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

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HISTORIC				
Butchertov	wn Historic District			
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2 LOCATION				
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Generally speaking, the Butchertown Historic District lies between Main Street and Story Avenue on the south, the floodwall on the north, I-65 and the Penn Central right-of-way on the west, and the Beargrass Creek from Spring Street to the Pumping Station on the east. Washington Street forms a central axis through much of the district, ending at Adams Street on the east. (For the exact boundaries, see 9)

The development and continuity of Butchertown can be traced vividly through a series of historic maps and views (labelled H, attached; most of them are reproduced from Samuel W. Thomas, Views of Louisville Since 1766).

The area was originally bounded by two forks of Beargrass Creek (see Historic Map 1). The main branch originally emptied into the Ohio about 3rd Street in downtown Louisville, considerably to the west of its present mouth. This branch was filled in during the mid-1850s, although its course remains definable and forms the approximate northern boundary of the district. The Muddy Fork from the east and the Middle Fork from the south meet approximately at the eastern tip of the district, while the South Fork joins the Middle Fork near the present Bourbon Stockyards at the southwestern corner A modern expressway (I-65) forms the western boundary, dividing the of the district. neighborhood from the downtown commercial and industrial area (see U.S.G.S. map). Another north-south expressway, I-64, unfortunately divides the historic district near its center, although the old east-west streets provide a strong enough axis to maintain continuity from one end to the other. The access ramp to the Big Four Railroad Bridge connecting Kentucky and Indiana formerly also traversed the district in a north-south direction, reaching ground level near the Bourbon Stock Yards, where the several The bridge is no longer used, however, although remnants railroad lines connected. Furthermore, a tangle of expressways connecting of the ramp remain (see photo 3). with the east-west expressway, I-71, follows approximately the old channel of Beargrass Creek to the north of the district, although some primarily industrial and commercial development lies between the district and the highway system. These highways take the place of the old turnpikes that entered Louisville from the east at Butchertown, and still provide a smaller-scale network within the district.

These boundaries include numerous structures and areas that might be considered intrusions in a district of more overtly homogeneous character. Since Butchertown is now and historically has been characterized by such socio-economic diversity and mixed uses of land, however, these "intrusions" form an intrinsic part of the district (see the Historic maps and views), and will not be listed here as such. The mixed character of the district is, if anything, overemphasized in the modern photographs because of the distortions of perspective. Within the boundaries there is a definite sense of identity, partly because of the everpresent overlapping transportation systems and a few conspicuous landmarks such as the twin spires of St. Joseph's Church, and partly because one is seldom if ever out of sight of residential structures--and therefore of human scale, however varied individual dwellings may be.

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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"Centennial Anniversary, S			
Johnston, J. Stoddard, ed.	. Memorial History	of Louisville from Its	<u>First Settlement to</u>
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SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

At one time, in the early 19th century, the area now known as Butchertown was the easternmost outpost of Louisville, retaining a suburban character at least until midcentury. The main sources of identity were the Frankfort Pike connecting the mercantile city of Louisville at the Falls of the Ohio River with the fertile Bluegrass region of central Kentucky, and Beargrass Creek. The roads and the forks of Beargrass Creek, which virtually encircled the district, and still define its boundaries and character, were the determining cause of the area's rapid development and distinctive character in the second half of the 19th century.

Much of Butchertown was once the farmland of Colonel Frederick Geiger, a distinguished veteran of the War of 1812, who about 1815 built a country house on the Frankfort Pike that may still exist as part of the large house on Linden Hill at the junction of Story Avenue (photo 12). Past his property were driven great droves of cattle and hogs, then the staple products of the Bluegrass, as thoroughbred horses are today. Bound for market in the South, they were driven to Louisville where the Ohio River at the mouth of Beargrass Creek provided convenient transportation to the Cotton States.

