

## Geoffrey Williams

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**Sent:** Friday, March 05, 2010 9:28 AM  
**To:** Clingan, Thomas  
**Subject:** RE: Found a map with the St. Mary's Park NYSCT-early SUNYA playing fields  
**Attachments:** St Mary's Hall 96dpi.jpg

Hi Tom,

I found my citation for the acquisition of St. Mary's Park but unfortunately it was written two years later and doesn't give a precise date of the State's acquisition of the 10 acres in 1945.

<H2>1945</H2>

<BLOCKQUOTE>

<P><B><I>GENERAL</I></B> </P>

<P>Ten acres of St. Mary's Park deeded to the State of New York by the City of Albany for a gymnasium, health education building and athletic fields for the NYSCT. (See the project description list, 8/13/47, attached to letter from L. A. Wilson to Dr. Milton G. Nelson, Acting President, NYSCT, August 13, 1947. Folder Construction-Draper, Husted Hall, etc., Box 12, President E. R. Collins Records) </P>

I also just located a slightly different description of the transfer in a April 1945 Alumni Quarterly ("Alumni Day Message from Dr. Sayles," p. 2) which records the remarks President John Sayles would make to the Alumni Annual Reunion which would be held on June 16, 1945. Sayles was describing all of the plans he had developed to enlarge the college after WW II. In addition to the plans for construction of the Richardson Annex and Draper Annex, that would in the 1950s bring the façade of the Downtown Campus right to Washington Avenue, and the plan for a third dormitory and student union on Alumni Quad (what became Brubacher Hall) Sayles says that "The City of Albany has given us a ten-acre tract across the road from the men's residence hall between Partridge and Erie Streets on Washington Avenue...." and he planned to build a health center, a modern gymnasium with a swimming pool, and playing fields on the site for a full physical education program. He reiterates these points in the speech he gave at Alumni Day. My assumption is that this places the actual land transfer between the City of Albany and the College somewhere between January and early April 1945.

The other thing that I discovered is that the Varsity Tennis Team was apparently created or recreated (we had had varsity tennis teams over the years off and on going back to the turn of the century) in the spring of 1959 under Coach Hathaway, and I wonder if that means that the tennis courts were actually built in the late 1950s. Once the courts were constructed I can't believe the college wouldn't have immediately introduced a varsity tennis team. None of the other structures that Sayles planned for St. Mary's Park were built--the health center or the gymnasium with a pool. I wonder if playing fields were built on St. Mary's Park. Sayles never saw any of his plans come to fruition as he was forced to resign in 1947 due to failing health. His successor, Evan R. Collins, got credit for all of the construction that Sayles had planned.

I have attached a couple of photos of St. Mary's Hall as a dormitory. The interesting thing is that it did have a street address of 816 on State Street for St. Mary's Hall but a 1946 map of the campus in the Student Handbook for the Class of 1950, shows a dotted line for State Street running through St. Mary's Park (meaning it didn't really go through the park), and a 1947 map in the Student Handbook for the Class of 1951 shows the "St. Mary's Housing Project" on the north east corner of Partridge and Washington Streets but no State Street running through the park. A brief article called "Plans for Veterans Housing," State College News, April 1946, p. 1, says that the barracks called St. Mary's Hall being occupied and/or

possibly built in the fall of 1946. The wording of exactly what was being done is a bit unclear. St. Mary's Hall was intended to house some of the influx of veterans in the post World War II GI Bill days. Other veterans had the much more palatial home at the corner of Sprague and Washington named Vanderzee Hall when we had it, and it later became the home of the Catholic Bishop of Albany. St. Mary's Hall was apparently torn down in the summer of 1952 (State College News, May 2, 1952, p. 1) *States Adviser should file Residence Files*

