

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUL 5 1977
DATE ENTERED JAN 3 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Will Morton's Tavern Stand

AND/OR COMMON
Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 137 South Limestone Street

CITY, TOWN Lexington VICINITY OF _____
STATE Kentucky CODE 021 COUNTY Fayette CODE 067
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 06 (NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mrs. Georgia Polites

STREET & NUMBER
440 Ridgeway Road

CITY, TOWN Lexington VICINITY OF _____ STATE Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Fayette County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
215 W. Main Street

CITY, TOWN Lexington STATE Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historical Survey and Plan for Lexington & Fayette Co., Kentucky

DATE 1970 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Lexington-Fayette Urban County Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN Lexington STATE Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The 19th century building at 137 South Limestone, also known as 102 West Vine, is on the southwest corner of Limestone and Vine Streets at the edge of Lexington's downtown business district. Bounded on the south by a row of 20th century commercial buildings and on the west by a vacant lot used for parking and a multi-storied office building under construction, it sits upon the beginning of the rise toward South Hill Historic District on High Street (Photo #1). Although it has a corner entrance, it faces four-lane Vine Street, recently given a facelift by Urban Renewal with removal of the railroad tracks in its center.

Painted white, the two-story building has Flemish bond brick and four bays on its Vine Street facade and common bond brick and five bays on the Limestone side. The second floor windows have 6/6-paned sashes; pegged window frames are present on the Vine Street facade and on the northernmost two windows on the Limestone side (Photo #6). The frames of the southernmost three windows are unpegged, but not mitered. The nosing of each window sill has been shaved off to make the sill flush with the walls.

A store front with large windows is on the first level of the Vine Street facade and wraps around the recessed double doors at the corner to terminate in another large window on the Limestone side (Photo #2). There are subsidiary entrances on the west end of the Vine Street facade and on the south end of the Limestone side.

The Vine Street facade is crowned by a wide plain frieze beneath a heavy box cornice with crown moulding (Photo #4). This wood entablature is terminated at either end by wood consoles decorated with rectangular pyramidal blocks (Photo #5). The entablature and store front appear to have been added to the building at the same time, either during the Greek Revival period or, most probably, later.

The gable end of the roof on the east or Limestone side has been shortened on the south by the addition of a flat roof which drops to a lower level farther south. The west wall of the building reflects a true gable end with a two-story flat-roofed section behind, in which a seam in the brick indicates an earlier shed roof (Photo #3). Sanborn Insurance maps from 1886 through 1907 confirm this. They show a one-story section behind the two-story Vine Street facade; between 1907 and 1934 this section was made two-story. The building is rectangular in shape. Its first floor has two large rooms on the east side which have been connected and two smaller rooms on the west which are separate from the other two. The upstairs area has been partitioned into a large front room with kitchen and baths in the rear. The interior of the building has been completely remodeled with no evidence currently visible of a 19th century appearance other than the pegged window frames on the second floor (Photo #7). These windows are very high, perhaps suggesting the floor has been lowered at some point. The first and second level floors are covered with linoleum and walls of the building encased in modern plywood paneling (Photo #8). There is a full basement.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1810

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Will Morton's Tavern Stand at 137 South Limestone (102 West Vine Street) is significant as a reminder of Lexington's yesteryear to the many pedestrians and automobile passengers who pass it daily on the busy thoroughfares of South Limestone and new Vine. A recognizable size and shape from the early 19th century, it is one of the few survivors to give a sense of time and place to one of the most important areas of modern downtown Lexington. Strategically situated in a block between the South Hill neighborhood to the south and the main business area to the north, and currently vacant, its value is undeniable but its future uncertain.

The lot's history begins when William R. "Lord" Morton, well-known merchant, bought a house and lot fronting on Water and High from William M. Nash, saddler by trade, and Naomi, his wife, in May, 1810. Evidently Nash had many debts as Morton was to pay for "said Nash the amount of an execution...in the sheriff's hand in favor of Winney Webb" and debts due upon bonds as well as the remainder of the purchase price, \$2,000 in 10 installments. In June, 1810 Morton purchased the remainder (3/4) of Inlot #56 for \$450 from North Parker and wife. He evidently built the corner addition (or current building as it now stands) before January 1814 when he sold Inlot #56 in entirety to James Maccoun and William N. Lane.¹ The greatly increased price was \$6,000, an indication that the property was improved. (The price remained the same until 1840.) Lane and George G. Taylor bought out Maccoun's interest that same year.

