

SKID ROWS: A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

by

LARRY LLOYD KING

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Larry Lloyd King                      for the Degree of                      Doctor of Philosophy  
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This study will focus on changes that skid row is experiencing. Following an introductory statement which defines skid row and reviews the area historically, an examination of skid row evolution on a national basis is presented. Specifically, this involves a comparative analysis of thirty-one skid rows representing all regions of the United States. Each skid row is examined as to its 1950, 1968, and 1979 size and location. Much of the information for this analysis is based on responses to questionnaires and census data.

With few exceptions, skid rows have changed substantially from 1950 to 1979. Most have declined significantly in size or relocated to new sites in the central business district. Almost all the cities surveyed have retained a skid row, in some form, over the thirty years studied.

A closer view of skid row evolution and change is presented utilizing a case study of Portland, Oregon. Portland was selected for

study because it is fairly representative of skid rows in general. It has had a skid row for approximately a century and its process of establishment, growth, and decline through the years has followed a pattern which is typical of other skid rows studies throughout the United States. For example, the current "Old Town" trend occurring in some skid rows is also happening to Portland's skid row. Sanborn Maps, city directories, field observations, and census tract reports provide land use data for Portland.

Despite the efforts of planners and others to remove skid row from the landscape, with rare exceptions it has existed as an urban phenomenon for at least a century to the present day.

## VITA

NAME OF AUTHOR: Larry Lloyd King

PLACE OF BIRTH: Eugene, Oregon

DATE OF BIRTH: February 25, 1942

UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

Linfield College  
Portland State University  
University of Oregon

DEGREES AWARDED:

Bachelor of Science, 1964, University of Oregon  
Master of Science, 1968, University of Oregon

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Urban Geography  
Geographic Education  
Environmental Perception

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Instructor, Department of Geography, Portland  
Community College, 1969-1982

AWARDS AND HONORS:

NDEA Institute for Advanced Study in Physical and  
Resource Geography, Oregon State University, 1967

NSF Institute for Application of Systems Analysis to  
Viable Solutions for Land Use Problems, Oregon State  
University, 1972

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my mother and the memory of my father.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCING SKID ROW

#### Defining Skid Row

Skid Rows are controversial living areas in large North American cities. Visually they are unattractive because of their down and out inhabitants and older, deteriorating buildings. Specifically, Skid Rows are older, declining areas serving elderly males living on the edge of poverty.

Even though the term Skid Row lends itself to connotations of downsliding personalities and life-styles, and most skid rowers seem to accept this definition of personal failure (referring to themselves as bums, tramps, and winos), the phrase originated in a legitimate economic phenomenon.<sup>1</sup>

The name "skid row" evolved from the term "skid road" which originated in the Pacific Northwest. A skid road was a dirt road used to transport logs to the river or mill by skidding them over inlaid logs. These inlaid timbers were curved on top to keep the logs from sliding off. Oxen were used to pull the logs over the road while a "greaser" walked in front, greasing down the inlaid timbers with axle grease to let the load slide easier. In Seattle, the lodging houses, saloons, and other working men oriented establishments were contiguous to the skid road running from the top of the ridge down to Henry

Yesler's mill on Puget Sound, and the term skid road was applied to the community which grew up next to it.<sup>2</sup>

Sociologist Ronald Vander Kooi summarizes the creation of a permanent skid row population in the following words:

After loggers had spent months in the woods, they arrived in Seattle and Spokane, Washington, Portland, Oregon, Muskegon and Saginaw, Michigan, Bangor and Portland, Maine and lesser lumber ports. They picked up their pay and, quite naturally, stayed to celebrate at conveniently located saloons, gambling places, houses of prostitution and various kinds of male lodging houses. Many loggers blew all their pay in the cities and after a few days or weeks returned to work. But some stayed on, unable or unwilling to work or unneeded during off seasons or other periods of employment. They became "bums," a term which, opposed to "hobo" and "tramp" denoted those who<sub>3</sub> stayed in one place and did a lot of drinking and little work.

Furthermore, there is much disagreement over the definition of skid row. Whereas geographers, Ward in particular, examine skid row from the perspective of land use change, spatial locational attributes, and behavior spaces, some sociologists and anthropologists are concerned about homelessness, disaffiliation, and the social organization of skid row. These different definitions are reviewed in the following passages.

Sociologists have tended to focus on the residents of skid row rather than skid row as a physical place. Sociologist Samuel Wallace has defined skid row as the most deviant community in the United States. He says,

The skid rower does not bathe, eat regularly, dress respectably, marry or raise children, attend school, vote, own property, or regularly live in the same place. He does little work of any kind. He does not even steal. The skid rower does nothing, he just is.<sup>4</sup>

Another sociologist supports Wallace's conclusions when he states,

Skid Row is not so much a place as a human condition. To be a skid row person is to be poor, to live outside normal family relationships, to live in extremely low-cost housing, to have high probabilities of coming to police attention for behavior related to alcohol use, to be more vulnerable to victimization than other destitute people, to have a superficial style of social relations, and to have a prognosis for continued low status or even downward mobility.<sup>5</sup>

The work of sociologists Blumberg, Shipley, and Barsky resulted in a unique definition of skid row. In fact, their book Liquor and Poverty is a direct assault on the traditional definitions of skid row and its people. The geographic or natural area perspective is firmly rejected. Skid Row, they argue, is not merely or even primarily a specific neighborhood. Rather, Skid Row-like people are found wherever there is poverty. This can occur in the slum neighborhoods, the low-income racial and ethnic enclaves, and even in the suburbs. Consequently, by limiting the definition of Skid Row to a geographic place, little attention will be given to many "skid row-like" people who need help but live outside the traditional skid row boundaries. In short, the basic theme of Blumberg and Associates is that skid row should be defined as a human condition rather than a geographic place.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to these sociological perspectives is the approach taken by geographer Jim Ward. He is concerned with social and physical aspects of skid row which make it a unique geographic entity. For example, he states that one of the notable features of skid row is the physical plant that houses essential skid row services. These include barber colleges, blood clinics, employment agencies, hotels, liquor stores, men's clothing stores, missions, pawn shops, restaurants, rooming houses, secondhand clothing stores, taverns.

They tend to cluster in certain areas of particular cities largely because of the strong pull of a highly specialized market population because of the latter's very high tolerance for these particular services, this fact being in large part linked to the generally impecunious nature of most skid row inhabitants. For example, the barber colleges on New York's Bowery will give haircuts for 50 cents whereas those just a few blocks away would charge at least three times that amount, but the high tolerance of the skid row inhabitants for poor quality haircuts is probably as important as the low price. The rooming houses (flophouses) offering beds for one dollar per night on Toronto's skid row can only hope to attract those with a high tolerance for bed bugs and filth and with too little ready cash to opt for better accommodations. Similar forces are at work in determining a high concentration of secondhand clothing stores in skid row areas; the high tolerance in this case is that for out-of-style clothing, as a walk down any skid row will show.

Thus, the spatial clustering of such services offers important visual clues regarding the presence and magnitude of a particular skid row. Changeover time can be measured by perusal of city business directories, such data providing an indication of development trends.<sup>7</sup>

Ward also examines the locational characteristics of skid row and how its location may affect the types of labor vacancies its inhabitants are likely to fill. Beside locational characteristics, Ward concentrates on linkage characteristics. The amount of migration flowing between a particular skid row and other skid rows is some indicator of how strongly that skid row is linked into the total network.

An American anthropologist refers to the skid row inhabitant and his lifestyle as an "urban nomad culture." He points out that the use of the word culture refers to the knowledge skid row residents have acquired and use to organize their behavior. Their culture is the set of rules they employ, the characteristic ways in which they categorize, code, and define their experiences. In short, Spradley says urban

nomads are a category of urban males who share a common way of life, a culture.<sup>8</sup>

### History of Skid Row

The history of skid row is really a history of homeless individuals. The initial problem of homelessness or vagrancy in the United States can be traced to the first boatload of England's homeless deported to this country.

Attempts to control vagrancy in England date back to the 14th century. From 1388, well into the 16th century, the numerous legislative attempts to suppress vagrancy were marked by an increasing severity of penalties imposed. For example, King Edward VI's response to this growing problem was a statute unparalleled in severity.

