

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Parker, Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 624 E. Capitol Avenue [n/a] not for publication

city or town Jefferson City [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Cole code 051 zip code 65101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [x] locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

Date 21 April 2000

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

[] 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 see continuation sheet [].

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	2	2 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	1	0 structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0 objects
		3	2 total

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/A

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

Current Functions

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Neo-Classical Revival

Materials

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

STONE

see continuation sheet [].

see continuation sheet [].

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet [x]

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

INDUSTRY

Periods of Significance

1905 - 1925

Significant Dates

1905

Significant Person(s)

Parker, Lester Shepard

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other:

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	572850	4269450			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title see continuation sheet
organization _____ date _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas M. Monaco
street & number 1122 Moreau Drive telephone 573/635-3287
city or town Jefferson City state Missouri zip code 65101

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Section 7 Page 1

Parker, Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon House
Cole County, Missouri

Summary: The Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon Parker House, 624 E. Capitol Avenue, Jefferson City, Missouri, is a two-story Neo-Classical Revival style brick house, irregular in plan, with twin bay windows projecting on the southeast side. Two two-story brick pavilions are on the northwest side. The house's full-height central portico with classical pediment and Ionic columns and pilasters, central entrance with sidelights and tall fanlight, and boxed cornice with frieze band illustrate the Neo-Classical Revival style used in its construction in circa 1905.¹ The Parker House is located on a tree-lined street centered on the State Capitol, which is visible for seven blocks. A hipped roof covers the house and a gable roof is over the portico. Behind the house is a small two-story brick dwelling, two concrete garages with a total of nine units, and a root cellar. While the outbuildings are more than 60 years old and relatively unaltered, only the smaller house and the cellar are contributing properties (along with the main house) because the garage units were built after the period of significance. Between 1935 and 1939, the Parker House was converted into four apartments.² The Parker House is in good to very good condition, and retains much of its original floor plan and many details despite several decades of use as apartments.

Elaboration: Facing East Capitol Avenue in a north-northeast direction, the Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon Parker House retains its original setting in a historic neighborhood. Across Lafayette Street on the southeast side is the National Register-listed Missouri State Penitentiary Warden's House (700 E. Capitol Avenue, 10/24/91). To the northeast across East Capitol Avenue is the Jefferson City Correctional Center, formerly the Missouri State Penitentiary, in operation since 1836.³ To the northwest on both sides of East Capitol Avenue are older houses of varying types and sizes, some of which have been converted to commercial use. The residential lot on which the Parker House stands is of typical size. The ground is level with the street in front and on the northwest side and slopes to Lafayette Street on the southeast.

The building's most notable Neo-Classical Revival details occur on the three-bay primary facade, and some of these elements continue into the side elevations. The dominating feature in the front is the central two-story shallow portico which is topped by a triangular pediment with an oval window. The window has a raised surround with four keystones and is divided into four lights. The portico is supported by monumental Ionic columns adjacent to Ionic pilasters set on low stone pedestals. Existence of the pilasters is notable, as they are so close to the columns that they can barely be seen and yet show the attention to detail that is evident throughout the house. The portico's molded architrave, plain frieze and boxed cornice continue on the main block of the Parker House. In addition to the portico on the southeast is a two-story side porch which has been enclosed with glass and frame panels on the upper level, and a frame addition and porch on the southwest corner. Walls have a distinctive pattern of Flemish bond red brick with black glazed headers. Stone quoins accent the house's primary corners.

A somewhat deteriorated concrete terrace extends from the north corner past the front portico and wraps to the

¹ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), pp. 344-345.

² Polk's *Jefferson City Directory*, 1935. Jas. M. Sanders is listed as the owner, residing at 624 E. Capitol Avenue, with his wife Grace. Mr. Sanders was also listed as Warden of the State Prison. In 1939 the Sanborn Map shows the building as apartments.

³ Gary R. Kremer and Thomas E. Gage, "The Prison Against the Town: Jefferson City and the Penitentiary In the 19th Century," *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. LXXIV, Number 4, July 1980.

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Parker, Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon House
Cole County, Missouri

porch on the southeast side. Solid brick railings with stone caps have brick pedestals raised at the corners and flanking the front entrance, curving around the northeast corner. These railings show evidence of improper repointing at some point, and the masonry is again in need of repair.⁴ With this amount of deterioration, it is clear that the railings have been in place for some time. However, a circa 1910 photo (see Figure 1) shows a railing in the same location with similar brick pedestals and stone caps, but instead of solid brick railings, the railings appear to be plain vertical wooden balusters. Originally the pedestals were topped by stone or concrete balls. These have been removed and replaced at the corners and front entrance by concrete urns. Poured concrete steps lead from the lower porch to the back yard.

Another prominent Neo-Classical Revival element is the central entrance with its large light door, flanked by tracery sidelights and capped by a tall fanlight, reflecting the earlier Adam style. A header surround with a raised keystone completes the doorway. On either side of the entrance on the first floor, wide 1/1 double-hung sash windows have tall, round-arched, semicircular blind transoms with circle appliques. As with the door, a header surround and raised keystone tops the windows. The same window treatment is found on the windows in the bay projections and in the rear, where they are visible from Lafayette Street. For emphasis, the appliques were recently painted a darker color than the blind transoms. Just below the second floor windows, a molded continuous sill wraps around the entire building as a stringcourse. Centered over the entrance, a pair of narrow 1/1 windows opens onto a curved balconet with delicate turned balusters and scrolled modillions beneath. To either side of these windows are wide 1/1 double-hung sash. A molded architrave, plain frieze, and boxed cornice on the front portico is continued throughout the main block.

Flanked by two-story semi-hexagonal bays, the porch on the Lafayette Street side is the dominant feature of this elevation. The Doric columns of the lower porch rest on a brick railing, the same as the railing around the terrace. Two doorways provide access to this porch. Multiple-light French doors with sidelights and triple transom windows open into the front apartment on the lower level. Another door accesses the rear downstairs apartment and stairs leading to the upstairs apartments. Probably decades ago, the upper level sleeping porch was enclosed with glass on three sides, with wooden panels below the windows. French doors opening onto it are almost identical to those below, except for five shorter transom windows. Stained and varnished beadboard ceilings reflect the period of construction on both porches. On either side of the porches, two-story semi-hexagonal bays have three windows each on both the first and second floors. The bays are topped with pedimented gable roofs and first floor windows have semicircular blind transoms with circle appliques.

The west elevation, with three projecting pavilions, has experienced a few changes over time. In the northwest corner, the first floor window is smaller and has a stone lintel instead of a semicircular blind transom as on the front. Leaded glass is present but is more visible from the inside than out due to the presence of aluminum storm windows. On the second level, a narrow window is southwest of the lower level window.

A two-story pavilion on the northwest elevation projects farther from the house than the other two pavilions. Constructed of brick, it houses bathrooms on both levels. Sanborn maps indicate that it was added between

⁴ Urbana Group, "Jefferson City Historic East Survey," (Jefferson City, MO: Missouri DNR/Historic Preservation Program, 1991). Inventory Sheet for 624 E. Capitol Avenue.

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Parker, Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon House
Cole County, Missouri

1923 and 1939, probably when the house was converted into apartments. (See Figures 2-5, Sanborn Maps) The small lower window has a projecting stone lintel with a keystone, while just above is a window of similar size but without decoration. A sill just below the second floor windows matches and connects with the sill encircling the main block. This pavilion roof is flat and lacks the boxed cornice and plain frieze evident on most of the west elevation. To the rear of this pavilion is a two-story pavilion which appears to be original to the house. This pavilion features a lower level window with a semicircular blind transom, circle applique, header surround and raised keystone. A wide second floor window rests on the continuous sill, and is topped by the entablature and boxed cornice. A brick chimney is located just southwest of this pavilion. At the rear of the brick portion of the house is a third brick pavilion topped with a frame sleeping porch. First appearing on the Sanborn map of 1923, this pavilion has one small window with a segmental arch. Adjacent to this construction on the southwest corner is a frame, two-story enclosed porch. Between the brick pavilions is a modern two-story porch, enclosed by wood lattice on the first floor and a wood slat balustrade on the second. Overlooking the upper porch is a pair of windows but no door. The 1908 Sanborn map depicts a small porch on the southwest corner. No porches (not even on the Lafayette Street side where the small porch was depicted earlier) are shown on the 1923 map, so it is difficult to know what porches existed then. On the 1939 map, the porches are depicted as they exist today.

On the rear elevation, the two-story enclosed porch projects from the original brick wall of the house. Rows of windows continue from the west side on both levels, and there is a door on the southeast corner of the lower level with concrete steps. These steps lead to a concrete sidewalk that curves to reach the west yard. The brick wall has a window on each level, the continuous sill as on the other brick walls, and stone quoins at the south corner.

The interior of the Parker House retains a remarkable number of original decorative elements, considering that it has been used as apartments since at least 1939. The front entry opens onto a curious space, facing a curved wall. This wall contains a curved oak door and a pair of curved windows, all with beautiful leaded glass which was popular at the time of the building's construction. Larger paired windows of similar design are located in the northwest room on the first floor. An expansive archway with a keystone, leading into the first floor dining room, features decorative trim and recessed panels. The arch rests on columns, also adorned with trim, panels and raised diamond-shaped medallions. French doors with sidelights and transoms open onto the east porch from both the first and second floors. A beautiful box-beamed ceiling remains in the living room of the first floor rear apartment and, in the dining room, a light fixture appears to be original. The bathroom in the front first floor apartment retains its original white wall tile, extending about five feet from the floor and capped with a tile edge, as well as original fixtures. Some tile near the window experienced water damage but the owners plan to replace it with matching tile. Window seats are extant in three of the four bay windows. The stairway leading upstairs consists of wide wood steps and sturdy wood slat balusters which are terminated at the ends and corners by substantial square wood newel posts. The posts are unadorned except for two-tiered, tapered square finials with flat tops. These stairs and the curved entry door are stained; all other woodwork in the house is painted. Upstairs, an original fireplace and mantle with a three-panel overmantle presides in a room with refinished wood floors. Original four-panel doors, as well as baseboard, window and door trim can be found throughout the house. Floors are wood, although carpet will be installed in the front upstairs apartment. Original door hardware featuring an intricate raised design on

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Cole County, Missouri

both the knob and backplate is intact throughout the house.

New kitchen cabinets and appliances have been installed in all apartments. To enlarge the kitchens in the front apartments on both floors, partition walls were removed on each level (see Figures 6 and 7). Air conditioning was recently installed and many rooms have modern ceiling fans with lights. Replacement light fixtures upstairs are appropriate for the period of construction.

Several outbuildings remain in the back yard. Most notable is a small two-story brick house, depicted on a Sanborn map for the first time in 1923 but seemingly much older. Constructed of plain red brick, this building has arched double header windows which are typical of German vernacular construction. The house appears to have been constructed for residential use, most likely as servant's quarters rather than as a garage or carriage house. The hipped roof building has simple enclosed eaves. A hipped overhang protects the front entrance and a pair of windows on the lower level. The front facade has a single centered window on the second floor. The southeast (rear) elevation has two windows and an entrance with a concrete stoop and small wooden porch. Two windows on the upper level flank the original brick chimney and a metal stovepipe. The rear wall has one window on each level. The northwest wall is on the property line. The 1939 Sanborn map indicates that the building was considered a residence, as a street number (624 1/2) is given. Constructed while Lester Parker lived in the main house, this building retains integrity and is contributing.

Two garage buildings face the alley to the rear of the property. One or both must have been built when the house was converted into apartments. They first appear on the 1939 Sanborn map, in the same configuration as today. Built at a lower level than the rest of the yard, their presence is barely noticeable from outside the property. The northwest unit, constructed of concrete and with a flat roof, appears to be the oldest. Its four stalls are smaller and the door for each unit consists of three four-panel doors. The more recently constructed garage, near the corner of the alley and Lafayette Street, contains five units under a slightly sloping roof. Its more typical doors are constructed of vertical boards. A deteriorated remnant of a stone wall abuts this section and extends almost to the sidewalk along Lafayette Street. Concrete steps lead to the back yard from Lafayette Street just northeast of the garages. The only other outbuilding is a root cellar a few yards from the back wall of the main house. The cellar has a concrete top and a newer sloping entry door. The cellar is a contributing resource, as it was in use during the period of significance. The garages retain integrity and are at least 60 years old but were constructed after Lester Parker's death in 1925, and so are considered noncontributing.