William R. Morton was a prominent and successful businessman of early Lexington, "whose grand manner and scale of living prompted the townspeople to address him as 'Lord' Morton."² Migrating from Pennsylvania, he opened a general trading store with drugs on the southwest corner of Main and Upper and later a tanyard on Main and Lower (now Patterson). He also served as President of the Kentucky Insurance Company in 1805 and 1806, which was to become the first bank in Kentucky. He built a fine house (Morton House) on North Limestone in 1810, now on the National Register of Historic Places, and took an active role in the community. Serving as Trustee of the City and later a Justice for Fayette, he also was active in Episcopal Church

¹C. Frank Dunn, "Old Houses of Lexington" (Kentucky Historical Society: 1930-50), p. 444.

²Clay Lancaster, Ante Bellum Houses of the Bluegrass (Lexington, 1961), p. 61.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dunn, C. Frank. "Old Houses of Lexington, Kentucky." Unpublished manuscript, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky, 1930-1950.
Fayette County Deed Books: Co. Ct. E-77, Co. Ct. D-395, Co. Ct. K-264, Co. Ct. K-276, Q-250, 9-215, 16-528, 23-79.
 Lancaster, Clay, Vestiges of a Venerable City, Manuscript to be published by Lexington-Fayette County Historic Commission, 1977.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. .05 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	7,1,9	5,2,0	4,2,1,3	6,2,0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C						D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

On southwest corner of South Limestone and West Vine, bounded by building at 139-143 South Limestone and vacant lot at 102 West Vine.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Mrs. James Park, Jr.

ORGANIZATION <u>Lexington-Fayette County Historic Commission</u>	DATE <u>April 1, 1977</u>
STREET & NUMBER <u>253 Market Street</u>	TELEPHONE <u>(606)252-2504</u>
CITY OR TOWN <u>Lexington, Kentucky 40508</u>	STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Eldred W. Melton
 TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE 6/24/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: Charles A. [Signature] DATE 1-3-77
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Will Morton's Tavern Stand

CONTINUATION SHEET

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affairs, giving a lot in 1796 for the erection of a church. "Touched by the plight of 10,000 orphan children left by the cholera epidemic" of 1833, he left \$10,000 in his will to the public school system.³

The Lanes and the Taylors sold the property in 1817 to Samuel Downing and Sons, merchants, who were listed here in the 1818 City Directory. When they sold it to David Megowan in 1833, the deed stated that it was Inlot #56, "the same property now occupied by said Megowan as residence, grocery store and livery stable."⁴ Megowan had been here since at least 1824, when he advertised in the local paper, "whiskey by the barrel."⁵ Inlot #56, which stretched from High to Vine and from South Limestone to Robert Barr's property line, was divided by Megowan, who sold 25 feet on Limestone back of his stable to the City of Lexington for an Engine House and then the stable, reducing the frontage of the corner property to 89 feet on Limestone.

When James Reilly purchased the property in 1839, E. Parker was operating it as a tavern stand, and a tavern it has been for at least half of its existence.⁶ Reilly was already an experienced tavern-keeper, leaving his tavern across Water Street to operate this one. In the 1920s and 30s, it was used as a hardware store and then again as a "Liquor Dispensary" in recent years.

The tavern's golden years were during the ownership of Dennis Mulligan, who bought the building in 1845. An Irish immigrant, strong-willed, devoted to church, family and the Democratic Party, he had come to Lexington with a surveying party and boarded across the street at James Reilly's first tavern. At 76-78 East Vine (now 137 South Limestone) he ran a thriving business combining groceries and a saloon for over 50 years. This spot was the gathering place of Democratic politicians who controlled both local and state governments. A power on the City Council--his opponents called it the "Mulligan Guards"--he was responsible for establishment of the Lexington Fire Department on a modern plan and the macadamising of most of the streets in the city, supervising the construction himself. Upon his death, an editorial praised him: "He was perhaps the most industrious and faithful member--devoting more time and labor to the affairs of

³"William R. Morton Legacy " (The Lexington Herald, March 2, 1896), p. 4.

