

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only
received SEP 14 1983
date entered

1. Name

historic Arkansas City Commercial Center Historic District

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Summit Street and Fifth Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Arkansas City N/A vicinity of

state Kansas code 20 county Cowley code 035

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Owners

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Cowley County Court House

city, town Winfield state Kansas 67156

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Arkansas City, the largest town in Cowley County, Kansas, is located just north of the Oklahoma border on the Arkansas River. The Arkansas City Commercial Center Historic District consists of five blocks along the main route through the town, Summit Street, which runs north to south, and two small extensions on the main east-west street, Fifth Avenue. The district is made up predominantly of two and three story commercial structures of stone or brick dating from the 1880's, the time of Ark City's greatest development, and buildings from the early 1900's, the time of a secondary boost to the City's growth. The district is anchored north and south by two outstanding buildings. At the north end of the area is the Gladstone (Elmo) Hotel, important historically as the oldest standing hotel in the town, built in 1886. At the south end of the district is the Syndicate Building, also dating from 1886 with important architectural detailing including molded brick and cast iron trim. Both structures were built by prominent south Kansas architect W. A. Ritchie.

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Arkansas City is situated on a hill above the Arkansas and Walnut Rivers which flow to its west and east respectively. The town is laid out on a north-south axis.

Arkansas City was established in 1870 and grew rapidly in its first five years. However, the one and two story early frame buildings were replaced predominantly in the 1880's by more substantial stone and brick buildings, many with elaborate cast iron trim. The town is characterized by wide streets, often part of the appearance of western communities. There is also a preponderance of stone construction, either of entire stone buildings or buildings with stone side and rear walls with brick or cast iron street facades. Most of these stone structures date from 1880's or early 1890's. Those that are entirely of stone construction have facades with regularly cut rock faced blocks with rhythmically repeated rectangular or arched windows. The brick structures of the late 19th century are generally decorated with either molded or standard brick corbeling, cast iron trim and arched openings.

Like most town centers in the late 20th century, the historic district of Arkansas City has new elements out of keeping with the character of the town as established in the 19th century. These "intrusive" structures are fairly scattered through the district but are somewhat more concentrated at its extremities. Also scattered through the district are several outstanding buildings which appear to be eligible individually for National Register listing. Among them are the two anchor buildings already mentioned: the Gladstone Hotel and the Syndicate Building. Other key buildings are the Union State Bank, built in 1883, the Summit Block, a stone structure with an elaborate cast iron front built in 1886, and the Ranney Davis Building dating from 1888 on West Fifth Avenue.

In 1914 there was an oil boom in Arkansas City and a resultant group of early 20th century commercial structures. These buildings include the structure at 205 West Fifth Street, built in 1915, Newman's Department Store, 1917, the rebuilding of the Home National Bank in 1918 and the Osage Hotel built in 1920.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 1880's-90's, 1910's **Builder/Architect** N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Arkansas City Commercial Center Historic District is significant as representing two important periods of the town's history in the 1880's and early 1890's and the early 20th century. The district is worthy of recognition beyond the local realm for its association with an event of national significance, the Cherokee Strip Run of September 16, 1893. As one of the few gateways for the start of this run, Arkansas City played an integral role in the settlement of the Cherokee Strip which is seen by many historians as marking the close of the American frontier. For years before the federal government opened the Cherokee strip, there had been speculation about its availability for settlement. Anticipating the Run, would-be settlers moved to Arkansas City, swelling its population and adding to the boom atmosphere which had begun a few years earlier when depots were established by five railroad companies. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe came to Arkansas City in 1879, followed by the Kansas Southwestern, the Missouri Pacific, the Midland Valley and the St. Louis and San Francisco. Arkansas City's architecture reflects its perception of itself as a growing, prosperous city. A second boom precipitated by the discovery of oil in the area in 1914 brought about another surge of development in the town so that today Arkansas City's appearance illustrates the two main historical growth periods. The district as a whole is significant because it includes the historic commercial and civic center and represents important developments in the growth of Arkansas City. Individual buildings, however, may be characterized as mostly versions of the Italianate and Queen Anne commercial styles, early 20th century commercial vernacular and neoclassical styles. In general the buildings have an air of exuberance in their architectural expression. In particular, the 1880's structures are stylishly built with local stone as the favored building material. Many of the grander buildings of the 1880's were the work of W.A. Ritchie and Company, prominent architects of the time in southern Kansas.