The condition of the buildings ranges from good to very good. The current owners bought the property in the 1970s from a lady whose family had lived in the Parker House for many years. Even though divided into apartments, the house has been well cared for. Recently, the owners began a major rehabilitation of the four apartments. Most of the work involves new kitchens, new wiring, air conditioning and repainting. For rewiring, channels were cut into walls in some rooms (for access to ceiling fixtures) and the channels were subsequently replastered. The exterior columns were meticulously scraped by hand before being carefully primed and painted. Hardwood floors which did not require refinishing were protected. While much work has been done, it has not diminished the property's historic character and its useful life has been extended so that future generations can also appreciate its stately beauty.

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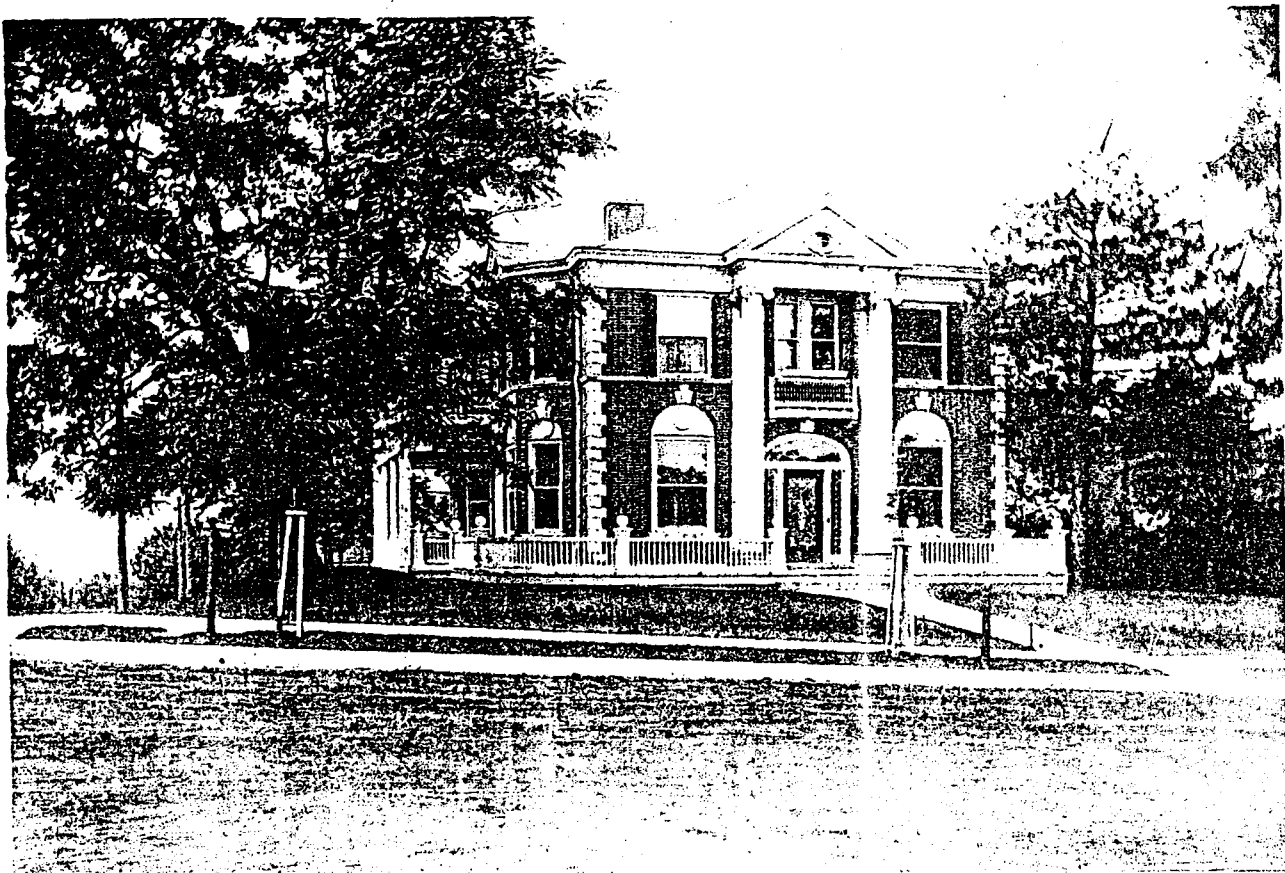
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Parker, Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon House
Cole County, Missouri

The Parker House reflects its period of significance and clearly portrays the characteristics typical of the Neo-Classical Revival style. The house stands on its original site and retains integrity of design, setting, materials, and workmanship.

Figure 1: Historic Photograph
(Circa 1910 photograph, Cole County Historical Society)



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Cole County, Missouri

Figure 2: Sanborn Map of 1898

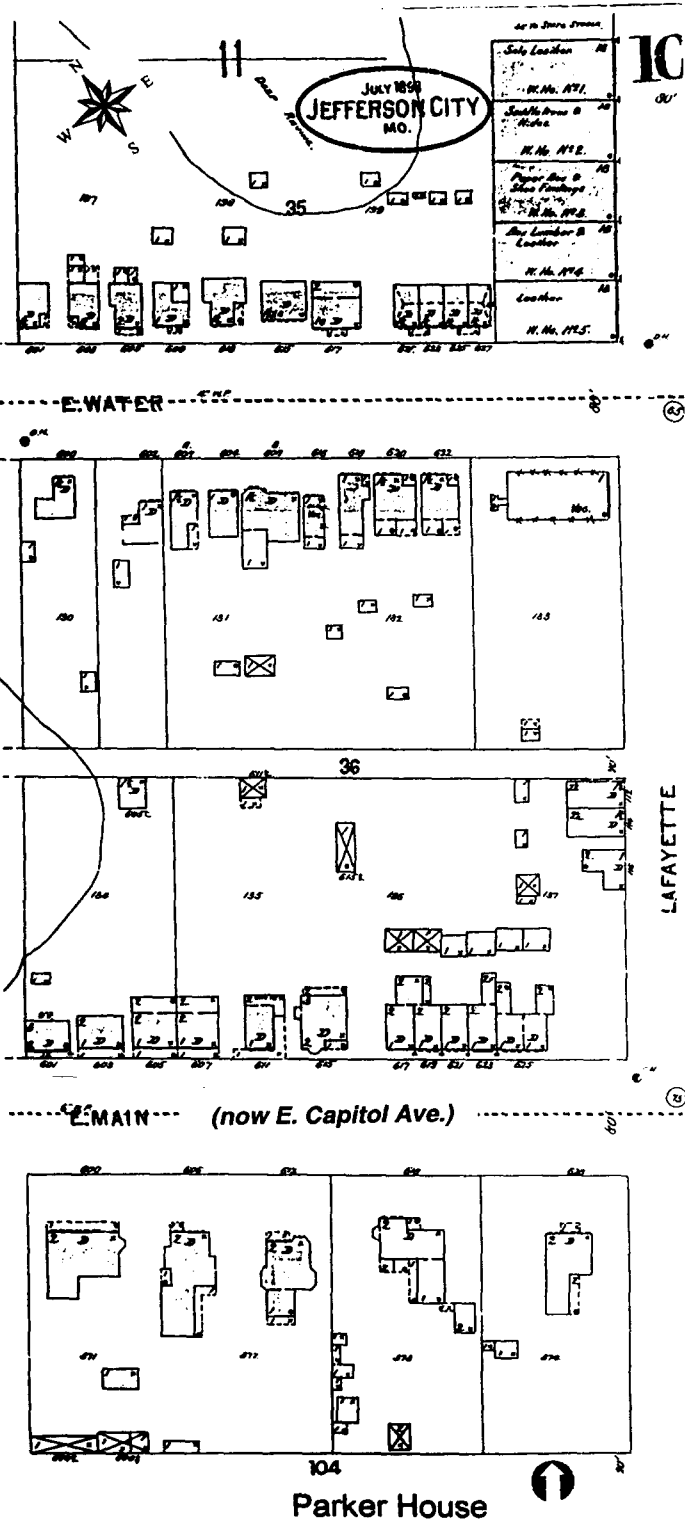
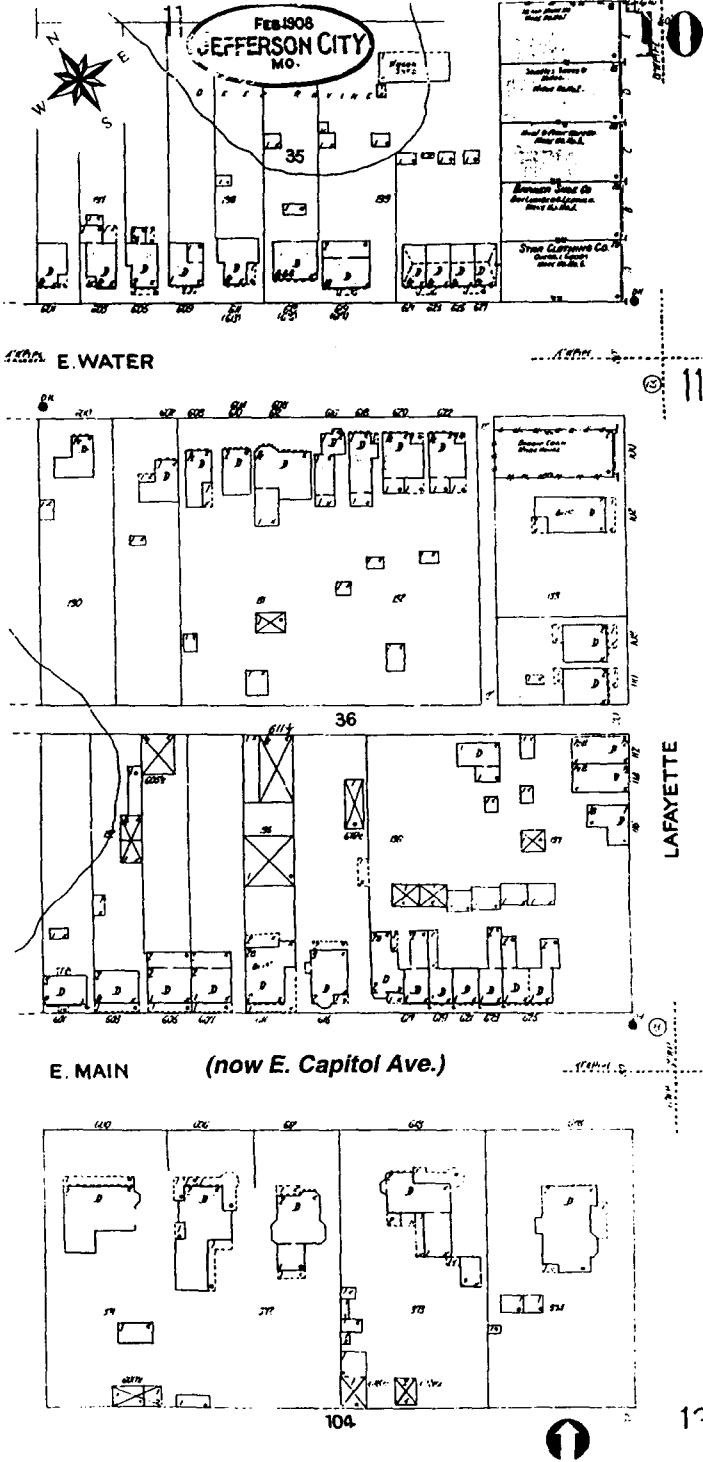


Figure 3: Sanborn Map of 1908



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Figure 4: Sanborn Map of 1923

