

2016

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

OCT 16 1989

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Widman's Saloon and Grocery other names/site number JFEG 720

2. Location

street & number 2317-19 Frankfort Avenue city, town Louisville state Kentucky code 021 county Jefferson code 111 zip code 40206

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of David L. Morgan, State Historic Preservation Officer, Kentucky Heritage Council, dated 9-10-89.

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.

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
determined eligible for the National Register.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain):

Signature of the Keeper: Patrick Andrews, Date of Action: 6/13/90

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Restaurant

COMMERCE/TRADE: Department Store

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Restaurant

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

other STONE/limestone

WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Widman's Saloon and Grocery is a two-story brick commercial structure built in the Italianate style. It displays a high level of architectural integrity and is an important remnant of Louisville's early suburban commercial development.

Widman's Saloon and Grocery is located in the eastern portion of the city in the Clifton neighborhood. The Clifton neighborhood is situated among a series of steep bluffs. Frankfort Avenue is one of the highest and flattest points in the area and it is this major thoroughfare that Widman's Saloon and Grocery faces.

The streets in the area are laid out in a basic grid pattern with some irregularities. The building sits on a trapezoid-shaped lot in the middle of a block bounded by the Louisville and Nashville Railroad to the north, Frankfort Avenue to the south, Keats Avenue to the east, and Jane Street to the west.

This early commercial building is situated in an area where few buildings with any historic or architectural integrity remain. The Clifton National Register District (August, 1983) is located to the north of Widman's Saloon and grocery and the Crescent Hill National Register District (November, 1982) is located farther east along Frankfort Avenue. The Three Mile Toll House (circa 1818) which is two lots west of Widman's Salon and Grocery is historically important to the development of the Clifton neighborhood but has suffered from a number of additions and deferred maintenance which render it only marginally National Register eligible. The National Register listed St. Frances of Rome School (July, 1987) is situated several blocks away in a southwesterly direction.

Widman's Saloon and Grocery is a two-story brick, commercial structure which rests upon a brick foundation. It is a deep, rectangularly-shaped building with a blocky massing. The primary facade, which fronts along Frankfort Avenue, has a six bay facade division. The ground level features six identical pairs of panelled, multi-light french doors topped by transoms with elaborate cast iron grills. This motif is repeated in all of the six facade bays, each of which is separated by simple stone pilasters. The corresponding six bays on the second floor level each have six-over-six windows with simple stone lintels and sills. The deeply overhanging cornice features dentils and consoles. A shallow gabled roof which was originally tin but is now sheathed in asphalt shingles tops the building (photos 1-3).

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

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Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G n/a

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance  
1858-1940

Significant Dates  
n/a

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Cultural Affiliation  
n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

n/a

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Widman's Saloon and Grocery is locally significant under criterion "C" as one of Clifton's earliest extant commercial buildings and under criterion "A" as a rare example of Clifton's early commercial development.

Historic Development

Two early transportation - related developments in Clifton had a major impact on that neighborhood in terms of later development: The installation of a toll road, and the installation of a railroad. Both would shape the neighborhood's physical expansion and commercial development.

The first significant occurrence was a move by the General Assembly in 1818 to assign the responsibility of creating a toll road away from Louisville toward Shelbyville to the east to the Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike Company. This legislation, which would facilitate the movement of goods and people to and from Louisville resulted in the establishment of a toll road built upon a high ridge which ran through Clifton on a trail originally formed by buffalo herds and migrating Indians. The toll road which was officially called the Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike follows what is presently known as Frankfort Avenue. It passed through rural farms which were carved from the original land grant parcels issued to soldiers for service to the British during the French and Indian War of 1773.

The second major development, which occurred in the late 1840s, was the establishment of the Louisville and Frankfort Railroad. This rail line, which would eventually merge with the Lexington and Frankfort line, was called the Lexington, Frankfort, and Louisville Railroad and later, the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Lexington Railroad. It, too, was intended to facilitate the

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

\_\_\_\_\_. Caron's Directory of the City of Louisville. Louisville: Caron Directory Company, 1884-1990.

Louisville Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission. National Register File. Louisville, 1974-1989.

