

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 6 1986  
date entered APR 3 1986

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

1. Name

historic Seiter, Joseph House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 307-309 Berry Avenue not for publication

city, town Bellevue vicinity of

state Kentucky code county Campbell code

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence 2 Family
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Raymond P. Schlosser and Jo Anne Schlosser

street & number 307 Berry Avenue

city, town Bellevue vicinity of state Kentucky 41073

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Campbell County Courthouse

street & number 4th & York Streets

city, town Newport state Kentucky 41071

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(CP-B-20)  
title KY Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

date 1985 federal  state county local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<u>XX</u> excellent	<u>    </u> deteriorated	<u>XX</u> unaltered	<u>XX</u> original site
<u>XX</u> good	<u>    </u> ruins	<u>XX</u> altered	<u>    </u> moved    date _____
<u>    </u> fair	<u>    </u> unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

## 1. Summary paragraph

The Joseph Seiter House, built in 1894, is a two and a half story, assymetrical brick Queen Anne House located at 307-309 Berry Avenue. The house was built as an offset side-by-side duplex, designed to resemble a single family residence yet function as a two-famimly dwelling. The Seiter House is sited on a narrow, level lot on the east side of Berry Avenue between Lake and Divisions Streets (see map), and is part of an intact neighborhood of late nineteenth and early twentieth century residences.

## 2. Context

The Seiter House is located in the city of Bellevue, Kentucky which was incorporated in 1870. Bellevue is located in the northernmost part of Campbell county, on the south bank of the Ohio River opposite Cincinnati. Like many other Ohio Valley river cities, Bellevue possesses a rich and diverse concentration of historic architecture. The Joseph Seiter House is part of Seiter's addition to the city of Bellevue, which is located near the western edge of the city's historic core area. The house is one of the most visually prominent buildings in the Addition, an area of the city known for its distinctive and heterogeneous architecture.

## 3. Exterior summary

The Joseph Seiter House is an eclectic, high style example of the Queen Anne mode, and incorporates elements of each of the style's major sub-types. The body of the house utilizes "patterned masonry" construction; the porches add both "free classic" and "spindework" details; the dormers and verge boards contribute "half timbered" decorations.<sup>1</sup> (Photos:1, 2, 3)

## 4. Masonry description

The Seiter House is especially noteworthy for the quality of the masonry work incorporated in the home. The irregular coursed limestone rubble foundation is faced with limestones laid in a coursed ashlar pattern. Other stonework on the body of the house includes sandstone lintels, sills, and water table. The decorative stone of the facade is limestone, the face textured with a cupped out pattern. (Photo 4) This stone is used for the facade's water table and the four belt courses which incorporate the sills and lintels of the facade windows and door. It is also used for the sill and lintel of the attic window and the lower half of the "quoin" window surround on the large left front window. (Photo 5)

## 5. Patterned brickwork

The body of the house is composed of soft brick laid in an American bond pattern but having every 8th. course as a header. The facade is made from a harder brick laid in a running bond. Decorative brickwork is also used on the house including ashlar faced bricks to complete the "quoins" around the left front

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	___ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
___ 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1894-1895

Builder/Architect Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### 1. Summary

The **Joseph Seiter House** is significant for its association with a prominent early resident of Bellevue who played a pioneering role in the development of the city from 1868 until his death in 1903. Although the house has undergone alterations over time, it remains one of the more elaborate and stylish Queen Anne residences in the city.<sup>1</sup> The most notable feature of the Seiter House is its eclectic use of Queen Anne stylistic elements, especially the patterned masonry in the facade's pilasters, stepped cornice/frieze, and window surrounds. The house is one of several late nineteenth century Bellevue and east Newport structures displaying these hallmarks of a still anonymous mason.

#### 2. Early History

Joseph Seiter, 1821-1903, was a native of Baden-Baden (Germany). He emigrated to the United States in June of 1837 at the age of sixteen to join the growing German immigrant community of Cincinnati, Ohio. After learning the trade of a tailor, he opened his own shop on Broadway in the commercial center of Cincinnati where he developed a loyal clientele among the riverboat men. He became "one of the prominent and successful businessmen of Cincinnati identified with many of her early interests."<sup>2</sup> In 1854 Seiter married Margaret Guilfoyle, herself an immigrant from England. Since she supervised the construction of the current Queen Anne house, her being English may have influenced their choice of house styles. Together they raised a family of nine children.