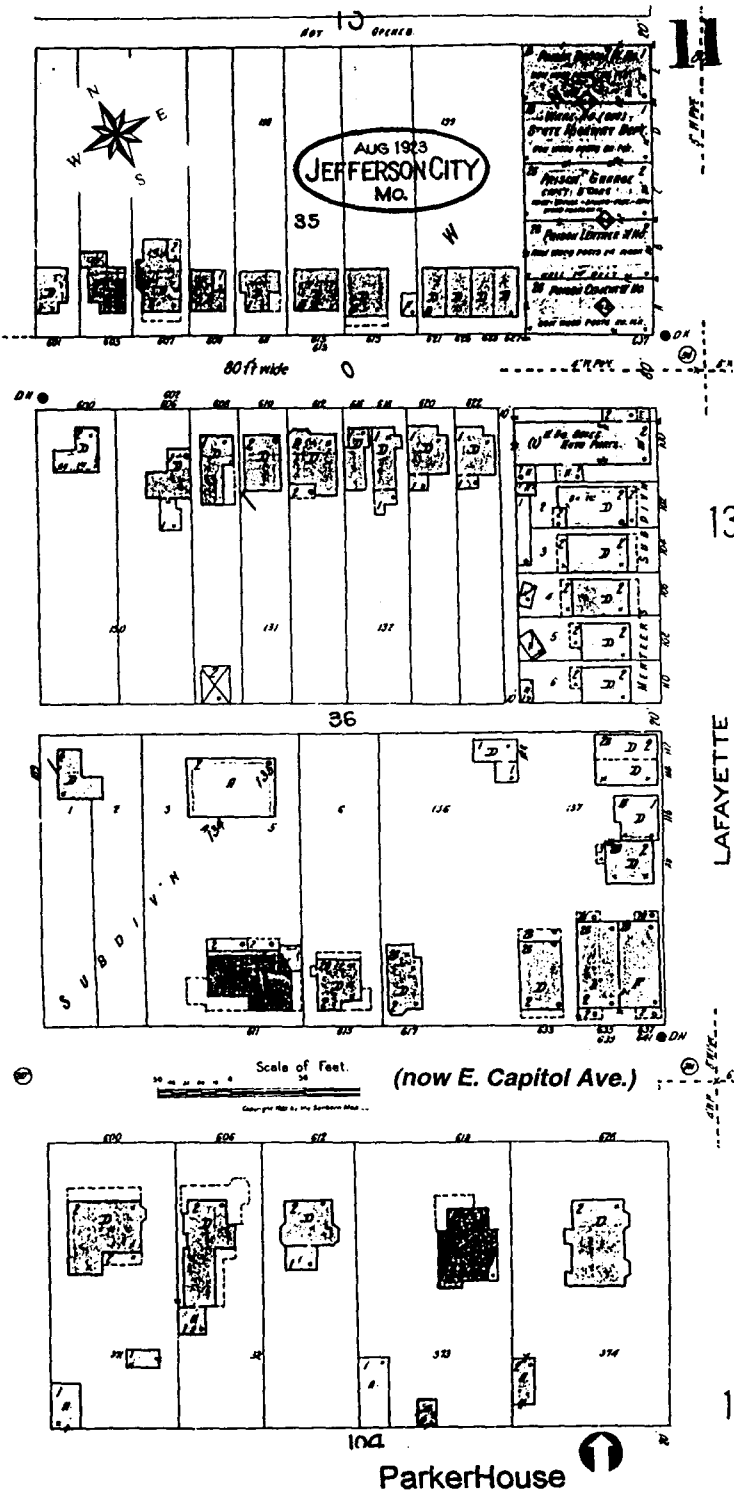
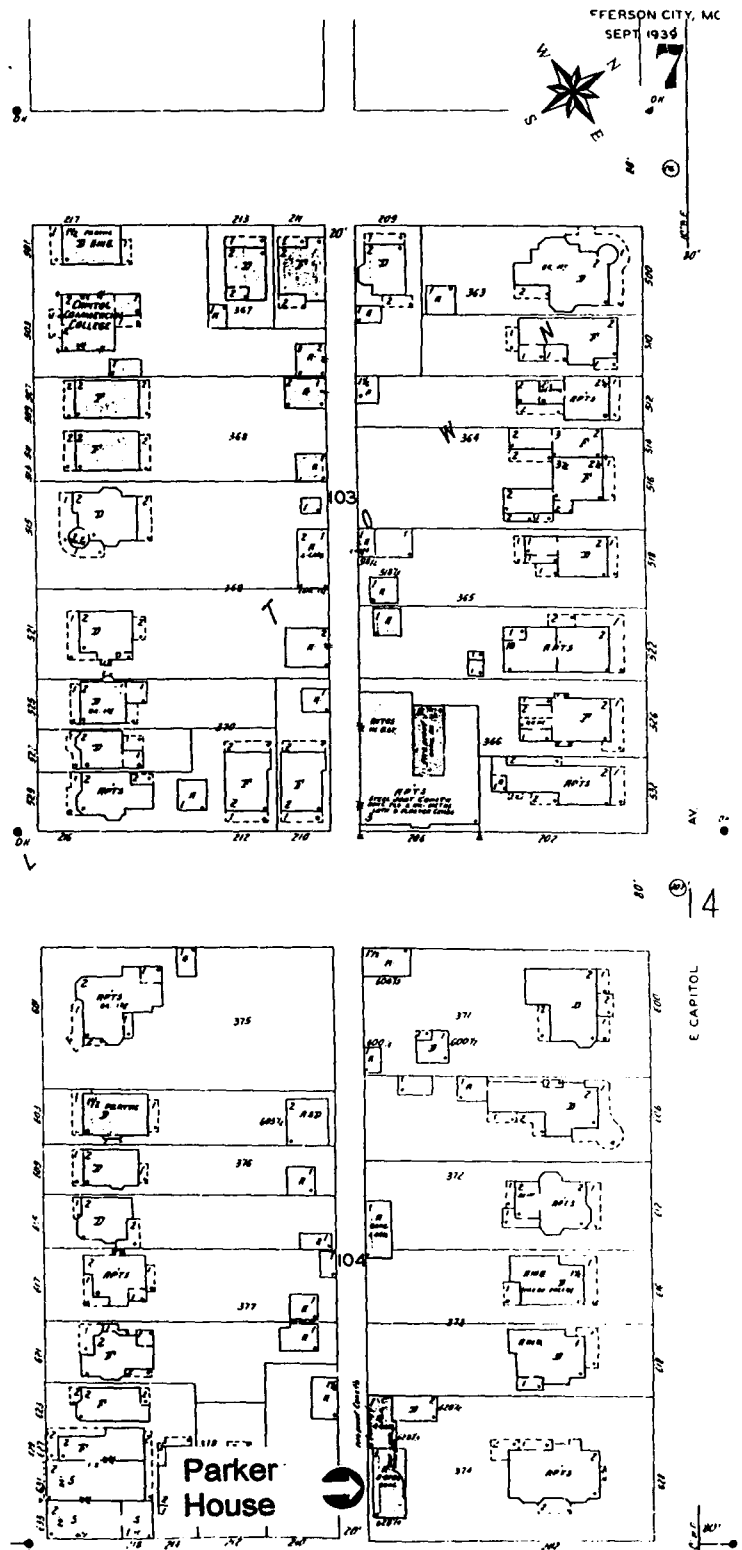


Figure 5: Sanborn Map of 1939



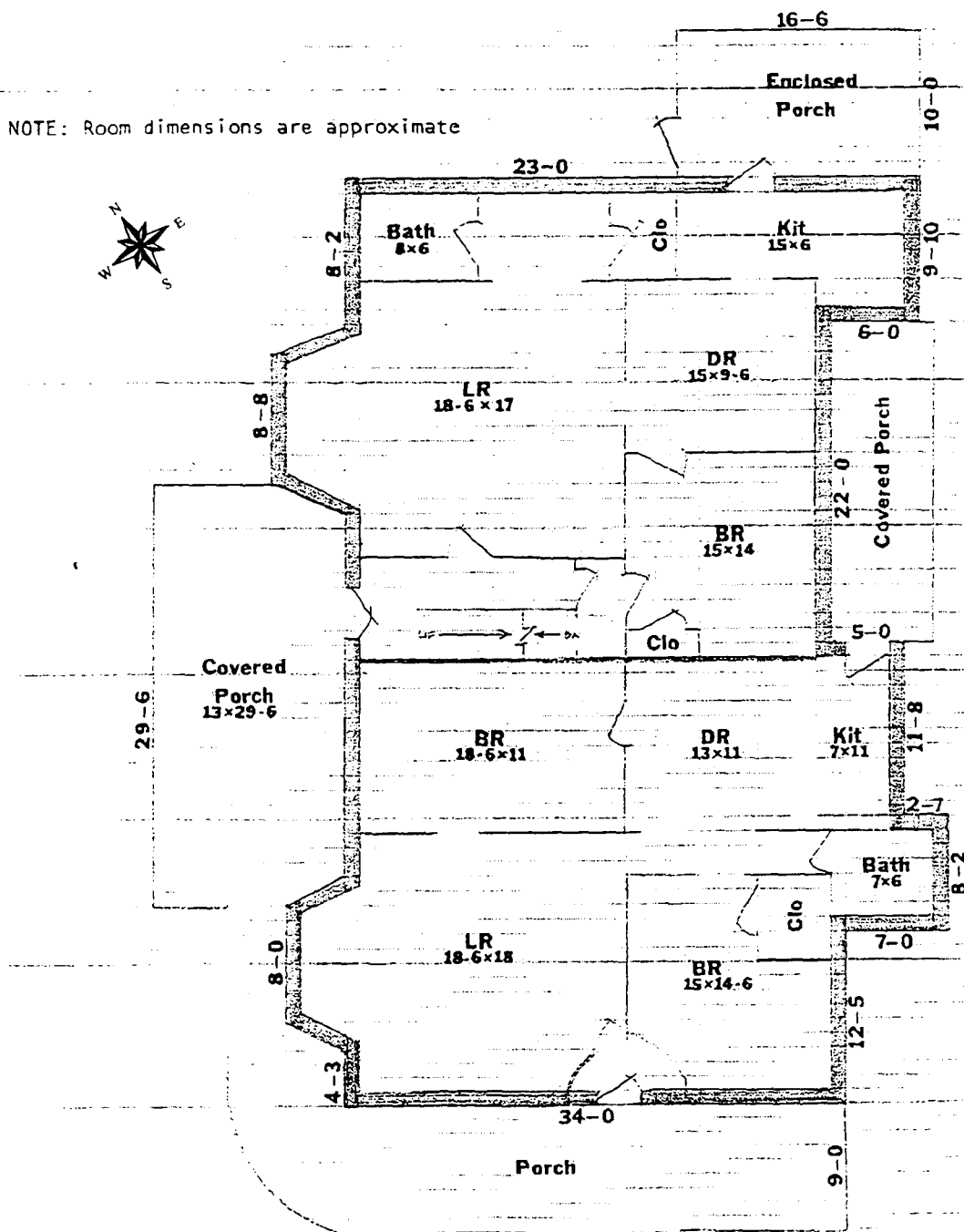
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Parker, Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon House
Cole County, Missouri

Figure 6: Floor Plan, First Floor



FIRST FLOOR LEVEL

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

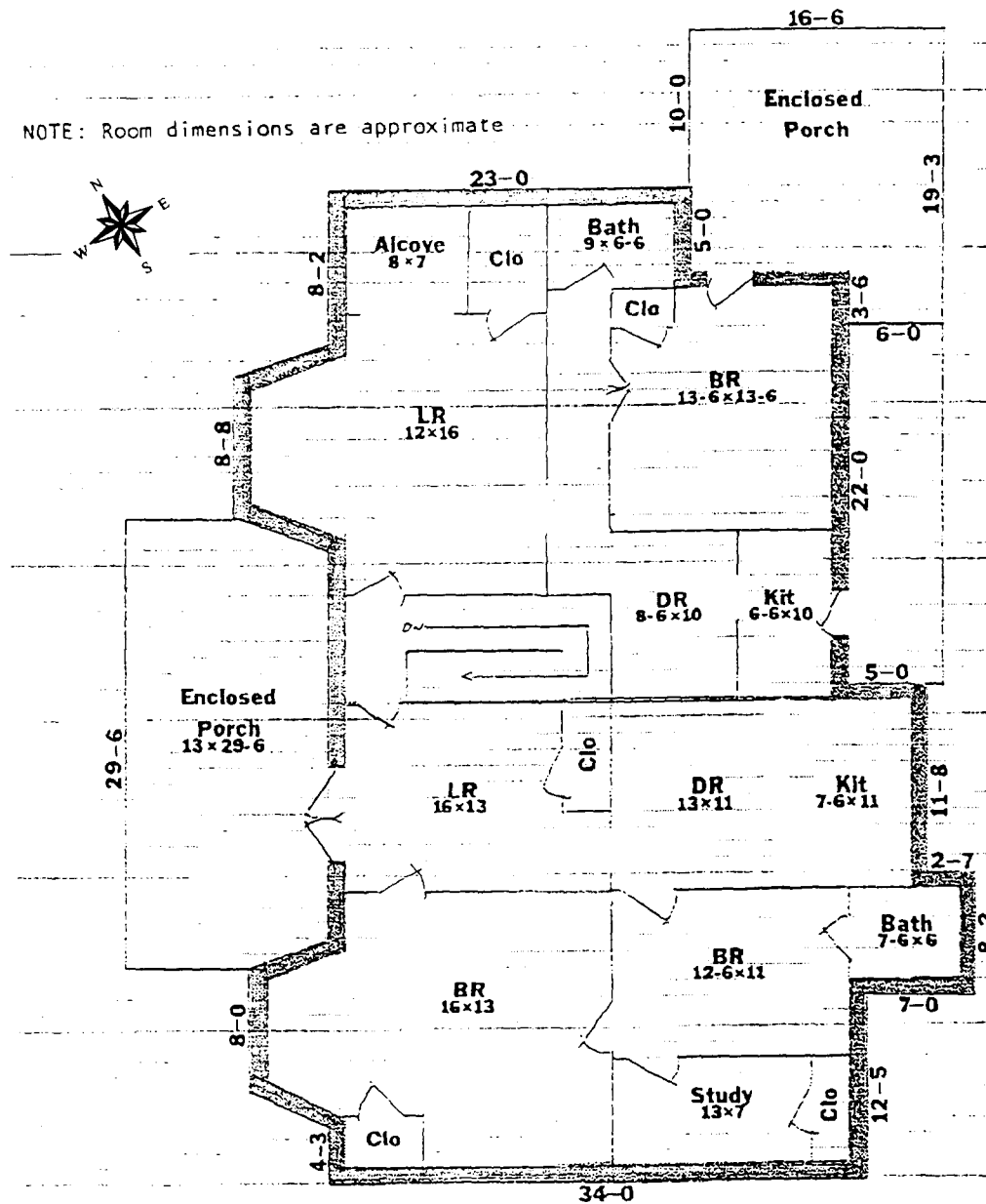
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Figure 7: Floor Plan, Second Floor