\_\_\_\_\_. Louisville Survey East Report. Louisville: City of Louisville Community Development Cabinet, 1979.

\_\_\_\_\_. St. Frances of Rome Parish: Story of Seventy-five Years (1887-1962). Louisville: circa 1962.

Thomas, Samuel W., Crescent Hill Revisited. Louisville: George Rogers Clark Press, Inc. 1987.

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:

n/a

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

A 

1	6
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6	1	3	5	3	0
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4	2	3	4	5	4	0
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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

D 

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n/a  See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property includes all of City of Louisville Block 72B, Lot 7 with sides which roughly measure 145', 97', 97' and 26'.

n/a  See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lot historically associated with this property (also see #7 description under "Boundary Justification" heading).

n/a  See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Joanne Weeter, Research Coordinator

organization Louisville Landmarks Commission date August 1, 1989

street & number 609 W. Jefferson Street telephone (502) 625-3501

city or town Louisville state KY zip code 40202

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The ground floor has historically served both as a saloon and as a grocery store. Caron's Annual Directories of the City of Louisville suggest that both uses may have occurred simultaneously. The directories also indicate that, for many years, the upper floor was used as living quarters by the proprietor of the saloon/grocery and his family.

The interior of Widman's Saloon and Grocery, on the ground level, has a load bearing brick wall running through the center of the building from front to back. Many of the interior details, including the wooden bar that was situated in one of the two front rooms, have been removed. Still intact are a number of wooden panelled doors with glass transoms and dog eared surrounds. Additionally, several of the extant six-over-six windows have decorative wooden panels below them. The second floor, which displays a more modest architectural treatment, has several simply detailed fireplaces. While the ground level floor plan remains basically intact, the second floor room arrangement has been altered (photo 4).

Between its use as Widman's Saloon and Grocery in the late 1800s up to 1942, and its current use as a restaurant and bar, this commercial building was employed as a statuary factory. Remnants of Vincent Mattei's Louisville Statuary Company, which produced an assortment of plaster cast ceiling medallions, dentil molds, brackets and the like, can still be seen on the building's interior. Although these architectural elements were added sometime after 1942 they are evidence of the building's function as a plaster factory and have achieved a degree of significance in their own right.

Aside from a variety of uses over the years little has changed with Widman's Saloon and Grocery. The most significant change occurred sometime after 1942 when Mr. Mattei changed the building from its original "L" shape to a rectangle by replacing the wood side porch on the northeast side with a two-story concrete block addition. In August, 1988 Widman's Saloon and Grocery was purchased from the estate of Vincent Mattei by Jim Goodman of the Another Place Restaurant Company. Goodwin recently completed rehabilitation of the structure. The new owner demolished several concrete block additions to the building, reconstructed the altered portion of the primary facade and renovated the building's interior spaces.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries chosen for Widman's Saloon and Grocery are based on the original lot boundaries historically associated with the site. Surrounding the nominated property are remnants of late Victorian commercial and residential development, but none retain enough architectural integrity to warrant National Register listing. In general, the area surrounding Widman's Saloon and Grocery reflects commercial, industrial, and residential

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development that dates from more recent times or, in the case of historic structures, contains buildings that exhibit extensive alterations, additions, or are in poor structural condition.

Archeological Considerations

Structures, of course, are closely related to the surrounding environment. Archeological investigations that have been conducted in the suburban areas of Louisville have yielded valuable information. Archeological survey, excavation, and/or incidental discovery or monitoring occurred at the following suburban sites: Locust Grove, Ward's Mill, Farmington, Beargrass Creek sites, and Soldiers Retreat. An archeological investigation of Widman's Saloon and Grocery, if conducted, might yield positive results if the historic context of the site has not been disturbed. At this time no investigation has been made to discover if remains exist on the site. However, archeological remains should be considered in any development of this property. If, in the course of work, it becomes evident that the site might reveal archeological information, it is recommended that work cease and the appropriate Kentucky Heritage Council staff be notified.

Integrity Considerations

Three areas of the building have been affected by its tenants since 1942 and have been considered in evaluating the integrity of the building. These areas are the removed concrete block additions at rear of the building, the facade remodelling, and the interior remodelling. It is believed that none of the three areas of change constitute a loss of substantial integrity of design, materials, workmanship, or feeling, such that the property is no longer able to convey its historical and architectural significance.

