

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: N/A

other name/site number: South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District (preferred)

2. Location

street & number: 2 South Main St., 10 East Kansas St., 1-17 East Kansas St.

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Liberty

vicinity: N/A

state: MO

county: Clay

code: 047

zip code: 64068

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private and Public - Local

Category of Property: District

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>9</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>9</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: "Historic Resources of Liberty, Clay County, Missouri"

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

Claire F. Blackwell

9 November 1992
Date

Signature of certifying official
Claire F. Blackwell, Deputy SHPO
Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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5. National Park Service Certification
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ entered in the National Register
____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the
National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined not eligible for the
National Register

____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic: Commerce/Trade
Commerce/Trade
Government

Sub: Specialty Store
Financial Institution
Courthouse

Current : Commerce/Trade
Commerce/Trade
Government

Sub: Specialty Store
Financial Institution
Courthouse

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

- Modern Movement
- Late Victorian
- Neo-Classical Revival

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation Stone roof Asphalt
walls Stone other Metal
Brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: Commerce
Architecture
Politics/Government

Period(s) of Significance: ca. 1875 - 1942

Significant Dates : ca. 1875, 1877, ca. 1880, ca. 1886, ca. 1894, ca. 1895, 1915, 1923, 1935-36

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Wight & Wight, Architect
A.F. Haeussler, Architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: Clay County Archives (Liberty, MO)

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>377480</u>	<u>4344810</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

Lots 130 - 133 and Courthouse Block, Original Town of Liberty

Boundary Justification: X See continuation sheet.

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Deon K. Wolfenbarger

Organization: Three Gables Preservation Date: _____

Street & Number: 9550 NE Cookingham Drive Telephone: 816/792-1275

City or Town: Kansas City State: MO ZIP: 64157

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Section number 7 South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District Page 1
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SUMMARY:

The South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District is located in Liberty, Clay County, Missouri. It consists of nine contributing buildings, including the Clay County Courthouse, located in a central courthouse square bounded by E. Franklin, N. Main, E. Kansas, and N. Water streets. Included as well are seven contributing buildings which make up the entire block of E. Kansas between Main and Water streets, all Two-Part Commercial Block buildings directly south of the courthouse, and one contributing building at the southwest corner of E. Kansas and S. Water streets. The Clay County Courthouse is the prime example of the Civic Buildings property type, as defined in the Multiple Property Submission, "Historic Resources of Liberty, Clay County, Missouri" (hereafter, "Liberty-MPS").

ELABORATION:

The South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District contains nine buildings which retain a sufficient degree of integrity so as to be clearly associated with the context "The Courthouse Square in Liberty: Commercial and Governmental Center of Clay County, 1858-1942": 1 E. Kansas, 5 E. Kansas, 7 E. Kansas, 9 E. Kansas, 10 E. Kansas, 11 E. Kansas, 15 E. Kansas, 17 E. Kansas, and 2 S. Main. Seven of these buildings comprise the entire block of E. Kansas between Main and Water streets, and are directly south of the central courthouse square. All of these buildings fulfill the registration requirements for the Two-Part Commercial Block buildings, as outlined in Section F of the "Liberty-MPS". In addition to retaining their integrity in location and setting, all reflect historic association. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are found as well.

Also included as a contributing building in the historic district is a bank at the southwest corner of the intersection of E. Kansas and Main streets, which represents a "Temple Front" commercial property type (Longstreth, 1987). The bank building at 2 S. Main is a good representative of this form of commercial building, and retains its integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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The visual focal point of the entire central courthouse square is Liberty is quite naturally the Clay County Courthouse, also a contributing building in the historic district. The courthouse fulfills the registration requirements for the Civic Buildings property type, as defined in section F of the "Liberty-MPS". As the central focal point of commerce and governmental activities in Liberty, it retains integrity in the important areas of location, setting, association, and feeling. In addition, its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship convey an important historic sense of time and place.

The four streets surrounding the central courthouse square - E. Franklin on the north, N. Main on the west, E. Kansas on the south, and N. Water on the east - are all one-way, with vehicular traffic travelling in a counter-clockwise manner. The sidewalks around the square are constructed of large concrete block pavers with granite curbs. Angled parking along the street is demarcated by interlocking brick pavers in a herringbone pattern, with the parking spaces defined by a soldier course of lighter colored bricks. Crosswalks are laid in the same brick pattern. Modern street lights have a design which is representative of historic light standards.

The commercial buildings all abut the sidewalk, and fill up the entire lot. The courthouse, however, is located in the middle of the central public square, in a grassy lawn. Large, deciduous shade trees are on the east and west sides, and smaller flowering trees on the north and south. Small planting areas of evergreen and deciduous shrubs are interspersed in the square. Along the sidewalk, seating areas with metal and wood benches are enclosed with a semi-circular metal fence. A memorial statue to World War I soldiers is located on the west side of the courthouse.

The boundaries of the district were selected so as to include the greatest concentration of contributing historic buildings around the central courthouse square. The north and east sides of the square contain both historic and non-historic buildings; several of the historic buildings have suffered a loss of integrity in varying degrees. However, a few individually eligible buildings are found on the north side of the square, and a small historic

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district (also nominated) exists on the west side. The south side of the square contains a collection of historic buildings which exhibit the greatest amount of integrity of those buildings on the square.

The buildings in the South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District were constructed between c. 1875 and 1935-36. The block on E. Kansas between Water and Main Street, as mentioned earlier, are all Two-Part Commercial Block buildings, and were constructed between c. 1875 and 1895. The easternmost building on the block, 17 E. Kansas, was constructed in 1877 as a bank, but underwent a major facade remodeling in 1915. The Neoclassical facade had symbolic associations typically sought in bank buildings during this period. This building, therefore, has associations with the with the early twentieth century. The remaining Two-Part Commercial Blocks on the south side of the square, however, all contain numerous features typical of the times in which they were constructed - the Victorian period of commercial architecture. Although the street drops slightly in elevation from Main down to Water Street, the buildings are basically of identical height, excepting for varying degrees of elaboration on the cornices. All have a projecting cornice line, and the Victorian buildings have additional detailing which emphasizes this area of the facade. There is also a clearly defined cornice between the first and second story, which helps to define a distinct storefront area.