Although some of the animals were shipped live, it was more practical to butcher them in Louisville, salt the pork and pickle the beef, and pack it in barrels. Thus, the packing business in Louisville began early--no exact records were kept--but Louisville's first city directory, published in 1832, reveals that 12 butchers served the needs of the city's own tables and the packing business as well. Already two butchers were up on the east end of Main Street near today's Bourbon Stockyards--which didn't exist then. Probably they chose the location to get first choice from the droves of animals coming in the Frankfort Pike, and because it was close to Beargrass Creek--providing the water needed in the butchering process and serving as a handy drain. In Butchertown's prime, it is said, the creek ran red with blood from the slaughtering.

Louisville's butcher business was eventually to be dominated by the thrifty Germans who began arriving in the U.S. by the thousands after the failure in their homeland of the Revolution of 1848. Even before then, other Germans were emigrating and the two most important butchers in Louisville as early as the 1830s were two Germans: Frederick Bremaker and Peter Kliessendorf.

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On the other hand, the boundaries provide relatively clear dividing lines between areas of mixed use with a substantial proportion of surviving historical fabric, and blocks either completely industrial-commercial or entirely 20th-century in construction date. The south side of Story Avenue from where it separates off Main Street east to Spring retains only a slight scattering of older structures, with little or no sense of continuity. The north bank of Beargrass Creek from Spring to the Pumping Station remains relatively unspoiled and represents the historical raison-d'être for the area's existence and character. Unfortunately, the floodwall has physically split several streets lined with modest but compatible older residences off from the main axis of Butchertown. However, these dwellings are still part of the fabric of Butchertown; farther behind them to the north in most cases lies land of an incompatible character and use, mainly industrial associated with the innumerable railroad tracks and cut off from surrounding areas by the tangle of expressway interchanges north almost to the Ohio River. The northwestern blocks included in the designation have suffered a particularly high rate of attrition, but include several individual structures traditionally associated with Butchertown, such as the house Thomas Alva Edison lived in at 729 East Washington between 1866-1868 and the fine double house at 729 Franklin Street, as well as a number of rare surviving Greek Revival vernacular townhouses.

The Butchertown area contains a number of local architectural landmarks. Among them 1 is St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church (photos 35-38). The church, of brick trimmed with stone and terracotta insets, was designed by Adolph Druiding, a St. Louis and Chicago architect who had drawn plans for more than one hundred churches in America. The church is built without interior pillars, affording an unobstructed view of the altars. The main reredos, an intricately carved structure of wood, reaches nearly to the The church was completed in 1885 with the exception of 57-foot-high vaulted ceiling. the twin spires which were completed in 1905-1906. The 175-foot towers are the tallest church spires in the city of Louisville. They identify Butchertown and make a prominent landmark for those traveling on the nearby expressways. (Also within the γ_{\perp} district are a very handsome and elaborate 1891 German Methodist church complex at the corner of Main and Shelby Streets (photo 18; it was probably designed by the fine local firm of Clarke and Loomis) and a modest but charming frame church on East 3 Story Avenue (photo 11; now unfortunately aluminum-sided).

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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- Immediately across from St. Joseph's is a handsome old fire station with a Baroque balustrade supported by stone pilasters set within the facade overlooking Washington Street (photo 39). It was built in 1873 under the influence of Senator J. M. Letterle for whom it was named. The station has now been converted into an attractive interior decoration shop, one of the earlier adaptive uses in the recent revival of the area.
- On the corner of Adams and Washington Streets is still standing the building which William Gnau had built in 1875 as his family residence and place of business (photo 42). William Gnau Groceries, Provisions, and Feed Company was one of the oldest groceries in this locality. This building now also houses an interior decoration shop and the residence of its proprietors. The structure has been kept very nearly original on the exterior. It has a sister building in the 1400 block of East Main Street, which is entirely original, including the delicate iron work above the first floor windows (photo 21). Nearby is "Bakery Square" (photo 32), once a large local bakery, recently successfully converted into a cluster of shops and restaurants--one of the latter, appropriately called "The Stable," is located in the ample former stables that enclose the cobbled baker's yard.