SECOND FLOOR LEVEL

SCALE: 1" = 10' +

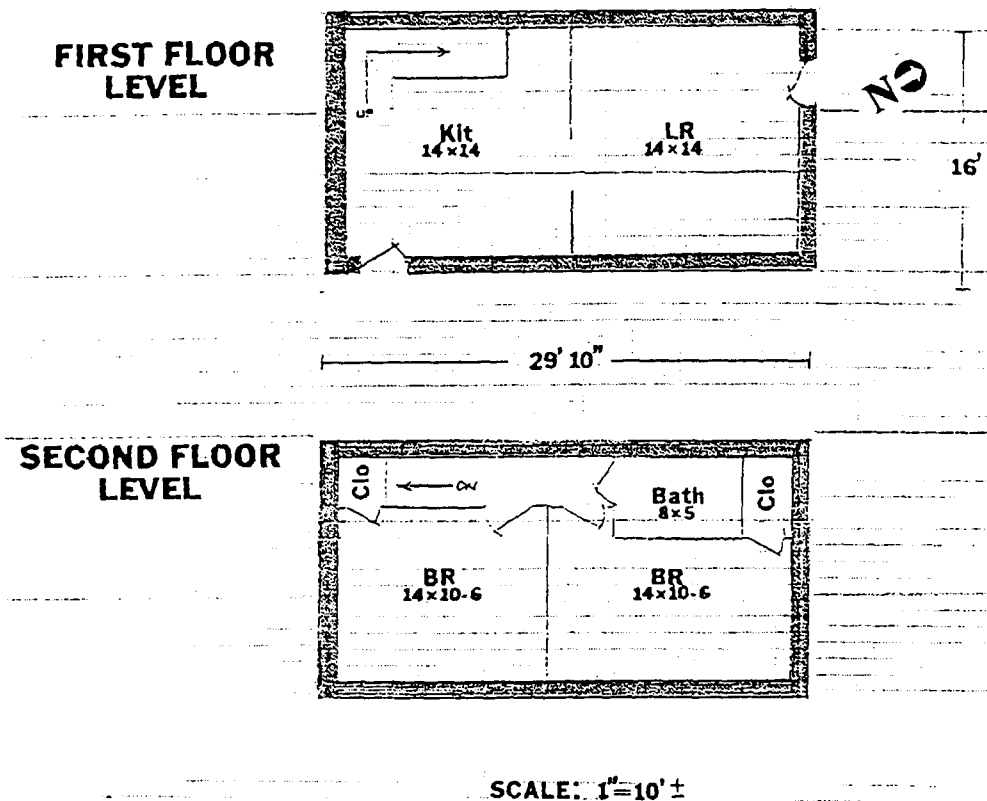
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Figure 8: Floor Plans, Servant's Quarters



NOTE: Room dimensions shown are approximate

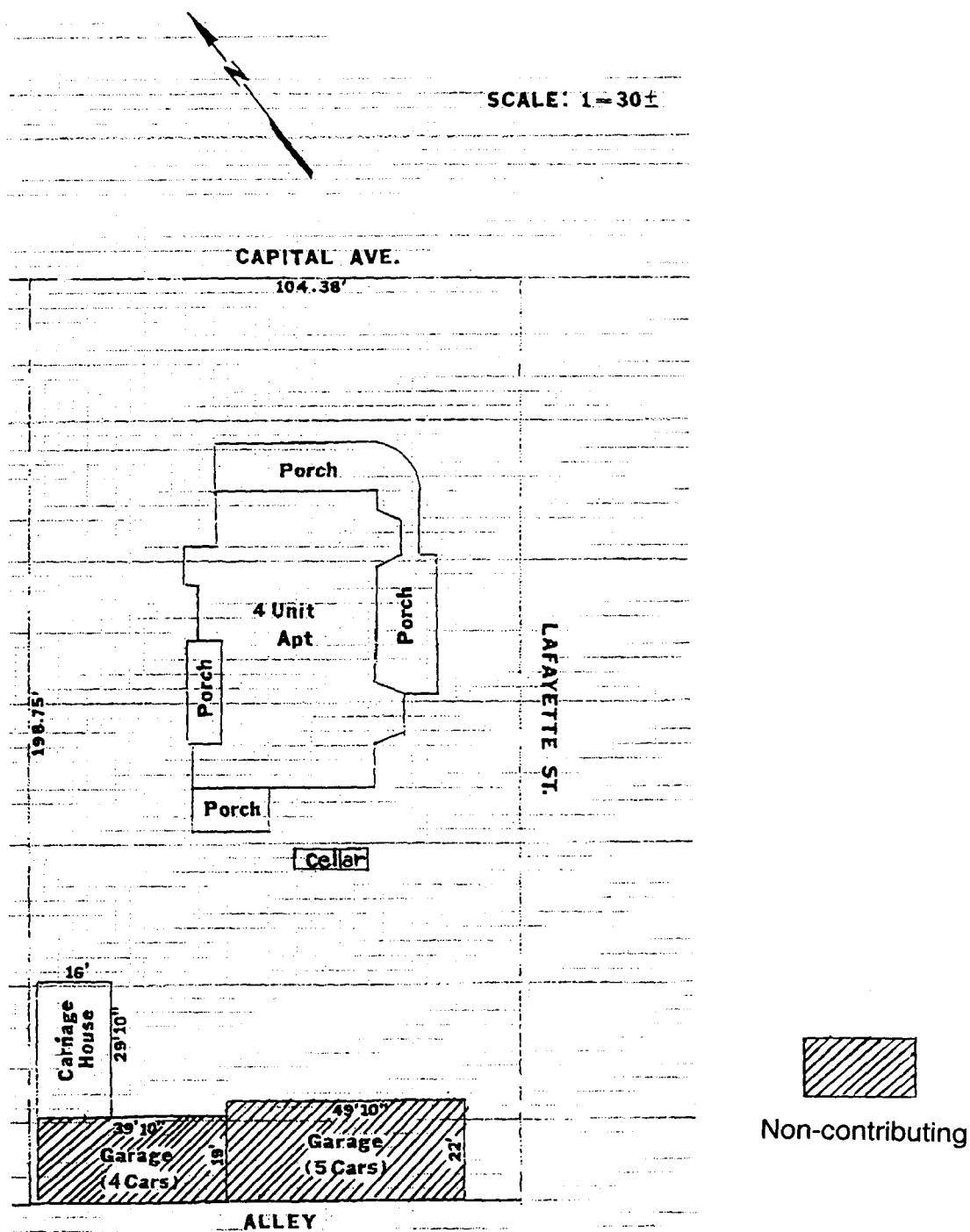
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Figure 9: Site Plan



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Parker, Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon House
Cole County, Missouri

Summary: The Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon Parker House, 624 E. Capitol Avenue, Jefferson City, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria B and C with significance in the areas of Industry and Architecture. Under Criterion B, the Parker House is significant for its association with Lester S. Parker whose business and civic accomplishments during the first three decades of the 20th century included the founding of an early shoe factory in Jefferson City, a gubernatorial appointment as Missouri's first superintendent of state prison industries, and an important role in arranging for the artistic decoration of the State Capitol. Significant under Criterion C as an intact example of the Neo-Classical Revival style, the house was purchased by Parker and his third wife, Missouri "Zue" Gordon Parker, upon its construction in circa 1905. The house's location, diagonally opposite the former Missouri State Penitentiary (today the Jefferson City Correctional Center) and just six blocks from the State Capitol, was physically convenient to both areas where Parker achieved special prominence. By 1900 the L. S. Parker Shoe Company, by manufacturing thousands of pairs of shoes annually on the penitentiary grounds, had become an important component of Jefferson City industry.⁵ When the contract labor system under which the factory operated was abolished several years later, Parker was appointed to head the new state-operated system which involved several factories and a variety of products manufactured by prison labor. Parker's tenure was so successful that in 1919, Governor Frederick D. Gardner refused to accept his resignation.⁶ During the last three years of his life, Parker played a key role in the selection of artwork for the new State Capitol as a member of an advisory committee to the Capitol Decoration Commission.⁷ The Parker House retains the original distinctive elements of its construction including a full-height central portico with Ionic columns and a classical pediment, a central entrance with tracery sidelights and a tall fanlight, and a boxed cornice with a frieze band. The Parker House is the only intact building associated with Lester Parker during his most productive years and the craftsmanship used in its construction remains evident. Also on the property are a small brick building and a root cellar, both contributing, and two old but noncontributing multiple car garages. The period of significance begins with Parker's purchase of the house in 1905 and ends with his death in 1925.

Elaboration: Criterion C - Architecture: The house was constructed in 1905 when Parker purchased it for his third wife, Missouri "Zue" Gordon Parker.⁸ The Parker House retains the distinctive characteristics of its original construction in the eclectic Neo-Classical Revival style. A renewed interest in classical architecture was a byproduct of the World's Columbian Exposition, held in 1893 in Chicago. A classical theme was established for the exhibition, and prominent architects designed colonnaded buildings which faced a central court. These designs were heavily influenced by the Early Classical Revival and Greek Revival styles, and incorporated Georgian and Adam features. Embraced as the latest architectural fashion but never quite as popular as the Colonial Revival style, the Neo-Classical Revival style had two waves of popularity. From

⁵ Illustrated Sketch Book and Directory of Jefferson City and Cole County, 1900, p. 331.

⁶ The Democrat Tribune, Jefferson City, Missouri, October 8, 1919, p. 1.

⁷ "Report of the Capitol Decoration Commission, 1917-1928," prepared by John Picard, Ph.D., D.F.A., President of the Commission.

⁸ The Sanborn Map of 1898 shows a house of completely different shape. Parker's second wife, Sue O'Bannon Parker, died in 1899, according to The Illustrated Sketch Book and Directory of Jefferson City and Cole County, 1900, p. 331. According to deed records, Lester and Missouri "Zue" Gordon Parker purchased the house in 1905, and Hoye's Jefferson City Directory, 1905, lists the couple as residing at 624 E. Main Street. (East Main Street was later renamed East Capitol Avenue.)

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Parker, Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon House
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1900 to 1920, the style emphasized hipped roofs and simple, slender columns. Later, from 1925 to the 1950s, a side-gabled version with slender columns was more typical.⁹

With its hipped roof and other characteristic features, the Parker House best exemplifies Neo-Classical Revival houses built between 1900 to 1920. The symmetrically balanced front facade is dominated by a full-height porch, with the porch roof supported by classical Ionic columns. The house's high quality workmanship and attention to detail are evident in the front portico where although the pilasters are barely visible from the street, their details are carefully crafted to match the columns. The porch has a classic triangular pediment and gabled roof, highlighted by an oval window divided into four lights, with raised surround and four keystones. The central doorway has an elaborate decorative surround, based on Adam style precedents, exhibiting tracery sidelights and a tall fanlight. Directly above, the paired windows feature a curved balconet with delicately turned balusters. First floor windows have tall round-arched, semicircular blind transoms with circle appliques. The Parker House has a boxed eave with moderate overhang, with a wide frieze band below the cornice. Rectangular double-hung windows have single pane upper and lower sashes. Large paired brick bays on the southeast side are another feature associated with the Neo-Classical Revival style.¹⁰

Although converted from a single family dwelling to four apartments by 1939, the Parker House has retained a remarkable number of original features on the interior as well as the exterior. Popular design elements of the period which are extant include a curved, leaded glass door and windows near the front entry, a wide archway leading into the dining room, large bay windows, box-beam ceilings and door hardware with intricate raised designs. Despite alterations, the setting remains remarkably unchanged overall and the Parker House largely reflects its appearance in 1905. The property includes the brick servant's quarters constructed between 1908 and 1923, along with other outbuildings.