The facades of the buildings on this block are clearly divided into two zones, with the first story storefronts separated from the elaborated upper story by a decorative cornice. All of the storefronts have enframing pilasters, or sections of the buildings which serve to enframe the first story. Five of the buildings have cornice line brackets, dentils, and/or modillions. All of the second story windows have decorative surrounds. Each storefront has large glass display windows, and except for the Neoclassical Revival bank on the east end, all have recessed entry doors.

The temple front bank building at 2 S. Main, and the Clay County Courthouse at 10 E. Kansas, are both monumental stone buildings

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which evoke the early twentieth century. Although situated on a corner lot, the building at 2 S. Main abuts the sidewalk, thus retaining the pattern of building facades along both Kansas and Main streets. Its height also corresponds with the commercial buildings on the two streets. The Clay County Courthouse, on the other hand, not only sets back from the street surrounded by open space, but it is differentiated from the commercial buildings by its added height. In addition to sitting on a raised basement, a central portion of the building juts above with a parapet roofline, giving the building a greater feeling of monumentality.

The Clay County Courthouse and Boggess Hardware (5 E. Kansas) have remained virtually unaltered from the time of their construction. All of the other buildings have undergone some alteration in the storefront area, but all have retained their integrity from the historic period of significance in their upper stories. The design of the more recent storefronts utilize a similar scale and basic arrangement, which does not detract from a historic sense of time and place along the block.

A full listing of the resources in the West Liberty Historic district follows, giving the address, property type, estimated date of construction, and contributing versus non-contributing status. A brief description of each resource follows the listing.

2 S. Main. Temple front. (1923) CONTRIBUTING.

Built in 1923 of Bedford stone and rose marble for the First National Bank, this temple front building incorporates Neoclassical Revival elements, primarily in the facade, to evoke the image of a Roman temple. The prime facade faces east onto Main Street, and features a monumental temple front. Four Tuscan columns extend across the front facade and are in antis (set between sections of enframing wall, that read like thick piers). The columns rise the full height of the building, and end in a pedimented portico. On the entablature, the words "First National Bank" are carved into the stone, on both the east and north facade. At the top of the pediment on the east facade is a

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stone fleur de lis. The pediment and columns themselves are attached to the building, and are more decorative rather than an essential part of the structure. As it sits on a corner site, the north facade is subordinate, yet closely related to the composition of the east facade. Engaged pilasters rise two stories, and form the divisions of the bays. A modern addition extends on the rear extends to the west, and a new elevator shaft has been added to the south elevation.

10 E. Kansas. Civic Building. (1935-36) CONTRIBUTING.

The Clay County Courthouse was constructed in 1935-36, utilizing elements from the then prevailing architectural styles - the Art Deco and Moderne styles. It is the most significant example of the Civic Building property type in Liberty. The primary facade faces east onto Kansas Street, but its symmetrical design provides an identical elevation on the north. The east and west facades are secondary, and are also identical to each other. The building is clad in limestone panels, and features a minimum of ornamentation, except for a highly elaborate relief band in the cornice area featuring bull's-eyes, triglyphs, foliated designs, and eagles. The design of each elevation is noted for the division of the wall surface into bays, utilizing recessed window openings reaching two stories in height, which in turn are separated by stone pilasters or projecting portions of the buildings. The central bays of the south and north elevations project above the roofline of the remainder of the building, and have the inscription "Clay County Courthouse" above the relief panel. The south elevation also features a clock.

1 E. Kansas. Two-Part Commercial Block. (c. 1894) CONTRIBUTING.

Under construction in 1894, this Two-Part Commercial Block building contains elements common to the Queen Anne style. It is located on the southeast corner of E. Kansas and Main streets, and the primary facade faces north, towards the courthouse square. The storefront is altered, and currently contains two recessed entry doors with a large, centered display window and bulkhead below. The transom area has been stuccoed, and bears

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the name of the current business. The second story of the north elevation contains the most decorative elements, with a central cast metal oriel window flanked by segmentally arched windows set within a rectangular recessed brick panel. The roofline is terminated with a metal cornice with brackets. The second story of the west elevation features arched windows embellished by compound brick arches, tied together with a brick string-course. An iron fire escape leads to a second story west entry. At the rear (south) of the west elevation are two small storefronts with entry doors.

5 E. Kansas. Two-Part Commercial Block. (c. 1895) CONTRIBUTING.
Constructed between 1894 and 1899, this Two-Part Commercial Block retains nearly all of its original facade, which was executed in the Romanesque Revival style. Decorative cast iron pilasters enframe the storefront. A central recessed entry door is flanked by large display windows, with glass transoms above and original panelled bulkhead below. A simple cornice separates the first from the second story, which features an elaborate Romanesque Revival window treatment. A series of three, slender grouped engaged columns separates the upper story into three window bays, and provides the support for rusticated round stone arches. The bases of the grouped columns are rusticated, as is the entire surface of the upper story wall cladding. The central window bay is taller and larger, containing three windows. It is flanked by two single windows. Semi-circular engaged columns enframe the remainder of the upper story, and terminate in cone finials. A centered rectangular parapet extends above the roof, and features two cone finials and a panel with "Jr. O.U.A.M. No. 12." inscribed.