The center of Washington Street is climaxed by the great Victorian double houses now used effectively as the Wesley Community House (photos 25 and 26). It is said that the a elaborate shingle-style house across the street was built for the daughters of the same Farther west on Washington is the modest but historic duplex cottage in which man. the young Thomas A. Edison lived from 1866 to 1868, when he worked in Louisville as a telegraph operator (photo 23). The house itself is typical of the vernacular dwellings of the area, which range from the early Greek Revival townhouses (see photo 22, left) through 11 many versions of the one-story "shot-gun" house, usually with the two-story rear portion known as a "camel-back." The shotgun houses may ultimately have a source in African structures of the "Slave Coast" transmitted through Haiti and New Orleans in the early 19th century and thence north along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Those in Louisville appear to date from the second half of the century, and are mainly associated with the Germans who immigrated into the city by the thousands in the mid-19th century and who, of course, formed the backbone of the butcher industry. Some shotguns, like the "Edison House," are double. (See photos 13, 16, 19-20, 28, 29, 30, 34-35, 40-41, 49, 50.)

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Throughout the area the "standard" larger houses, mixed in with the smaller shotguns, whose facades are often reduced versions of them, are the two or two-and-a-half-story Italianate townhouses known locally as the "Whitestone type" because they represent vernacular versions of the superb townhouses and villas designed by Louisville architect Henry Whitestone. These brick residences feature rich dentillated and/or modillioned cornices on the facades; segmental, round, or flat arched window heads, usually with brick or elaborate castiron hoodmolds; and raised brick courses connecting the attic twindows (see photos 11,21,31,42). One example of this Italianate type, recently restored, has a prominent location on Adams Street at the head of Washington (photos 43-44). Others housed John Story, for whom the avenue was named (photos 4-5), and the founders of the famous Hadley Pottery (photo 14); the latter now serves as an art gallery and school of art.

Many of the later houses in the district, both single and double, are of frame construction and have less classical trim and such features as bay windows and varied porches (see especially photos 16, 19, 24).

Toward the west end of Franklin Street, north of Washington, is a fine early double house, said once to have been a tavern. It is one of the most impressive pre-1850 residential structures near the downtown area (photo 9). One of the most amusing houses in the) area is the tiny cottage with an extravagant porch treated in the "Venetian Gothic" style, echoing on a smaller scale one of the houses on St. James Court, the upper-class residential enclave south of downtown Louisville (photo 27).

The Story Avenue section is somewhat more compact than Washington and Franklin Streets, with some quite grand houses (photos 14-16). At 1642 Story is the former "Last Chance Tavern," once the last tavern before the Brownsboro Turnpike on the way out of town. Its architecture is very much like that of the mid-century houses, but the lower story had a store-front (now walled up), supported on cast-iron columns. A considerable number of this type of mixed use remain, particularly along East Main Street (photos 18, 20, 21); the others house corner groceries and saloons (photos 11, 26, 28) elsewhere in the district.

10 The Bourbon Stockyards, still the economic core of Butchertown, is located at the southeast boundary of the proposed district, between Baxter Avenue and East Main Street.

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- ¹⁰ The present Stockyard Exchange Building (photos 1 and 2) was designed by the Louisville firm D. X. Murphy and Co. in 1914. It has some of the most extravagant Beaux-Arts terracotta work in Louisville on the Main Street office block, which provides a kind of ceremonial screen in front of the vast array of functional sheds that house the actual stockyards, which are ranged along the labyrinth of railroad lines along Beargrass Creek (photo 3).
- Other significant commercial-industrial structures in the district also relate to the stockyards. The "Grocers Ice and Cold Storage Company" on the northeast corner of Main and Hancock Streets has an unusually handsome and original facade of two-tone yellow brick and terracotta. Abstract geometric patterns suggestive of the building's function as a storage vault frame a plain brick surface in the center, whose void is broken by the recessed panels with the firm name in elegant raised letters. The office windows have a more classical trim of keystoned lintels, flanked by interiorized quoins, yet the overall effect recalls some of Frank Lloyd Wright's early designs for similar blocklike structures. Steel beams are used here both decoratively and to span the wide first-floor openings.
- A smaller but elegant turn-of-the century building opposite the Stockyards houses a A veterinary supply company, and the byproducts of the slaughterhouse are still processed in older buildings in the area. Adjacent to the present Caudill Seed Co. warehouse (photo 6) there remains, barely visible, a painted sign for the "Louisville Butchers Hide and Tallow Co." (photo 7), a consortium of "boss butchers" organized in 1873 to maximize profits. And in the northern extremity of the district is a modest frame shed housing the "Tri-City Hide and Tallow Co." (photo 51). Also, the interesting Hadley Pottery building east on Story Avenue is said once to have been a candle factory (photo 10). Most of the newer warehouses and other industrial buildings in the area seem to have taken the place of similar earlier factories (see photo 31).