The removal of concrete block additions is believed to have involved non-historic materials, i.e., space added at the back of the facility probably in the late 1940s or early 1950s associated with the plaster business inhabiting the building. Since these areas appear to date later than the period of significance, their removal is not a compromise to the historical or architectural integrity.

Interior rehabilitation has related to the use of space as a restaurant, which involved converting it from its immediately prior use as a statuary factory. Owners have largely left spaces as they have found them, which includes many of the cast plaster dentils and hood moldings produced after 1942. These interior decorative features cannot strictly be said to contribute to the building's integrity. However, the conversion from a craft factory to a restaurant has preserved some integrity of feeling with events dating to the period of significance.

Exterior rehabilitation has had the most impact on the structure, but owners attempted to follow the Secretary of the Interior's rehabilitation guidelines. Following the presumption that the original facade was symmetrical and consistent in its decoration, owners have removed non-historic commercial doors on the three left bays of the facade. These doors, added by the owner of the statuary business, have been replaced with doors that replicate the three historic doors to the right. Similarly, the three right-side facade bays have metal grilles on fixed glass transoms; the three left-side transoms have been fitted with new grills which match the historic ones. Recent painting has unified the entry to re-establish the appearance of a single enterprise.

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Widman's Saloon and Grocery: Louisville, Jefferson Co., KY

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movement of goods and people to and from Louisville. The newly established railroad converged with the already existing Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike in the as yet unestablished Clifton neighborhood near what is now Clifton Avenue. From this point of intersection it continued eastward toward Shelbyville along a path parallel to the turnpike road.

The point of intersection for these systems occurred on land owned by Colonel Joshua Bowles. One of the earliest settlers in the area, Bowles came to Louisville from Virginia but felt the city was too smoky and stuffy so he moved to the country, built an estate and named it Clifton for the cliffs located toward the north and of his property which ran along Brownsboro Road. The name he gave his country retreat was later adopted by other residents who called their suburban enclave Clifton.

It was on a parcel of Bowles' original tract that Bowles' Station was built. On this triangular plot of land several small railroad related buildings, which included a small post office and a waiting room, were constructed. None of these buildings survive to the present day. Just down the road from Bowles' Station the Three Mile House Toll House of the Louisville and Shelbyville turnpike was constructed. This modest, one-story brick structure which still stands was probably constructed soon after the Turnpike Company was established in 1818 and is one of the oldest surviving structures in Clifton.

Both Bowles' Railroad Station and the Three Mile Toll House of the Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike were strategically located in an area that would become the center of residential and commercial development in what is now the Clifton neighborhood. Widman's Saloon and Grocery, the nominated property, was built circa 1852 on land right next to the Three Mile Toll House and just down the street from the train station. It stands to reason that the site chosen for the Saloon and Grocery was selected because tired travelers needed a place to refresh themselves with food and drink. It was one of the first commercial establishments built in Clifton along the route of the toll road.

An 1858 map of Jefferson County published by G.T. Bergmann is the first definitive evidence of a building on the site of the nominated property, Widman's Saloon and Grocery. Its building configuration, site placement and location, is consistent with later historic documentation.

The earliest deed reference to Widman's Saloon and Grocery is in an 1868 deed which conveys the nominated property from Henry and Catherine Holtzheimer to Joseph Widman and Armand Eble. The clause in this deed which states "...Henry Holtzheimer hereby agrees and binds himself not to keep or said to be kept a

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Louisville, Jefferson County, KY

tavern or grocery on said pike or near said pike within five miles of the property herein conveyed" implies that prior to 1868 Holtzheimer owned and operated a tavern and grocery on this site.

Initially, the saloon and grocery was under the joint ownership of Joseph Widman and Armand Eble. Two years later, the property in its totality was conveyed to Widman and from this time on, Joseph Widman and his heirs owned the property solely or in partnership with others until 1942. City Directories indicate that both a saloon and grocery were at this location until 1942.