7 E. Kansas. Two-Part Commercial Block. (c. 1886) CONTRIBUTING.
Constructed between 1895 and 1899, this Two-Part Commercial Block has architectural design features typical of the Italianate commercial style. The first story has been altered, but it retains its historic pattern of fenestration. An entry to the second floor is on the east end of the front facade, and is original. It is slightly recessed, and has a movable as well as

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fixed transoms above. The storefront area also has a recessed entry, centrally located, and is flanked by large display windows. The bulkhead is brick, and the transom area is glass. Above is a flat cornice area, which separates the two stories. On the second story, brick piers separate four rectangular recessed window bays. The windows themselves are arched, and feature a keystone. The elaborate cornice features decorative brackets, a paneled frieze, sawtooth dentil-like details, and a broken, semi-circular pediment extending above the roof. A 22'x30' concrete block addition was constructed in the rear in 1967.

9 E. Kansas. Two-Part Commercial Block. (c. 1875) CONTRIBUTING.

This Two-Part Commercial Block building was constructed circa 1875, and contains decorative elements harkening to the Italianate and Queen Anne styles. The first story has been altered, but it retains its historic pattern of fenestrations. A central recessed entry is flanked by large glass display windows. Rectangular glass transom panels (smaller than the original) have been painted, and the bulkhead area has been bricked in. Separating the two stories is a smooth, stucco panel. The second story features three identical segmentally arched windows, each with keystone. The prominent, overhanging cornice features three large brackets, a vertically grooved frieze, and block modillions.

11 E. Kansas. Two-Part Commercial Block. (c. 1880) CONTRIBUTING.

Constructed prior to 1883, this Two-Part Commercial Block has retained its historic appearance from its alterations ca. 1920, and still contains many original architectural features from its time of original construction. The brick building was stuccoed and the storefront altered sometime between ca. 1913 and 1922. The storefront features an entrance to the second story at the west end of the north facade. The main entry is recessed, and is centrally located between two glass display windows. The bulkhead area, and enframing piers, have been stuccoed. The transom area has prism glass tiles. A projecting cornice separates the two floors. The second story has four identical

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two-over-one, double-hung windows, with molded triangular pediments. A slightly projecting stuccoed area above covers a former corbelled brick course. The roof is accentuated by a projecting metal cornice, with brackets and pellet molding in the frieze area.

15 E. Kansas. Two-Part Commercial Block. (c. 1875) CONTRIBUTING.

This Two-Part Commercial Block was constructed c. 1875, and contains two storefronts on the first story. The second story has decorative features typical of the Italianate commercial style. There are three entry doors - one is centered between the two storefronts and leads to the upper story. The entry doors to the storefronts are slightly off-center, and are recessed. The flanking glass display windows are angled back to the entry doors. The transom area has been covered over with the store sign, and the bulkheads are brick. The enframing piers are faced with stone, as is the cornice between the two floors, which matches that of the bank on the east. The second story was stuccoed, sometime between ca. 1913 and 1922. There are seven identical, one-over-one double-hung windows, each with multi-light arched transom above. The hooded window lintels are quite ornate. The overhanging cornice features dentils with intermittent scrolled brackets.

17 E. Kansas. Two-Part Commercial Block. (1877; 1915) CONTRIBUTING.

Although this Two-Part Commercial Block was constructed in 1877, the facade was completely remodeled in 1915, giving the building architectural features typical of the Neoclassical Revival style. It is on the southwest corner of E. Kansas and Water streets, and the primary facade faces north. The primary elevation has been faced with stone. The storefront area has been altered since 1915, and currently features a double glass door entry, surrounded by large, square display and transom windows divided by metal muntins. The window area in the storefront is further surrounded by black marble. The storefront itself is set within sections of enframing wall that read like thick piers. The west enframing wall contains an entry door to the second floor, and

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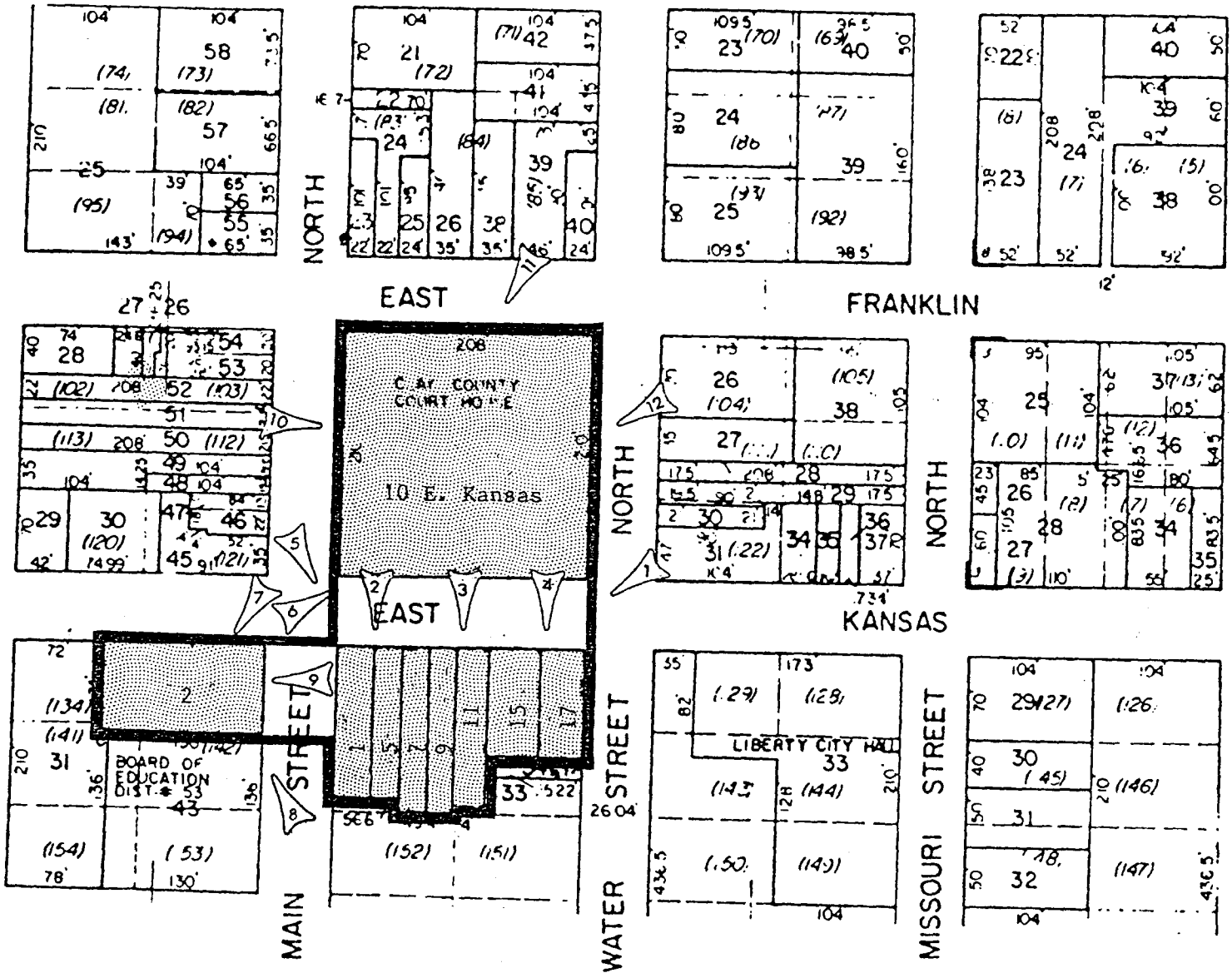
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the right contains an overnight banking deposit box. Classical swags are carved above both of these. A denticulated cornice separates the two floors, and the frieze of this cornice has "Commercial Bank" incised upon it. Engaged square classical columns separate the four central windows, which are one-over-one, with a transom above featuring a starburst pattern in metal. The set of four windows and columns is set within a deeply recessed panel. Both ends of the second story facade have a smaller window, with projecting bracketed lugsills, and projecting lintel. These smaller windows are one-over-one, with the upper sash covered with the same metal starburst pattern. A simple, classical entablature tops the second story, featuring a wide frieze band with stone roundels, and an overhanging cornice. A subordinate facade faces east onto Water Street, and features original windows from the 1877 building. The windows are very tall and narrow, and have a circular transom above. There are entry doors to basement offices, and the east facade has been stuccoed.