In June of 1867 Seiter purchased from Albert S. Berry a tract of undeveloped land which was to become Seiter's Addition to Bellevue. Berry was a prominent Newport real estate investor and local politician who was later elected U.S. congressman. Berry had purchased the land the year before from Henry and Susan Timberlake. Together Berry and Henry Timberlake had laid out the original plan for Bellevue on the land from the estate of General James Taylor. The Taylor family was related to President Zachary Taylor and had been the leading family of Newport Kentucky for many years. Susan Timberlake (formerly Tibbats) was Taylor's granddaughter and heiress to part of his estate. Seiter subdivided the land after his purchase reserving lot #17 for his own small cottage which was similar to the four comprising "Seiter's Row" (311, 317, 319, 323 Berry Avenue) that remain standing to the south of the present house. Seiter continued to gradually sell the lots in his addition as it became one of the

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

An Atlas of Boone, Kenton, and Cambell Counties, Kentucky, Philadelphia:

D.J. Lake & Co., 1883. Location: Kenton County Kentucky Library,  
Covington branch (br.).

Campbell County Kentucky, Records of the Clerk, Deeds.

City of Bellevue, Records of the Clerk, Building Permits and Tax Assessments.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.135 acres

Quadrangle name Newport, Ky.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	7	17	5	6	10	4	13	3	11	0	10	10
Zone			Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing						

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### 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
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Raymond P. Schlosser (owner) assisted by Margo Warminski

organization \_\_\_\_\_

date August 14, 1985

street & number 307 Berry Avenue

telephone (606) 291-4294

city or town Bellevue

state Kentucky 41073

## 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

*David L. Morgan*

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date 3-30-86

### For NPS use only

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

*Joyce M. McPherson*  
Keeper of the National Register

entered in the  
National Register

date

4/3/86

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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window and the entire "quoin" surround of the paired windows on the second floor. (Photo 6) This ashlar brick is also used to form the arch above the "mushroom" window on the northern elevation. Patterned brickwork is used to create pilaster-like structures at the junctions of the facade on the second story. The tops of these pilasters have a two brick stepped pattern which is expanded to four courses to produce a cornice for the 307 side. (Photo 6) A staggered step variation containing alternately 5&6 courses extends forward on the 309 side producing a frieze at the base of the front facing gable. (Photo 7) Patterned brickwork also evidently is used in many of the seven chimneys which project through the roof at various points, but these were cemented over at an undetermined date.

6. Roof line

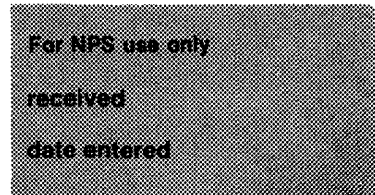
The main roof is hipped with two gabled protrusions, one extending forward over the projection of the right facade and the other extending above the cutaway bay on the northern elevation. This bay is supported by simple arched corner brackets with ball finials. The pediment of the side gable is filled with wooden shingles and two windows decorated with circular buttons and an incised vine-like pattern. Many dormers also break up the roof line. A two window gabled dormer extends above the 307 side decorated in a half-timbered design over wooden boards which mimics the larger gabled roof extension to the right. Two gabled dormers extend from the northern side and a matching pair extend from the southern side of the roof. These show the same button/incised vine decorations found in the pediment above the bay. Two shed dormers extend from the rear of the roof. The original gray slate roof was lost due to excessive damage caused by an asphalt coating and had to be replaced by fiberglass/ asphalt shingles in 1981.

7. Porches

The porches of the Seiter House incorporate many important decorative features. Slightly off center on the facade entering the 309 side is a gabled porch having free classic elements of rounded "dentils" and a dendritic vine-like wood pattern in the pediment. This porch is supported by squared pillars in front and matching pilasters behind, all set on stone piers. (Photo 8) The main entrance to the 307 side is on the northern elevation and is protected by a shed roof representing the left side of a gable and having decorations identical to those of the facade porch. This porch is supported by stone piers and two sets of tripled free classic columns. A second door on this side enters the kitchen and is protected by a half hipped roof and a porch decorated with spindlework elements including sawed corner brackets and spindlework posts. The original standing seam metal roof remains on this porch. (Photo 9) While the upper parts of these porches have survived basically in tact, the rails and

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floors have deteriorated. The floors were replaced by concrete and the foundation of the 307 kitchen porch was rebuilt with concrete blocks at an unknown date. The rails are to be reconstructed. The rail for the 307 kitchen porch will incorporate spindles salvaged from the 307 entry porch.