*apparently was done on Washington. You would probably refer to men & women tennis courts.*  
I did find reference to 1956 NYS appropriations to plan for 12 tennis courts on Washington and the draining of St. Mary's Park in the an article "State Legislature Gives Money for Construction," State College News, April 13, 1956, p. 1. From the photo in the 1960 Pedagogue it certainly looks as if there were a great many courts constructed. Presumably 1957 legislation actually appropriated money to construct the new tennis courts. I also found a reference to Coach Hathaway handing out uniforms supplies in the early 60s from a building beside the courts so that may be the building you see in the photograph right beside the courts. If those courts were clay you would have needed a maintenance building beside the courts to store sweeping equipment, replacement tape, hoses, etc., and it may have had a small locker room. Interestingly in 1959 the area began to be called Veterans Field in the student newspaper, perhaps a reference to the fact that the land was originally used to house former vets from 1946 through 1952. The last references to Veterans Field occur in the fall of 1965 and I did find a 1971 Albany Student Press article about the new Albany High School, then just pilings in St. Mary's Park from the accompanying photo, that refers to the city's acquiring the park land in 1965. I wish I could find something a bit more authoritative from 1965 or 1966 about the turnover. The 1965 articles refer to inter-mural football being played on Veterans Field through November, so in addition to the tennis courts there must have been some type of level playing field.

Geoff

-----Original Message-----

From: Clingan, Thomas [mailto:Thomas.Clingan@albanycounty.com]  
Sent: Thursday, March 04, 2010 6:18 PM  
To: Geoffrey Williams  
Subject: RE: Found a map with the St. Mary's Park NYSCT-early SUNYA playing fields

*"New Albany High Back  
to Drawing Boards"  
SAN, April 21, 1973 p. 12*

Geoff:

This is great confirmation of the existence of these courts right up against the south side of Washington Avenue. The three houses behind the 1960 team photo appear to be the same three houses immediately east of the present Levine Memorial Chapel at 649 Washington Avenue. Clearly, these tennis courts were substantial (see the lower left photo) and occupied at least the Washington Avenue end of the present Albany High School track oval. There seems to be a sizeable structure at the east end of the courts, perhaps right at the SW corner of Washington and Partridge.

I will forward this to Joe Galu, and ask him to show it to Jack. This is a wonderful set of photos to add to your story about the athletic facilities.

I will also try to trace the deeds for the recruiting station(s) along North Main. As far as the city streets, I suspect that they continued to exist on paper until the High School was constructed.

Tom

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-----Original Message-----

From: Geoffrey Williams [mailto:GWilliams@uamail.albany.edu]  
Sent: Thursday, March 04, 2010 4:49 PM  
To: Clingan, Thomas  
Subject: RE: Found a map with the St. Mary's Park NYSCT-early SUNYA playing fields

Hi Tom,

I am attaching the photo of the tennis courts from the 1961 Pedagogue, the student yearbook. The top photo has a brick building in the background on the left and that building is almost across the street from the Albany High School. The bottom right photo has the west end of Brubacher Hall and the North and West sides of Sayles Halls in the background. From the angle of these photos it looks to me like the tennis courts were right up next to Washington Avenue. You might ask Joe Galu if the pictures bring back any memories.

I wonder when the extensions of State Street and Spring Streets disappeared? If Beverwyck Park is five acres then the whole of St. Mary's Park must have been close to 25 acres and the State only took/bought 10 acres for the college. I have got to get those precise dates but have been tied up with a couple reference questions. I will try to get back to you with the dates of purchase and sale of the land.

The other question is when the Amy/Navy recruiting station was built. It is just penciled into map drawing I sent you.

-----Original Message-----

From: Clingan, Thomas [mailto:Thomas.Clingan@albanycounty.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, March 03, 2010 12:47 PM  
To: Geoffrey Williams  
Cc: Carlson, Craig  
Subject: RE: Found a map with the St. Mary's Park NYSCT-early SUNYA playing fields

Geoff:

Craig Carlson at the Hall of Records located several Ward Maps of the city. I attach scans from the 1936 map and the 1953 map (plus a close-up of part of each.) The cemetery was moved by 1920 (and seems to have been closer to North Main Avenue than to Partridge Street.) The 1936 map shows it as a single open space, despite being traversed by Spring, State and West Erie Streets earlier. However, these streets re-appear in the 1953 map, likely confirming Jack McEneny's statement that "temporary" barracks were built there during WWII (and re-used after the war for young veterans and their families.) Clearly, at some point those buildings were demolished and the area became open space (again?)

I spoke with Joe Galu in Jack's office, who was a State College student from 1960 to 1964. Joe's recollection is that this was an open field at that time, and points out that city-owned property was often informally utilized by others as long as the use had Mayor Corning's blessing (and the neighbors didn't object.) Joe does not remember tennis courts there,

unfortunately. I have a call in to longtime Partridge Street resident Nancy Wiley, to see if she remembers the tennis courts (or could point us towards someone who might.)