Early accounts of breweries in Clifton indicate that saloons such as Widman's may have gotten their dark brewed "common beer" from a neighborhood brewery near Edward's Pond, located close to the intersection of present day Ewing Avenue and Brownsboro Road. Ice to cool the kegs of beer was cut from the pond and stored in a nearby ice house.

Little is known specifically of the Widman family or their neighborhood saloon and grocery. Caron's City Directories first lists Joseph Widman in 1885 in reference to a saloon. His residence was on the Shelbyville Pike near the toll gate. The Widman family, under various family names would own this property until the final sale out of the family in 1942. At one point, in 1890, Joseph Widman Jr., son of the saloon and grocery owner, is listed in the city directory as boarding at that address and employed as a driver. No doubt he had a job related to the turnpike as driver for a mule car or coach and could begin his work day at the Three Mile Toll House conveniently located next door to his place of residence.

Although the toll house, railroad station, and Widman's were among the earliest developments in Clifton, as time passed land was subdivided, the original farm tracts were sold to land speculators, and additional commercial enterprises located in the neighborhood. The core, Frankfort Avenue, received the heaviest concentration of non-residential construction.

#### Architecture

Stylistically Widman's Saloon and Grocery is typical of mid-nineteenth century commercial architecture. Located on Frankfort Avenue close to Widman's Saloon are C. B. Liebert's Clifton Market and Spect's Saloon which were built in 1887. In addition to the fact that each building was constructed to serve functions similar to Widman's each also shares common stylistic characteristics. All three have ground level retail space topped by a second floor which was originally used as a residence. Accordingly, the more public ground level has a typical storefront arrangement with an entrance and large glass display windows while the second floor windows are smaller and allow for more

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Widman's Saloon and Grocery: Louisville, Jefferson Co., KY  
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privacy. All three buildings are sited on the frequently travelled turnpike road. The most elaborate architectural treatment is found on the primary facades of each of the buildings. Widman's simple ground level french doors allowed the first floor saloon and grocery to be well lighted and highly visible to passers-by while allowing a great deal of ventilation during the warm summer months. The stone pilasters between each window bay denotes rare, early commercial stylistic tendencies more commonly found in the older Phoenix Hill or Butchertown neighborhoods. Also more common to those areas, where a larger number of mid-nineteenth century buildings survive, are details on Widman's such as side chimneys that are flush with the exterior brick wall of the building and wooden rather than stone window sills and lintels on the less visible side and rear facades. The wooden side porch which was located on the inside of the buildings original "L" shape was also fairly typical of circa 1850s architecture.

Few commercial buildings in the Clifton neighborhood pre-date Widman's Saloon and Grocery. The circa 1818 Three Mile Toll House is the earliest extant structure in Clifton followed by Widman's. The commercial buildings that date from later years are concentrated along Frankfort Avenue both inside and outside the National Register District boundaries. Generally speaking, those commercial buildings with the highest degree of architectural integrity have been placed on the National Register by the virtue of the fact that they are within the boundaries of the Clifton National Register District. The remainder of the commercial buildings, by and large, lack architectural integrity due to severe alterations or due to poor structural condition that is the result of inadequate maintenance.