Additional Information

Arkansas City was laid out in 1870 and was first called Adelphi, then Walnut City, then Creswell and finally Arkansas City under which name it was incorporated in 1872. During these early years the town consisted of a cluster of wooden shops and houses. The 1939 Kansas Guide to the Sunflower State mentioned that "The community in these years was a rendezvous for horse thieves who stole stock from settlers in Kansas and drove the animals into Oklahoma. 'Buffalo Bill', the US Marshal made the vicinity his headquarters during the early 1870's."

The character that Arkansas City imparts today is essentially that which it took on in the 1880's after the railroads came, combined with the influence of the early 20th century oil boom. The town in the 1880's began to grow very rapidly. By 1882 the population was 1,300; in 1884 it was 2,800 and by 1886, 5,000. In 1893 the population was 9,264. The city lost almost 2,000 people in 1894 due to the land rush. During the decade of the 1880's, four hotels were built, a canal was established between the two rivers to give water power and a large elaborate opera house was built. Clearly the town saw itself as a growing metropolis.

When the federal government opened the Oklahoma territory for settlement in 1889, and the narrow stretch of land along the Kansas border known as the Cherokee Strip in 1893, a great

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 21

Quadrangle name Arkansas City

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	1 4	6 7 4 3 2 0	4 1 0 3 5 7 0	B	1 4	6 7 4 4 8 0	4 1 0 3 5 7 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 4	6 7 4 4 8 0	4 1 0 2 8 7 0	D	1 4	6 7 4 3 2 0	4 1 0 2 8 7 0
E	1 4	6 7 4 1 1 0	4 1 0 3 1 4 0	F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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 Paula Stoner Reed, Vice President

organization Preservation Associates, Inc. date June 20, 1983

street & number P.O. Box 100 telephone (301) 791-7880

city or town Sharpsburg state Maryland

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 *Joseph M. Gull* date September 7, 1983

title Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Beth Crocker date 10/29/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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rush of humanity burst forth to take up the land. Settlers in the West had experienced hard times in the late 1880's from drought, crop failures and economic depression. Many had lost their farms through mortgage foreclosures and saw the land in Oklahoma and the Cherokee Strip as an opportunity for a fresh start. Hoping for the official opening of these lands, they crowded along the border awaiting the chance to stake a claim. Taken in the context of the economic and political climate of the 1890's, the Cherokee Strip Run and the role that Arkansas City played in the event take on national significance. Conversely, the Cherokee Strip Run played an integral part in shaping the character and appearance of Arkansas City.

The architectural expression of the buildings in the commercial area reflects the mood of the community at the time they were built. Three of the most prominent buildings in the district, the Gladstone Hotel (individually nominated to the National Register of Historic Places), the Syndicate Block and the First National Bank (now the Union State Bank) were designed along with some other buildings in the town by W.A. Ritchie and Co., a prominent architectural firm in southern Kansas. Brothers W.A. and W.J. Ritchie were the principals of this firm which for a time was headquartered in Winfield, Arkansas City and Wichita. The Ritchie buildings stand out as not only stylish but the most flamboyant in Arkansas City. The Gladstone had galleries of delicate cast iron work at each of its four stories; the First National Bank building has an unusual round corner tower with a bell shaped roof; the Syndicate Block has creative repeated arches of round, elliptical and horseshoe forms in walls embellished with corbels and red and black bricks.

The population figures for Arkansas City corroborate the development of the city as outlined above with primary and secondary growth periods occurring respectively in the late 1880's and early 1900's. Since 1893 when the population was almost 9,300, the growth of Arkansas City slackened and became stable. By 1950 the population was 13,616. In the 1980 census the population was 13,201. The rapid growth between 1884 and 1893 is evidenced in Arkansas City architecture, the main indicator of a community's view of itself.

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Between the Rivers: Pioneer Tales of Arkansas City, Kansas. V.I.

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V. 25. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society (1959).

