

ROCK ISLAND PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
NOMINATION FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Common Street Address of Property:

908 Fourth Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Name and Address of Property Owner(s):

Arthur and Dorothy Mayne, 908 Fourth Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Is Owner Aware of Proposed Designation:  X  Yes   No

Please attach a short report setting forth the reasons for requesting designation. Please refer to the criteria listed on the reverse side. (These are excerpted from the Rock Island Preservation Ordinance.) A list of other details you should attempt to provide in the nomination report is attached.

Please also attach the following:

1. Legal description of property (available from abstract or County Recorder of Deeds office).
2. One photograph of each elevation (side) of the property being nominated. Copies of old photographs or drawings may also be included.
3. Sources used to write the report.

Name(s) and Address(es) of Applicant(s):

Jaan Sturgis  
Special Projects - Education Chair  
Rock Island Preservation Society

128 West 14th Street, Davenport, IA  
Address

Name

Jaan Sturgis  
Signature

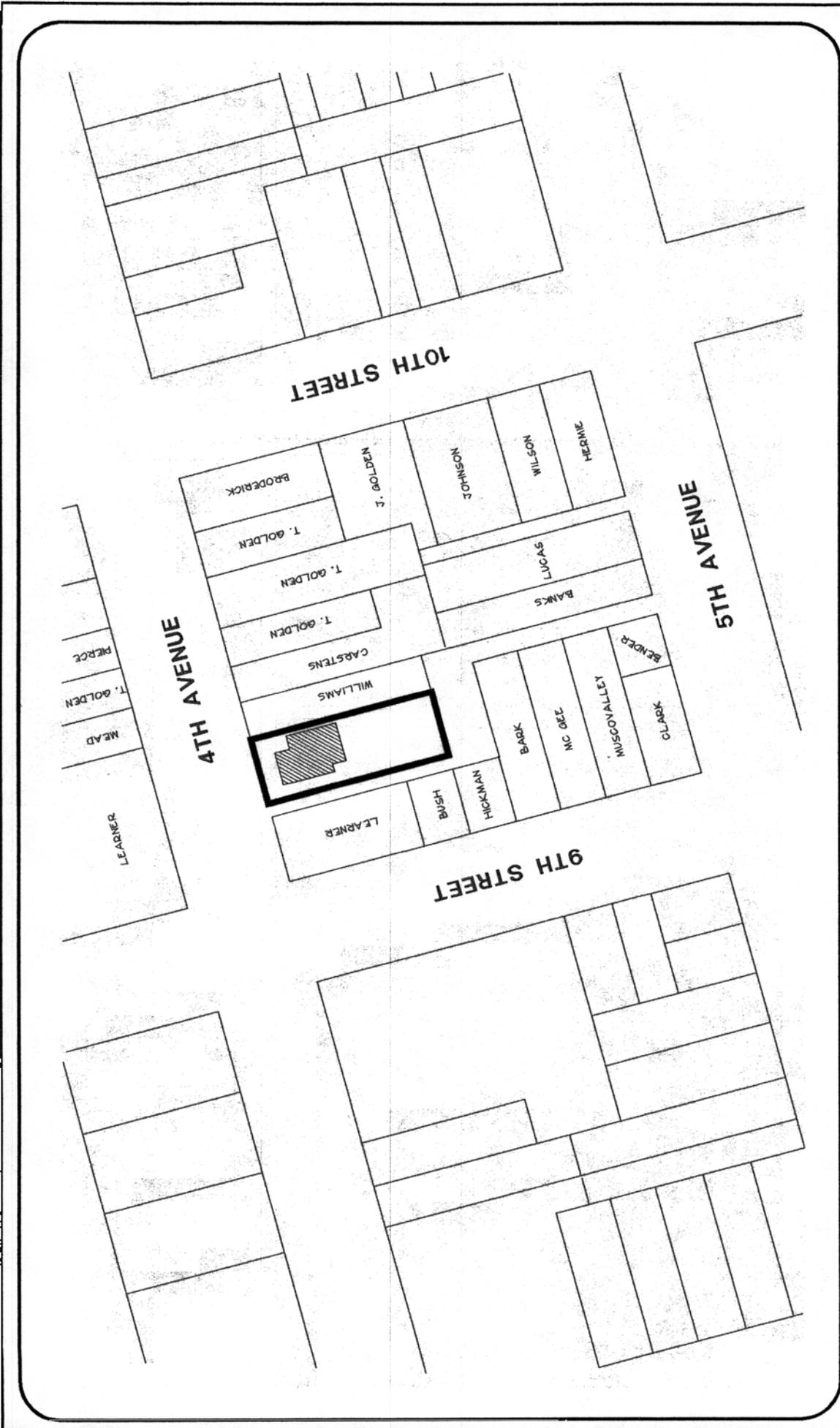
324-6628  
Phone Number

Return Nomination Form To:

City of Rock Island  
Planning and Redevelopment Division  
1528 Third Avenue  
Rock Island, Illinois 61201

\*\*\*\*\*

OFFICE Case # 91-5 Date April 24, 1991 Time 4:30 p.m.  
USE  
ONLY



**LEGEND**

— SUBJECT PROPERTY  
(STRECKFUS HOUSE,  
908-4TH AVE.)

# LANDMARK NOMINATION

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND**  
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
PLANNING AND REDEVELOPMENT DIVISION



**NORTH**

SCALE: 0 50 100 200 FEET

**DRAWN BY:** L.R.O.

**APPROV. BY:** JD

**5/3/91**

Rock Island Preservation Society proudly nominates the home at 908 Fourth Avenue, Rock Island for landmark designation. This home successfully meets criteria two and three of the Rock Island Preservation Commission's requirements for landmarking structures. Specifically, we will attempt to prove that the original builder/family of the property played a significant part in Rock Island, Tri Cities, and Midwestern/Southern history. Too, the building is intrinsically an important example of architecture exemplifying good craftsmanship and integrity relative to the period in which it was built.

Coming to America from Bavaria, Germany in the 1850's, Balthazar Streckfus originally settled in the nearby community of Edgington. Discovering that it was very inconvenient to bring his children to school due to the far distance, his three sons-- Henry, Mike and John--- built the home located at 908 Fourth Avenue for their parents. Just prior to this time, Balthazar located his wagon-making and blacksmith shop on the corner of Ninth Street and Fourth Avenue. The home was finished in 1871 and the family moved in.

The lovely brick two and one-half story home is an excellent example of Italianate architecture from the early 1870's combined with a Queen Anne style third story and porch probably from the 1890's. It displays some Italianate features in the tall, slender windows with crowns over them. In the front facing gable note the grouping of three windows with a decorative treatment both above and below. The front porch, virtually original in context, has beautiful fluted chamfer-like columns supporting an area of very decorative spindlework directly below the porch roof. The decorative millwork

half-circles found at the top of the porch column are particularly ornate and the pearl-like molding beneath the porch roof adds additional interest. The west side of the property features a bay window with fanciful millwork-type brackets. Note the brick extension on either side of the picture windows which form a pilaster affect tending to elongate the building. The header bricks used at this bay cause a distinctive demarcation between the first and second stories of the house. The gable at this location has decorative shingles above the paired attic windows

The Streckfus family became a name synonymous with riverboat excursions. John, Balthazar's youngest son, had the keen interest in the river. At the age of nine in 1866, John accompanied his father to the Rock Island levee with a load of corn. When the loading was completed, John was not to be found. Eventually, the search party discovered the young boy hidden in a pile of corn. But not until some years later did John's passion for the river surface again. In the late 1870s he went into the grocery business with his brother after they built the storefront at 16th Street and Fourth Avenue. However, in 1884 John announced to the family that he was leaving the smell of flour for the mist of the river for "health" reasons. Initially purchasing a steamer that operated between Andalusia and Rock island, John serviced the farmers needs in that area. In four short years he had added a second double decker steamer which made runs between Clinton and Rock Island in less than six hours while still stopping at six landings for passengers

As John's business progressed, he built the first boat used

exclusively for pleasure excursions in the United States, naming it the J.S. The J.S. was palatial in scope being 175 feet long and sporting four decks and a crew of 45. Unfortunately, it burned in 1910 and caused him not only severe financial hardship because the boat was only insured for one-third of its value, but great emotional turmoil as well because the whole family had a great love for river excursions and the J.S. was the epitome of such a steamer

By the 1920s the Streckfus family relocated to St. Louis after the popularity of the Model-T caused a lessening interest in excursion steamers. However, the '20s and '30s saw a resurgence of interest; and in 1941 the biggest and finest excursion steamer in the world, the Admiral, was built being all-steel and air conditioned!

The Streckfus family is credited with sending Dixieland music north. The Admiral and other boats excursionsed between New Orleans and Minneapolis, and many winters Davenport's Credit Island harbor was the home of the Streckfus fleet. Such familiar jazz musicians as George (Pops Foster, Arthur James (Zutty) Singleton and Louis (Satchmo Armstrong all played in the local establishments, having come on the Streckfus boats.