In the back streets (some of them split down the middle by the floodwall (photos 13, 50; note the herringbone brick sidewalks)) and alleys, a few still cobbled (photo 41), survive many other features of 19th-century urban life that contribute to the unique and still viable character that is Butchertown's.

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As Louisville developed into the pantry of the Cotton Kingdom, the droves of cattle and hogs arriving became immense--sometimes 50,000 hogs at once to meet the demand for salt pork. Special inns sprang up in Louisville, offering accommodations for the drovers and pens where the stock could be kept until it was sold. Probably the first was the Bourbon House of about 1834, out on the Pike in today's Butchertown at what is now the corner of Story and Cabel (formerly spelled Cabell). It was the beginning of the Bourbon Stock Yards (photos 1-2), which opened in its present location in 1869 and soon absorbed all the other yards that had grown up around other drovers' inns.

As the butchering and pork-packing business grew, skilled German butchers were attracted to Louisville, settling along the Pike (it became East Main Street in the late 1840s, Story Avenue in the early 1870s) near the drove yards, building their shops facing the street, their slaughtering sheds in the rear along the creek. It was these independent "boss butchers" who caused the area to be tagged "Butchertown" as early as the 1850s. They supplied Louisville's home tables, the hotels and the steamboats, bidding on choice animals at the drove yards and offering strictly fresh cuts at their stalls in downtown market houses. By the end of the Civil War, Louisville's butcher population had grown to nearly 200, employing perhaps another 150 journeymen butchers and apprentices, and nearly 80% of them were located in Butchertown.

The meat-packing business, although it suffered severe competition with the opening of Western grazing lands after the Civil War and the rise of the Chicago packers, continued to be important. In the 1850s the Beargrass Pork House, between Cabel and Webster north of Quincy, was said to be the largest in the nation. Packing was mainly a winter business in the days before refrigeration and the pork-house whistles livened the morning air on cold mornings in Butchertown, calling workers from the shotgun cottages to hurry to work so the packing could be dispatched while the cold spell was on.

Meanwhile the "boss butchers" were growing affluent and building themselves big comfortable brick homes. In 1869 the Germans organized the Metzger Verein (Butcher's Society) at Ehrmann's Halle, still standing at 1663 Story Avenue, and began sponsoring gala annual balls, street parades and picnics. John M. Letterle, "boss butcher" and City council man, was the first president of the Society and the man who used his political influence to secure a firehouse for Butchertown (photo 39). It housed steam pumper #10,

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the "John M. Letterle," and today it is Allen House at 1419 East Washington, one of the many new businesses that is infusing Butchertown with fresh life. Directly across the street from it is St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, founded in 1866 to serve the large German population (photos 35-38).

Another Butchertown resident with political influence was builder John W. Story. When the old Turnpike received its third and last name, it was named for him. Other street names in the area interestingly invoke the early republic: Washington, Franklin, Adams, Quincy, Buchanan, and Webster.

The 40-year period after the Civil War marked Butchertown's economic high-water mark. In addition to the butchers, the packing houses, tanners, coopers, and soap and tallow makers (see photos 7, 10, 51), other enterprises began moving in. The woolen mill opened about 1864 at Frankfort and Story. Today the lot where it stood is the site of the annual Oktoberfest. A furniture factory opened in 1870 at Washington and Webster. Today it is Bakery Square (photo 32).

Two breweries opened in the late 1860s, and in one--the Franklin Street Brewery--young John F. Oertel learned his trade, and later opened his own Butchertown Braueri on Story Avenue in 1892. Those were the years when the beer flowed freely at tree-shaded Woodland Garden, which occupied the whole block between Wenzel and Johnson, Main and Market, just south of the present district. Famed <u>Courier-Journal</u> editor Henry Watterson had fond memories of Woodland Garden of the late 1860s: good music, good beer, good sausage, good cheese, and a pretzel.