8. Fenestration

Most of the fenestration of the house uses double hung 1 over 1 windows and is original to the house. Attic windows are single pane casement windows hinged inward. An art glass transom stretches above the large, single pane, first floor window in the facade of the 307 side. An exception to the 1 over 1 pattern is the 309 front parlor window to the right of the porch which shows a Queen Anne pattern to the lights of the upper sash. The Queen Anne pattern is characterized by a larger central pane surrounded by several smaller panes. This pattern is repeated in the facade porch door and the main entry door for the 307 side. All of the entry doors have single pane transoms. An unusual "mushroom" window appears on the northern elevation in the second floor front bedroom. This window has a standard 1 over 1 double hung sash but the upper sash is flanked by two arched sidelights. (Photo 10) Only two of the original windows have been removed. One now provides the door to the back porch addition and a second was enclosed by the addition and covered in a 1980 remodeling of the 309 kitchen.

9. Major alterations

The exterior of the house, in summary, remains essentially intact from the original except for an incompatible porch/garage addition that was made on the 309 side c.1960. This addition also caused a rerouting of the cellar stairs of the 307 side. The 1st story of the addition is made of concrete block and the 2nd story is frame with a red shingle exterior. (Photo 11) Final restoration plans call for reconstructing this addition with more appropriate materials.

10. Floor Plan

The floor plan of the Seiter house is controlled by its duplex nature with a common wall dividing the house. The right half of the house (309 side when facing) projects about 17", thus breaking the facade into two sections. The 307 side extends about 8' past the original 309 section to allow for a larger entry room. This larger entry room also allows for a bath above it while the baths on the 309 side are positioned at the rear of the house along the common wall. The layout of the two sides, otherwise, is similar. Both have double parlors with the entry way and main stairs to the second floor located between the parlors. Service stairs to the second floor and attic are behind the back parlor creating a small hallway to the connecting kitchens. These service stairs on the 309 side have been enclosed between the first two floors. The kitchens both have

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pantries which provide access to the basement. The principle bedrooms are above each of the parlors and smaller rooms are placed above the kitchens. The attic half-story is divided into three sections on each side but were finished rooms only on the 309 side. At an unknown date the back 1/3 of the roof on the 307 side burned and was repaired. Plans call for this attic to be finished into a library, bedroom, and bath. The principle rooms of the house average about 14'/15' with the ceilings having a height of 10 1/4' on the first floor and 10' on the second.

Most of the original woodwork and the decorative cast iron door and window hardware remain in the Seiter House. The mantles demonstrate a variety of artistic techniques. Three mantles on the 309 side are excellent examples of late nineteenth century marbled iron. The second floor mantles have additional geometric and Japanese inspired designs. (Photos 12, 13) The front parlor mantle of the 309 side and all of those in the 307 half are composite designs made from prefabricated carved oak pieces. Each mantle has a different form but the fireplace surrounds and hearths throughout the house are made from art tiles manufactured by the Kensington Art Tile Co. (formerly of Newport, Kentucky). (Photos: 18, 19) As the 307 side was intended to be the Seiters' principle residence, the more elaborate interior appointments are on that side. Excellent examples of the yellow pine woodwork exist in the pocket doors of the parlors (Photo: 15), the fretwork panel above these doors (Photo: 16), and the massive Victorian styled main stair (Photo: 14). An unusual original limestone sink and splash back remains in the bath (Photo: 17) and the front rooms of the first floor have an approximately six inch wide plaster cove molding as a cornice. This molding has been damaged by water in several places but its restoration is planned. The front parlor and entry room also have a thick oak floor installed c. 1930 which covers the original pine floors of the house.

12. Concluding statement on interior

While none of the decorative treatments for the walls remain, much of the structural materials and most of the original floor plan, including many built in closets, survive in tact.

End Notes

1. Virginia McAlaster, Lee McAlaster, Field Guide to American Houses, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984. Source for classifications of Queen Anne styles.

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first "subdivisions" of Bellevue when it was incorporated in 1870. He slowly retired from business and, in the midst of the depression of 1893, he and his wife moved to one of the cottages at the rear of their property near Poplar Street. They then tore down their original house and began construction of the current Queen Anne duplex in 1894.<sup>3</sup> The building of the house evidently continued into 1895 as the Seiters first moved into the 309 side of the house ( then numbered 65 ) apparently as the other half of the duplex was not yet finished. They then moved to the 307 side ( formerly #63 ) where Seiter lived until his death in 1903 after a lingering illness. During this interval they rented out the 309 side of the duplex. Seiter was eulogized as one of Bellevue's pioneer citizens who was "prominently connected with the affairs of the city"<sup>4</sup> and who did "much toward the improvement of the city."<sup>5</sup>

**3. Subsequent History**

Shortly before his father's death, the eldest son, Edwin, purchased the house. The property remained in the Seiter family until 1920. Since that time the house has passed through several hands, the most notable of which was Olive Vail. For many years beginning in the 1920's, Olive Vail operated a dance studio and school in the front rooms of the 307 side, thus accounting for the thick hardwood flooring overlay in those rooms. Vail's studio became an important cultural and social gathering place in Bellevue which is still remembered by many of the residents.<sup>6</sup> The hardwood flooring, therefore, while not original to the house, has become an intregal part of the Seiter House's on going history. The house was later (c. 1960) divided into four apartments. The current owners aquired the property in 1984 when they completed a land contract purchase begun in 1980. The property is currently being restored.