This act of 1547 ordained that all persons loitering, wandering, and not seeking work were to be taken before justices of the peace and marked with a hot iron in the breast the mark of V. The culprit was to be presented to his captor as a slave for two years and to be fed on bread and water and such refuse meats as the master thinks fit. He was to be caused to work by any means. If he ran away, he was to be branded on the cheek in the sign of an S, and the second time he escaped, he was to be put to death. Those not taken into any service were to be marked on the breast with a V and returned to their birthplace with an official pass, there to become the slaves of that town or city. The truly impotent poor were to be provided with lodging at the expense of the local inhabitants. No one was permitted to beg.<sup>9</sup>

Since punishment, no matter how severe, left the fundamental causes of homelessness or vagrancy untouched, the number of homeless in England continued to increase. Many of the same causes which created the homeless problem in England--crop failure, civil strife, escape from slavery, harsh treatment, and criminal prosecution--were responsible in shaping America's vagrancy problem. In fact, many of

England's vagrants and undesirables were forcibly deported to the Colonies. The United States, like England, passed several laws in an attempt to deal with the homeless problem.\* The results of this legislation paralleled that of England's and transients and migrants continued to be reported with increasing regularity from Colonial days on.<sup>10</sup>

It wasn't until the early 1800's that the United States responded to the homeless problem with any concentrated effort. One of the first occupational groups of homeless individuals to draw the attention and assistance of concerned society were seamen. In 1802, the first recorded soup kitchen was opened in New York to serve seamen who were temporarily out of work, usually between ships. By 1840, there were at least seven different organizations devoted to the relief of seamen in New York City, New Orleans, and Philadelphia. However, according to Bahr, many of the early institutions (pre-1872) which provided help to the destitute and homeless cannot be cited as literal ancestors of skid row because, with the exception of seamen, they did not cater to a male clientele.<sup>11</sup>

Though various organizations had been established to help the homeless in the early 1800's, there was no distinct ecological area in American cities for the housing of those who belonged nowhere and to no one. There was no skid row. Skid row wasn't truly born until October 1872. It was on this date that Jerry McAuley began his Water Street

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\* According to Wallace, the term homeless stems from the period before the vagrant community became spatially fixed in a separate and specialized ecological area of the city.

mission in New York City. He became the first person in the world to open the doors of a religious institution every night of the year specifically for outcasts of society. A year later, the Reverend John Dooley opened the first cheap Bowery lodging house. With the appearance of these two dominant institutions, the gospel mission and the lodging house, skid row was born.<sup>12</sup>

At least three historical processes continued to produce the conditions leading to the establishment of skid rows in the United States. The first of these was the Civil War. Like all wars, it created homelessness on a vast scale, and many of those uprooted by the war were driven to the nation's cities. Second was the continuing European immigration. Migrants, poor and without families, increased the pool of potentially homeless persons and the need for cheap lodging facilities in major cities. Third, there was the panic of 1873 and the depression which followed. During the depression, the idea of setting up cheap dormitories or lodging houses caught on, and when prosperity returned, the facilities created to serve the unemployed and outcast continued as fixed features of urban life.<sup>13</sup>

By the turn of the twentieth century, skid row in the United States had come into its own. It was well established with 104 lodging houses in New York City, 200 in Chicago, 106 in Philadelphia, 113 in Baltimore, 120 in Washington, D.C., 113 in Minneapolis, and 45 in Denver. At first, the areas containing homeless men were called by a variety of local and descriptive names such as: Lower Town, The Bowery, The Mission District, Beer Gulch, Chippie town, the Red Light District.

Finally, Seattle contributed the term skid road which was later changed to skid row.<sup>14</sup>

In the early years of the 1900's, skid rows expanded rapidly. Men were needed to fell trees, pick fruit in orchards, lay railroad tracks, and follow the harvest of field crops. When men weren't working, they lived on skid row between jobs. During the early 1900's Chicago had an estimated forty to sixty thousand men living on its skid row.<sup>15</sup>

The number of inhabitants living on skid row varied with the health of the economy following 1900. During World War I, manpower needs and prosperity drained the country's skid rows of the major portion of their population. Following the war, the veterans, like those of the Civil War who had helped establish skid row, helped to re-establish it. Thousands of veterans, either unwilling or unable to adjust to the demands of ordinary society, found a place for themselves among the skid rowers.

During the Great Depression early in the 1930's, the number of people living on skid row reached an unprecedented level. Government authorities estimated the number of transients and homeless persons in the United States at a million and one half to five million. Men started returning to mainstream society during the recovery of 1936, and with the onset of the war effort in the later thirties, the populations of skid rows throughout the country nearly disappeared.<sup>16</sup>

The Second World War ended and the populations of skid rows continued to decrease. Returning veterans from other wars had contributed heavily to the ranks of the homeless. However, the G. I. Bill,



the Veterans Administration, and a series of social welfare benefits ranging from education to psychiatric treatment enabled most veterans of World War II to return to civilian society. Very few found their way to skid row.<sup>17</sup>

Recent articles have predicted the disappearance of skid row in the near future. (Bahr, 1967; Lee, 1980; Rooney, 1970; Rubington, 1971; Vander Kooi, 1973; Wallace, 1965) This demise is being measured, by researchers, both in terms of population composition and population size.

Some studies indicate that the demographic composition of skid row is less distinctive now than it once was. For example, Bogue noted that between 1940 and 1950 skid rows across the country were becoming increasingly non-white.<sup>18</sup> Recent analysis confirms Bogue's finding and indicates a continuation of the trend in racial composition away from the predominantly white skid row neighborhoods of the past. According to Lee, "The hypothesized effect of these shifts has been to make the skid row neighborhood more like the surrounding urban population and, thus, to hasten its disappearance in a relative sense."<sup>19</sup>

Bogue also drew conclusions pertaining to the population size of skid rows. On the basis of 1950 census tract data, he estimated a total skid row population of approximately 100,000 for the 41 cities in his sample, with the five largest skid row districts exceeding 5,000 or 6,000. Bogue further concluded that these 41 skid row neighborhoods increased in population by an average of 2.9% from 1940 to 1950.<sup>20</sup>

However, since the time of Bogue's investigation, several studies have shown a population decline and spatial shrinkage occurring in many skid

rows.<sup>21</sup> The decline has most often been attributed to urban renewal and to skid row's loss of its historical function as an unskilled labor pool.

Sociologist Vander Kooi discusses the disappearance of skid row. He writes,

While few were watching, a number of our large and smaller skid rows have disappeared, often leaving only small remnants . . .

American skid rows are being replaced by large projects such as cultural centers, hotel and transportation concentrations. Until financing and other arrangements are completed, and this may take decades, the space is usually used for parking. Replacing the men and buildings with more downtown space for America's cultural centerpiece, the automobile, is considered a wonderful achievement.

Not only is skid row to be eliminated, as many city newspapers have bragged, but money is to be made. The economics of skid row are such that more can be made operating parking lots. In the affluent post-war era, the skid row population has dropped, but more important, there are many more profitable ways to invest money and efforts, even in decaying downtown areas than in skid row businesses. The buildings are very old, and any rigorous enforcement of building and health codes means that the owners would have to spend excessive amounts to come up to code. No wonder many skid row businessmen have branched out into apartment buildings and other non-skid row businesses.<sup>22</sup>

### Perceptions of Skid Row

Perceptions or attitudes toward skid row fall into two categories. The first of these are attitudes concerning the inhabitants of skid row. The second are attitudes toward skid row as a place. In some cases, it is not possible to separate the two attitudes. In short, people combine their feelings about skid row and its residents and make no effort to perceive each on its own merits.

An anthropologist presents four models which reflect how experts and laymen feel about both skid row inhabitants and skid row. He refers to these models as identities.

1. Popular identity - Skid row inhabitants are seen as people who fail, are dependent on society, lack self-control, drink too much, are unpredictable, and often end up in jail for their criminal behavior. A number of widely used names reflects this popular identity: derelict, bum, wino, and transient.

This is the viewpoint of the outsider who sees this way of life as irrational, immoral, and irresponsible, but it is important to understand this model since it has influenced professional and layman alike. As part of American culture, it is learned early in life and taken for granted.<sup>23</sup>

2. Medical Identity - Skid row inhabitants are defined on the basis of a disease: alcoholism.

3. Legal Identity - They are seen as criminals, guilty of many minor crimes, but especially of public drunkenness. The police refer to those men as drunks and vagrants and view them in much the same way as the general public does.