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South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District
Liberty, Clay County, Missouri
Scale: Unknown

LEGEND:

Contributing resources

Non-contributing resources

District boundary

Camera position



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SUMMARY:

The South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District in Liberty, Missouri is significant under criteria A and C in the areas of COMMERCE and ARCHITECTURE. Under criterion A, the district retains its historic associations with commerce around the central courthouse square in Liberty. It includes the entire block south of the courthouse, which together form the most intact collection of historic commercial buildings that retain their integrity from the historic period. They are representative of the range of commercial enterprises found on the square around the turn of the century in Liberty. The relevant historic context, as defined in the Multiple Property Submission "Historic Resources of Liberty, Clay County, Missouri," (hereafter, "Liberty-MPS") is "The Courthouse Square in Liberty: Commercial and Governmental Center of Clay County, 1858-1942". In addition, the district contains representatives both the Two-Part Commercial Block and the Civic Buildings property type, as defined in the aforementioned multiple property submission. The historic resources run the gamut from simple, vernacular expressions of Victorian commercial architecture, to high-style, architect designed buildings, and are thus eligible in the area of ARCHITECTURE. In addition, the Clay County Courthouse is significant under Criterion A in the area of POLITICS/GOVERNMENT. Completed in 1934, the third courthouse constructed for the county served as the seat of county government and the focus of activity, both civic and commercial, in Liberty from its completion to 1942, the arbitrary fifty-year limit.

ELABORATION:

The South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District represents the entire range of property types found on the square in Liberty. Historically, it also contained a variety of business enterprises, which are indicative of the importance of the location of the square to commerce in the town. As noted in the "Liberty-MPS", the lots surrounding the public square were the first to sell, and the first to contain combination residential and commercial buildings. The original plat for the town laid out 210 foot square blocks. Facing the courthouse square, each block originally had three, seventy foot wide lots (Ohman, 1985). After the early shop-houses gave way to strictly commercial buildings, though, these generous lots were subdivided and soon contained two to three buildings each. The blocks on E. Kansas, between Main and Water streets, and on N. Main, between E. Franklin and E. Kansas streets, seemed to be particularly desirable. The 1883 Sanborn Map reveals no available vacant lots on the south and west sides of the square, whereas a few still existed on the other two sides (Sanborn Map, 1883). By 1883, in fact, four of the seven currently extant buildings on this block had been constructed. By 1895, all of the extant buildings were completed, many replacing earlier commercial buildings.

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The First National Bank had been conducting business in its own building at 100 N. Main Street since 1887, on the northwest corner of the square. The bank had been planning on new quarters since before World War I, but had to delay construction until after the war (Liberty Tribune, 27 October 1922). In 1922, they purchased the commercial building on the southwest corner of the square, and began construction of a "modern" bank facility. At the time of its demolition, the commercial building on this corner contained a cafe, barber shop, shoe shop, clothing store, and offices and living quarters on the second floor. Previously, it had been the site of a confectionery, grocery store, hardware store, pool room, "moving picture" house, and even the post office. The new First National Bank building was finished in 1923 at a cost of \$150,000. The architect, A.F. Haeussler of St. Louis, utilized a temple front form. Temple front buildings were common to banks in the first half of the nineteenth century, then again in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Ancient Roman architecture served as the source of inspiration, although great freedom was used in adapting it to the buildings of the twentieth century (Longstreth, 1987). Columns and pilaster or piers were used to create a facade which presented a facade derived from Roman temples. Not only did the form and the design, Neoclassical Revival, take advantage of the corner lot and add to the sense of monumentality, the lavish building materials and modern banking devices made this the most up-to-date bank in Liberty. It included a six and a half foot diameter bank vault, and a special room for women customers. By the time of its completion, all four corners of the square either contained a bank, or a former bank building.