Neo-Classical Revival is a relatively uncommon style of architecture in Jefferson City. In the 1991 "Jefferson City Historic East Survey," involving more than 550 properties, the majority of the city's extant historic residential resources were studied. The survey's summary report identifies only two properties as having Neo-Classical Revival characteristics: 505 E. State Street, which has Neo-Classical Revival and Georgian Revival features and 503 E. High Street, an antebellum building with a Neo-Classical portico. Both buildings were determined individually eligible for listing in the National Register.¹¹ Prior to the rise in popularity of the Craftsman style bungalow in the 1920s, German vernacular architecture was the predominant style in Jefferson City. Stylistic interpretations were rare on these simple brick buildings which were not intended for the conspicuous exhibition of a family's wealth and prestige. Thus when Parker, a successful businessman, chose the fashionable and eye-catching Neo-Classical Revival style for his new home, it was a major departure from the simple German vernacular architecture that preceded it in Jefferson City.

The Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon Parker House is eligible for listing in the National Register of

⁹ McAlester, pp. 344-345.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Urbana Group, "Jefferson City Historic East Survey." Summary Report.

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Historic Places under Criterion C, Architecture, as it retains the original and distinctive Neo-Classical Revival characteristics from its period of construction.

Criterion B – Association with Life of a Significant Person: It was through shoe manufacturing that Lester Shepard Parker earned the wealth that enabled his fine residence to be constructed. Parker's father worked for a shoe manufacturer in Chicago when Lester was young. Unfortunately for the Parkers, according to a biographical sketch in The Illustrated Sketch Book and Directory of Jefferson City and Cole County, 1900, they lived next door to Mrs. O'Leary, and their house was the first one consumed by Chicago's great fire of 1871. After graduation from college in 1879, Parker moved to Kansas where he practiced law, taught school and farmed, raising sheep and cattle. In 1894 he moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, becoming foreman of the Kellogg & Johnson shoe factory. One year later in Chicago he became associated with C. M. Henderson & Co., organizing the Jefferson Shoe Company for the manufacture of shoes in Jefferson City, Missouri. Parker moved to Jefferson City in 1895, where he was superintendent and general manager of the Jefferson Shoe Company. Just before Henderson's death in 1895, Parker disposed of his interest in that firm and organized the L. S. Parker Shoe Co., which brought him to the forefront of local shoe manufacturing.¹²

The incentive for manufacturers such as Parker to relocate in Jefferson City was the potential profits from using the Missouri State Penitentiary buildings, grounds, and inmates. A combination of cheap labor, low taxes and rental rates, and competitive freight rates added up to an attractive package and a highly successful operation. From the state's perspective, this use of the penitentiary was primarily a means of making it a more self-supporting institution. A look at previous attempts to utilize inmates as a cheap labor source will help explain how the new system came about.

The State of Missouri had since 1839 been concerned with the cost of maintaining the penitentiary. Between 1839 and 1853, various attempts were made to lease the penitentiary and absolve the state from all costs of its operation. The lessee would, in exchange for use of the prison grounds, buildings and inmates, be responsible for all prison operations, including food, clothing and shelter for the inmates. In the early years, the lessees frequently worked inmates outside the prison walls, advertising that prison labor was available for such things as construction projects, landscaping and groundskeeping, blacksmithing and house and sign painting. Lax supervision, however, led to frequent escapes. Townspeople were distressed not only by the number of prisoners working among them and fleeing through town, but that inmates working for such low wages were taking jobs from local workers. Gross abuses of prison labor and supplies after 1853, while under state management, prompted a return to the lease system from 1873 to 1875. By the late 1870s, Missouri was prepared to try a different approach to making the penitentiary self-supporting. Governor John S. Phelps' 1879 address to the General Assembly recounted the problems and failures of the lease system, and remarked on attempts to operate the prison as a manufacturing facility run by the prison warden. The governor's recommendation was a middle approach in which the facility would not be leased, but neither would prison officers serve as business managers for manufacturing. Instead, expansion of private industry within the prison was favored and the governor's recommendation was carried out. Under this arrangement, the state constructed factory buildings and then negotiated with manufacturers for multi-year contracts specifying terms

¹² The Illustrated Sketch Book and Directory of Jefferson City and Cole County, 1900, p. 331.

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for the use of prison labor. In 1873, shoe manufacturer George Corning testified to the new system's success. His operation employed 70 inmates at a cost of 40 cents each per day, he said, from which he generated an annual profit of \$5,000. He said the prospects of earning such a substantial profit were what convinced him to relocate from St. Louis to Jefferson City.¹³

The 1898 Sanborn Map indicates that the following private manufacturers were operating within the prison walls at that time: Jacob Strauss Saddlery Co., J. S. Sullivan Saddletree Factory and Lumber Yards, Hoskins-Ross Manufacturing (broom factory), Giesecke Boot & Shoe Manufacturing Co., A. Priesmeyer Shoe Company, Vaughn Monning Shoe Cutters, and L. S. Parker Shoe Co. The L. S. Parker Shoe Co. is shown on the 1898 map in a large building. (See Figure 12) By 1900, the L. S. Parker Shoe Co. employed 230 people, and had a backlog of orders for 65,000 pairs of shoes.¹⁴ In 1904, four shoe manufacturers remained in operation at the prison: Bruns Manufacturing Company, Giesecke-D'Oench-Hays Shoe Company, L. S. Parker Shoe Company, and A. Priesmeyer Shoe Company.¹⁵ By 1908 the L. S. Parker Shoe Co. had expanded, using the same building as in 1898 plus the building formerly used by the Jefferson Shoe Company and a nearby former warehouse. (See Figure 13)

The practice of contracting for prison labor was discontinued in 1915, apparently because wages had become more reasonable (higher) and an inmate's work day could no longer exceed eight hours. In 1913, the warden was authorized to contract for the labor of able-bodied male prisoners at a rate of not less than 75-cents per day per prisoner, nearly double the rate that George Corning and other early manufacturers paid.¹⁶ Even without cheap prison labor, however, shoe manufacturing remained an important factor in the Jefferson City economy. In 1936 it was reported that 1,131 people representing 24 per cent of the total labor force was employed in the manufacture of leather goods.¹⁷

The next available Sanborn Map, in 1923, was made after the state took over the prison industries in 1915, but the former L. S. Parker Shoe Co. buildings remained in place. (See Figure 14) By 1939, the building initially occupied by the L. S. Parker Shoe Co. and the warehouse the company occupied near the upper yard had been removed. (See Figure 15) The remaining building used by the L. S. Parker Shoe Co. was burned during the prison riot of 1954. (See Figure 16) This building was rebuilt using the original foundation and walls. Used for a time to house prisoners and known as "M" Hall, this building now serves as a prison maintenance facility. (See Figure 17) The Department of Corrections identifies this building as having been built in 1956, the date of reconstruction. This is the only extant Parker-associated building on the prison grounds but since it burned and was rebuilt, it lacks integrity and the connection with Parker is not significant.

It was while Lester Parker lived in the house at 624 E. Capitol Avenue that many, if not most, of his contributions to the community were made. By 1913, some 18 years after its establishment in 1895, Parker apparently had sold his shoe company and "retired." The 1913 city directory lists an H. M. Chandler as

¹³ Kremer and Gage, pp. 417-427.

¹⁴ The Illustrated Sketch Book and Directory of Jefferson City and Cole County, 1900, p. 331.

¹⁵ Urbana Group, pp. 12-14.

¹⁶ Laws of Missouri, 1913. January, 1913, pp. 147-148.

¹⁷ Progressive Jefferson City, 1936, p. 25.

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president of the L. S. Parker Shoe Co., and in 1915 an F. M. Chandler is listed as president of the company.¹⁸ Parker got out of the business just two years before the state terminated the practice of contract labor and assumed control of managing the facilities, in 1915.¹⁹

Once the state took control of the industries operating on the prison grounds, a capable administrator was needed. Governor Frederick D. Gardner appointed Parker as the first superintendent of industries at the penitentiary in 1915. This post was considered sufficiently important that it paid an annual salary of \$5,000, \$2,000 a year more than other state officers and the same salary as the governor.²⁰ [For comparison purposes, in 1917 a prison guard earned \$1,200 per year.²¹] Among other things, the superintendent was responsible for the overall operation of the prison factories. Responsibilities included the purchase of materials for manufacturing and the distribution of manufactured goods.²² During Parker's term as superintendent of industries, a new statute authorized payments to prisoners doing acceptable work equaling five per cent of their daily earnings, or five per cent of what they would have earned if working under contract to private business.²³ During Parker's tenure as superintendent, more than 1,500 prisoners were engaged in the manufacture of various goods. At the beginning of October 1919, the institution reported a cash balance of \$61,000. In the same month, Parker announced that "having established the prison industries on a footing where they are a profit to the State," he wished to retire.²⁴ According to Parker's friend Hugh Stephens:

His master stroke was the organization of the intricate system of industries within the state prison. Here he turned a liability into an asset and performed a great service to his state. Ex-Gov. Gardner recently stated in a public address that Lester Parker contributed more to the success of his administration than any other man.²⁵

Prior to 1900, leasing of the penitentiary and the inmates in order to make the prison more self-sustaining were less than successful, for various reasons. Under Lester Parker's leadership, however, it appears that this goal was finally achieved. The system of prison industries over which Parker originally presided continues to operate to this day, making all of the license plates and renewal stickers for Missouri automobiles, furniture, uniforms, and other staples for purchase by state agencies. Thus Parker's contribution as first superintendent of the state prison industries established a path that has been followed for almost 80 years. The house at 624 E. Capitol Avenue, where Parker lived from 1905 to 1925, is the largest and most tangible reminder of his contributions. As no other intact buildings exist which have a strong connection to Parker, this building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B.

¹⁸ Jefferson City and Cole County Directory, 1913; Polk's Directory, 1915.

¹⁹ Laws of Missouri, 1915, January 6, 1915, p. 220, Sec. 4. "Appointment of superintendent of industries - duties of - salary."

²⁰ The Daily Post, Jefferson City, MO, "L.S. Parker Quits Prison Job," October 8, 1919, p. 1.

²¹ Laws of Missouri, 1917, January 1917, p. 173.

²² Laws of Missouri, 1915, p. 220.

²³ Laws of Missouri, 1917, p. 157.

²⁴ The Daily Post, October 8, 1919, p. 1.

²⁵ The Sunday News and Tribune, Jefferson City, MO, January 24, 1954.

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Additional Information on Lester S. Parker

Parker served in other capacities, to the benefit of both Jefferson City and Missouri. Residents of the community and visitors to the Capitol probably would have difficulty imagining it today without the extensive artwork for which it is so well known. But without Lester Parker's contribution, the artwork undoubtedly would have been different and perhaps there would have been less of it to appreciate. After the Capitol was destroyed by fire in 1911, a massive rebuilding effort was launched. To supervise decoration of the new Capitol in 1917, Governor Gardner appointed a five member Capitol Decoration Commission. In 1922, an advisory committee was formed to work with the Capitol Decoration Commission. The advisors included Governor A. M. Hyde, Lieutenant-Governor Hiram Lloyd, Senator William Irwin, Hugh Stephens and Lester S. Parker. Parker was included on the committee due to his interest in and appreciation of the arts, his interest in the Capitol, and his reputation as a local artist. A report prepared by John Picard, Ph.D., D.F.A., President of the Capitol Decoration Commission in 1928 characterized Parker's service to the Commission and State as "invaluable."²⁶

Advisor Hugh Stephens was particularly complimentary. In a eulogy to Parker, Stephens stated:

To him is due the credit for having rescued from defeat the movement to decorate the state capitol when that work had just started and was about to be given up. Single-handed he began a thorough study of the great purpose and aim of its decorations, and as a result we have in this city a building on which there has been expended for art nearly a million dollars, making it perhaps the greatest public building in that respect, within the bounds of the United States, except the Library of Congress. He was the first to deliver lectures on the subject here and elsewhere. He wrote a book describing the works of art, which book he published at his own expense. This community will never cease to draw dividends from the thousands of visitors who will come here as a result of the interest which he created.²⁷

In 1924, a year before his death, Parker published a book describing the building's artwork: State capitol of Missouri, with a description of its construction, museum, art features, mural paintings, sculptures, art windows and decorations.²⁸ Upon Parker's death, one headline was "WELL KNOWN CITIZEN WAS RECOVERING FROM OPERATION AT MAYO BROS.; Death Was Due To Blood Clot On Heart - End Came Peacefully and Unexpectedly; WIDELY KNOWN CRITIC AND ART AUTHORITY; Remains Will Arrive In Jefferson City At 3 o'Clock Monday Morning." The accompanying article describes Parker's connection with the Capitol: "In his connection with the Capitol Decorating Commission Mr. Parker became known to a large number of Missourians who were privileged to listen to his explanation of the paintings and decoration in the State Capitol."²⁹ While Lester Parker was long remembered for his role in decoration of the Capitol, his

²⁶ John Pickard, Ph.D., D.F.A., President of Capitol Decoration Commission, "Report of the Capitol Decoration Commission, 1917-1928," Jefferson City, MO., 1928.