4. Sociological Identity -

Some social scientists have adopted the perspective of the medical or legal models while others have selected geographic boundaries and focused upon that section of American cities known as skid road. One of the most widely used criterion has been the lack of a home, giving rise to the concept of the homeless man. Age, race, sex, income and drinking behavior have all been used by researchers for identifying this population. Most of these criteria have implicit values drawn from the popular image of the bum. The focus upon drinking behavior and homelessness, for instance, reflects the dominant values in American society of sobriety, self control and the home. The popular image has influenced social science studies of these men in many ways.<sup>24</sup>

Sociologist Howard Bahr examined the attitudes of both experts and laymen toward skid row and its inhabitants and found both groups held similar views about skid row residents. For example, they perceive the skid rower as subhuman. Bahr says, "The professional

rehabilitation agents seem to share the view that skid row men are less than human. A journalist quotes the director of a relocation center for alcoholics as saying 'We are trying to make them social beings again after skid row dehumanized them . . .'"<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, laymen see skid row men as polluting an area so that it is not fit for other urbanites. In keeping with this "less than human" attitude is the professionals' use of labels to imply failure and inadequacy. "Thus, the singularly consistent labeling of the skid row man as defective and unredeemable is common even among the professionals whose function it is to treat the deviant."<sup>26</sup> Finally, one of the most dominant responses, especially among laymen, to skid row people is fear. When students were polled by me regarding their feelings about skid row, the most prevalent concern expressed was one of fear and avoidance. Students felt as if harm would come to them in the skid row and, consequently, they would avoid the area whenever possible.

Bahr summarizes these various attitudes best when he writes,

The homeless man is seen as dirty, defective, and morally inferior; he is diseased, hopeless, and non-redeemable. He tends to be treated by agents of society with intolerance and disrespect, avoidance and fearfulness, disgust and apprehension. In the public press, people are warned against him, and terms like depraved, degenerate, derelict, and degraded are frequently used. The dangerous misfits--and a skid row address is enough to mark a man as misfit--are best shut away, shut out, avoided, or contained. Even representatives of helping professions or charitable organizations are more apt to refer homeless men elsewhere, to where they belong, than to treat them as people with soluble problems. The lepers may be fed and clothed, but only at special stations for the unclean in the colonies set aside for them.<sup>27</sup>

Beside the inhabitants, people have mixed attitudes toward skid row as a place. Many perceive skid row as a place where homeless individuals belong. When they are in their place, the public will tolerate

certain behaviors by these people that would not be tolerated in other areas of the city. Ward analyzes this attitude in terms of territorial security. He writes,

This territorial security was seen to be related to some extent to the tolerance of citizens for this type of behavior in certain parts of the city, namely the skid row area, whereas such behavior outside skid row area is likely to elicit hostile responses that may lead to incarceration of the skid row inhabitant.<sup>28</sup>

This same attitude is expressed by Bahr, but in different words when he states,

. . . it was apparent that the Bowery, a collection of special institutions and services in a distinct geographic location, performed important functions in the New York community. Among other things, its presence allowed local authorities to shift the responsibility for homeless people in their neighborhoods to some other area where they belonged.<sup>29</sup>

Another perception of skid row is based on the work of geographers Lanegran and Palm. They are concerned with comparing attitudes toward places, in particular skid row. They state,

Antisacred places also exist in the United States. These are locales where people we do not like are forced to live. Our urban areas contain several such places. They are not all contiguous spaces easily defined in absolute terms, but they are nonetheless very real. Consider the space, occupied by the group called "homeless men," "urban nomads," or "bums," according to the view of the describer. These people live in the streets, alleys, and old buildings fringing the central commercial core of cities. They sleep . . . under bridges, in parks, behind empty buildings, or in missions. The distance between these men and most Americans cannot be measured in miles. They are separated from you by a gulf in relative distance so great that you cannot see or feel across it. Our society has confined these men to valueless space, to areas we don't occupy. When they venture into public places such as warm libraries on cold winter nights, they are hurried out to make room for legitimate patrons.<sup>30</sup>

### Research Preview

Inspiration for this study can be traced to several sources. A student research project on the area titled, "The Past, Present, and Future of Portland's Skid Row" prompted my interest. Part of that research was based on participant observation. Once the student graduated from college with a degree in sociology, he founded and operated a bank for skid row residents. During the years of skid row contact, the student kept me informed as to changing conditions in the area.

Other sources of inspiration included the research of sociologist Donald Bogue and geographer Jim Ward. Bogue utilized census data to examine 40 skid rows in the United States. Ward studied land use and other characteristics peculiar to skid row. According to Ward, with the exception of his research, only one other geographer has concentrated on the skid row area.

This study will focus on changes that skid row is experiencing. Chapter II analyzes these changes on a national basis. Specifically, this chapter represents a comparative analysis of twenty skid rows representing all regions of the United States. Each skid row is examined as to its 1950, 1968, and 1979 size and location. With few exceptions, skid rows have changed substantially from 1950 to 1979. Most have declined significantly in size or relocated to new sites in the central business district. Almost all the cities surveyed have retained a skid row, in some form, over the 30 years studied.

Chapter III examines Portland, Oregon, as an example of the changes skid rows are undergoing. Sanborn Maps, city directories, field observations, and census tract reports provide land use data for Portland. Portland was selected for study because it is fairly representative of skid rows in general. It has had a skid row for approximately a century and its process of establishment, growth, and decline through the years has followed a pattern which is typical of other skid rows studied throughout the United States. For example, the current "Old Town" trend occurring in some skid rows is also happening to Portland's skid row.

Chapter IV concludes the study. Despite the efforts of planners and others to remove skid row from the landscape, with rare exception it has existed as an urban phenomenon for at least a century to the present day.

### Chapter I Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Ronald Vander Kooi, "The Main Stem: Skid Row Revisited," Society 10 (1973):64.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 64-5.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>4</sup>Samuel E. Wallace, Skid Row as a Way of Life (Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster Press, 1965), p. 144.

<sup>5</sup>Leonard U. Blumberg, Thomas E. Shipley, Jr., and Joseph O. Moor, Jr., "The Skid Row Man and the Skid Row Status Community," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol 32 (December 1971):912.

<sup>6</sup>Leonard U. Blumberg, Thomas E. Shipley, Jr., and Stephen F. Barsky, Liquor and Poverty--Skid Row as a Human Condition (New Brunswick: Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies, 1978), pp. 195-198.

<sup>7</sup>Jim Ward, "Skid Row as a Geographic Entity," The Professional Geographer 27 (August 1975):286.

<sup>8</sup>James P. Spradley, You Owe Yourself a Drunk (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970), pp. 6-7.

<sup>9</sup>Wallace, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>11</sup>Howard M. Bahr, Skid Row--An Introduction to Disaffiliation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 32.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 31-32.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>14</sup>Wallace, pp. 17-18.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>18</sup>Donald J. Bogue, Skid Row in American Cities (Chicago: Community and Family Study Center, 1963), p. 12.



<sup>19</sup>Barrett A. Lee, "The Disappearance of Skid Row--Some Ecological Evidence," Urban Affairs Quarterly 16 (September 1980):83.

<sup>20</sup>Bogue, pp. 8-12.

<sup>21</sup>Lee, p. 83.

<sup>22</sup>Vander Kooi, p. 68.

<sup>23</sup>Spradley, p. 66.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 67-68.

<sup>25</sup>Bahr, pp. 61-62.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>28</sup>Ward, p. 292.

<sup>29</sup>Bahr, p. 66.

<sup>30</sup>David Lanegran and Risa Palm, An Invitation to Geography (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973), pp. 18-19.

## CHAPTER II

### SURVEY OF UNITED STATES SKID ROWS

#### Methods

This chapter compares skid rows in fifty-seven cities in the United States with more than 200,000 people in 1970. In forty-one of the fifty-seven, planners responded to questionnaires about the location and conditions of skid rows. (See Figures 1 and 2.) This questionnaire asked the planners to outline the current boundaries of their skid row, based on certain land use criteria, and compare those boundaries with 1968 boundaries. Furthermore, I asked planners to account for any differences between the two sets of boundaries. Other questions dealt with relocation or disappearance of skid row and any planning policies which caused these changes.