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The district consists of five main commercial blocks along Summit Street and two and a half blocks of Fifth Avenue in the vicinity of Summit Street. The boundaries were chosen to include the main commercial core of Arkansas City with their limits defined by the location of key or particularly significant buildings. Generally, the boundaries follow the property lines of the buildings facing onto Summit Street and Fifth Avenue with the exception of the west side of the 100 block of North Summit which has been eliminated from the district since most of the structures there do not contribute to the district. At the south end of the district, the west side of the 400 block of South Summit, except for the Syndicate Block, a key building, has been eliminated from the district.

The district's boundaries are described as follows: beginning at a point at the north-west corner of the Gladstone (Elmo) Hotel property, 201-203 North Summit, and following its north property line to its northeast corner; then continuing in a straight line across North Summit Street to a point on the east curb line; then south along the east curb line across East Chestnut Avenue to a point on the south curb line of East Chestnut Avenue; then east along the south curb line to a point opposite the rear (east) property line of the property located at 124 North Summit Street; then turning south and following the rear property lines of the lots facing onto Summit Street across East Central Avenue and continuing south to a point opposite the rear property line of the Public Library located at 110 East Fifth Avenue; then turning east along said rear property line to the east property line of the Library; then turning south and following the east property line to its end; then across East Fifth Avenue to the east property line of the former Winsdor Hotel at 115-117 East Fifth Avenue; then following that line to the south property line of the same lot; then turning west and following the south property line and continuing to and across the an alley way to the north end of the rear property line of 210 South Summit Street; then turning south and following the rear property lines of the lots facing onto South Summit Street to the South property line of 414 South Summit Street; then turning west and following said property line to its west end; then continuing west to the east curb line of South Summit Street; then turning south along the east curb line to the north curb line of East Jefferson Street; then turning west across South Summit Street to the north curb line of West Jefferson Street and continuing west to a point opposite the rear property line of 427 South Summit; then turning north along said rear (west) property line to its intersection with the north property line of 421 South Summit; then turning east along said north property line and following it to its east end; then continuing east to a point on the west curb line of South Summit Street; then turning north along the west curb line and continuing to and across West Adams Avenue to its north curb line; then turning to the west and following the north curb line to a point opposite the rear property line of 329 South Summit Street; then turning to the north and following the rear property lines of the lots facing onto South Summit Street to and across West Washington Avenue and continuing to the south property line of 209 South Summit; then turning west across the alley way to the northeast corner of the property located at 210 South First Street; then following its north property line to its west end and continuing in a north-westerly direction across South First Street to the southeast corner of 201-203 West Fifth Avenue; then continuing west along the south property line of it and adjoining properties to an alley; then continuing across the alley in a southwesterly direction to the southeast corner of the former Carnegie Public Library property; then following the south property