And it was in the late 1860s that a young Western Union telegrapher, Thomas A. Edison, boarded in the house at 729 East Washington (photo 23). It is recounted that his Louisville stay was cut short when he was fired because one of his innumerable experiments ruined his boss's office rug. Now Butchertown, Inc., the neighborhood association, owns the house and hopes to restore it.

The eastern portion of what is now included in the Butchertown area contained several other industries, such as those located in the present Hadley Pottery factory (photo 10).

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Although this was originally a candle manufactory dependent on by-products of the slaughtering process, later in the 19th century a number of other products were made there. It is believed to have been the first industrial structure in Louisville to be wired for electricity. It is rumored also to have been an underground railroad station during the Civil War. It was George and the late Mary Alice Hadley, proprietors of and designers for the pottery, who instigated the revival of the eastern part of Butchertown in the early 1960s. Their own house (shown at the left in photo 14; now an art gallery and art center) is a rather grand one, a typical large Victorian single row-house with a tall brick facade adorned with a heavy cornice and lavish door and window trim. The cool, high-ceilinged rooms and dignified but enriched character of houses such as this one have much appeal, and represent a vernacular version of the mansions that once lined Broadway in downtown Louisville.

One of the distinctive aspects of Butchertown is that ambitious houses such as the Hadleys' are intermingled with more modest wooden ones, often of the "shotgun" type, not to mention small shops and various industrial plants; there is little consistency of scale or use, or apparent economic level. This very heterogeneity gives the area as a whole a paradoxically consistent character different from, say, Old Louisville where each street has its own scale and economic level, or Germantown to the south with its preference for "shotguns" or "hunchbacks" as they are called by older residents of the area. This architectural diversity is also reflected in the social diversity that has been maintained by the recent renewal of interest in Butchertown. The newcomers, many young professionals, have fitted-in in a remarkably harmonious manner with the remaining residents, whether with Thus a true neighborold German families or the more recent working-class residents. hood continuity has been retained and even invigorated, thanks not only to the efforts of the newcomers, but also to those of the 'natives." It is not the individual buildings, their functions, or their inhabitants that give Butchertown its unique flavor: that identity is due to the willingness of a diversified group of people to live and work together to preserve and improve their neighborhood.

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[Langsam, Walter E.] <u>Metropolitan Preservation Plan</u>. Louisville: Falls of the Ohio Metropolitan Council of Governments, 1973.

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Much of the Statement of Significance is derived from research by George H. Yater based on city directories and trade records. Members of the research staff of the Louisville Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission, students of Walter E. Langsam at the University of Louisville, and members of Butchertown, Inc., have also contributed.