Questions included on the questionnaire matched some of the questions Donald Bogue used in his 1950 study. Bogue's study examined skid rows in forty cities of over 50,000 population. City planners and other knowledgeable sources (engineers, police officials, and welfare agency heads) were asked to determine boundaries for skid rows in their cities. (See Figure 1.) Bogue states,

Early in the planning of this study, letters were addressed to responsible officials in all cities in the 48 states having 50,000 or more population, inquiring whether a Skid Row were present in that city and, if so, where it is located. In response to these inquiries, and as a result of other explorations, Skid Row

# SKID ROWS STUDIED BY BOGUE AND KING

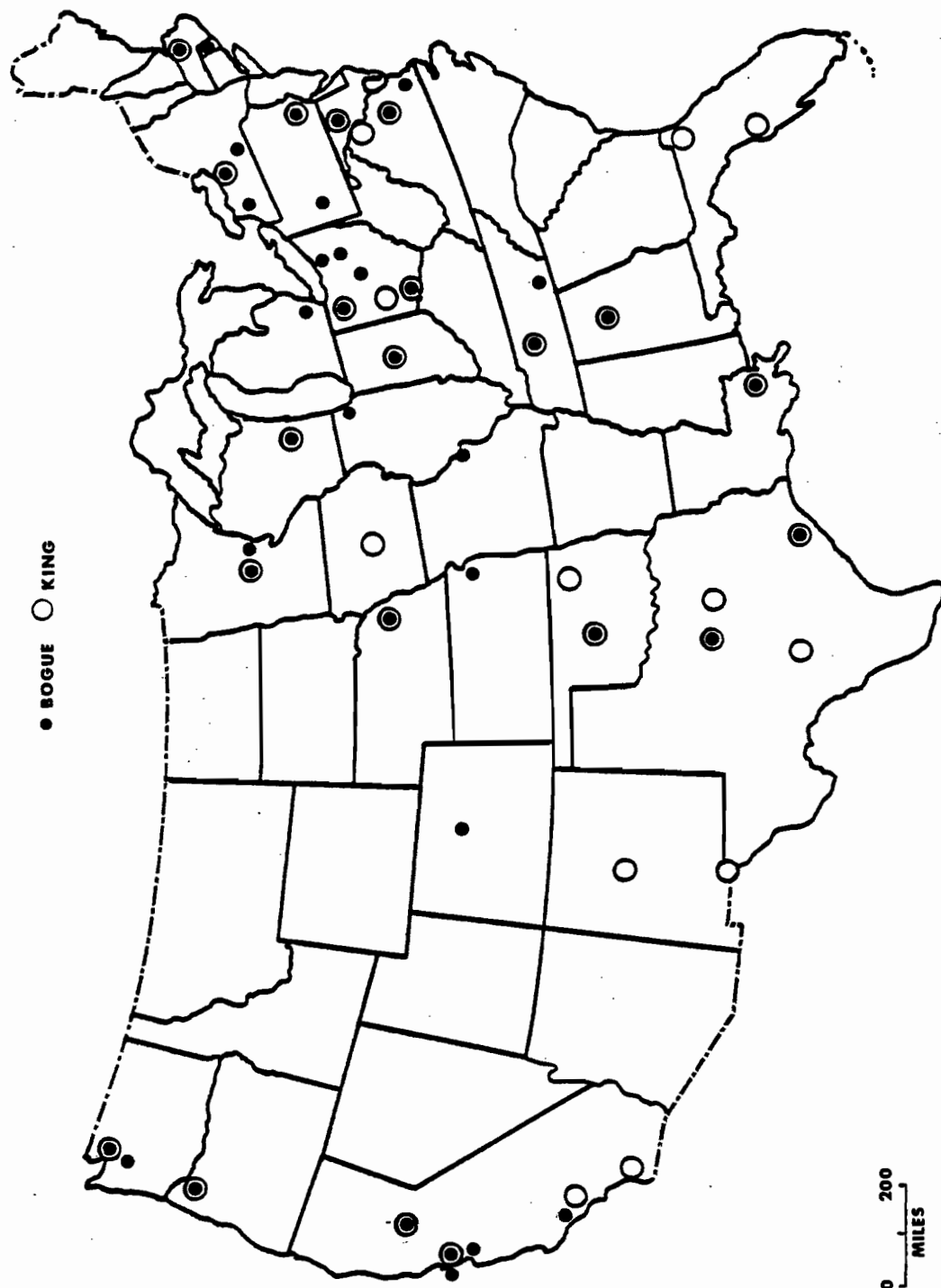


Figure 1



developments were reported or inferred for about 45 cities. The locations of the Skid Row neighborhoods in each city were plotted on maps. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Bogue included no criteria for determining skid row boundaries. This was left to the discretion of each "responsible official." However, land use is the criterion for defining skid row in this study. The questionnaire sent to city planners included the following skid row definitions, henceforth refereed to as the Bogue and Wallace criteria.

It is that collection of saloons, pawn shops, cheap restaurants, second hand shops, barber colleges, all night movies, missions, flop houses and dilapidated hotels which cater specifically to the needs of the down and outer, the bum, the alcoholic, the drifter.<sup>2</sup>

Another definition states that skid row is,

. . . a district in the city where there is a concentration of substandard hotels and rooming houses charging very low rates and catering primarily to men with low incomes. These hotels are intermingled with numerous taverns, employment agencies offering jobs as unskilled laborers, restaurants serving low-cost meals, pawnshops, and secondhand stores, and missions that daily provide a free meal after the service. Perhaps there are also barber colleges, burlesque shows or night clubs with strip tease acts, penny arcades, tattoo palaces, stores selling men's work clothing, bakeries selling stale bread and unclaimed freight stores. Most frequently the skid row is located near the Central Business District and also near a factory district or heavy transportation facilities such as a waterfront, freight yards, or a trucking and freight depot.<sup>3</sup>

The accuracy of the skid row boundaries represented on the maps included in this study depend on the city planners interpretation of the above criteria. Though the criteria seem straightforward and easily understandable, several planners took exception to it or the approach (using land use to identify skid row). For example, the planner for Corpus Christi, Texas, said,

. . . skid row is a term which is not definable within an urban planning context. Any moderately depressed area within any city

may have skid row indicators as quoted by Mr. King from Wallace and Bogue. Skid row appears not to be a definite description of the environment or area, but rather the attitude of the reviewer towards an area.<sup>4</sup>

Beside the use of questionnaires and maps to examine the changing skid row landscape, this study incorporates an analysis of census data. Data for selected census tracts, covering the years 1940, 1950, 1960, and 1970 are compared to determine the existence of skid rows in the cities being studied. Selection of census tracts for study is the result of city planners indicating skid row boundaries for Bogue's 1950 study and responding to the questionnaires for this study. These boundaries were then superimposed on census tract boundaries. If any part of the skid row boundary included a particular census tract, that tract is included in the study. Some census tracts might have only a small portion defined as skid row by the planners, but the data for the whole tract are utilized for skid row analysis. Consequently, it is probable that this inclusion will dilute and possibly alter some of the skid row findings. However, it could be argued that any census data pertaining to skid row census tracts are questionable. The difficulty of enumerating "urban nomads" with any accuracy cannot be overstated. Many of these individuals are hostile and uncooperative and only want to preserve their anonymity when questioned by census takers. The number that are overlooked altogether can only be guessed at. Furthermore, the census bureau is less than consistent in its definitions of data collected. It has changed the definition of a certain characteristic or trait or discontinued its collection from one census year to the next. This practice makes some 1940 and 1970

comparisons either impossible, difficult or questionable. However, despite these shortcomings, census information is currently one of the few sources available to researchers making comparative studies of areas such as skid row.

After selecting the census tracts, data over the thirty-year period allowed comparison of tract similarities and differences. Conversion of census data to percentages facilitated several types of comparisons. First, a single skid row is compared from one census year to the next. Also, it is compared with the city in which it is located. Skid rows in several cities are compared with one another at different census years. Finally, several skid row averages are tabulated and compared with the city averages in which they are located at different census years.

The skid row characteristics selected from the census for comparison were those which Bogue utilized in his 1950 study and others considered important in revealing the unique nature of skid row. (See Table 1.) A brief discussion of these characteristics is found in the appendix.

### Patterns

#### Census Data Analysis

A compilation of census data (Table 1) makes it possible to construct a profile of skid row and its inhabitants. Skid row consists of a high percentage of individuals living alone in group quarters, probably flop houses or cheap hotels, that are old and in poor repair.

TABLE 1  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR 20 U.S. CENTRAL CITIES  
AND THEIR SKID ROWS, 1940-1970

|             | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|-------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City        | 1940 | 0%                      | 11%                          | 18%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 9%                                 | 10%                    | 15%                                    | NA                          |
|             | 1950 | 4%                      | 8%                           | 23%                                | NA  | 11%                                   | 5%                                 | 19%                    | 12%                                    | 84%                         |
|             | 1960 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 23%                                | \$4847                                      | 11%                                   | 4%                                 | 3%                     | 10%                                    | 69%                         |
|             | 1970 | 3%                      | 11%                          | 29%                                | \$2936                                      | 13%                                   | 3%                                 | 4%                     | 2%                                     | 47%                         |
| Skid<br>Row | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|             | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|             | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|             | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).