Another bank in the South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District was located on a choice corner lot, but was within the E. Kansas block between Main and Water streets. The Liberty Savings Association constructed a bank on the east end of this block in 1877. The Commercial Bank of Liberty purchased the building in 1902, but in 1915, feeling "that their banking home should be in keeping with the necessities and stability of their business, [the board of directors] decided to make everything new except the kind of treatment which for years had been accorded their valued patrons." (Woodson, 1920). The main banking room had a circular counter, two large vaults, and rich wood fixtures and wainscoting. Thus the former Victorian era Two-Part Commercial Block was remodeled into a "metropolitan banking house", with a monumental stone front (Ibid.). Still retaining a distinction between the first and second story, the building remains a good example of the Two-Part Commercial Block property

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type, albeit with architectural references from a later period. Although the front facade was remodeled, the building has remained as a bank for over 115 years.

Many of the remaining six buildings on the south side of the square contained commercial enterprises which lasted several decades. 1 E. Kansas, formerly known as "Castle Hall", was built by the Liberty Knights of Pythias lodge. They used the second floor, and rented the first floor for retail purposes. The first tenant was the Jesse Slaughter Dry Goods store, followed by another dry goods business. Through the 1920's it housed a furniture store, then later the Safeway grocery store. The adjoining building to the east had a much simpler history. From the time of its construction (c. 1895) until 1991, 5 E. Kansas contained a hardware store. The first tenant was D.E. Bell Hardware. In 1902, Sterling Price Boggess moved to Liberty, and purchased the store. By 1908, the business was known as Boggess and Sons, which it remained until 1991. It now houses the Hardware Cafe.

7 E. Kansas has served as a drugstore since it was constructed c. 1886. J.H. Barnes Drug Store was here around the turn of the century, and in 1905 this business was purchased by Oliver P. Gentry (Liberty Tribune, 2 December 1921). The O.P. Gentry Drug Store was later run by his sons during the 1910's and 1920's. In the 1930's and '40's, it was the Southside Pharmacy and AID Drugs. By the 1950's, it housed the Beggs Drug Store, which continues to operate today. 9 E. Kansas had a long association with the Trimble Hardware business. Prior to Trimble's, it had been a hardware store on the first story, with a tin shop on the second. In 1870, John Messick came to Liberty and bought an interest in a established hardware store on the south side of the square (History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri, 1885). He formed a partnership with his brother, Messick & Bro., which was bought out in 1884 by W.L. Trimble (Woodson, 1920). In the 1920's, the business was known as Trimble & Trimble, Hardware (Withers, 1922). By the 1950's, J.J. Murphy Co., 5 & 10 Cent Store was housed in the building (Liberty, Missouri Telephone Directory, March 1954).

11 E. Kansas was constructed sometime prior to 1883. Except for a brief period around 1899 when it contained the dry goods store of Gray & Edwards, it housed a grocery store from at least 1883 through 1913 (Liberty Tribune, 6 February 1936; Sanborn Maps, 1883, 1889, 1894, 1899, 1906, & 1913). In the 1920's, various clothing stores occupied the building, including Clark's Clothing

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and Shoes and Lloyd & Ruckel's Clothing Store (Withers, 1922; Liberty, Missouri Telephone Directory, January 1929). In the 1930's, Pyle Hardware operated out of the first floor; by 1937, it was Frevert-Pyle Hardware, then later Frevert Hardware through at least the 1950's. The second story also contained a wide variety of businesses. In 1883, a skating rink was on the second floor; from c. 1889 to 1894, a tailor had rooms upstairs. The Liberty Advance had offices and did hand printing in 1899, and in 1906, a barber and restaurant operated out of the upper level (Sanborn Maps, 1883, 1889, 1894, 1899, & 1906). It was referred to as the "Garth Building" at this point. In the mid-twentieth century, an insurance agency had offices on the second story.

15 E. Kansas was probably built sometime before 1877 for Liberty's pioneer druggist, Trigg Allen. It contained two storefronts, one of which has housed a variety of businesses over the years. The east storefront (15 E. Kansas), though, has a long history as a drugstore, housing one for over sixty years from its construction through the 1940's. It was originally Trigg Allen's Drug Store, then J.H. Barnes' Drug Store through the 1920's, and by 1929, was Brant's Drug Store (Withers, 1922; Liberty, Missouri Telephone Directory, January 1929). By 1943, it was Brant's Bros. Clothing Store, which remains in the building today. The upstairs of 15 E. Kansas has a long history of medical offices. Trigg Allen's daughter married Dr. Francis H. Matthews in 1892, who had his office on the second story (Woodson, 1920). Later, numerous other doctors and veterinarians practiced upstairs. The adjoining storefront (formerly 13 E. Kansas), was actually part of the same building, but has contained a number of different business types over the years. Sanborn Maps reveal that in 1883 it was a dry goods store; in 1889, a boots and shoe store; in 1894, it was vacant, but by 1899, it contained both a dry goods and boots & shoes establishment. From the turn of the century through the 1920's, the first floor of 13 E. Kansas contained the post office (Sanborn Maps, 1883, 1889, 1894, 1899, 1906, 1913, & 1924). The Liberty Book Store was also housed there from the late 1920's to the 1940's, when first Waers Drug Store, then Chappler Drugs occupied the building.