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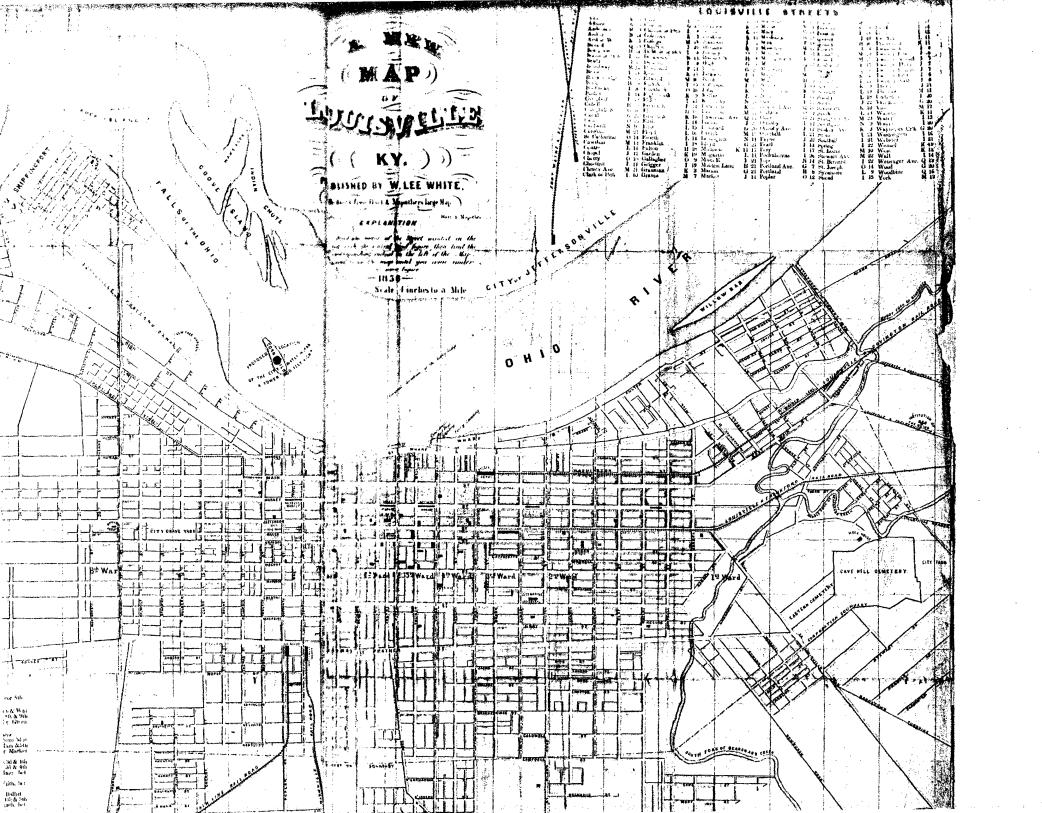
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and the east side of Ohio Street. The northern boundary follows approximately the floodwall from Ohio Street to Hancock, but includes on the north side of the floodwall the properties on both sides of Ohio Street above Washington; directly north of Quincy Street; north of Geiger; properties directly west of Campbell north of Geiger; those on the north side of the 700 block of Franklin Street; and thence west along the floodwall to the Penn Central right-of-way and along the latter to the starting point.



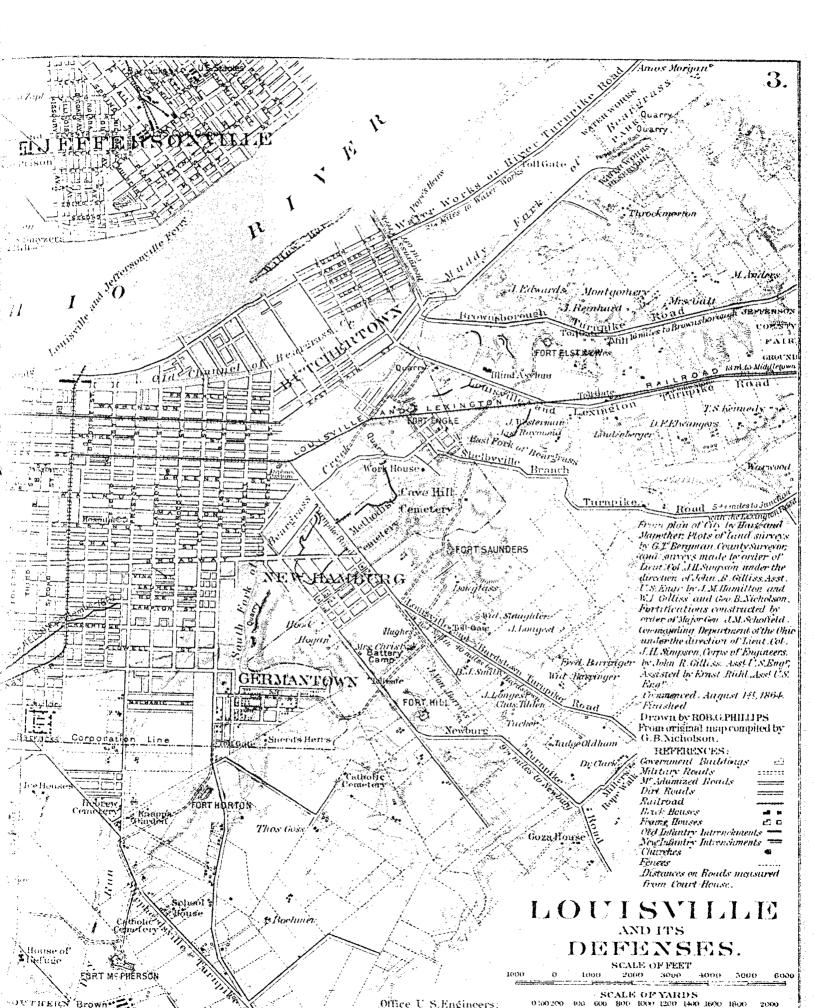
Butchertown Historic District, Louisville, Jefferson County, Ky. H 1. Detail from "A New Map of Louisville, Ky." (1856), frontispiece of W. Lee White, ed.,