Many of these inhabitants are either unemployed or, if they have jobs, are earning such low wages that they live on or close to the poverty level. Part of their inability to acquire or hold a job may be a consequence of little education beyond the first seven years.

Table 1 indicates that the percentage of people living in group quarters in skid row census tracts is substantially higher than the city average in 1960 and 1970. It also shows that in 1940 and 1950 there is little difference between city and skid row group quarter percentages.

Comparisons of city and skid row percent completing elementary school (5-7 years) reveals that from 1940 through 1970, without exception, the skid row tracts have a higher percentage of completion. However, when the percents of high school graduation are compared, the results are just the opposite.

Census information for the years 1950, 1960, and 1970 show skid row tracts with substantially larger percentages of unrelated individuals than skid row tracts. These differences range from 31% (1950) to 35% (1960). By 1970, almost half (47%) of the people residing in skid row tracts were unrelated individuals. (An unrelated individual is a member of a household who is not related to anyone else in the household, or is a person living in group quarters who is not an inmate of an institution.)

The percentage of unemployed males for skid row census tracts is higher for all years than city tracts. Differences range from 3% (1970) to 6% (1940).

Skid row census tracts have a higher percentage of dilapidated housing than city census tracts. Unlike unemployment, which decreases with each successive census year, dilapidation in skid row tracts increases from 1940 to 1950 by 28 percentage points. Between 1950 and 1960, there is a decrease of 43 percentage points. Finally, between the census years 1960 and 1970 dilapidation increases by 16 percent. It is assumed that skid row properties are highly dilapidated and the data illustrate this fact.

Data pertaining to the year structures were built reveal that for the census years 1950, 1960, and 1970 the skid row tracts contained a greater percentage of structures built before 1940 than did city tracts. By 1970, 71% of the skid row tract buildings had been constructed before 1940 compared to 47% for the city tracts.

#### Skid Row Classification Model

Much of the literature on skid row views the area as a district. The term district, as it applies to skid row, implies a concentration of city blocks dominated by land use catering to skid row individuals. Though the concept of skid row as a district has been appropriate in the past, it seems inadequate as a current description of the area. Consequently, a revised definition of skid row is presented.

The skid row classification model which follows is based on findings from questionnaires sent to U.S. cities of more than 200,000 population. It was apparent after even casual comparisons that skid

row districts, as defined above, did not exist in all the cities sampled. Furthermore, "traditional" skid row districts are being replaced by smaller units and, in some cases, a combination of units. These are defined below.

The classification model is divided into three parts: single units, multiple units, and combination units. In turn, each of these units has three sections--district, area, and node. For example, single units include the classifications of district, area, and node. A district has land use patterns as defined by Bogue and Wallace (See Endnotes 2 and 3) and is five or more blocks in size. The blocks are contiguous to each other. An area has the same land use characteristics as a district but consists of three or four blocks grouped together. A node consists of one or two blocks with skid row land use prevalent.

The multiple units classification is included because some cities have more than one district, area, or node. Consequently, if a city has more than one of these sections, it is mapped as a multiple unit. The land use and other requirements are the same as for the single unit classification. The only difference is the existence of more than one district, area, or node.

Some cities have a combination of several skid row sections. To accommodate this situation, a combination units classification is included. This classification is divided into four sections which are self explanatory. These include: (1) district(s) - area(s) - node(s), (2) district(s) - area(s), (3) district(s) - node(s), (4) area(s) -

node(s). If a city had one skid row district and two nodes, it would be classified a district(s) - node(s) and mapped accordingly. (See Table 2 and Figure 3.)

### National Survey: Similarities and Differences by Type

#### Single Unit Skid Rows

Figure 4 shows the distribution of cities that have a single skid row unit. It is obvious that the majority of them have districts. Furthermore, cities with districts are located, for the most part, in the "sun belt."

Several deductions are true of single skid row units.

1. Those skid row districts that existed in 1950 and 1968 but not in 1979 were destroyed by revitalization and urban renewal programs.
2. Existing skid row districts in 1979 occupied the same location as they did in 1950 and 1968.
3. Smaller 1979 single unit skid rows (areas and nodes) were located where districts once existed and are merely products of district shrinkage.
4. If a skid row district disappeared between the years 1950, 1968, and 1979, a new skid row unit reappeared by 1979 to replace it.
5. These new skid rows were located within walking distance (two to three blocks) of the 1950-1968 skid row.

TABLE 2  
SKID ROW CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

| <hr/>   |             |                             |
|---|-------------|-----------------------------|
| <u>Single Units</u><br>(one only)                 | <u>Size</u> | <u>Spatial Arrangement</u>  |
| District  | 5+ blocks   | Blocks grouped              |
| Area  | 3-4 blocks  | Blocks grouped              |
| Node  | 1-2 blocks  | Blocks grouped or scattered |
| <br>  |             |                             |
| <u>Multiple Units</u><br>(more than one)          | <u>Size</u> | <u>Spatial Arrangement</u>  |
| Districts   | 5+ blocks   | Blocks grouped              |
| Areas   | 3-4 blocks  | Blocks grouped              |
| Nodes   | 1-2 blocks  | Blocks grouped or scattered |
| <br>  |             |                             |
| <u>Combination Units</u><br>(one or more of each) |             |                             |
| District(s) - Area(s) - Node(s)                   |             |                             |
| District(s) - Area(s)                             |             |                             |
| District(s) - Node(s)                             |             |                             |
| Area(s) - Node(s)                                 |             |                             |
| <br>  |             |                             |
| <u>Miscellaneous</u>                              |             |                             |
| No Skid Row                                       |             |                             |
| <hr/>   |             |                             |