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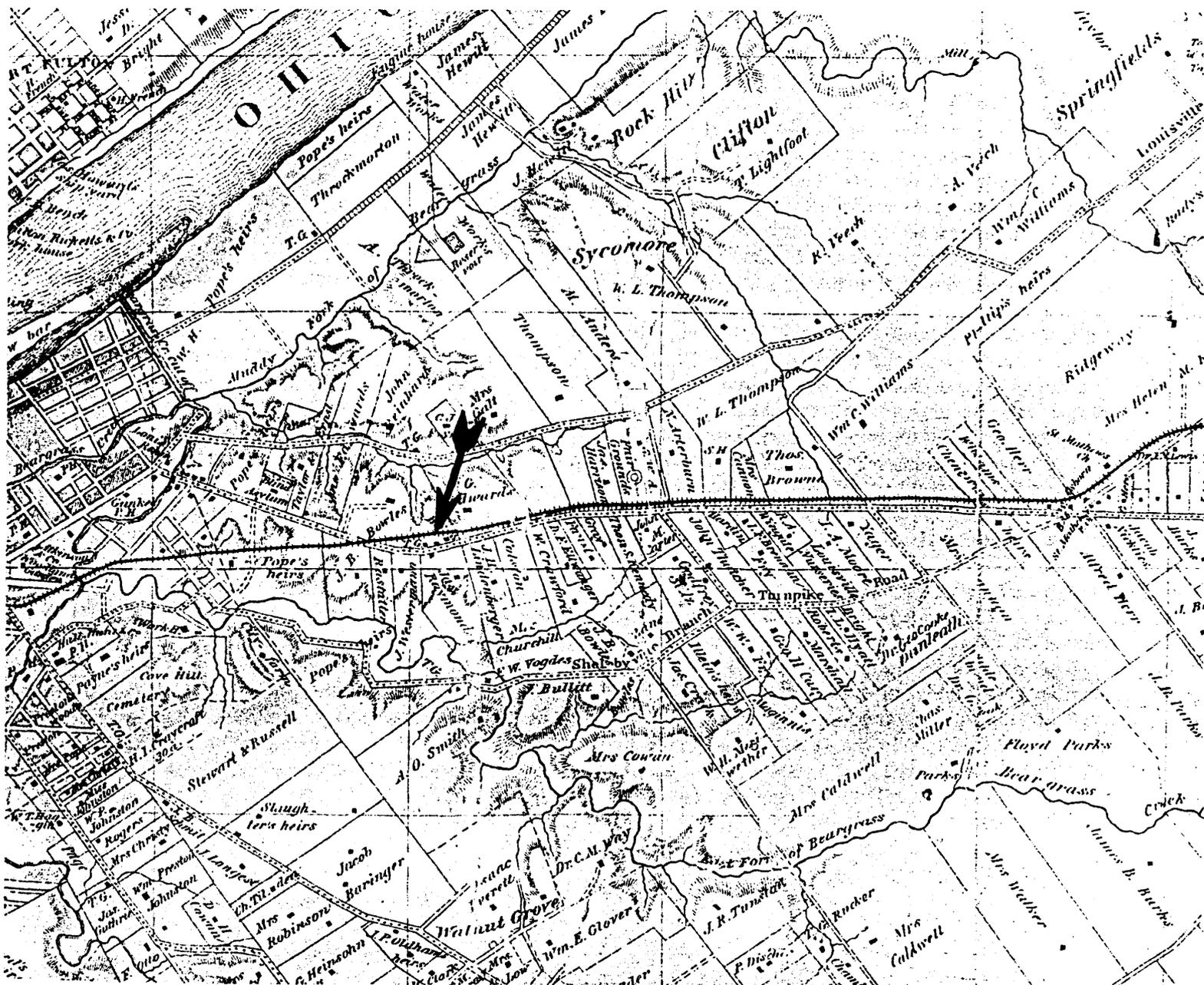
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Yater, George H. Two Hundred Years At the Falls of The Ohio: A History of Louisville and Jefferson County. Louisville: Heritage Corporation of Louisville and Jefferson County, 1979.