²⁷ The Sunday News and Tribune, January 24, 1954.

²⁸ Library of Congress web page, Lester Shepard Parker, State capitol of Missouri, with a description of its construction, museum, art features, mural paintings, sculptures, art windows and decorations.

²⁹ The Daily Post, July 25, 1925, p. 1.

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residence remains the building most connected with his life.

An avocational artist, Parker enjoyed painting scenes from his travels abroad in both oils and watercolors. He gave 100 pieces of his art collection to the First Baptist Church,³⁰ and one of his personal works remains on display there today. Parker's son, Lester S. Parker Jr., recently donated two of his father's works to the Cole County Historical Society, where they may be viewed in the museum and in the society's office. Several of Parker's works are also displayed in local homes. Parker also wrote and published poems and songs, such as "Come Back My Honey to Missouri," touted by some as a possible candidate for state song.³¹ He published a book of poems, titled Nancy MacIntyre, a tale of the prairies, in 1912.³² The 1900 Sketch Book states that Parker's musical compositions were being printed by the Tribune Publishing Company of Jefferson City at the time of the Sketch Book's publication. Song titles included "Rag Time Rastus, the Whistler," "The Pickaninny's Lullaby" and Parker's most popular song, "People Will Talk." Two stanzas of this song are published in the Sketch Book.³³ To celebrate the successful end of fund-raising for the new First Baptist Church in 1925, Parker wrote six "victory campaign hymns" to the tunes of popular church hymns, which were published in the program folder for Victory Sunday, July 26, 1925.³⁴

Parker was a strong supporter of the First Baptist Church, located on Capitol Avenue just three blocks from his home. He served as trustee, superintendent and teacher of the Sunday school, and a member of the church choir. Parker served on the board administrating Baptist state missions and Sunday schools, and served two terms as vice-president of the State B.Y.P.U.³⁵ A portrait of Lester Shepard Parker and one of his own paintings are displayed in the church as reminders of his talent and dedication. The portrait was painted by Ralph Chesley Ott of St. Louis, who also had been engaged by the Capitol Decoration Committee to paint portraits of several Missouri governors. In 1926 Parker's portrait, an oil painting, was presented to the church to be hung over the fireplace in the Lester Parker Memorial Room which was redecorated by the Parker family following his death.³⁶ The circa 1920s church, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was demolished in the early 1980s to clear the site for a new sanctuary. This new building burned but was quickly replaced by the congregation, so the building standing today is the third sanctuary constructed since the death of Lester Parker. The portrait of Parker and his paintings escaped the fire because at some point they had been placed in storage, apparently under the supervision of Parker's friend Hugh Stephens. The disposition of the other paintings upon Stephens' death is undetermined.³⁷

³⁰ Mary Tudor Walsh, Chrm., Church History Committee, A History of First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, Missouri, pp. 67-68.

³¹ The Sunday News and Tribune, January 24, 1954; Missouri Historical Review, undated copy, article contributed by N.T. Gentry, Attorney General of Missouri, pp. 245-246, Cole County Historical Society.

³² Library of Congress web page; Walsh, p. 68.

³³ The Illustrated Sketch Book and Directory of Jefferson City and Cole County, 1900, p. 432.

³⁴ Walsh, p. 68.

³⁵ The Illustrated Sketch Book and Directory of Jefferson City and Cole County, 1900, p. 117.

³⁶ The Daily Post, December 24, 1926, p. 4.

³⁷ Interview with Rev. Nelson, December 21, 1999. Descendants of Hugh Stephens live in the Hermann, Missouri, area and operate a business in Washington, Missouri.

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In addition to the shoe factory, Parker had various other business interests including mining near Joplin, Missouri, a summer resort in South Haven, Michigan,³⁸ and growing cotton in the Missouri bootheel.³⁹ He was president of the Economy Stay Company and the Capitol Telephone Company.⁴⁰ Although Parker died before Capitol moved into its new building at 319 Madison Street in 1930, his investment in the company helped keep it afloat. According to one writer, Parker's acquisition of all minority shares of the Capitol Telephone Company was instrumental in the struggling firm's efforts to successfully compete against two rival telephone companies.⁴¹

Parker was well respected and successful, but he and his family seem to have had an abundance of misfortune. As a youth, the Parker family lived in Chicago next door to Mrs. O'Leary and her now famous cow and suffered the consequences, losing their home in the ensuing blaze. His first two wives died after only a few years of marriage. In 1882 he married Katie Lockard, mother of his daughter Gracie and son Dan.⁴² Katie died in November 1890 and another son, Clyde, died at the age of three.⁴³ In May 1895 Parker married M. Sue O'Bannon, daughter of a former state legislator from Cass County. Sue had two children, Alice and Lester Parker Jr. before she died in September 1899.⁴⁴ Parker married a third time in 1901. His third wife, with whom he shared the Parker House at 624 E. Capitol Avenue, was Missouri Gordon Parker, nicknamed "Zue."⁴⁵

Lester Parker was active until his death in 1925 following surgery at Mayo Brothers Hospital.⁴⁶ Tragedy followed his wife Zue and daughter Rachel as well. Educated at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri and at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, she became vice-president of the telephone company her husband had worked to establish. But in 1931, Zue and her only daughter, Rachel, were killed in a car crash near Independence.⁴⁷

³⁸ The Illustrated Sketch Book, op cit.

³⁹ The Daily Post, January 24, 1954.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Undated and unattributed presentation, Cole County Historical Society.

⁴² The Illustrated Sketch Book, op cit., p. 331.

⁴³ Jane Randolph Jefferson Chapter, NSDAR, Cemetery Record of Woodlawn Cemetery and (Old) City Cemetery. Jefferson City, Missouri. 1976.

⁴⁴ The Illustrated Sketch Book, op cit.

⁴⁵ Missouri State Tribune, November 12, 1901.

⁴⁶ The Daily Post, July 25, 1925, p. 1.

⁴⁷ Undated presentation.

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Figure 10: Portrait of Lester Parker

Source: The Illustrated Sketch Book and Directory of Jefferson City and Cole County, 1900, p. 331.



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Parker, Lester S. and Missouri "Zue" Gordon House
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Figure 11: Advertisement

Source: The Illustrated Sketch Book and Directory of Jefferson City and Cole County, 1900, p. 52.

L. S. PARKER, President and Treasurer.	F. N. CHANDLER, Vice-Pres. and Gen'l Mgr.	GEORGE ELSTON, Secretary.
---	--	------------------------------

The L. S. Parker Shoe Company,
OF JEFFERSON CITY, MO.
MANUFACTURERS OF
Medium Grade Men's, Boys' and Youths' Shoes
EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE JOBBING TRADE.

Our Shoes are Sold by the leading Jobbers West of the Alleghany Mountains.

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Figure 12: Sanborn Map of 1898
L.S. Parker Shoe Co.
Missouri State Penitentiary

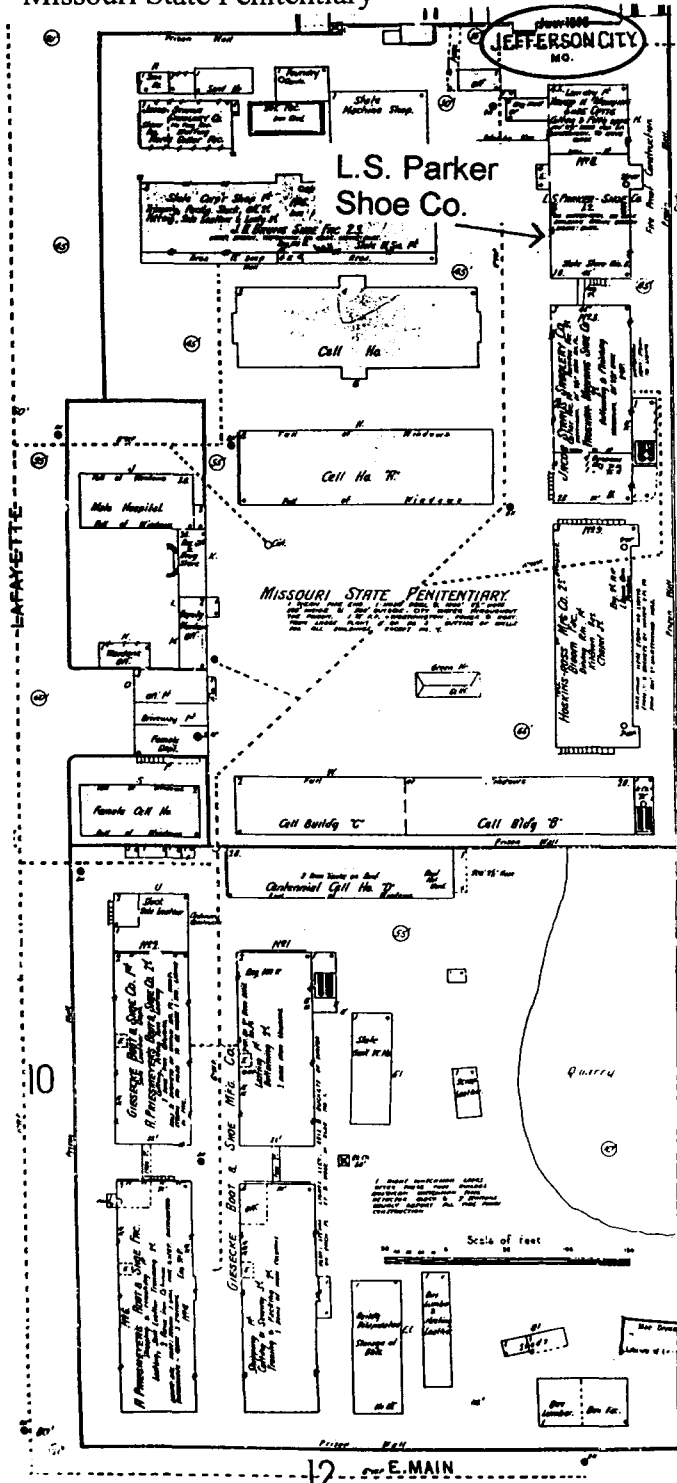
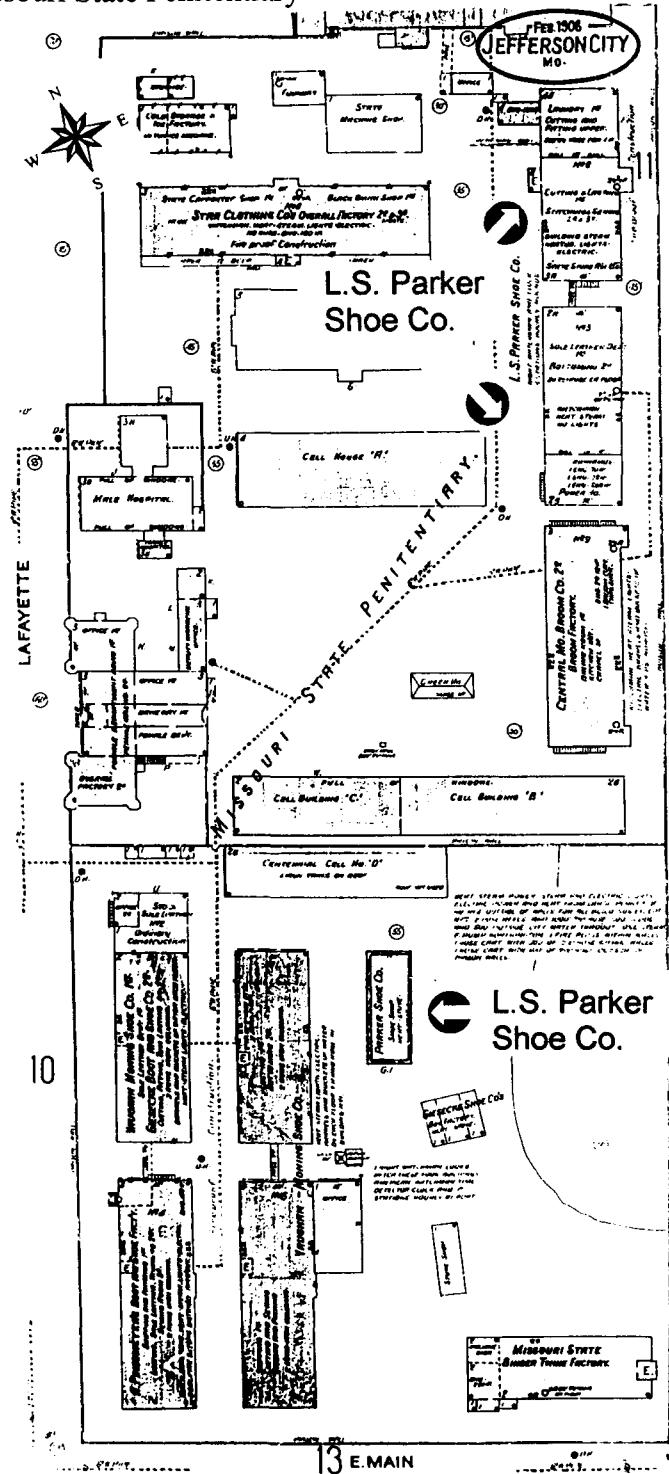