Therefore, the strong architectural presence of 908 Fourth Avenue as an example of vernacular architecture displaying good craftsmanship and integrity dating from the period of construction combined with the significance of its builder as a riverboat king on the mighty Mississippi makes this structure worthy of local landmark designation

Sources:

McAlester, Virginia & Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses, 1984, Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

Lofquist, Eleanor, "Streckfus-Scheff," May 1974 (college term paper).

Anderson, Linda, Newsletter of the Rock Island Preservation Society, "A Preservation Success Story," August 1989, Rock Island, IL.

The Daily Dispatch, "The Balthazar Streckfus November 7, 1979, Moline, IL. Novem-

Arpy, Jim, Quad-City Times, "Financial Salvos Sink Streckfus," January 22, 1981, Davenport, IA.

866103

WARRANTY DEED

*Wm. J. Casey*  
Recorder of Deeds

THE GRANTOR, CITY OF ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS, a Municipal Corporation, of the County of Rock Island and State of Illinois, for the Consideration of THE SUM OF Two Thousand Fifty-four and

88/100----- (\$2,054.00) Dollars, CONVEYS AND WARRANTS to ARTHUR P. MAYNE and DOROTHY M. MAYNE, Husband and Wife, as joint tenants and not as tenants in common and interest in the following described real estate:

See legal description attached hereto and made a part hereof

17<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1979



CITY OF ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS  
A Municipal Corporation,

By *[Signature]*

ATTEST:

*Wm. J. Casey Jr.*  
CITY CLERK

This Instrument was prepared by BERNARD C. GILLMAN 311 Safety Building Rock Island, Illinois 61201

STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
ROCK ISLAND COUNTY ) ss.

I, the undersigned, a Notary Public, in and for said County in the State aforesaid, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that JAMES R. DAVIS, personally known to me to be the Mayor of the City of Rock Island, Illinois, a Municipal Corporation, and WILLIAM J. TACEY JR., personally known to me to be the City Clerk of the City of Rock Island, Illinois, a Municipal Corporation, and personally known to me to be the same persons whose names are subscribed to the foregoing instrument, appeared before me this day in person and severally acknowledged that as the Mayor and City Clerk, they signed and delivered said Instrument as Mayor and City Clerk respectively, of said City of Rock Island, Illinois, a Municipal Corporation, and caused the Corporate Seal of said Corporation to be affixed thereto, pursuant to authority duly given by the City Council of the City of Rock Island, as their free and voluntary act, and as the free and voluntary act of said Corporation, for the uses and purposes therein set forth.

Given under my hand and Notarial Seal, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of December,

*Bernard C. Gillman*  
NOTARY PUBLIC

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
ROCK ISLAND  
COUNTY-SSNO  
ENTERED OF RECORD

DEC 20 PM 3:14

Record Book 858  
RECORDED IN  
PAGE 603  
*Wm. J. Casey*  
RECORDER OF DEEDS

Exempt under provisions of Paragraph (b) Sec. 4, Real Estate Transfer Tax Act.