Regards, Tom

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-----Original Message-----

From: Geoffrey Williams [mailto:GWilliams@uamail.albany.edu]

Sent: Wednesday, March 03, 2010 11:09 AM

To: Clingan, Thomas

Subject: RE: Found a map with the St. Mary's Park NYSCT-early SUNYA playing fields

Tom,

You are right about the dining hall dating the photo. In my excitement at discovering confirmation of my surmise about the location of St. Mary's Park, which the student newspaper made an effort to rename College Heights in the early 1950s, I didn't pay attention to that note.

The dining hall between Alden and Men's Residence Hall (Waterbury) opened in February of 1960. A State College News article about the new Men's Residence Hall in September 1959 confirmed that residents of the Men's Residence Hall and Alden Hall were eating at Pierce, Sayles and Brubacher Halls until the new dining hall was opened. Waterbury was the last dorm to be opened on Alumni Quadrangle (Sept. 1959) and it was known as Men's Residence Hall until the dedication of the building in Waterbury's name in April of 1960. That clearly places that map some time in 1959/60.

The map came from a group of miscellaneous material about the school given to us by a 92 year old former professor named Charles Petitjean (Business Education). I think this map may have been given out to faculty. It may be that the college knew it was going to officially name the newest dorm Waterbury Hall before the name was officially given it in April of 1960. All this is something of a mystery as that professor wasn't hired until 1966. Perhaps he was given the map by one of his colleagues.

In any case the key thing is that the College Playing Fields around 1960 are located squarely on St. Mary's Park where I thought they should be.

Geoff

-----Original Message-----

From: Clingan, Thomas [mailto:Thomas.Clingan@albanycounty.com]

Sent: Tuesday, March 02, 2010 4:29 PM

To: Geoffrey Williams

Subject: RE: Found a map with the St. Mary's Park NYSCT-early SUNYA playing fields

Geoff:

This is good news. Does the list of College Residence Group Houses help to narrow the time period?

I'm wondering if the handwritten notation about eating in Brubacher Hall means that the dining hall adjoining Waterbury and Alden Halls was not yet in operation?

I'll let you know what we find in our maps (we're still looking.)

Regards, Tom

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From: Geoffrey Williams [GWilliams@uamail.albany.edu]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 02, 2010 3:05 PM  
To: Clingan, Thomas  
Subject: Found a map with the St. Mary's Park NYSCT-early SUNYA playing fields

Hi Tom,

Just thought I would drop you a note to say that I located a campus map from about 1960 (attached) that actually labels the College Playing Field. I can't quite figure out where the map came from originally but the fact that it shows a fully built out Alumni Quadrangle places it around 1960. It looks like the College Playing Field may have encompassed much of what is now Albany High School, not just the field beside (Partridge/O'Leary Blvd and Washington Avenue.) If Beverwyck Park is 5 acres the 10 acres of St. Mary's Park must have been most of the side of Partridge that is now High School land.

Geoff Williams

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STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE at ALBANY