**4. Significance of the Seiter Addition**

While the specific nature of the civic contributions of Joseph Seiter mentioned in his death notices remains undocumented to date, he clearly deserves recognition as the developer of Seiter's Addition to Bellevue. The tract is slightly over four acres and is bounded on the north by Fairfield Avenue, on the south by Division Street, and runs between Berry and Lafayette Avenues. The blocks contained within the addition have considerable significance for the local history of Bellevue. First, the cottages of "Seiter's Row" ( c. 1868 ) are among the oldest extant housing in the city. Second, Seiter sold his three prime lots fronting Fairfield Avenue to Julius Balke who constructed an opera house on them in 1886. This opera house also housed the town offices, fire department, and most of the town's civic organizations- including Granville Moody: Post #89



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of the G.A.R.. The Balke flats ( 1888 ) behind the opera house at 207- 209 Berry were the first apartment buildings in the city. Finally, the addition is significant because it developed into a highly desirable but not exclusive residential district. Its proximity to the town hall attracted many of Bellevue's early civic leaders. Gus Harms, secretary-treasurer of the Bellevue Water, Fuel, and Gas Light Company and mayor of the city in the early 1890's, built his home at 235 Berry prior to 1883. Douglas Schoolfield, one of the first physicians in town, lived and had his practice at 241 Berry. Albert Fuhrman, a Cincinnati lumber dealer, had his home at 249 Berry Avenue. Seiter's son-in-law was a successful milliner who lived next door to his father-in-law at 305 Berry. Eugene Shinkle (a civil engineer) and Captain Russel G. Shinkle (secretary-treasurer of the Cincinnati and New Orleans Pilot Association) both lived at 317 Berry in one of the small cottages of "Seiter's Row".

As the area continued to fill in, the addition underwent selective redevelopment as some early vernacular buildings were torn down to make way for larger and more fashionable residences in the manner of Seiter's own homes. This process was completed shortly after the turn of the century. Seiter's Addition, therefore, represents a living record of the city's progress and an area that was truly the heart of early Bellevue.

#### 5. Conclusion

The Joseph Seiter House itself represents one of the most important houses in the Seiter Addition and has been intimately connected with the history of Bellevue since the city was founded. The exterior of the house and its interior appointments are fine examples of late nineteenth century craftsmanship, most of which have been well preserved. With the bulk of the original fabric remaining, the Seiter House, represents a testament to the life of an upwardly mobile, nineteenth century, immigrant businessman.

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#### Endnotes

1. This is all the more noteworthy because Bellevue as a whole possesses relatively few high-style Queen Anne homes. Although many good examples of other residential abound ( Italinete, Princess Anne, and Classical Revival), ornate houses dating from c.1888-1900 are few.
2. Charles T. Greve, Centennial History of Cincinnati and Representative Citizens, Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1904, p. 848.

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3. March 15, 1894: Building Permit #672 was issued to Mrs. Joseph Seiter for the construction of a house costing \$5000. City records of the Bellevue clerk's office.
4. The Cincinnati Enquirer, December 26, 1903, p.6.
5. The Commercial Tribune, December 26, 1903, p.3.
6. Thomas Fischer, ed., Bellevue Kentucky, From Past to Present, Centennial issue privately sponsored, 1970, p. 33.