12/17/79  
Date *Bernard C. Gillman*  
XXXXX Seller or Representative

That part of Lots Number Three (3), Four (4), Five (5) and Six (6) in Block Number Thirty-seven (37) in that part of the City of Rock Island known as and called "CHICAGO OR LOWER ADDITION" to said City, described as follows: Begin at a point on the South line of Fourth Avenue, Fifty (50) feet Easterly from the Northwest (NW) corner of Block Number Thirty-seven (37) in Chicago or Lower Addition; Thence South parallel to the East line of Ninth Street One Hundred Seventy-six (176) feet; Thence East parallel to the Fourth Avenue Seventy-six (76) feet; Thence South parallel to Ninth Street One hundred Six and One Fourth ( $106\frac{1}{4}$ ) feet to a point; Forty (40) feet North of Fifth Avenue; Thence East Four (4) feet parallel to Fifth Avenue; Thence South Forty (40) feet parallel to Ninth Street to the North line of Fifth Avenue; Thence East Ten (10) feet; Thence North parallel to Ninth Street One hundred seventy-one and one-fourth ( $171\frac{1}{4}$ ) feet to a point One hundred fifty-one (151) feet South of Fourth Avenue; Thence West Twenty (20) feet parallel to Fourth Avenue; Thence North One hundred fifty-one (151) feet to Fourth Avenue; Thence West on South side of Fourth Avenue Seventy (70) feet to the place of beginning; EXCEPTING and reserving therefrom an easement on and over the following tract; Begin at a point on the South line of Fourth Avenue Fifty (50) feet Easterly from the Northwest (NW) corner of Block Number Thirty-seven (37) Chicago or Lower Addition; Thence South parallel to the East line of Ninth Street One hundred seventy-six (176) feet; Thence East parallel to Fourth Avenue Seventy-six (76) feet; Thence South parallel to Ninth Street One hundred six and one fourth ( $106\frac{1}{4}$ ) feet to a point Forty (40) feet North of Fifth Avenue; Thence East Four (4) feet parallel to Fifth Avenue; Thence South Forty (40) feet parallel to Ninth Street to the North line of Fifth Avenue; Thence East Ten (10) feet; Thence North parallel to Ninth Street One hundred Seventy-one and One Fourth ( $171\frac{1}{4}$ ) feet to a point One hundred Fifty-one (151) feet South of Fourth Avenue; Thence West Seventy-eight (78) feet parallel to Fourth Avenue; Thence North One hundred fifty-one (151) feet parallel to Ninth Street to Fourth Avenue; Thence West Twelve (12) feet to the place of beginning; situated in Rock Island County, in the State of Illinois.



KURTH AND SHEREK.

Carriage and Wagon Shop.