- KEY -

Administration & Classroom Buildings

1. Main College Buildings
2. Milne School
3. Central Annex
4. Lake Annex
5. Washington Annex

College Residence Halls

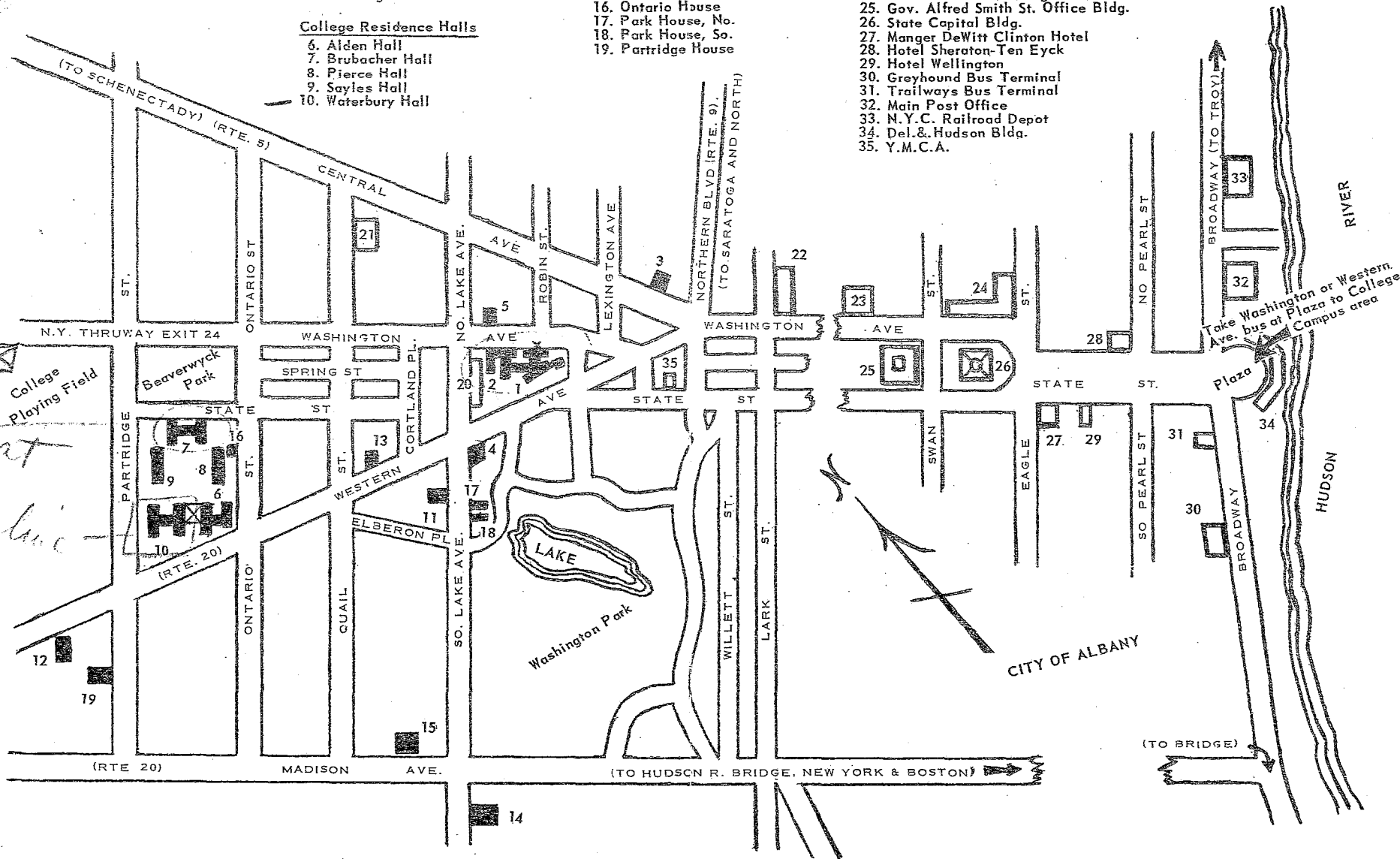
6. Alden Hall
7. Brubacher Hall
8. Pierce Hall
9. Sayles Hall
10. Waterbury Hall

College Residence Group Houses

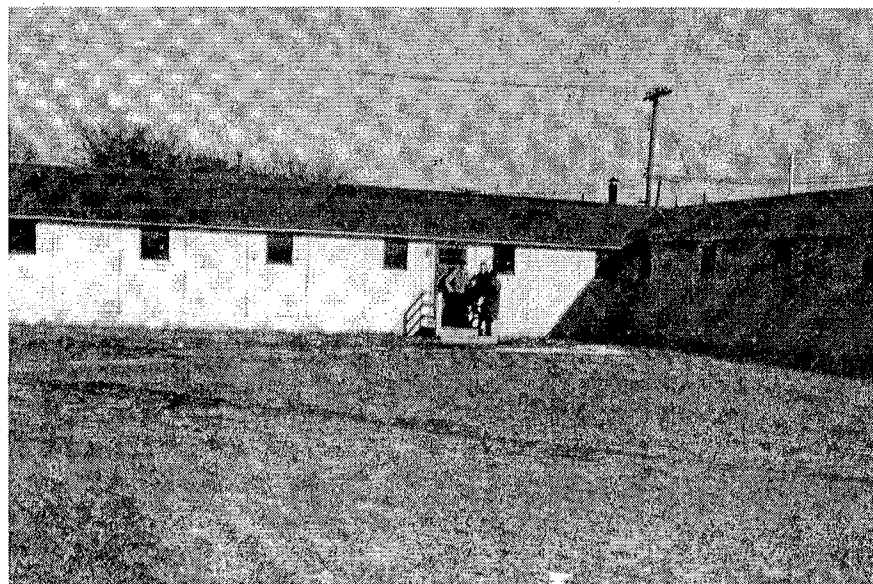
11. Adams House
12. East House
13. Jefferson House
14. Lake House
15. Madison House
16. Ontario House
17. Park House, No.
18. Park House, So.
19. Partridge House