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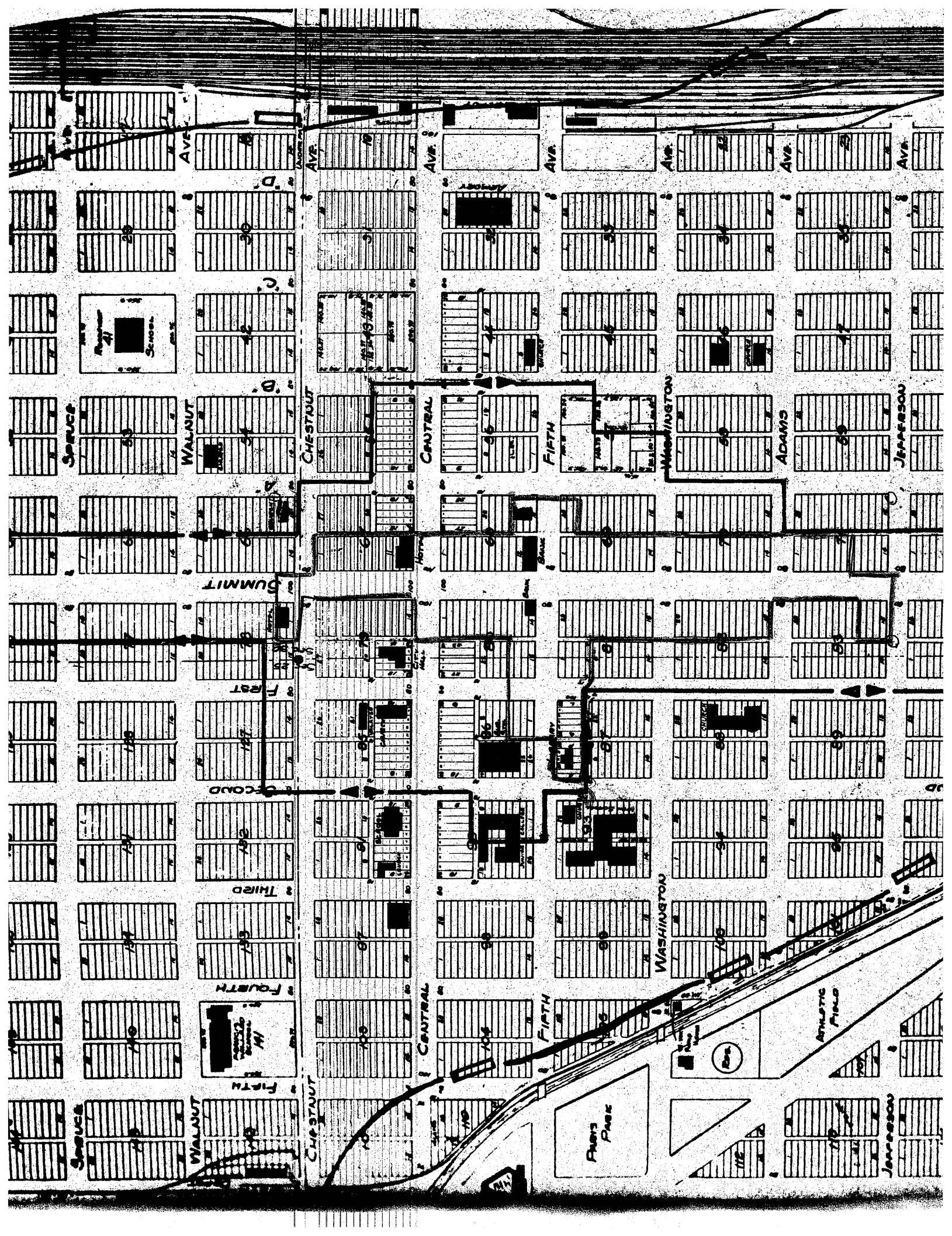
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line of the said Carnegie Library to its southwest corner; then turning north and following the west property line to its northwest corner; then turning east and following the property to its northeast corner; then turning north across West Fifth Avenue along the west property line of 208 West Fifth Avenue to the southwest corner of the property located at 117 South First Street; then turning east along said property line to its end and continuing across South First Street and along the north property line of 114 South First Street to an alley; and continuing across the alley to the rear property lines of the buildings along the west side of Summit Street; then turning north and following said rear property lines to West Central Avenue; then continuing north across West Central to its north curb line; then turning to the east along the north curb line to the west curb line of North Summit Street; then turning north and following the west curb line to and across West Chestnut Avenue to the north curb line of West Chestnut Avenue; then turning west and following the north curb line to a point opposite the rear property line of the Gladstone (Elmo) Hotel; then turning north and following the said rear property line to the place of beginning.



SPRUCE

WALNUT

SUNNIT

FIRST

SECOND

THIRD

FOURTH

FIFTH

AVE

CHESTNUT

WALNUT

FIRST

SECOND

THIRD

FOURTH

FIFTH

AVE

CENTRAL

WALNUT

FIRST

SECOND

THIRD

FOURTH

FIFTH

AVE

FIFTH

WALNUT

FIRST

SECOND

THIRD

FOURTH

FIFTH

AVE

WASHINGTON

WALNUT

FIRST

SECOND

THIRD

FOURTH

FIFTH

AVE

ADAMS

WALNUT

FIRST

SECOND

THIRD

FOURTH

FIFTH

AVE

JEFFERSON

WALNUT

FIRST

SECOND

THIRD

FOURTH

FIFTH

LABORATORY

21
SCHOOL

21
SCHOOL

Rivers
Park

Athletic
Field