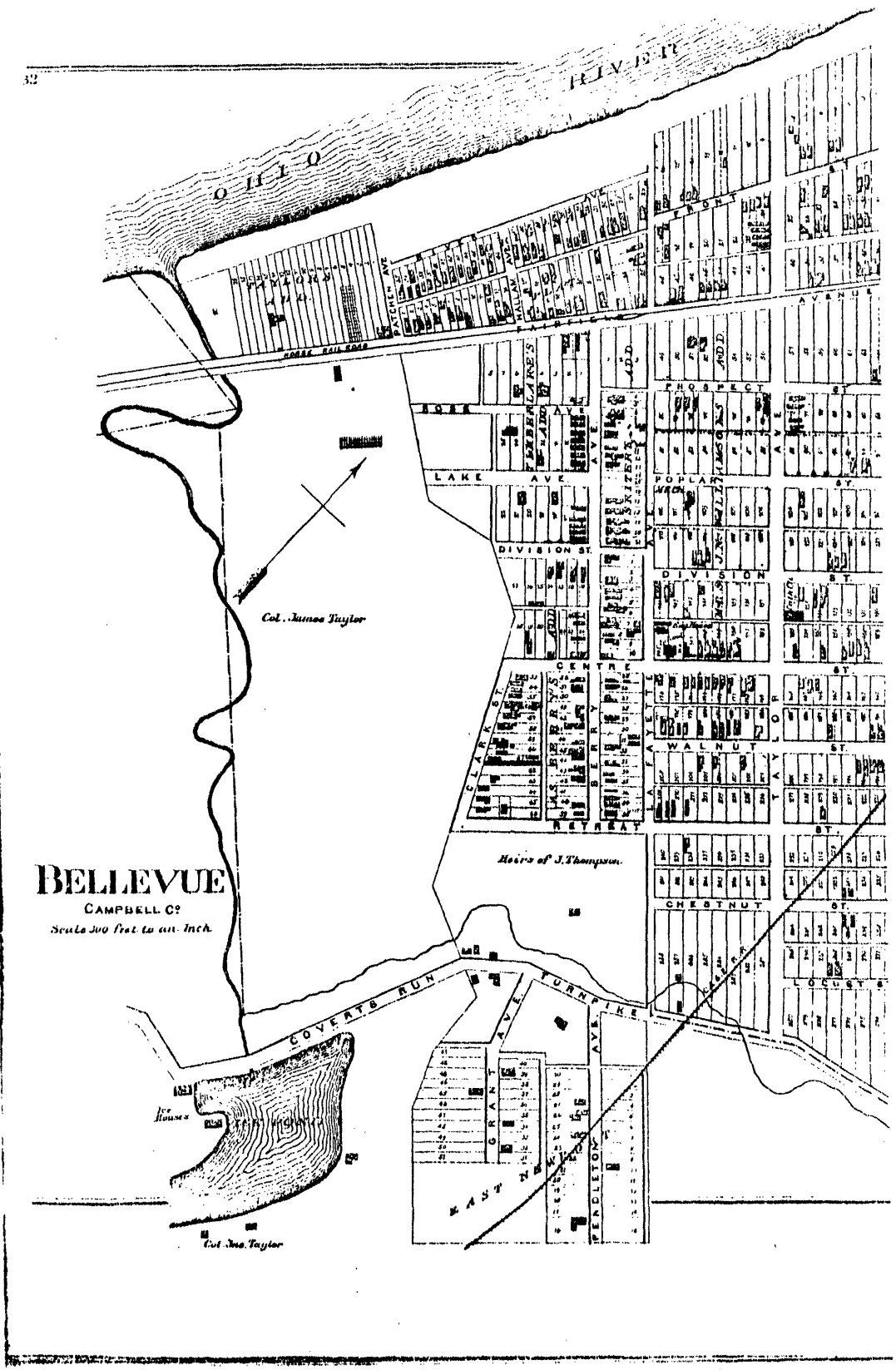
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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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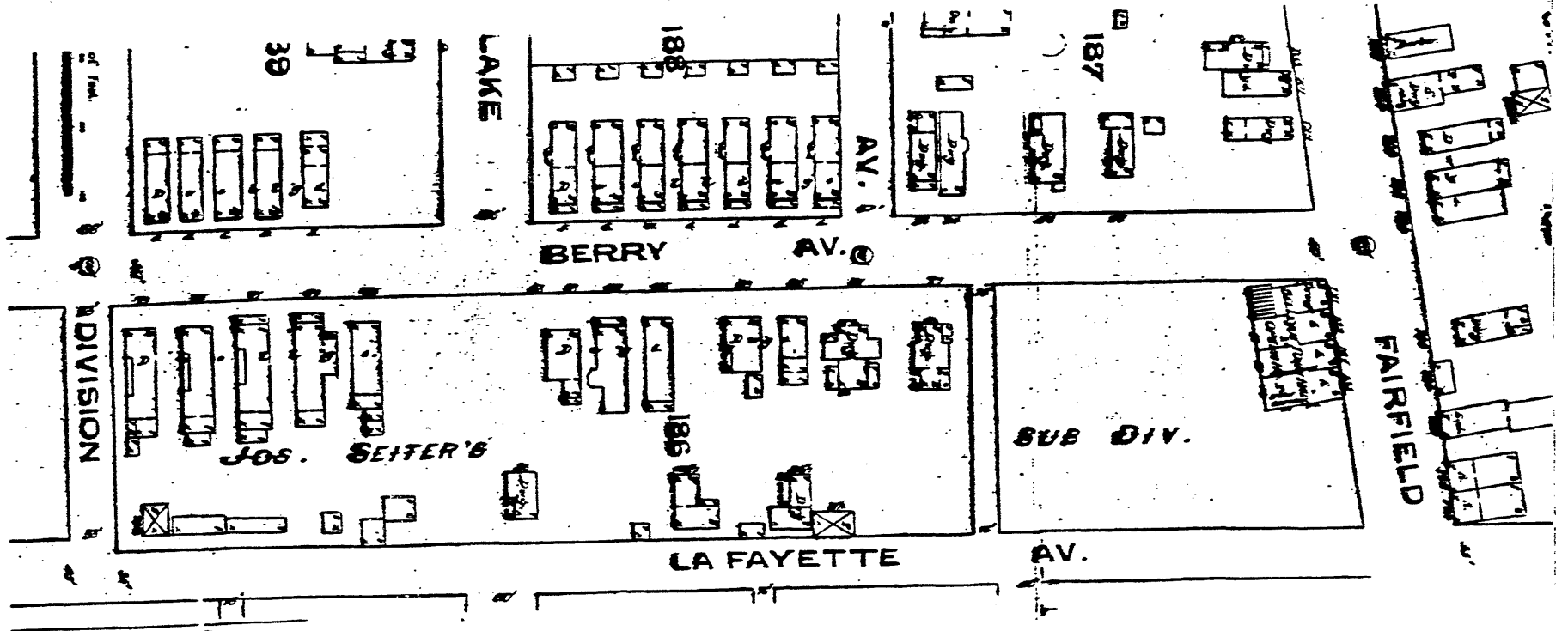
Verbal Boundary Description and Justification:

The boundaries as defined here follow the legal description of the property, which encompasses Lot #14 in the Seiter Addition to Bellevue as well as ten feet of the southern portion of Lot #16 as follows: beginning at a point, A (see map 5), that is in the easterly line of Berry Avenue and ten feet north of the southerly line of Lot #16 in the Seiter Addition to Bellevue; thence southwardly with the east line of Berry Avenue 52 1/2 feet; thence eastwardly 111'11"; thence northwardly 52 1/2 feet; and thence westwardly 111'11" toward Berry Avenue and the point of origin.



An Atlas of Boone, Kenton & Campbell Counties, KY, Philadelphia: D. J. Lake & Co., 1883. Location: Kenton County Kentucky Library, Covington Branch  
**MAP 2**

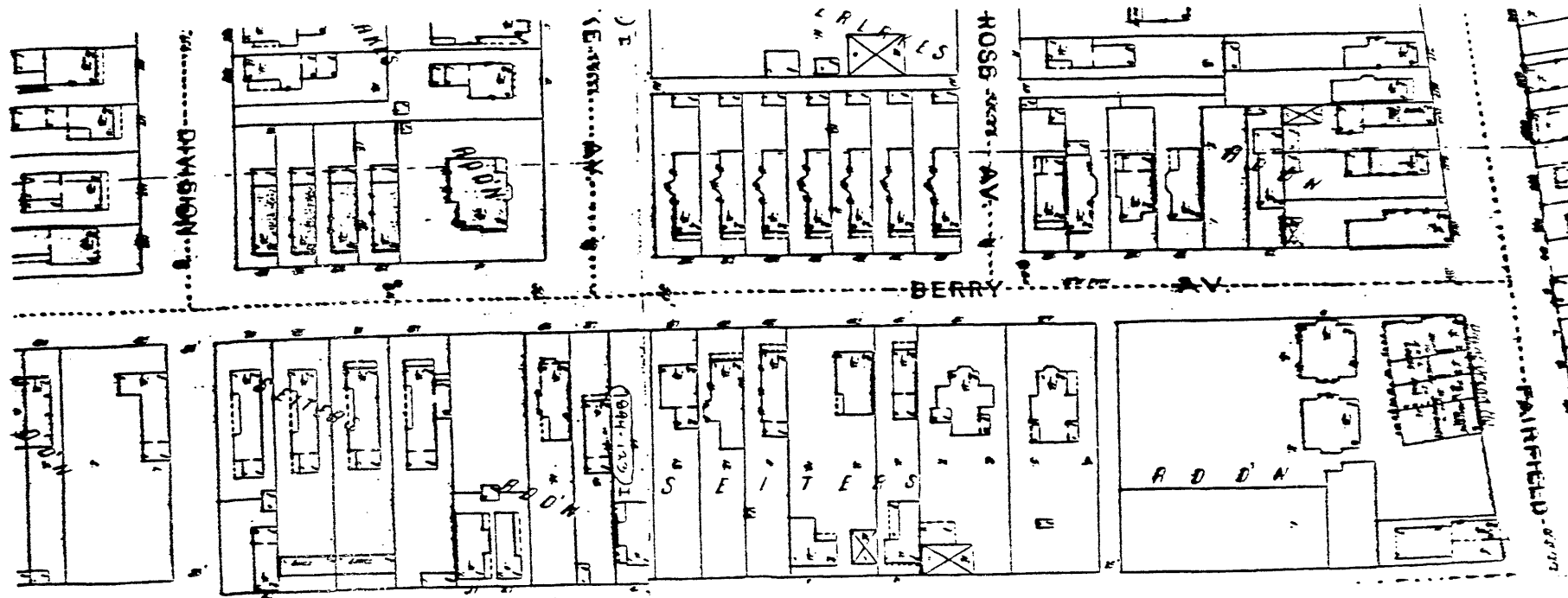
An Atlas of Boone, Kenton, and Campbell Counties, Ky., Philadelphia: D.J. Lake & Co., 1883. Location: Kenton County Kentucky Library, Covington branch.