### SKID ROWS BY CLASSIFICATION TYPE, 1979

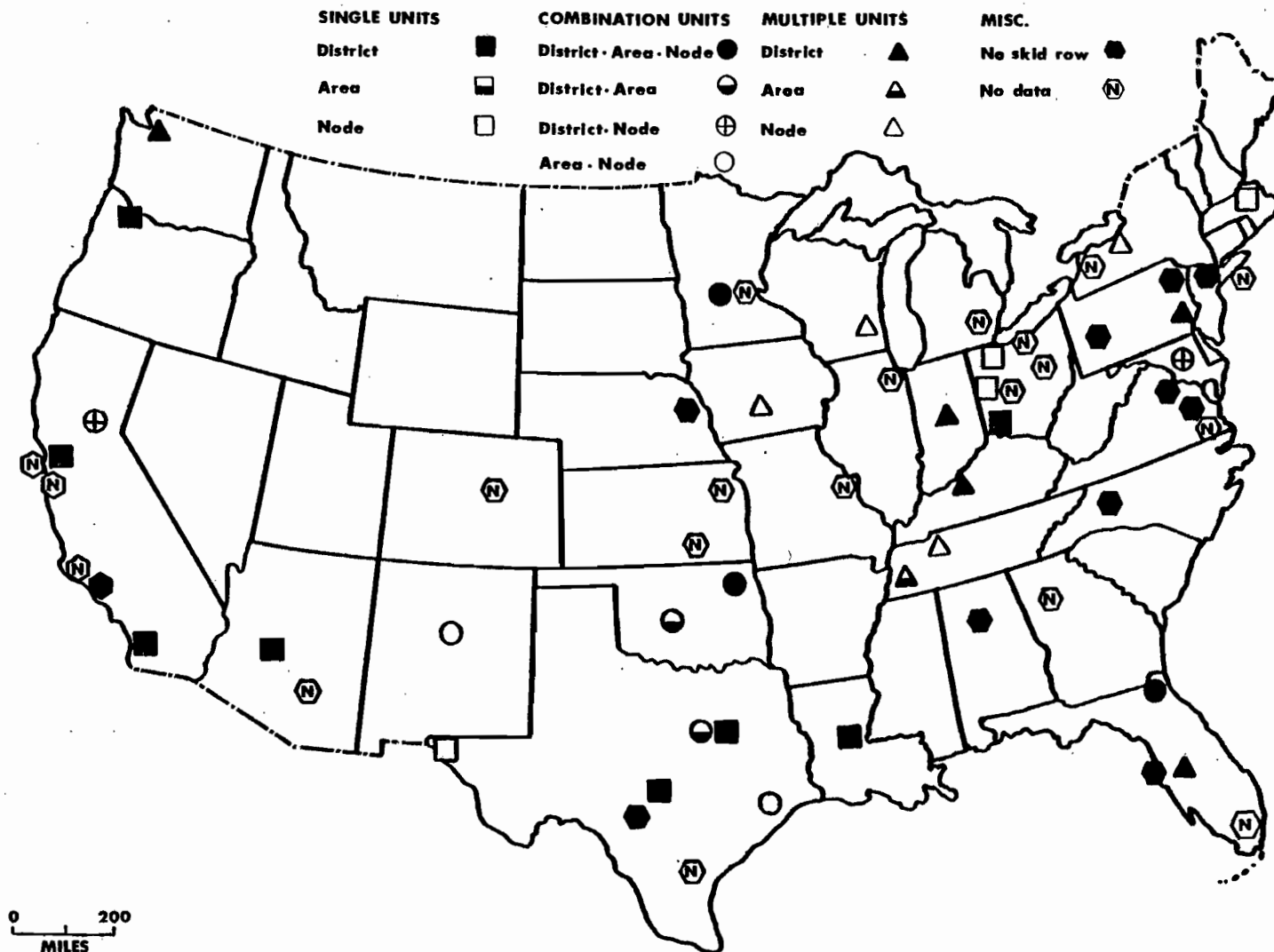


Figure 3

# SINGLE UNIT SKID ROWS, 1979

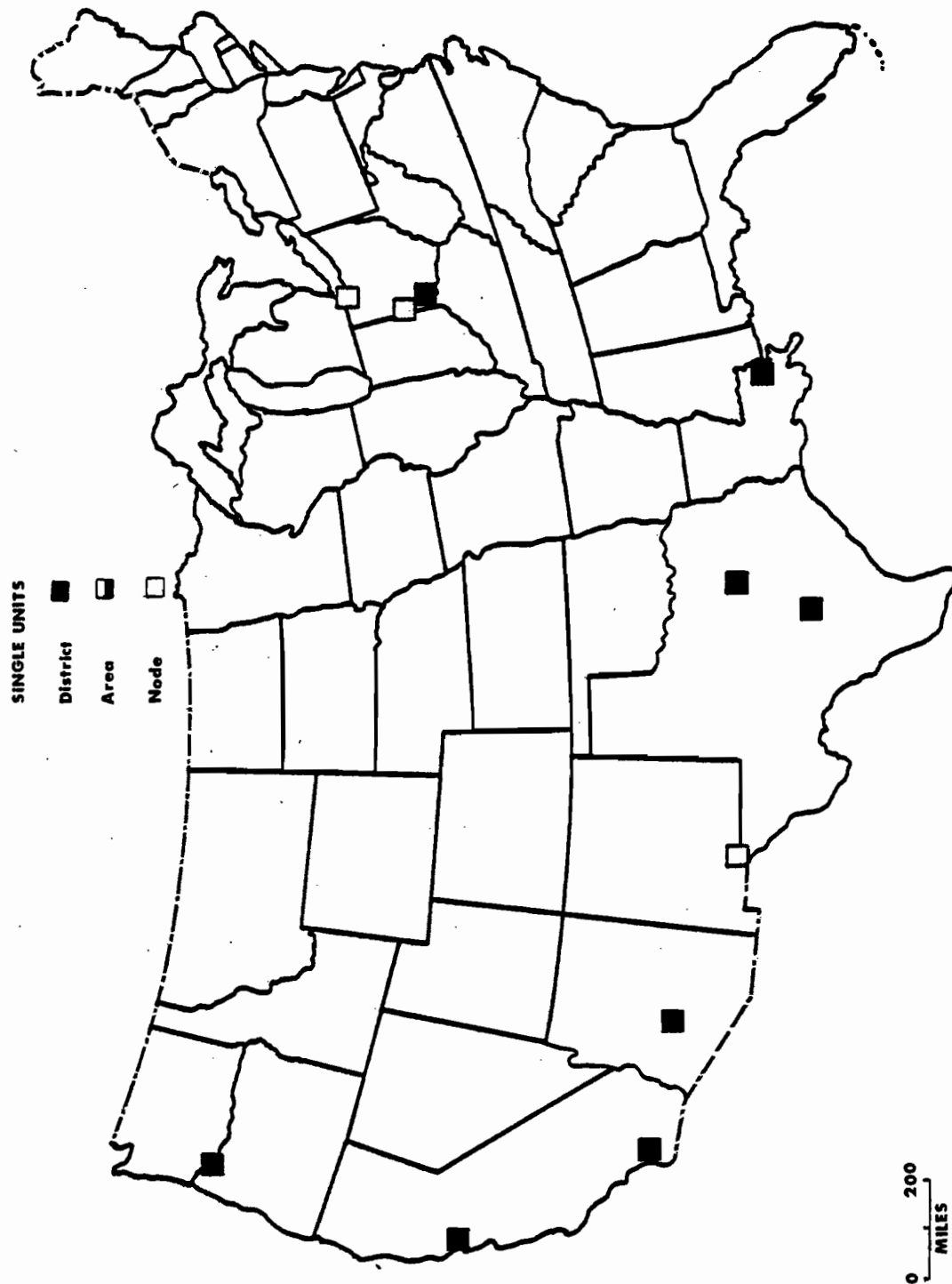


Figure 4

Table 3 shows the mean distances, in blocks (one block is approximately 100 meters), from the skid row to three major city landmarks (bodies of water, city hall, and railroad lines). It can be seen that the distance between skid row and these features has been increasing since 1950. Whereas the skid row was five blocks from a body of water (river or bay) in 1950, it was six and a half blocks by 1979. This same pattern is true of skid row in relation to city hall and railroad lines. Originally railroad and water ports served as places of initial entry to the city for the early skid road inhabitants, so that services competing for their patronage tended to locate in the immediate area. One author stated that skid rows are always found between a railroad station and the city hall.<sup>5</sup>

Beside the spatial movements which skid rows have undergone there has been a dramatic change in size. Table 4 reveals that in 1950 skid rows (which were predominantly districts) averaged thirty-six-and-a-half blocks in size. By 1979 this average had decreased to a little over seven blocks. If only single unit skid rows are compared through time, the same decrease is obvious. In 1950 their mean was 47 blocks, which was only 15 blocks by 1979. (See Table 4.) The decline of the skid row district is clearly illustrated by these figures. Examples of single unit skid rows follow.

#### Single Unit Districts

Austin. Austin's 1968 skid row district is in the process of being transformed while a new district has emerged. (See Figure 5.)



TABLE 3  
LOCATION OF SKID ROW IN RELATION TO  
SELECTED FEATURES FOR 31 U.S. CITIES

|                             | Date         | Single Unit<br>Skid Rows | Multiple Unit<br>Skid Rows | Combination<br>Unit<br>Skid Rows | Block<br>Totals |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Blocks to<br>Water          | 1950         | 5.7                      | 6.8                        | 3.0                              | 5.1             |
|                             | 1968         | 6.3                      | 7.6                        | 7.6                              | 7.0             |
|                             | 1979         | 8.3                      | 4.1                        | 6.6                              | 6.5             |
|                             | Block Totals | 7.0                      | 5.8                        | 5.9                              |                 |
| Blocks to<br>City Hall      | 1950         | 2.8                      | 2.4                        | 2.0                              | 2.4             |
|                             | 1968         | 3.0                      | 3.2                        | 1.3                              | 2.5             |
|                             | 1979         | 7.7                      | 4.1                        | 2.4                              | 5.0             |
|                             | Block Totals | 4.9                      | 3.4                        | 2.0                              |                 |
| Blocks to<br>Railroad Lines | 1950         | 2.3                      | 1.0                        | 1.8                              | 1.7             |
|                             | 1968         | 2.9                      | 2.2                        | 1.7                              | 2.4             |
|                             | 1979         | 4.2                      | 2.1                        | 2.6                              | 3.1             |
|                             | Block Totals | 3.3                      | 1.8                        | 2.1                              |                 |

TABLE 4  
SKID ROW SIZE IN BLOCKS FOR 31 U.S. CITIES

| Date            | Single Unit<br>Skid Rows | Multiple Unit<br>Skid Rows | Combination<br>Unit<br>Skid Rows | Block<br>Totals |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1950            | 46.9                     | 18.2                       | 39.8                             | 36.5            |
| 1968            | 27.0                     | 14.3                       | 20.5                             | 21.5            |
| 1979            | 14.8                     | 6.1                        | 5.7                              | 7.2             |
| Block<br>Totals | 27.4                     | 9.5                        | 13.1                             |                 |