Other Buildings of Interest

20. Albany High School
21. Quail St. Post Office
22. Washington Ave. Armory
23. Albany Inst. of History & Art
24. N.Y.S. Education Bldg.
25. Gov. Alfred Smith St. Office Bldg.
26. State Capital Bldg.
27. Manger DeWitt Clinton Hotel
28. Hotel Sheraton-Ten Eyck
29. Hotel Wellington
30. Greyhound Bus Terminal
31. Trailways Bus Terminal
32. Main Post Office
33. N.Y.C. Railroad Depot
34. Del.&. Hudson Bldg.
35. Y.M.C.A.

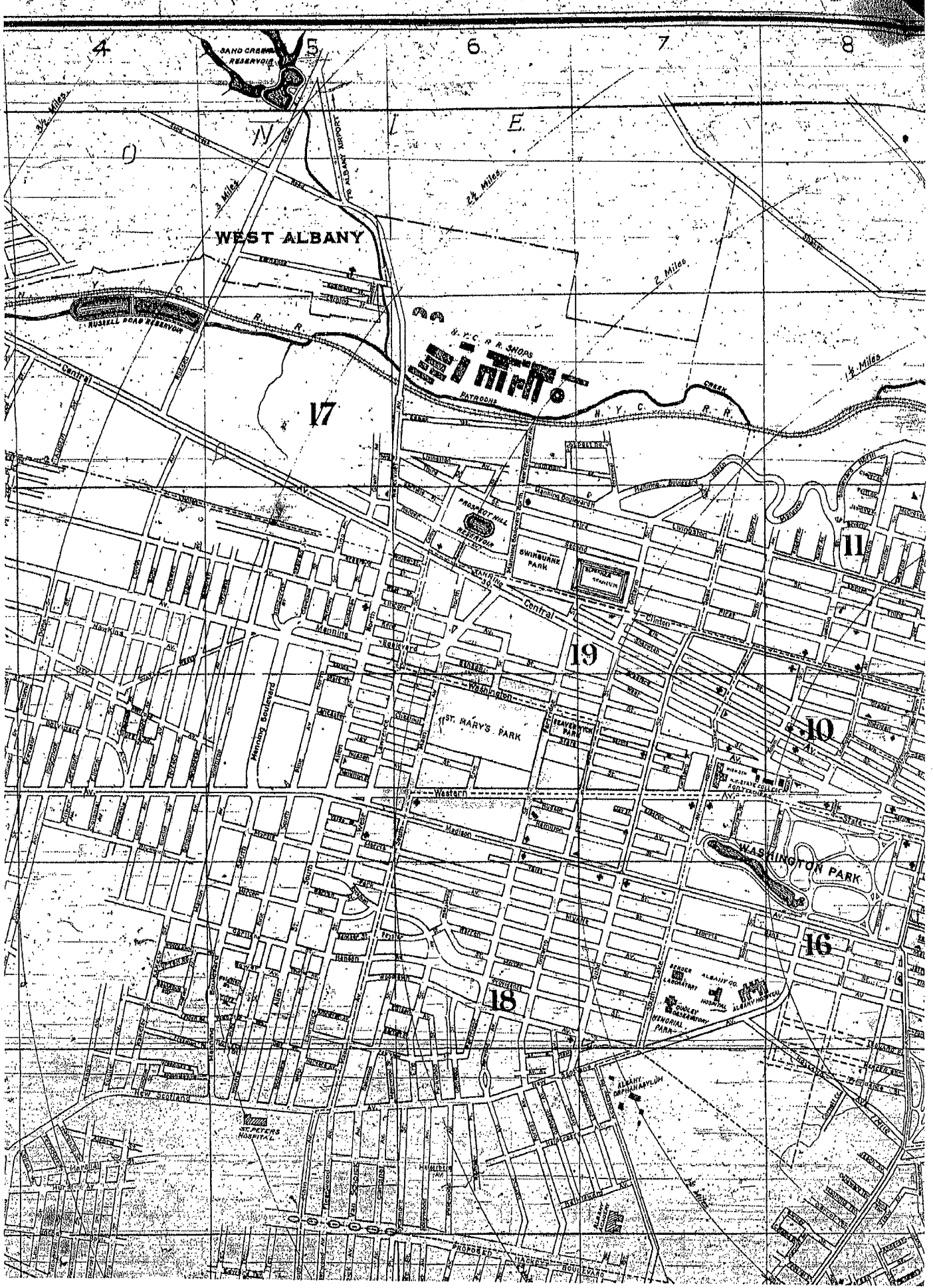