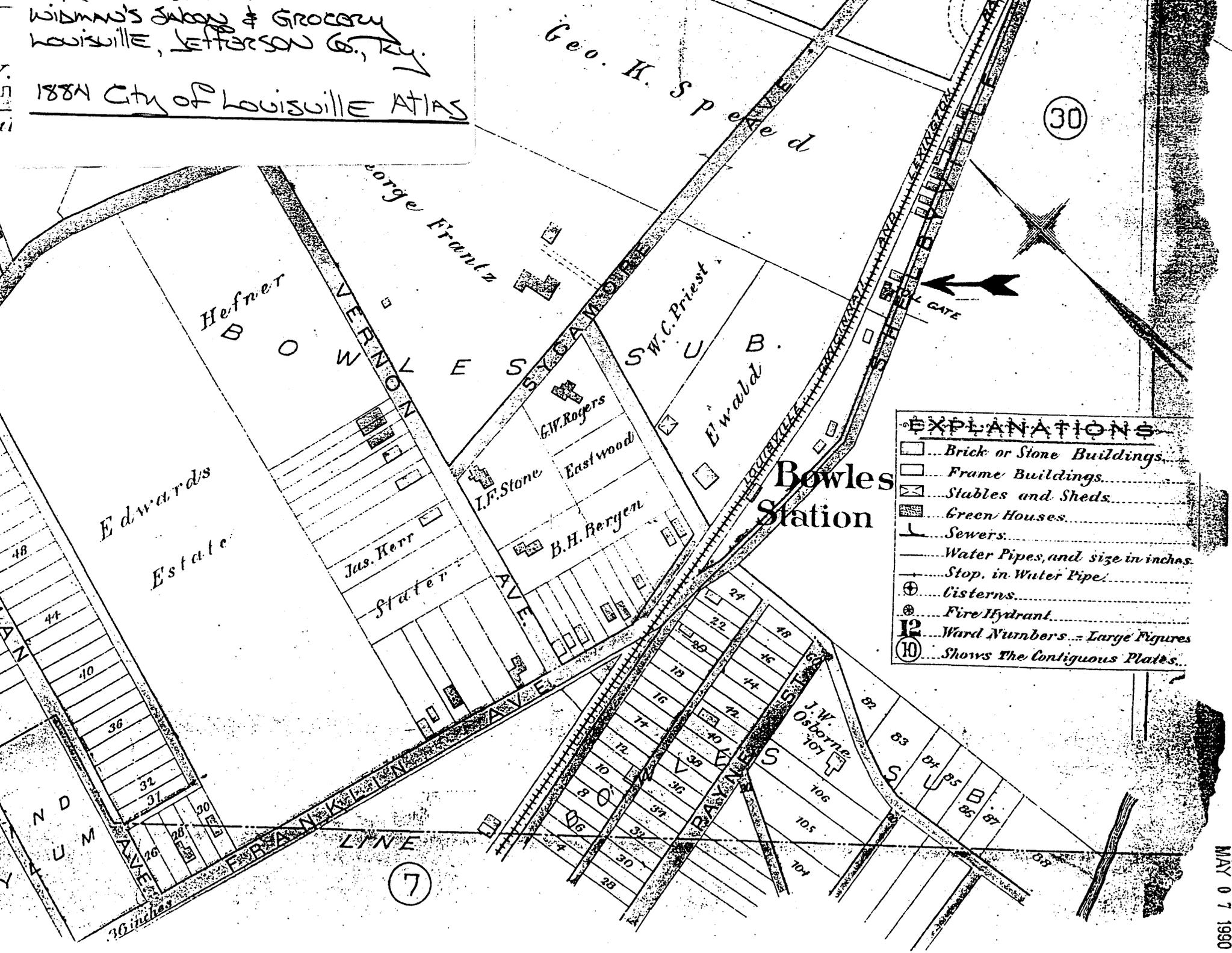
Widman's Saloon and Grocery  
Louisville, Jefferson Co., Ky.

Map of Jefferson County, Kentucky; G. T. Bergmann, 1858



WIDMAN'S SADDLERY & GROCERY  
LOUISVILLE, JEFFERSON CO., KY.