Sanborn Map of Seiter's Addition to  
Bellevue, Kentucky. 1886

MAP 3

Sanborn map of Seiter's Addition to Bellevue, Kentucky. 1886.



Sanborn Map of Seiter's Addition to  
Bellevue, Kentucky. 1894

MAP 4

Sanborn map of Seiter's Addition to Bellevue, Kentucky. 1894



46-2

50

Boundary Map - Shown on Sanborn Map, 1910 (boundaries shown in red)

MAP 5

WILLIAMSON ALLEY

POPLAR ST.

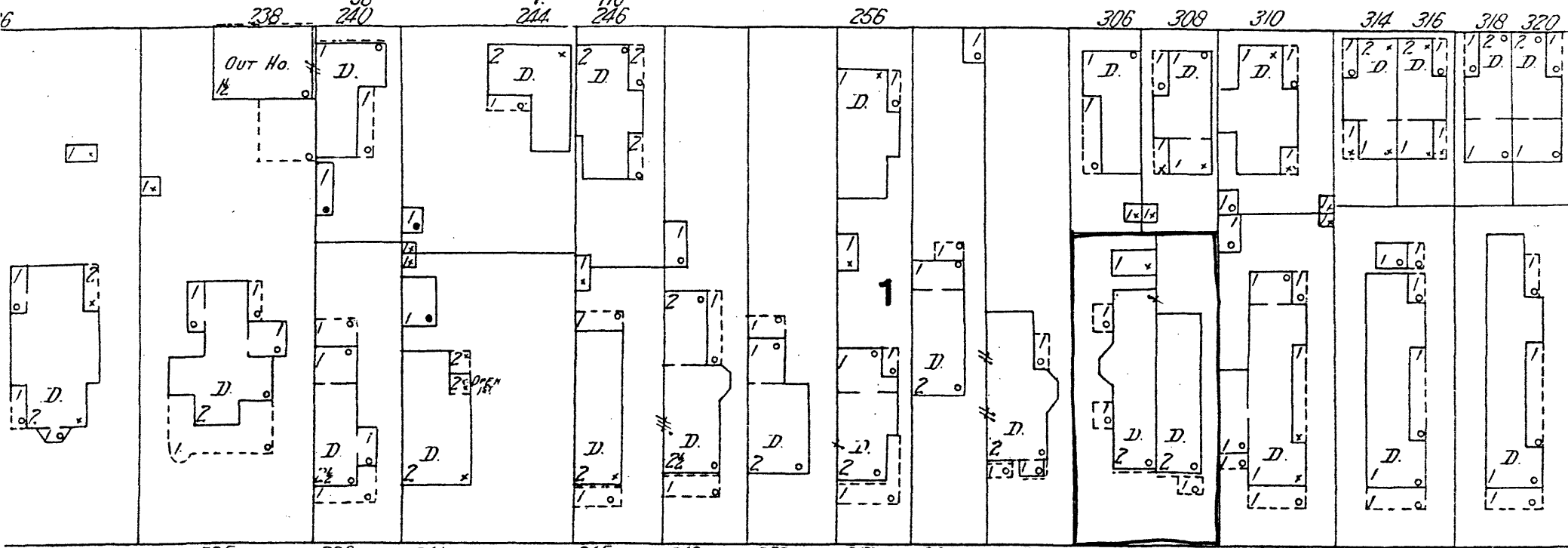
CHURCH ALLEY

H. 4" W. PIPE

D.H.

LAFAYETTE

AV.