⁴Fayette County Deed Book 9, p. 215.

⁵Dunn, Old Houses, p. 444.

⁶C. Frank Dunn, local Lexington historian, states in his Old Houses of Lexington: "In June, 1810, Morton bought the corner lot...and soon built the 'Tavern Stand'...." However no other reference can be found to indicate it was used as a tavern at its beginning. When it was a grocery in 1824, whiskey was sold there. Early City Directories listed saloons and taverns only when they were not connected with groceries, etc.

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the city than any of his associates."⁷ As a Catholic, he was instrumental in the establishment of St. Joseph's Hospital, as well as St. Paul's Catholic Church on West Short Street. His only son, James H. Mulligan, became a lawyer, respected judge, state senator, consul to Samoa and author of the poem, "In Kentucky," still quoted in part in almost every political race in Kentucky.⁸ The Mulligans, father and son, built Maxwell Place in 1870, a showy bracketed villa, which became in 1917 the home of University of Kentucky presidents. Will Morton's Tavern Stand was finally sold by Mulligan descendants in 1946.

⁷"Dennis Mulligan Dies " (The Lexington Herald, February 22, 1901), p. 2.

⁸Talk on the Mulligans given by E. I. "Buddy" Thompson, 1975.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Lexington City Directories: 1806, 1818, 1838-39, 1867, 1873-74, 1875-76, 1877-78, 1881-82, 1883-84, 1887, 1888, 1890, 1893, 1895, 1898-99, 1902, 1906-07, 1908, 1911, 1912-13, 1914-15, 1916-17, 1919, 1921, 1923, 1925, 1930.
- Staples, C. R., The History of Pioneer Lexington 1779-1806. Lexington: 1939. Reprinted by Lexington-Fayette County Historic Commission, 1973.
- Talk on the Mulligans given by E.I. "Buddy" Thompson, 1975.
- "William R. Morton Legacy." The Lexington Herald. March 2, 1896, p. 4.
- "Dennis Mulligan Dies." The Lexington Herald. February 22, 1901, pp. 1, 2, 8.



6

Will Morton's Tavern Stand
Lexington
Fayette County
Kentucky

JAN 3 1978

JUL 5 1977

Lexington-Fayette County Planning
Commission, 227 North Upper,
1" = 200' 1968
Map 2. Will Morton's Tavern
Stand indicated by black dot.

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



STAR MILL & DEADY'S

STAR MILL & DEADY'S

CHEAP STORE
LOUNT HOUSE

MAIN STREET

WATER STREET

HUNTS ROW

UPPER STREET

STREET

MULBERRY STREET

STREET

BROADWAY

STREET

CEDAR ST.