Louisville City Directory, 1855-56 (Louisville, 1855), reproduced from S. Thomas, ed., Views of Louisville, pp. 100-101. The historic downtown core of Louisville is in the center (under the legend); Butchertown is to the east (right). The approximate boundaries of the district are marked. Note the newly-closed channel of Beargrass Creek north of

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Butchertown, and the prominence of the Louisville & Covington and Louisville & Frankfort Railroad lines running through the district.



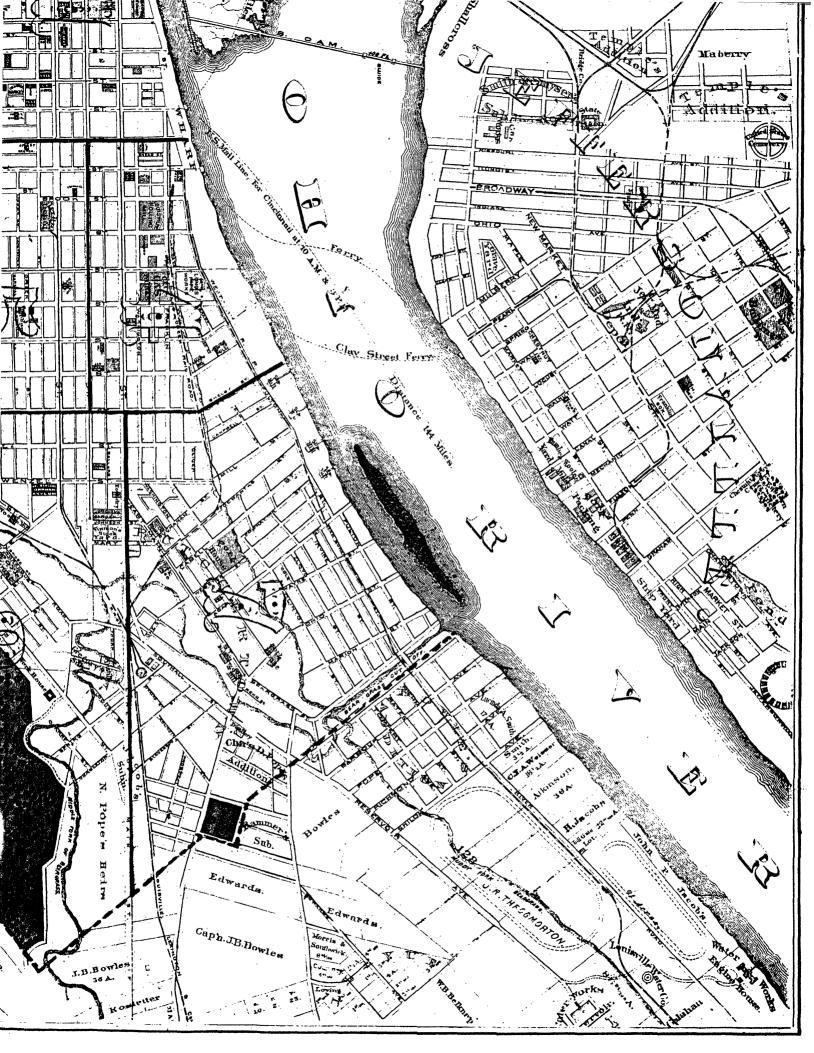


Butchertown Historic District, Louisville, Jefferson County, Ky. H 3. Detail from "Louisville and Its Defenses" (Office of U.S.