Figure 13: Sanborn Map of 1908
L.S. Parker Shoe Co.
Missouri State Penitentiary



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Figure 14: Sanborn Map of 1923
Missouri State Penitentiary
State Operated Industries

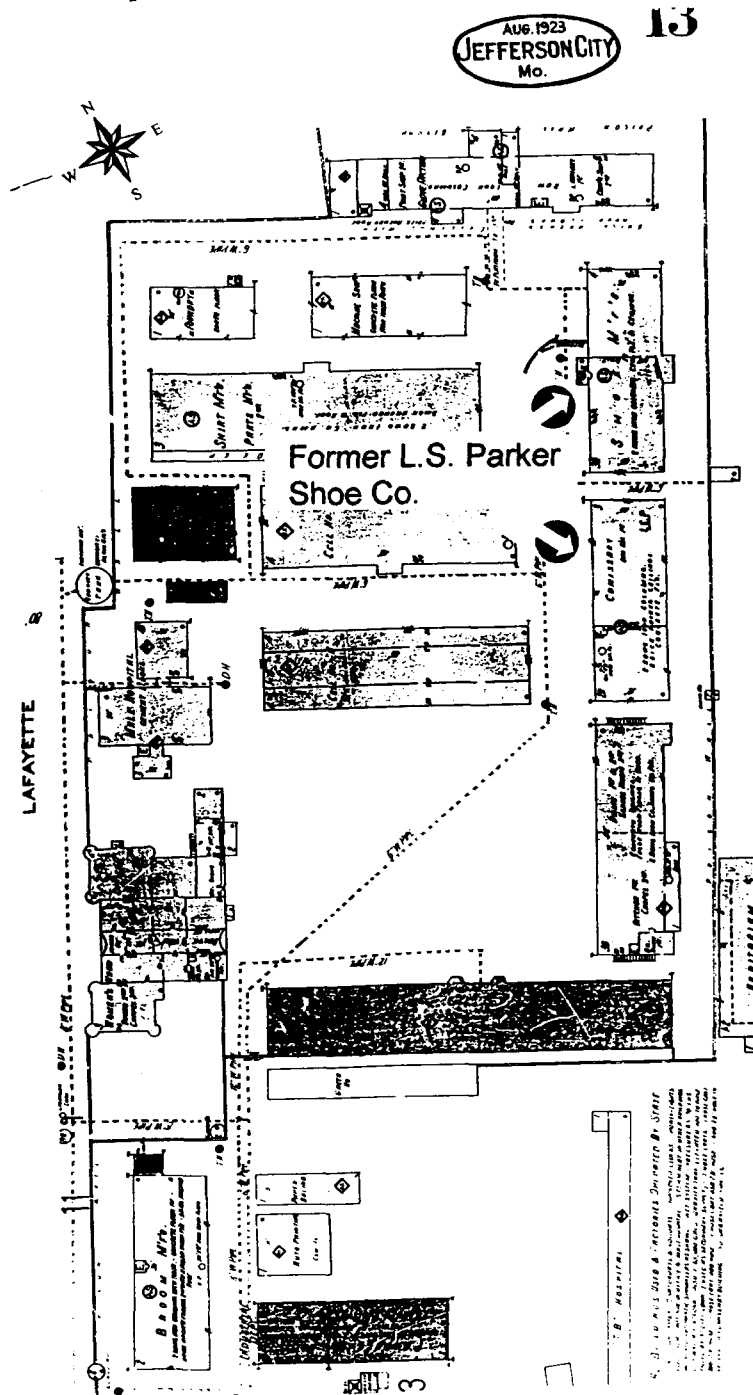
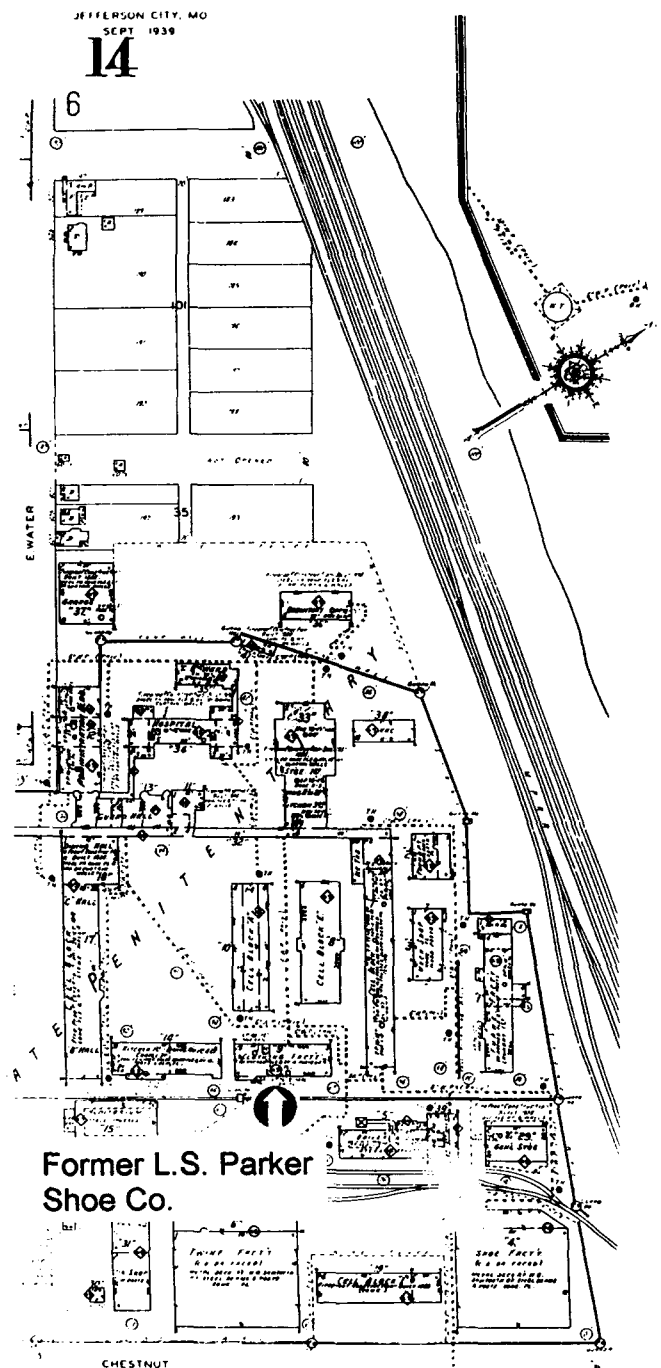


Figure 15: Sanborn Map of 1939
Missouri State Penitentiary
State Operated Industries



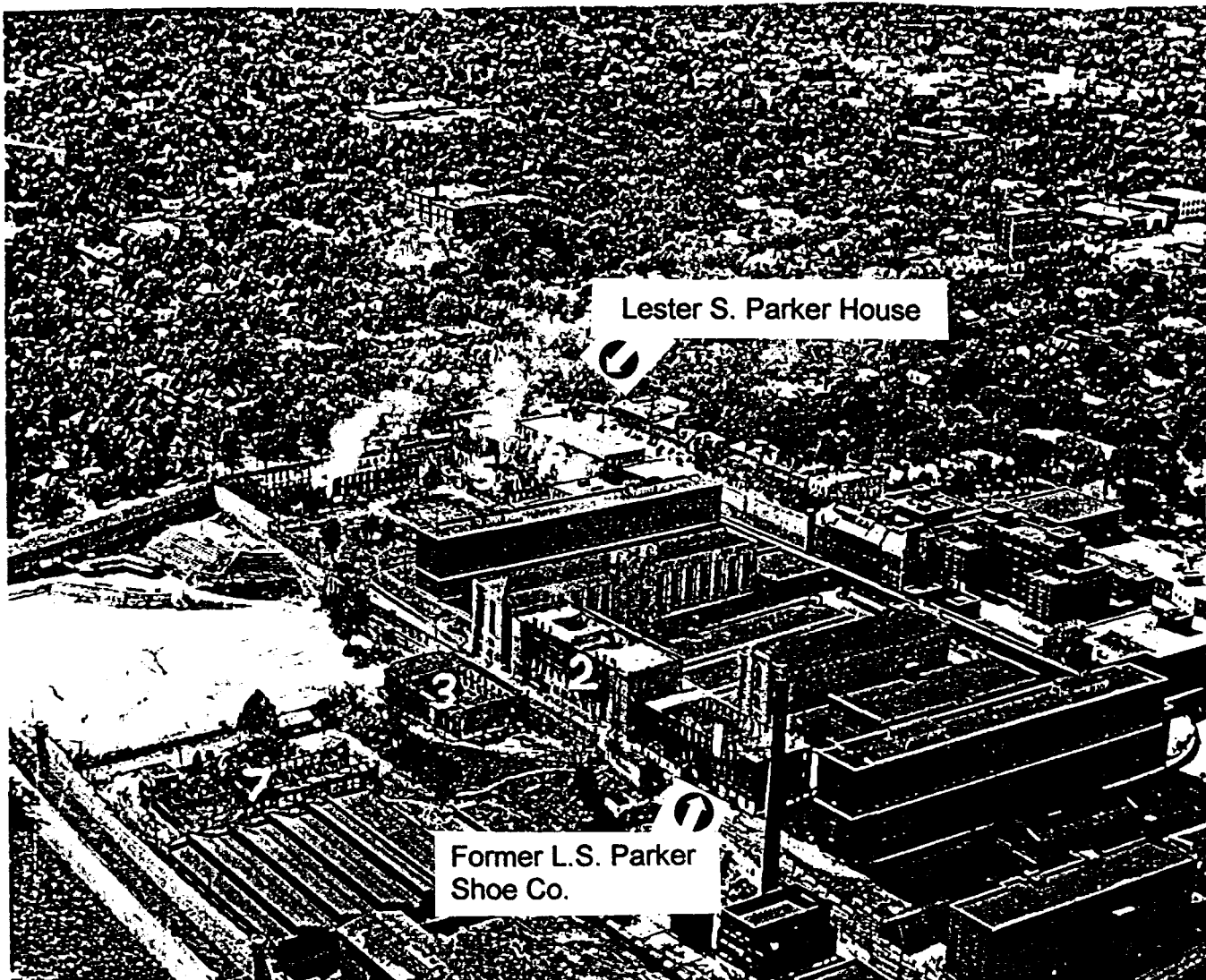
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Figure 16: Photograph of Riot Damage to Prison - 1954



AERIAL VIEW SHOWS FIRE DAMAGE
(Ruined Industrial Area)