Since 1833, the Clay County Courthouse occupied the central public square in Liberty's commercial center ("Liberty-MPS"). The first was destroyed by fire in 1857, and a new courthouse, designed by Peter McDuff, was constructed. His design featured a cross-shaped plan with classical portico across its main facade. The building terminated in a colonnaded cylindrical drum which

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carried a dome with a figure of Justice on top. In 1934, however, a feeling that the building was outdated, coupled with the fervor for new construction inspired by the Public Works Administration, the citizens of Clay County approved \$200,000 of bonds to construct a new courthouse (Liberty Tribune, 20 August 1934). Combined with \$75,000 of Public Works Administration funds, the new courthouse was the largest and most significant example of the Civic Buildings property type constructed in Clay County. Designed by the prominent Kansas City architectural firm of Wight & Wight, a "modern" design concept was chosen over a more traditional approach. The building, with its sleek Bedford limestone facade, reflects the then current architectural trends of the Art Deco and Moderne styles, focusing on a minimum of surface ornamentation. As a result, store owners facing the square felt a need to modernize their storefronts ". . . in order to have the four sides of the square conform as nearly as possible to the new building." (Piland, 1985)

The buildings in the South Liberty Courthouse Square are thus closely associated not only with the commerce of Liberty, but with the civic and governmental history of the town and county as well. The variety of property types and architectural styles reflect the change in the square over time. Included are representatives from the square's period of greatest commercial growth - the 1870's and 1880's - as well as its growth in civic affairs - the early twentieth century, particularly the 1920's and 1930's. Several of the Two-Part Commercial Block buildings housed the same type of commercial activities from fifty to over one hundred years. Others housed a variety of businesses, reflecting changing needs and economies in the community.

The historic character of the South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District is found in its retention of its architectural integrity, and correspondingly, its historic associations. The buildings along the south side of the square possess an architectural coherence by virtue of their form, massing, and distinct division of the facade into two zones - a storefront and a more decorative second story. While the historic resources share many common basic design elements, each building remains distinctly individual due to the decorative architectural features employed. The buildings contain architectural features found on a variety of architectural styles (Queen Anne, Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and Neoclassical Revival). Except for 2 S. Main Street, all of the buildings on the south side fulfill the requirements for the Two-Part Commercial Block property type, as defined in the "Liberty-MPS". The Clay County

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Courthouse, by virtue of its property type (Civic Building), stands out among the commercial buildings around the square. As the seat of county government, it retains its historic integrity as well. It is a monumental structure, which visually dominates the public square. It is architecturally significant for its design, as well as being the most prominent example of the Civic Building property type in Liberty. Clay County's continued commitment to the square and the courthouse building has helped keep the commercial activities around the square viable through the present day.

[In the course of research for this nomination, no generally accepted historic name was discovered for this district. However, the Liberty square, or the courthouse square, was, historically, a recognized and acknowledged feature, and it remains a point of reference for planning, civic, social, and commercial activity. The square was also used as the basis for the development of the first historic context under the Multiple Property Submission. Therefore, it was decided that the square, with the addition of appropriate geographical qualification, would be the basis of naming two proposed districts.]

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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

District boundaries encompass the highest concentration of significant commercial structures on the south side of Liberty's courthouse square. Buildings on the west, east and north break the visual continuity of the district, containing alterations of a later period and a different character than the contributing buildings within the district. The boundaries are based on the current legally recorded lot lines for the associated resources.

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The following information is the same for all photographs listed below:

LOCATION OF SITE: Liberty, MO
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Bob Askren
DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH: 19 December 1991
LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson City, MO