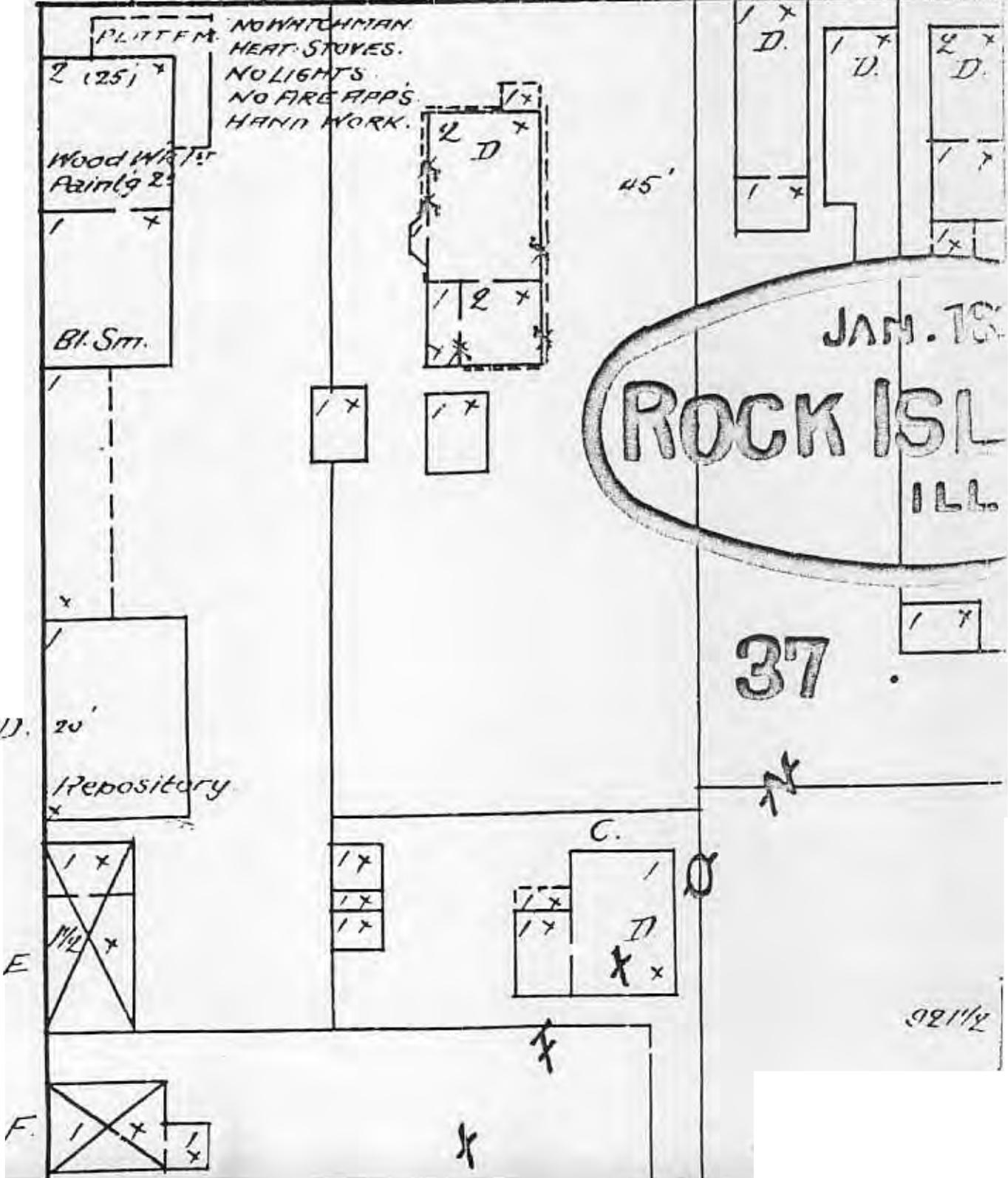
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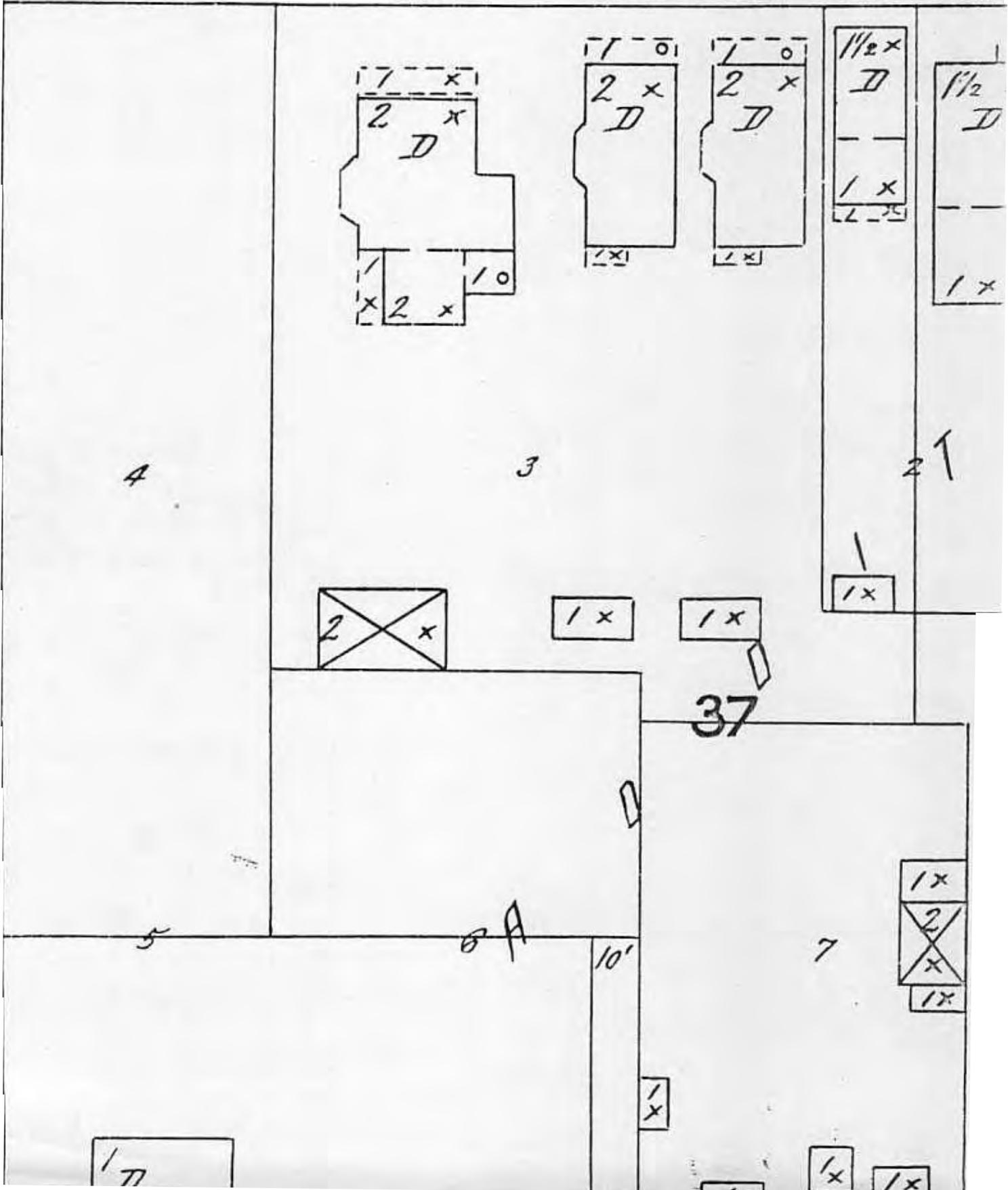
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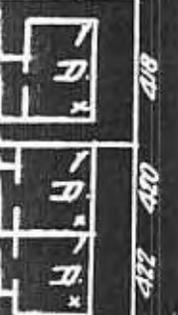