# St. Mary's Park (816 State Street)

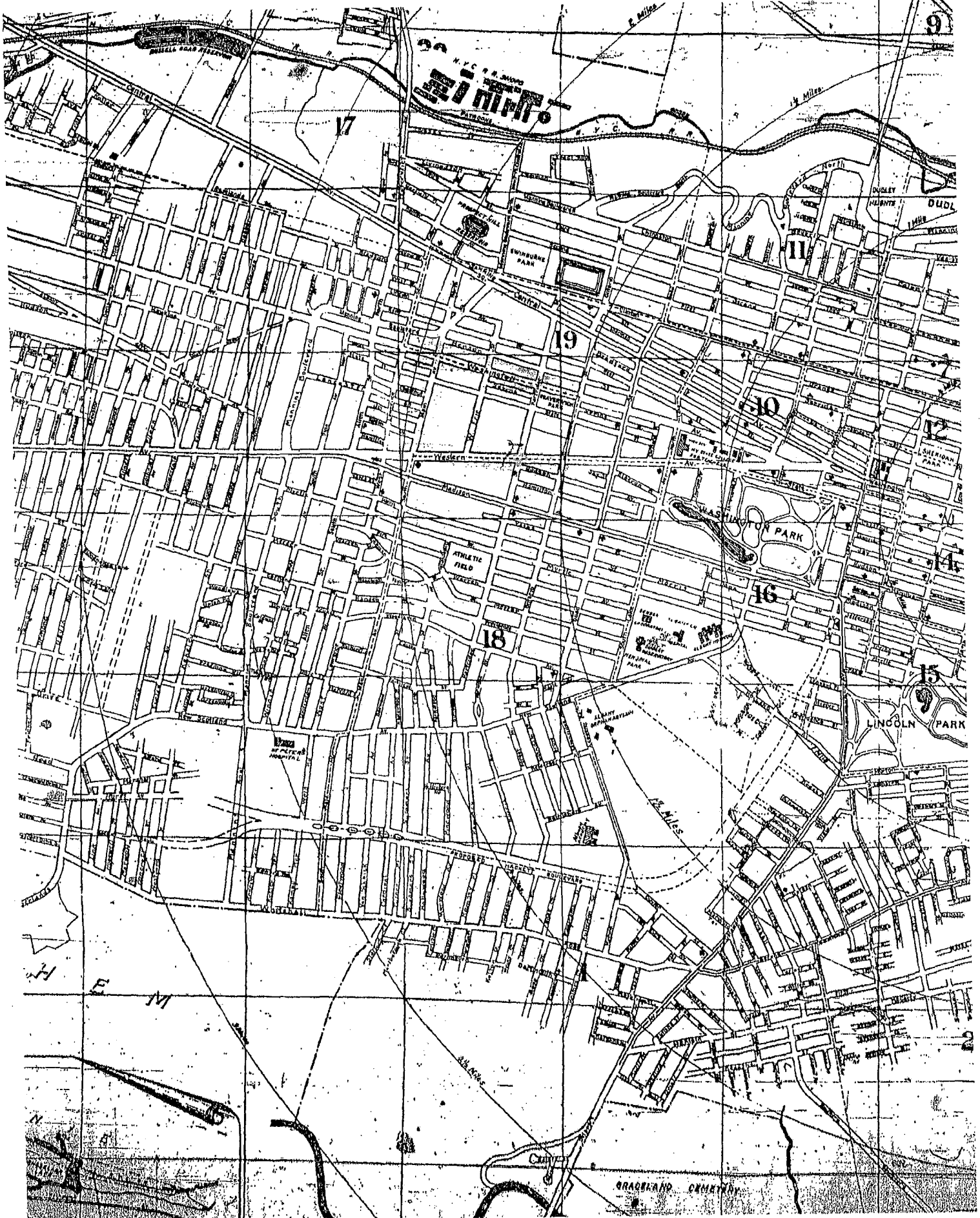






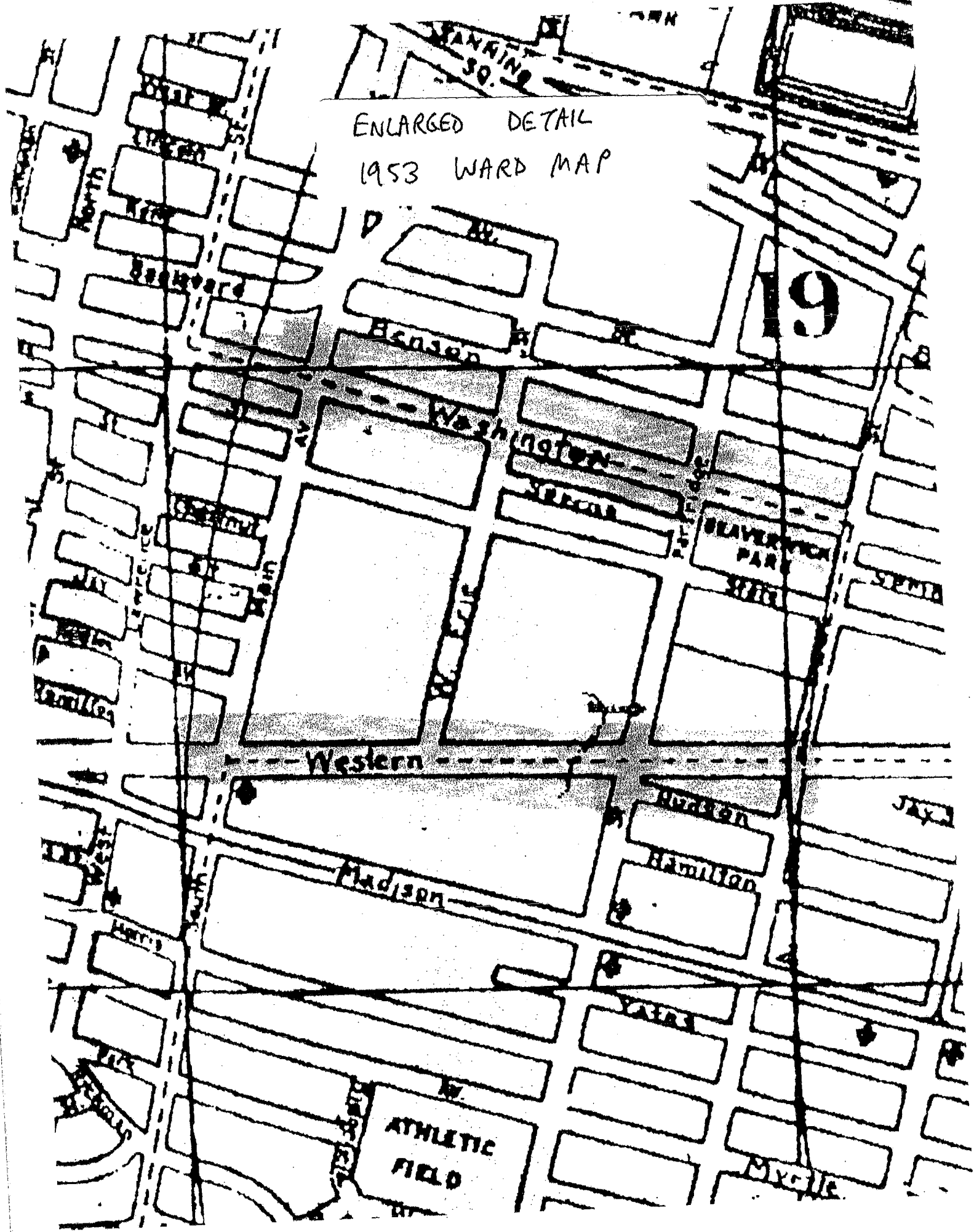


1936 - Ward Map



1953 City Ward Map 1953

ENLARGED DETAIL  
1953 WARD MAP



19

Western

Washington

Madison

ATHLETIC  
FIELD

BEAVERCREEK  
PARK