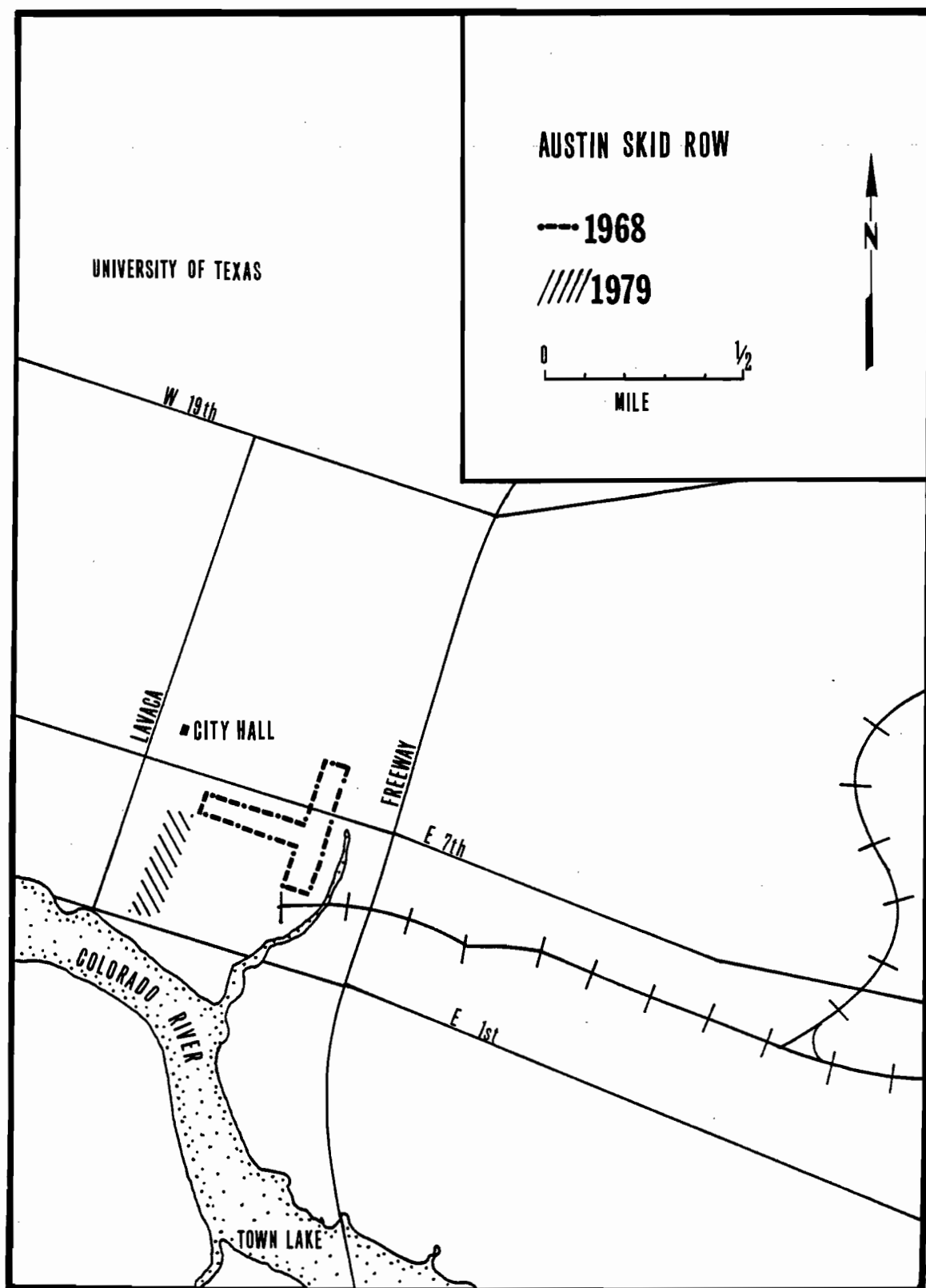


Figure 5

The disappearance of the 1968 district results from a combination of historical restoration and downtown revitalization programs. More specifically, middle income oriented restaurants, night clubs, and theaters along with restoration of other skid row structures are forcing the 1968 skid row district out of existence.

Cincinnati. Cincinnati's skid row has undergone many changes in the last thirty years. As the map indicates, in 1950 Cincinnati had two large skid row districts. (See Figure 6.) The northern district was 21 blocks in size, while the southern district measured 17 blocks. By 1968, according to the Cincinnati planning department, the 1950 districts had been replaced by one district of 5 blocks. This skid row district (1968) was a remnant of the larger 1950 southern district. Curiously, by 1979 a district of 16 blocks reappears in the same location as the 1950 northern district. This northern district supposedly disappears by 1968. To further complicate the issue, in a letter addressed to Mike Jones of the Portland State University Urban Studies Center and dated February 28, 1972, Cincinnati's Director of City Planning stated, "I am sorry that I cannot help you with your study of Skid Row. Cincinnati has no Skid Row identifiable as such."<sup>6</sup> However, the same planner when asked in 1979 indicated that skid row districts did indeed exist in Cincinnati in 1968 and 1979. Though it is not out of the realm of possibility, the disappearance of the 1950 northern district and the reappearance of a 1979 district in essentially the same spot as the defunct 1950 district does seem strange.

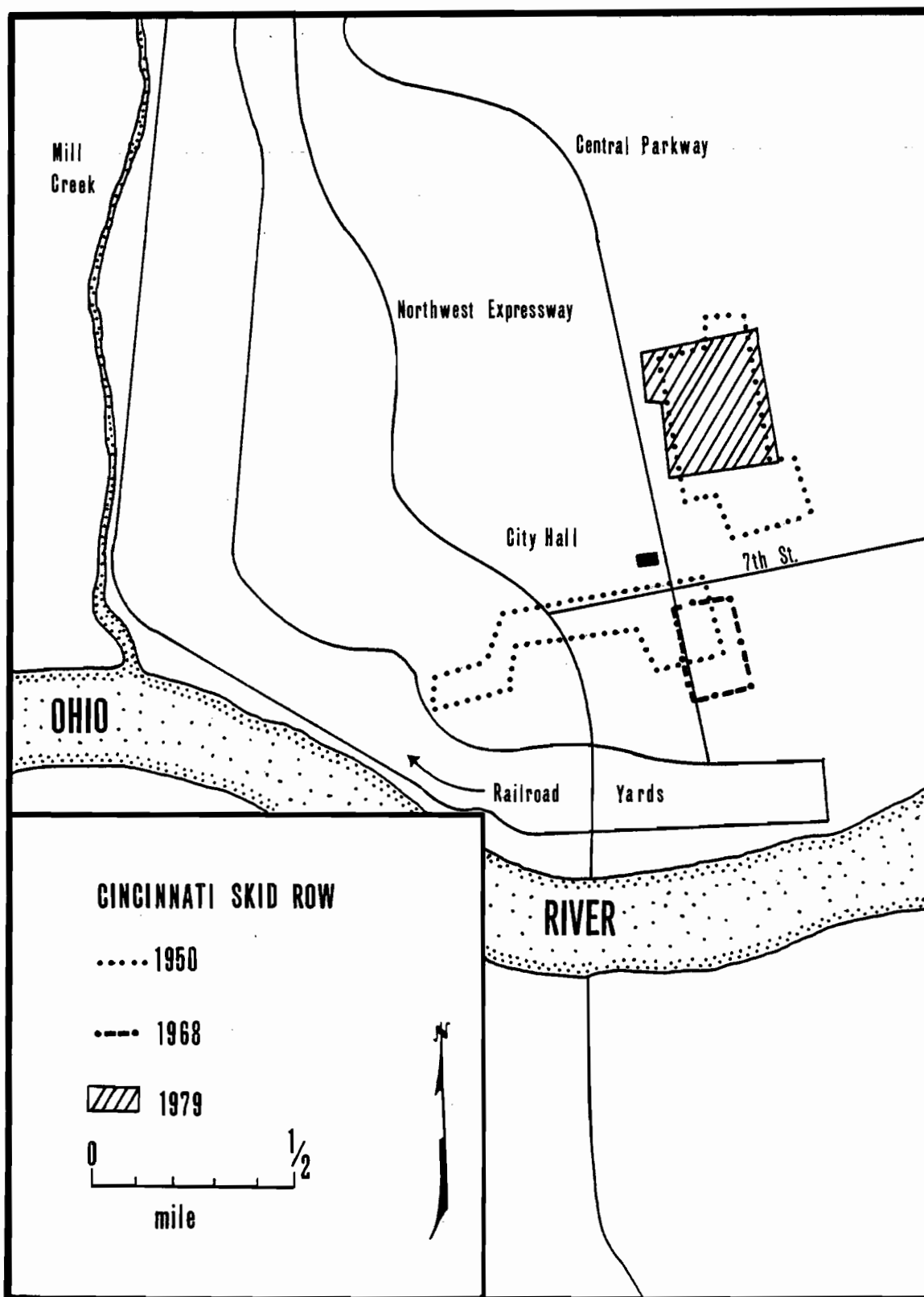


Figure 6

According to other data provided by Cincinnati's planning department, the demise of the 1968 skid row district is the result of urban renewal projects. New public buildings in the form of a convention center, garage, and a parking lot replaced the 1968 district causing the inhabitants and their support services (missions, etc.) to relocate. Apparently, this new district (1979) is located in an area that was identified as a skid row district in 1950.