1. M-HALL . . . This was a regular hall which housed men.

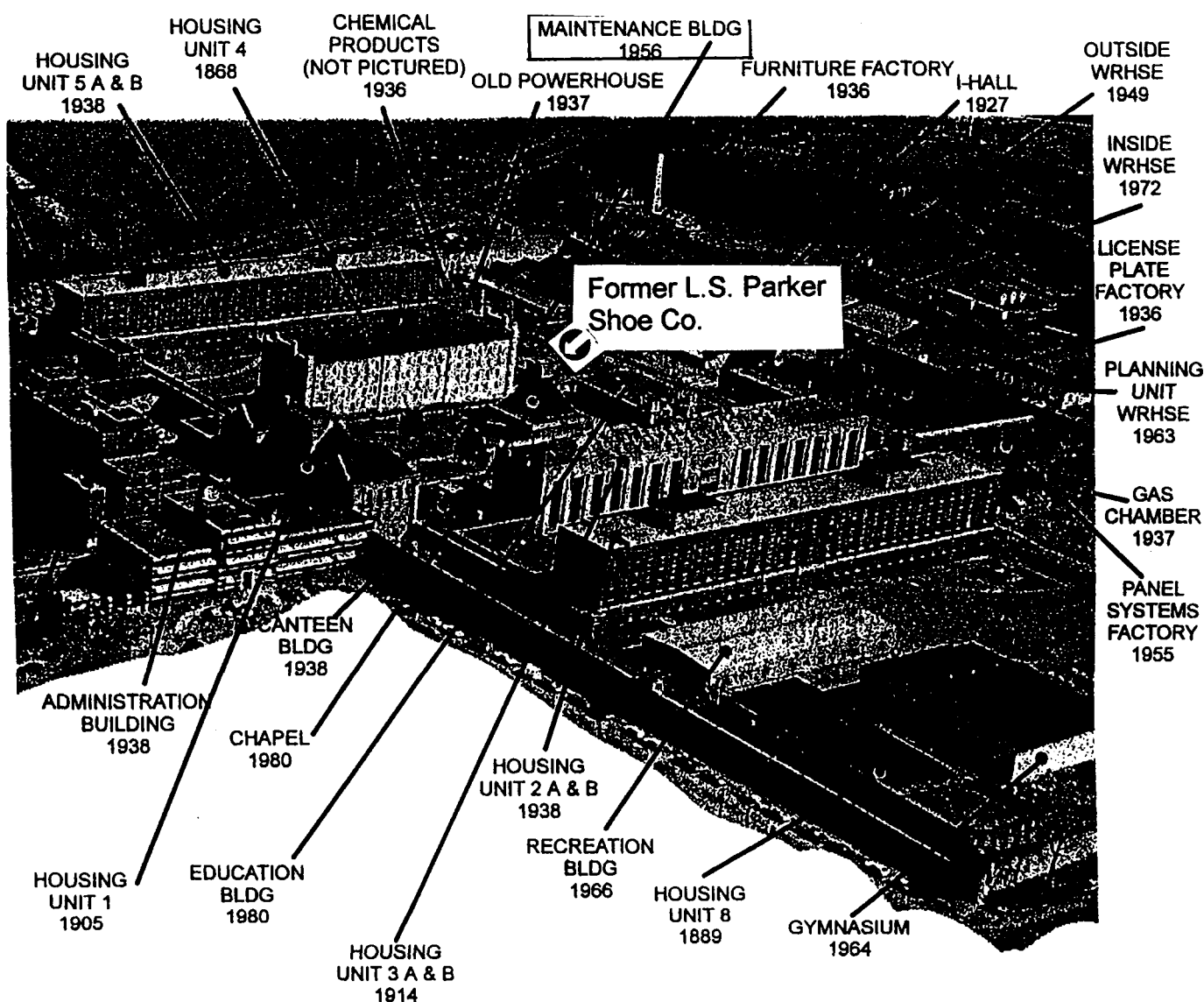
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Figure 17: Aerial View of Prison
Missouri Department of Corrections - Recent Photograph



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Figure 18: Portrait of Lester S. Parker
Currently displayed in the First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, MO



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NPS Form 10-900-a

(8-86)

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The Sunday News and Tribune (Jefferson City), January 1954.

Undated, unattributed presentation on Lester S. Parker. Cole County Historical Society.

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10. Geographical Data**Verbal Boundary Description**

All of Inlot No. 374 in the City of Jefferson, Missouri, more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the northeasterly corner of said Inlot No. 374, thence southerly with the easterly line thereof 198 feet 9 inches, thence westerly parallel with the northerly line of said Inlot 104 feet 4-1/2 inches to the westerly line, thence northerly along said westerly line 198 feet 9 inches to the northwesterly corner of said Inlot, thence easterly along the northerly line thereof 104 feet 4-1/2 inches to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

This lot encompasses all of the buildings which have been associated with 624 East Capitol Avenue, and the only intact buildings remaining which retain a strong connection with Lester Shepard Parker during his most productive period.

NPS Form 10-900-a

(8-86)

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Cole County, Missouri**11. Form Prepared By**

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Telephone: (573) 522-4641
Editor and revisions

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Parker, Lester S., House

624 East Capitol Avenue, Jefferson City

Cole County, Missouri

Photographer: Jane Beetem

November 1999

Negative location: Jane Beetem, 1612 Payne Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65101

List of Photographs

(See photo map key for indication of camera angles.)

1. Front (northeast) facade, facing southwest.
2. Front entry, detail, facing southwest.
3. Front and west facades, facing southeast.
4. East, or Lafayette Street facade and rear facade, facing north.
5. Servant's quarters, north and east facades, facing west.
6. Servant's quarters, west facade, facing southeast.

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7. Garages and stone wall; rear and east facades of servant 's quarters, facing north-northwest.
8. Cellar, rear yard; garage roof visible in background, facing south.
9. Curved interior entry door.
10. Pair of leaded glass windows in first floor apartment, northwest bedroom.
11. Original light fixture, first floor rear apartment dining room.
12. Original fireplace and mantle, upstairs front apartment living room.
13. Closet door, upstairs front apartment northeast bedroom.
14. Interior door knob and backplate.

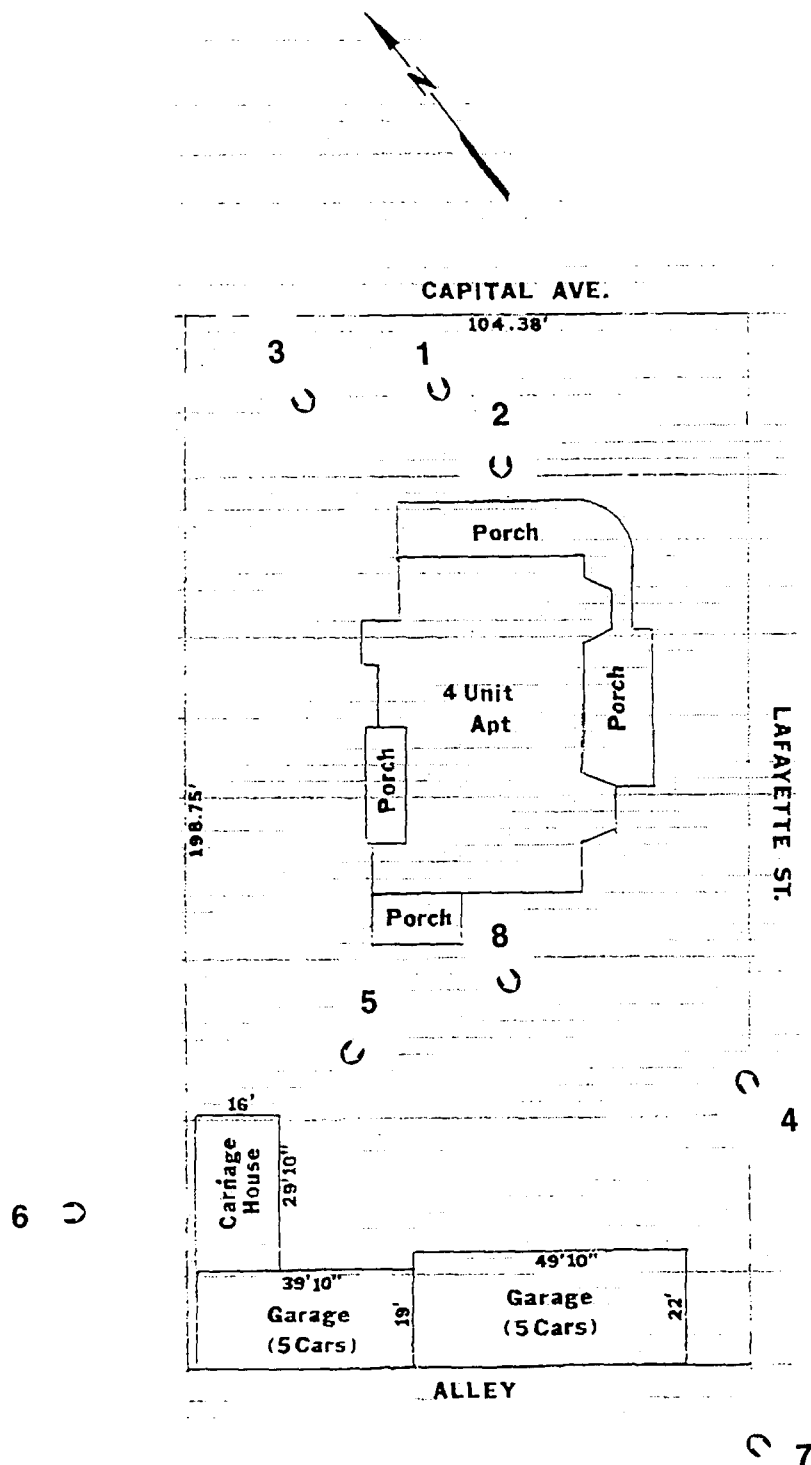
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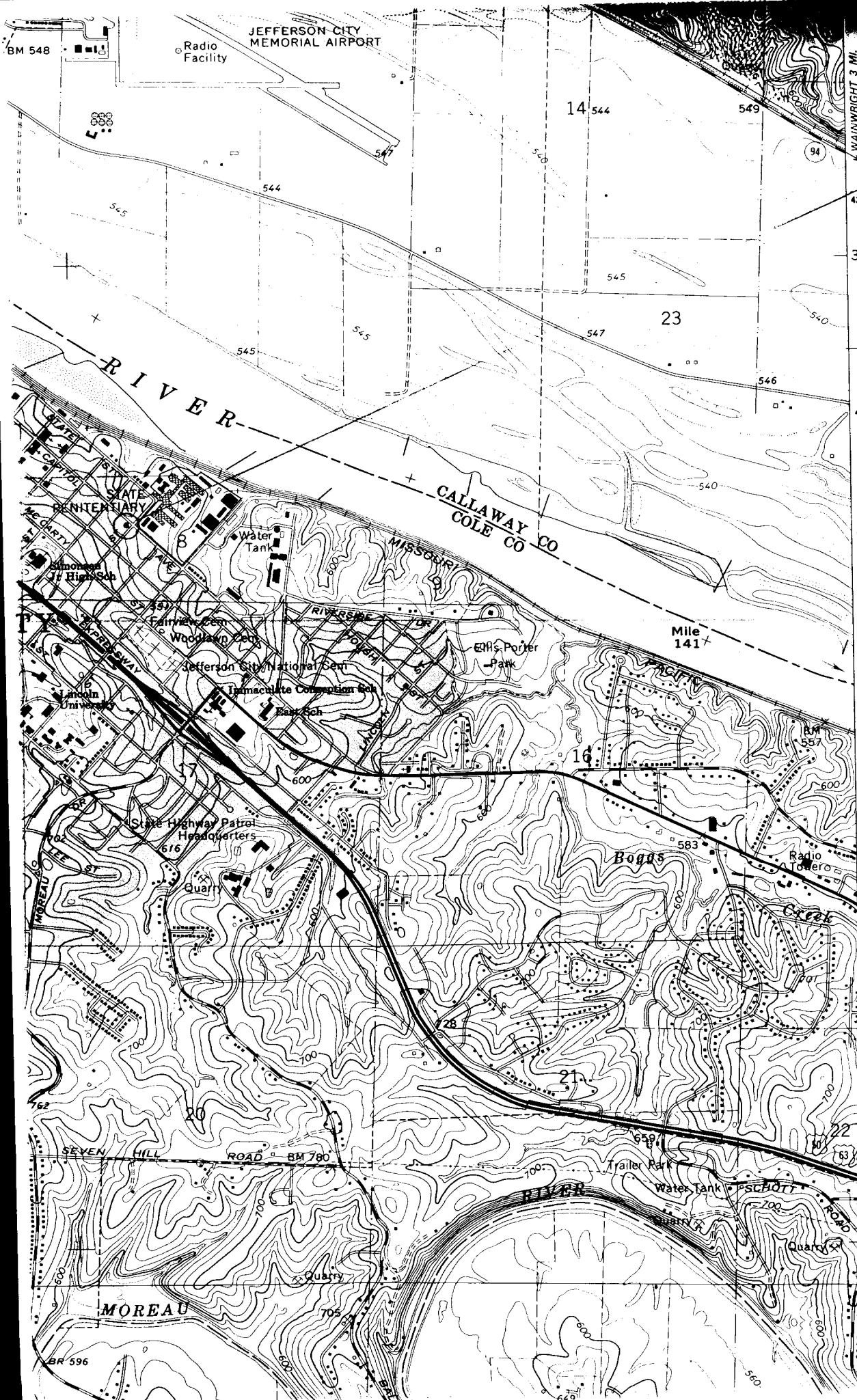
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Cole County, Missouri

Photo Key Map





PARKET, LESTER
AND MISSOURI "2L
GORDON HOUSE
COLE CO, MISSOURI
UTM REFERENCE
15/572850 E
15/4269450 N

JEFFERSON CITY
QUADRANGLE (MO)

OSAGE CITY
7561 11 SE
SCHUBERT 4.8 MI.
ROLLA (VIA U.S. 63) 60 MI.

32'30"
4266