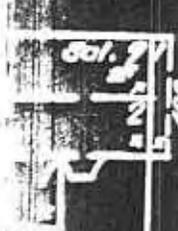
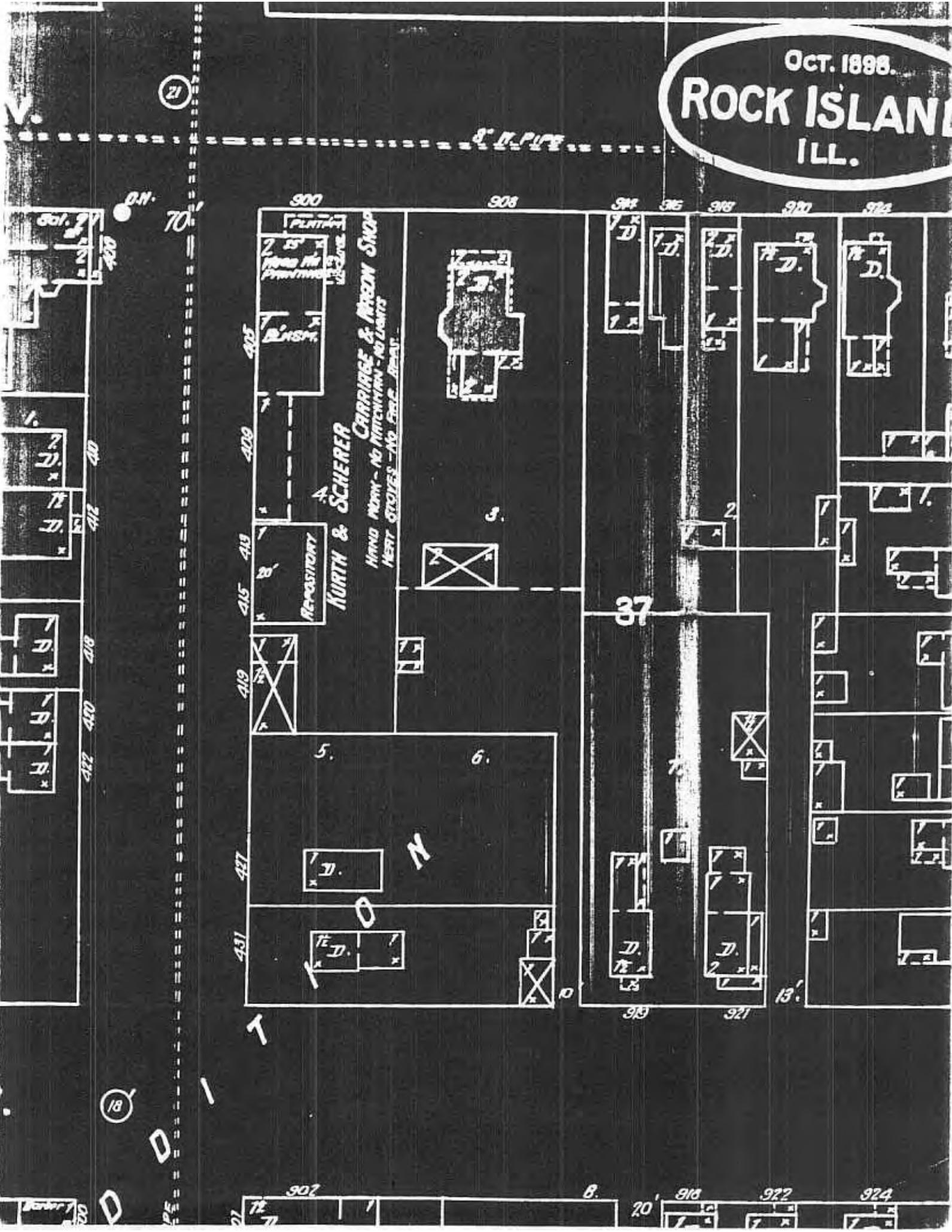
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OCT. 1898.  
**ROCK ISLAND**  
 ILL.

(21)



(18)

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