1884 CITY OF LOUISVILLE ATLAS

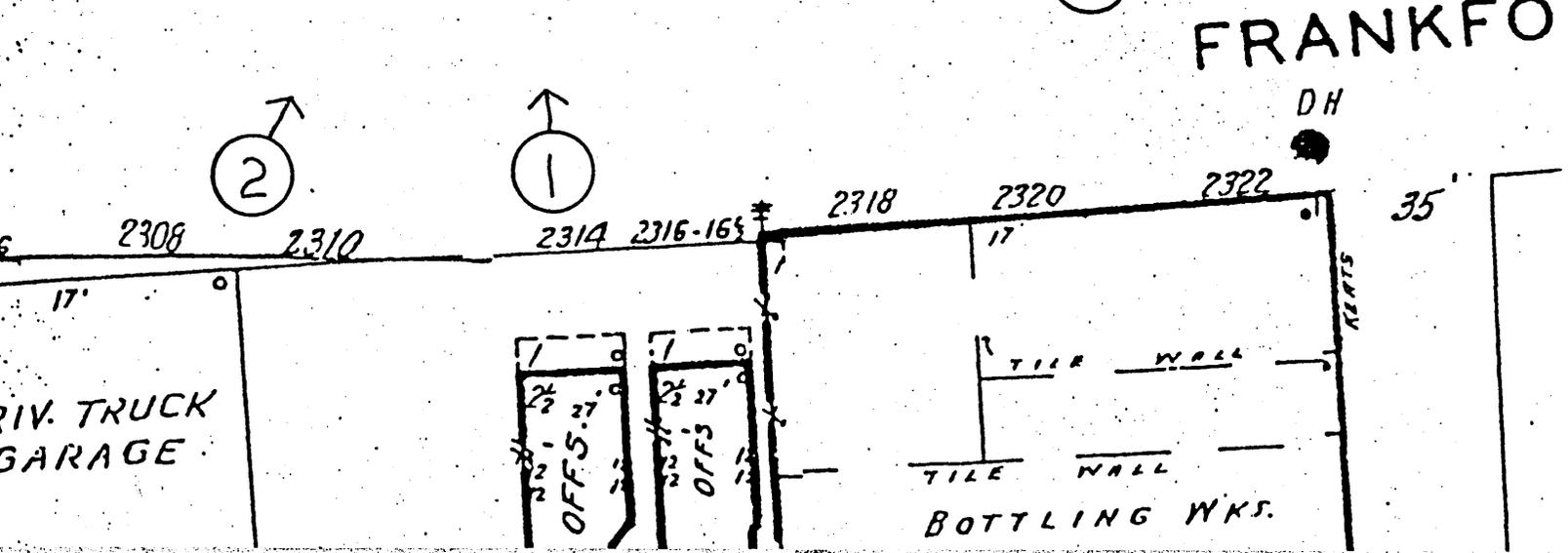
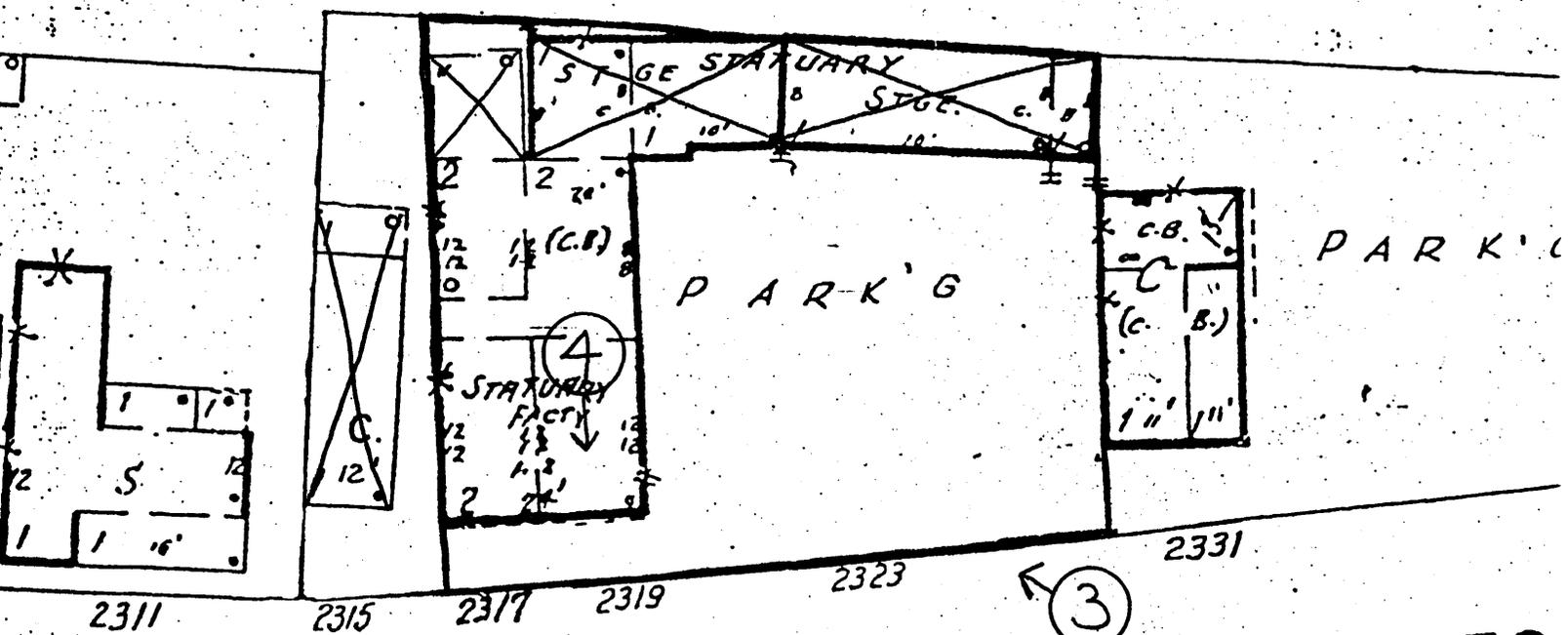
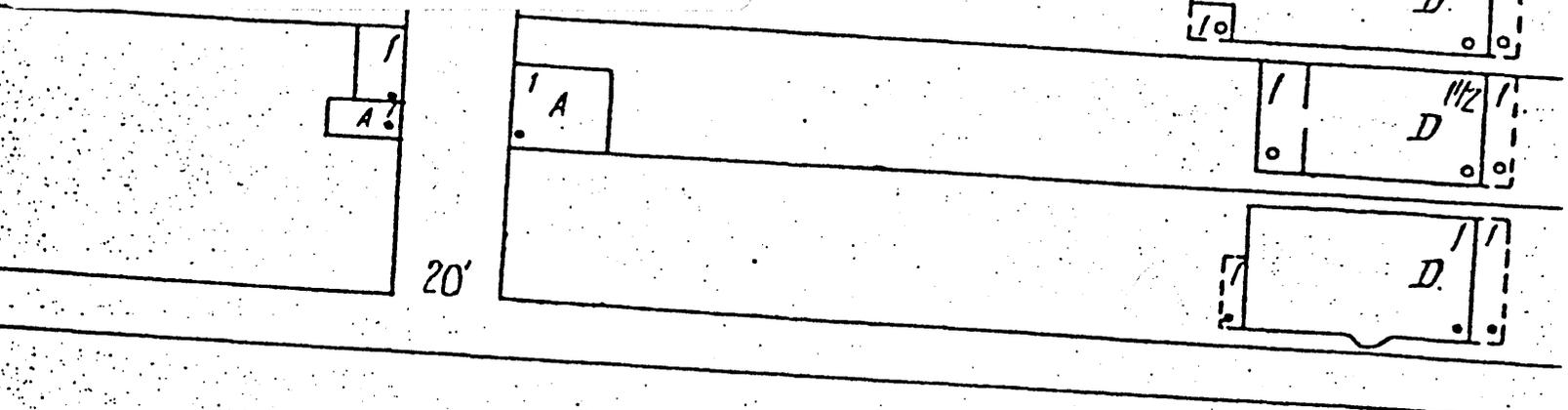


EXPLANATIONS	
[Symbol]	Brick or Stone Buildings
[Symbol]	Frame Buildings
[Symbol]	Stables and Sheds
[Symbol]	Green Houses
[Symbol]	Sewers
[Symbol]	Water Pipes, and size in inches
[Symbol]	Stop, in Water Pipe
[Symbol]	Cisterns
[Symbol]	Fire Hydrant
[Symbol]	Ward Numbers - Large Figures
[Symbol]	Shows The Contiguous Plates

WILLIAMS OACON & GROCERY  
LOUISVILLE, JEFFERSON CO., KY.

MAY 07 1990

1974 SANBORN INSURANCE MAP  
SHOWING SITE BOUNDARY &  
PHOTO KEY.



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### Photo Identification

Widman's Saloon and Grocery  
2317-19 Frankfort Avenue  
Louisville, Jefferson Co., KY

Joanne Weeter - Photographer  
July 1989 - Date taken  
Landmarks Commission - negative repository

All photographs are numbered and keyed to arrows on map as indicated.

1. Primary Facade: looking north
2. Secondary West Facade
3. Secondary East Facade
4. Interior: ground level