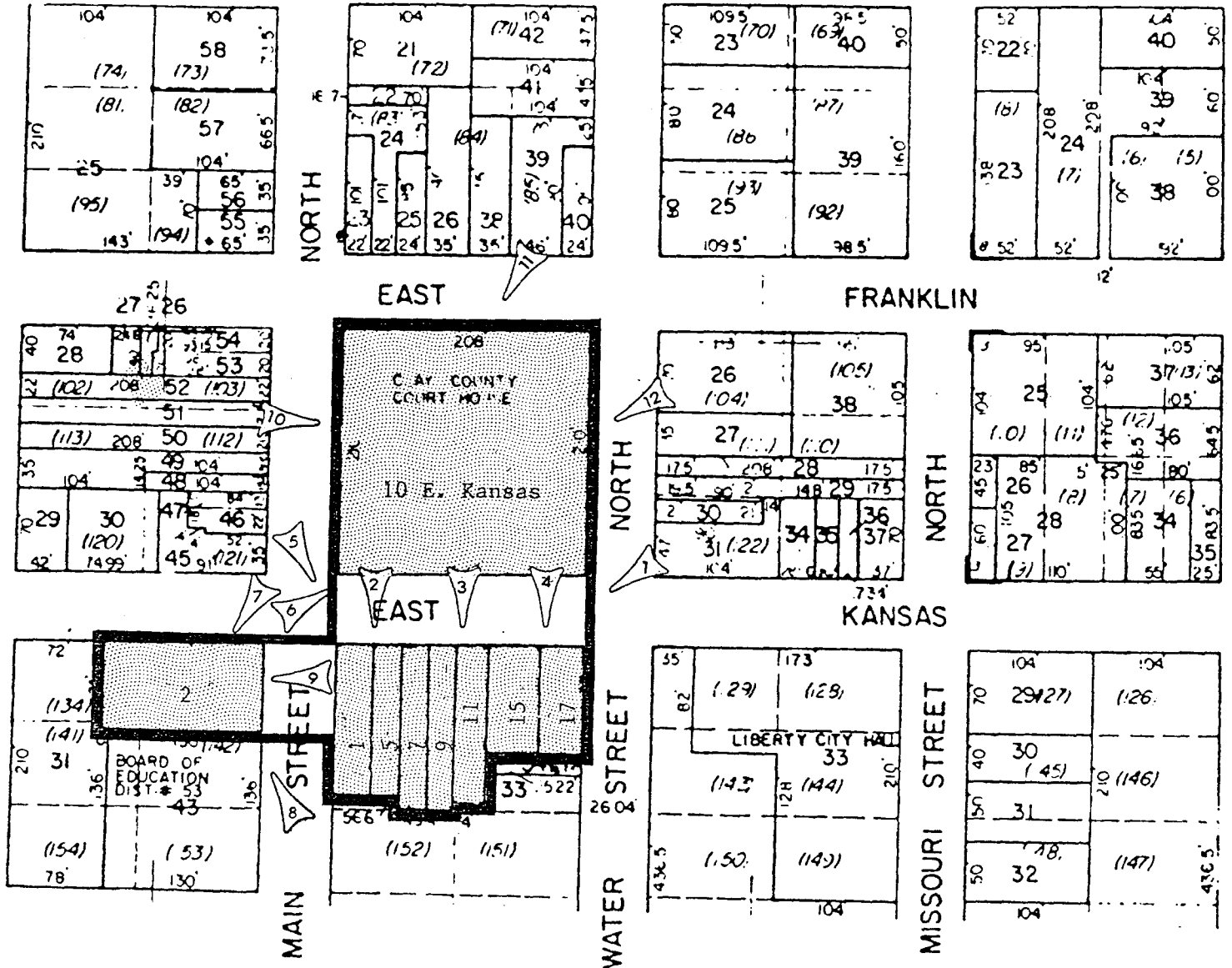
List of Photographs

1. Properties at 1-17 East Kansas Street and 2 South Main Street, the South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District. Perspective shot taken from the northeast.
2. Block of three properties at 1-7 East Kansas Street, South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District. Straight frontal shot taken from the north.
3. Two full elevations and two partial elevations of storefronts at 7-15 East Kansas Street, South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District. Straight frontal shot taken from the north.
4. Full elevation of two properties at 15 and 17 East Kansas Street, South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District. Straight frontal shot taken from the north.
5. Northwest elevation of corner lot at 1 East Kansas Street, South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District.
6. Front (east) elevation of First National Bank building at 2 South Main Street, South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District.
7. Northeast elevation of First National Bank building at 2 South Main Street, South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District.
8. Southeast elevation of First National Bank building at 2 South Main Street, South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District.
9. South elevation of Clay County Courthouse at 10 East Kansas Street, South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District.
10. West elevation of Clay County Courthouse at 10 East Kansas Street, South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District.
11. North elevation of Clay County Courthouse at 10 East Kansas Street, South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District.
12. West elevation of Clay County Courthouse at 10 East Kansas Street, South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District.

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South Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District
Liberty, Clay County, Missouri
Scale: Unknown




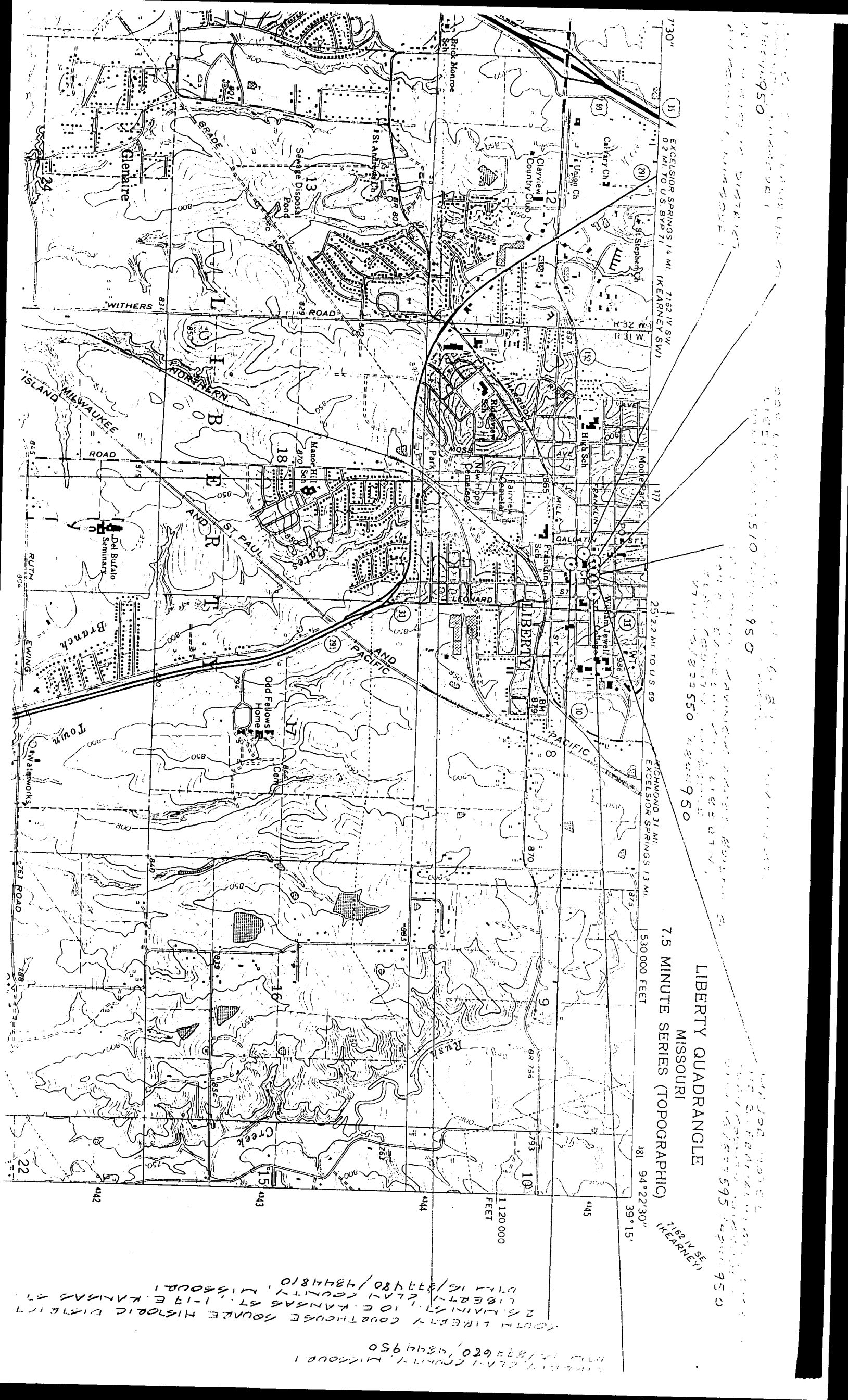
LEGEND:

Contributing resources 

Non-contributing resources 

District boundary 

Camera position 



730"
 33
 EXCELSIOR SPRINGS 14 MI. 7162 IV SW
 0.2 MI TO U.S. BYP 71 (KEARNEY SW)

950
 DISTRICT
 1510

950
 550

LIBERTY QUADRANGLE
 MISSOURI
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
 1:500 000 FEET
 7162 IV SE
 7162 IV SW
 (KEARNEY)

381 94° 22' 30"
 39° 15'

LIBERTY TOWNSHIP LIBERTY COUNTY MISSOURI
 014 15/4373620/4344950
 NORTH LIBERTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT
 2 S MAIN ST. IO C KANSAS ST. 1-19 E KANSAS ST.
 LIBERTY CIVIC CENTER MISSOURI
 014 16/434480/4344810
 LIBERTY CIVIC CENTER MISSOURI
 014 16/434480/4344810

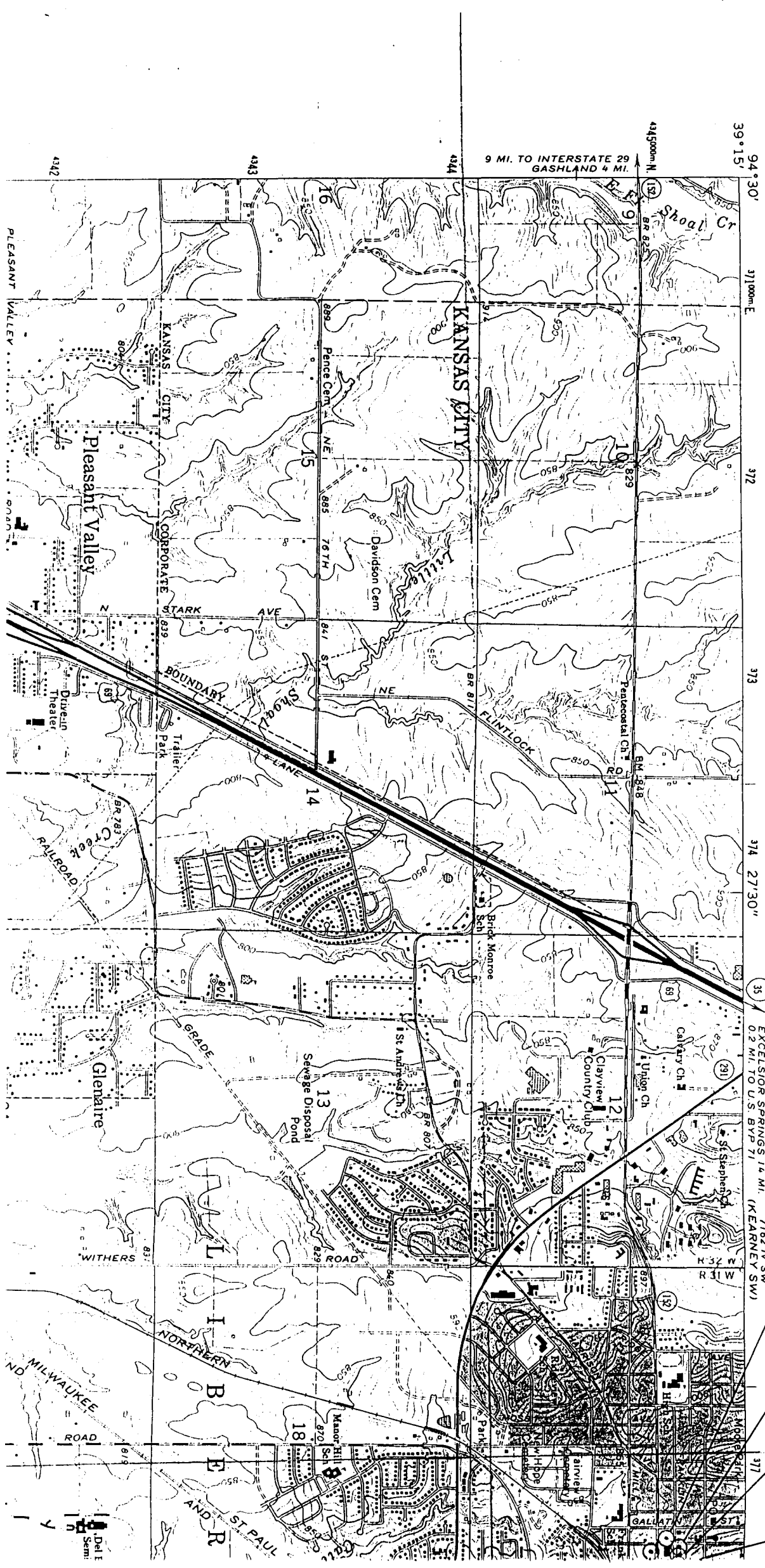
7002 1956
(MASHUVA)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

547 LIBERTY SQUARE HOUSE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT
12-16 N MAIN ST. LIBERTY, CLAY COUNTY, MISSOURI
UTM 15/377420/4344885

WILLER BUILDING S.E. CORNER OF
LIBERTY, CLAY COUNTY, MISSOURI
UTM 15/377470/4344950

DOE LIBERTY
LIBERTY, CLAY COUNTY,
UTM 15/377510/4344885



EXCELSIOR SPRINGS 1.4 MI. (KEARNEY SW)
0.2 MI. TO U.S. BYP 71

377

377





J.R. GUAM, No. 89

LIBERTY ANTIQUE MALL





Brant's
FAMILY SHOE STORE

Brant's
MEN'S & BOYS' WEAR

COMMERCIAL BANK