Engineers, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1865). Reproduced from S. Thomas, ed., <u>Views of Louisville</u>, pp. 126-21. The area east of Wenzel is now

labelled "Butchertown." The "old Channel of Beargrass Creek" is clearly indicated. The significance of the other transportation routes is also apparent.





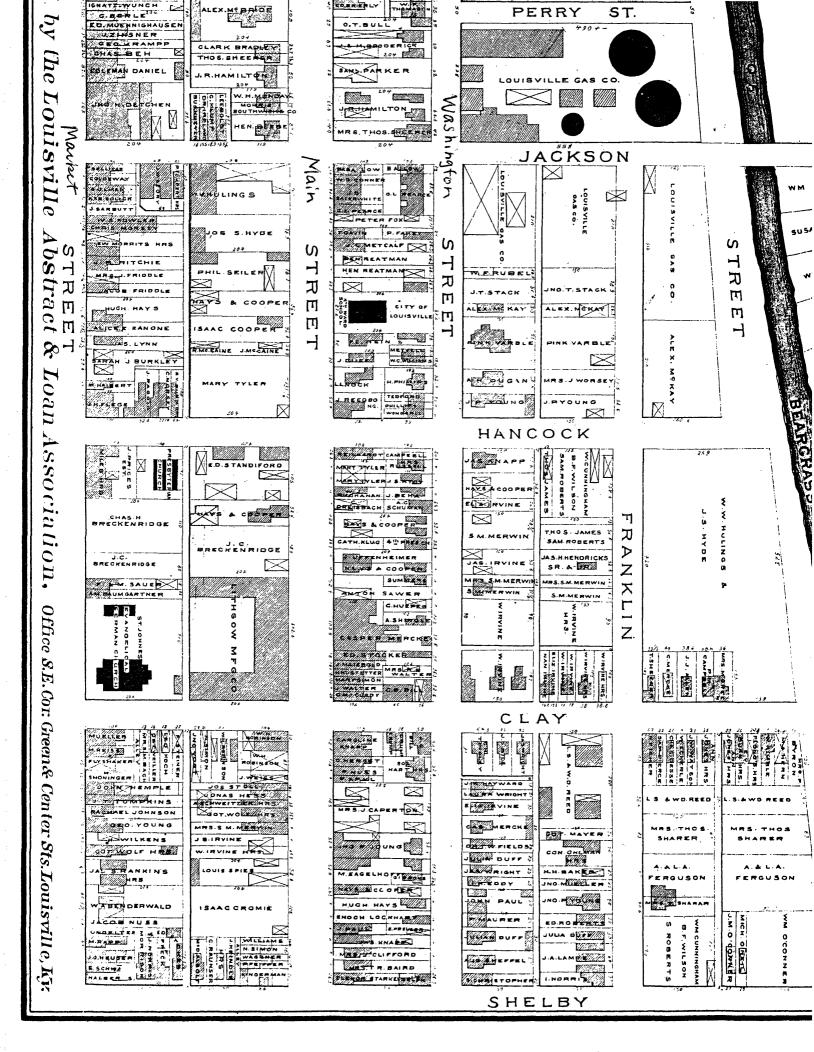
Butchertown Historic District, Louisville, Jefferson County, Ky. H 4. Atlas of the City of Louisville, Prepared and Published by the Louisville Abstract & Loan Assoc.

1600'=1'' 1876. Index Map. Butchertown is area marked at ''7.'' The area north of the original bed of Beargrass Creek no longer exists

as such. Note the location of of "Visman's Stock Yard" at approximately the site of the present Bourbon Stockyards, and the several "Pork Houses" in the area.

Part of the Hadley Pottery building may also be shown as a distillery.





Butchertown Historic District, Louisville, Jefferson County, Ky. H 5. Detail from Atlas of the City of Louisville (Louisville Abstract & Loan Association, 1876).

This detail shows the western portion of the district, not traditionally considered part of Butchertown until isolated from the downtown

area by the expressway that runs north-south over Hancock Street (in center here). Several structures shown in photos 22-24, 27, can be identified here.