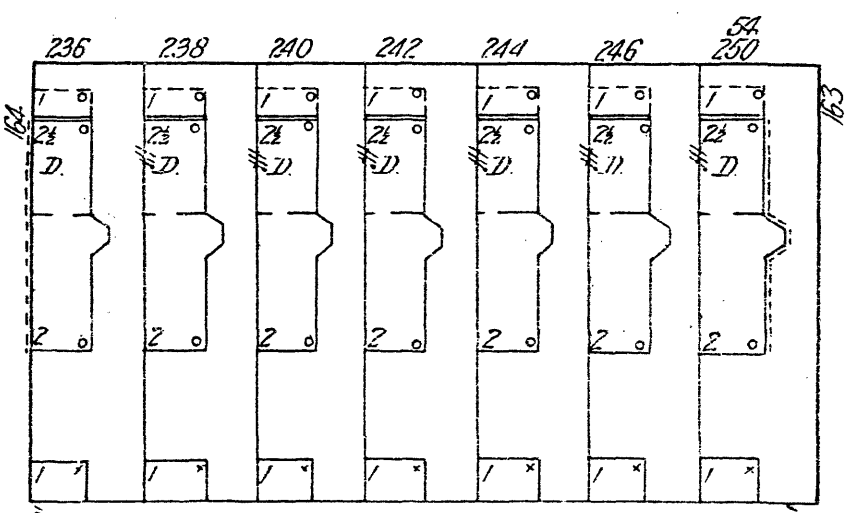
227 235 239 241 245 249 253 PATROL 257 259 305 307 309 311 317 319

8" W. PIPE

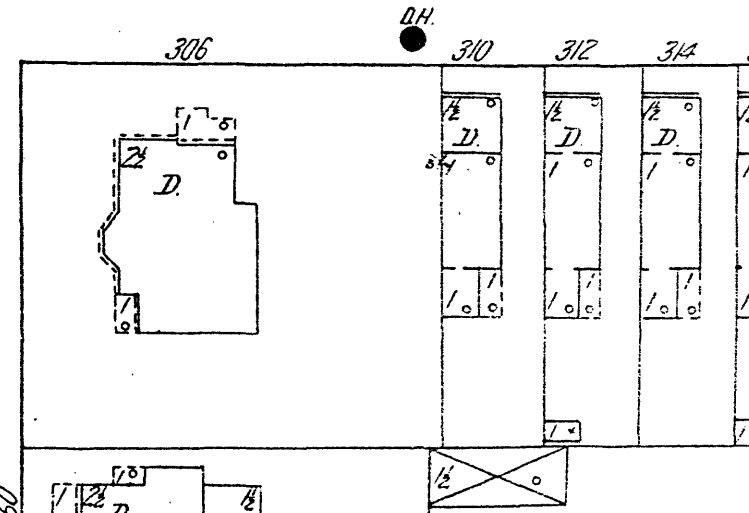
BERRY

AV.

Joseph Seiter House  
Bellevue, Kentucky



4" W. PIPE



Sanborn map showing the current house's outline at 307-9 Berry, Seiter's second house on this site, 1910.



Joseph Seiter House, Bellevue, KY  
 Photographic Key  
 Shown on Bellevue Zoning Map, 1984

MAP 6

No. 672

Bellevue, -Ky., Mar 15 1894

BUILDING PERMIT ISSUED TO

Mr. Joseph Suter to erect

Character of Improvement Building

Purpose of Improvement Dwelling

Material Brick

Size 30 X 60 Feet.

Height 30 feet

Price \$ 5000<sup>00</sup>

No. of Lot #16 & 17 Suter addition.

Street Perry

Between Division & Lake

Probable time of occupation of Street 90 da

Chas L Harrison

City Clerk.

No. 95

Bellevue Town Taxes for 1870  
August 1870

J. S. Suter \$  
lots 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

13 Lots  
J. S. S.

\$9100<sup>00</sup> assessed per 100

Paid 22.75

Total Amount, \$

No. 96

Bellevue Town Taxes for 1870  
August 1870

Jas Saver \$  
Lot 19

J. S. S.  
\*1600<sup>00</sup> assessed per 100

Paid 4.00

Total Amount, \$

COPY OF TAX BILL FOR 1870 SHOWING  
THAT JOSEPH SEITER STILL OWNED MUCH (13 LOTS)  
OF THE SEITER ADDITION WHEN BELLEVUE  
WAS INCORPORATED IN 1870.  
THE SEITER HOUSE WAS LOCATED ON LOT #17.  
AND PART OF #16. TAX BILL #95

COPY OF THE BUILDING PERMIT ISSUED  
FOR THE PRESENT STRUCTURE WHICH WAS  
HIS SECOND HOUSE ON THE SAME SITE.

SOURCE: RECORDS OF THE CITY OF BELLEVUE