STREET

J.O. Harrison

St. M's. Cauby

Leo Tarlton

P. Robertson

R. Higgins

W.K. Higgins

Joel Higgins

Leo Tarlton

69

30

27

2

65

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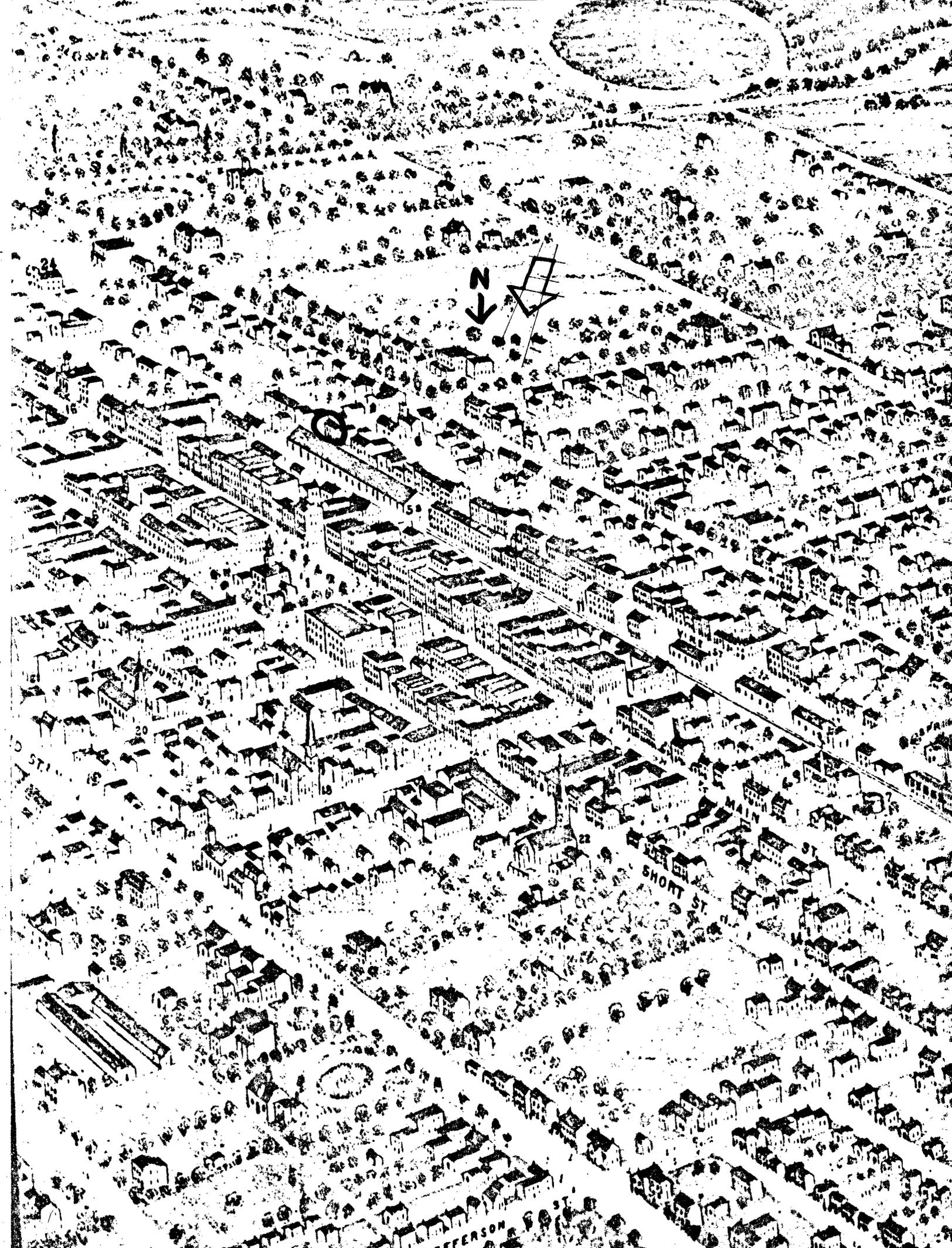
Will Morton's Tavern Stand
Lexington
Fayette County
Kentucky

JAN 3 1978

Hart-Mapother Map of Lexington
No scale, 1855.
Map 3. Site indicated by red
circle.

JUL 5 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Will Morton's Tavern Stand
Lexington
Fayette County
Kentucky

Birds Eye View of the City of
Lexington, Lexington-Fayette County
Historic Commission.
Scale Unknown. 1871.

Map 4. Will Morton's indicated
by red circle. JAN 3 1978

JUL 5 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Will Morton's Tavern Stand
Lexington
Fayette County
Kentucky

JAN 3 1978

Sanborn Insurance Map, University
of Kentucky Library.

1" = 50'

1886

Map 5.

JUL 5 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

1886

Will Morton's Tavern Stand
Lexington
Fayette County
Kentucky

JUL 5 1977

Sanborn Insurance Map,
University of Kentucky Library.
1" = 50' 1907
Map 6.

JAN 3 1978

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

1907