The future of Cincinnati's 1979 skid row is predictable. Because this area contains old buildings which are in need of repair or replacement, it is a prime target for rehabilitation projects or new construction. (See Table 5.) In both cases, the skid row district will be forced to relocate to the north and west.

Dallas. There seems to be some dispute as to the existence of skid row in Dallas. (See Figure 7.) According to a response from the Department of Planning and Urban Development dated 1972, there is no skid row in Dallas.

Actually, the situation in Dallas is such that we have no real skid row area. For many years there was an area at one end of the Central Business District which had these characteristics (it was primarily an area of pawn shops, etc.) but the entire area has been wiped out by a new freeway. As a result, there is an area about two blocks long that might be referred to as Dallas' skid row. However, it, too, is in the process of being demolished. Basically, we do not have a true skid row area in the downtown area, primarily because of the rapid development taking place that has demolished the older sectors before they could develop into a skid row.<sup>7</sup>

Interestingly enough, a 1979 response from the Department of Urban Planning includes a map showing both a 1968 and 1979 skid row district. The reason given for the difference in the two boundaries is

TABLE 5  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR CINCINNATI, OHIO,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 0%                      | 13%                          | 14%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 8%                                 | 14%                    | 21%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 3%                      | 10%                          | 18%                                | NA  | 10%                                   | 5%                                 | 30%                    | 18%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 4%                      | 16%                          | 18%                                | \$4603                                      | 11%                                   | 5%                                 | 4%                     | 16%                                    | 80%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 24%                                | \$2606                                      | 15%                                   | 3%                                 | 5%                     | 3%                                     | 59%                         |
|                      |      |                         |                              |                                    |   |                                       |                                    |                        |  |                             |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 1%                      | 21%                          | 7%                                 | NA  | NA                                    | 14%                                | 32%                    | 34%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 3%                      | 17%                          | 8%                                 | NA  | 28%                                   | 9%                                 | 84%                    | 32%                                    | 100%                        |
|                      | 1960 | 3%                      | 22%                          | 6%                                 | \$2534                                      | 29%                                   | 7%                                 | 12%                    | 22%                                    | 99%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 5%                      | 17%                          | 17%                                | \$1993                                      | 39%                                   | 4%                                 | 24%                    | 5%                                     | 82%                         |
|                      |      |                         |                              |                                    |   |                                       |                                    |                        |  |                             |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |
|                      |      |                         |                              |                                    |   |                                       |                                    |                        |  |                             |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Cincinnati, Ohio SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

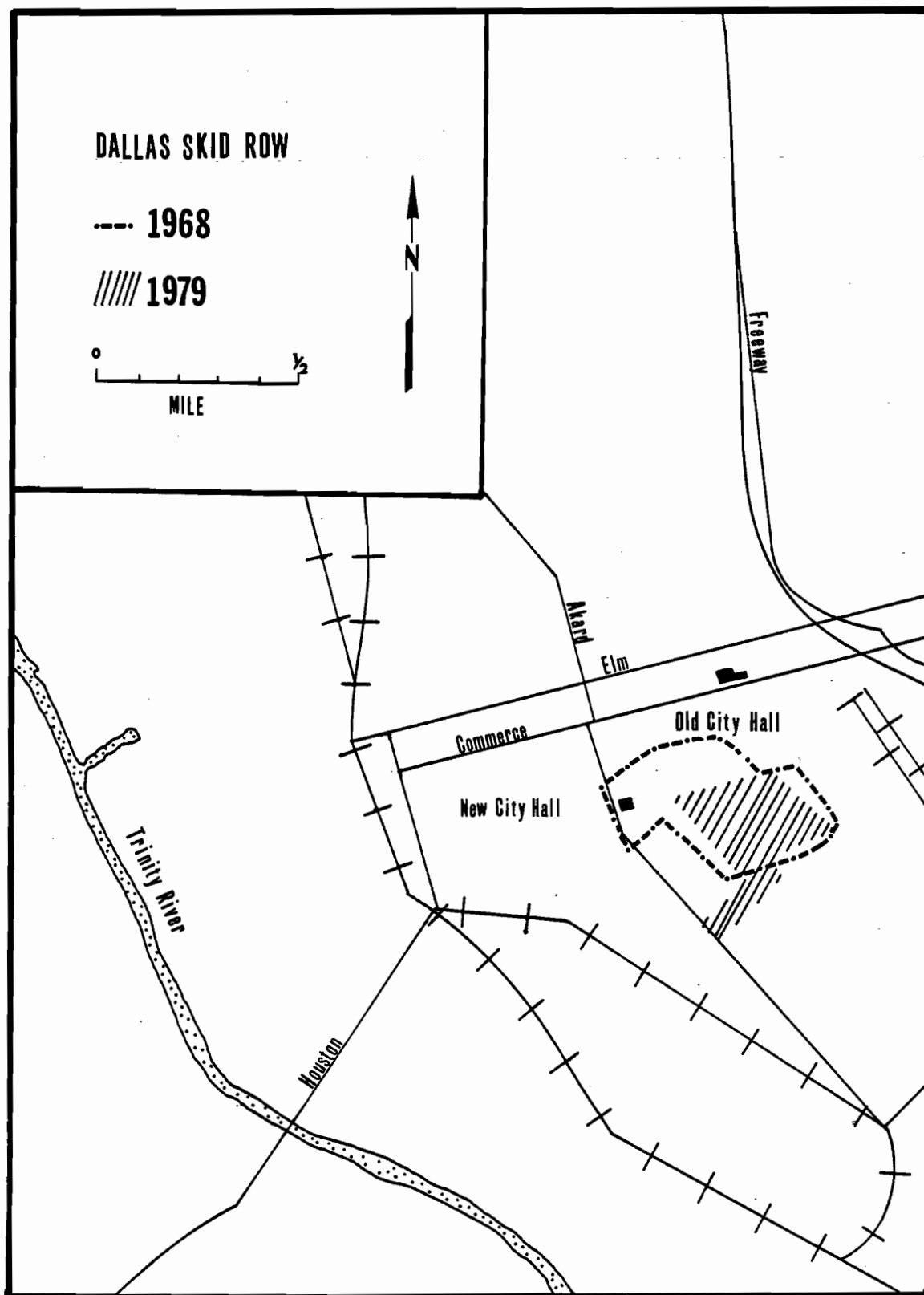


Figure 7



urban renewal. For example, Dallas' new City Hall, noted on Figure 7, was begun in 1972, causing a major removal of various structures that catered to the downtrodden.

New Orleans. Unlike other skid rows, New Orleans' skid row district has not experienced such drastic changes from 1950 to 1979. Though its skid row has decreased in size from 33 blocks in 1950 to 14 blocks in 1979, there has been no diffusion of the skid row to other sections of New Orleans. (See Figure 8.) New Orleans' skid row stability, compared to others examined in this study, is the result of inaction by the city government. Whereas skid rows in other cities have already been affected by private and public actions, New Orleans is just now in the process of dealing with its skid row. The 1979 skid row district was recently included in an historic district. According to New Orleans' planners, this inclusion will change the current skid row by encouraging private renovation by investors wishing to take advantage of tax incentives associated with certified historic districts. Also, New Orleans plans to enforce housing codes, eliminate flophouses, and reduce services to the transient population.

With a couple of exceptions, New Orleans' skid row is statistically very similar to the national skid row average. In 1970, New Orleans had a lower percentage of unrelated individuals than the national average. Also, the percentage of dilapidated dwellings and percentage of dwellings built 1939 or earlier is lower. However, when compared to the City of New Orleans, only the percentage of unrelated individuals is significantly different. (See Table 6.)

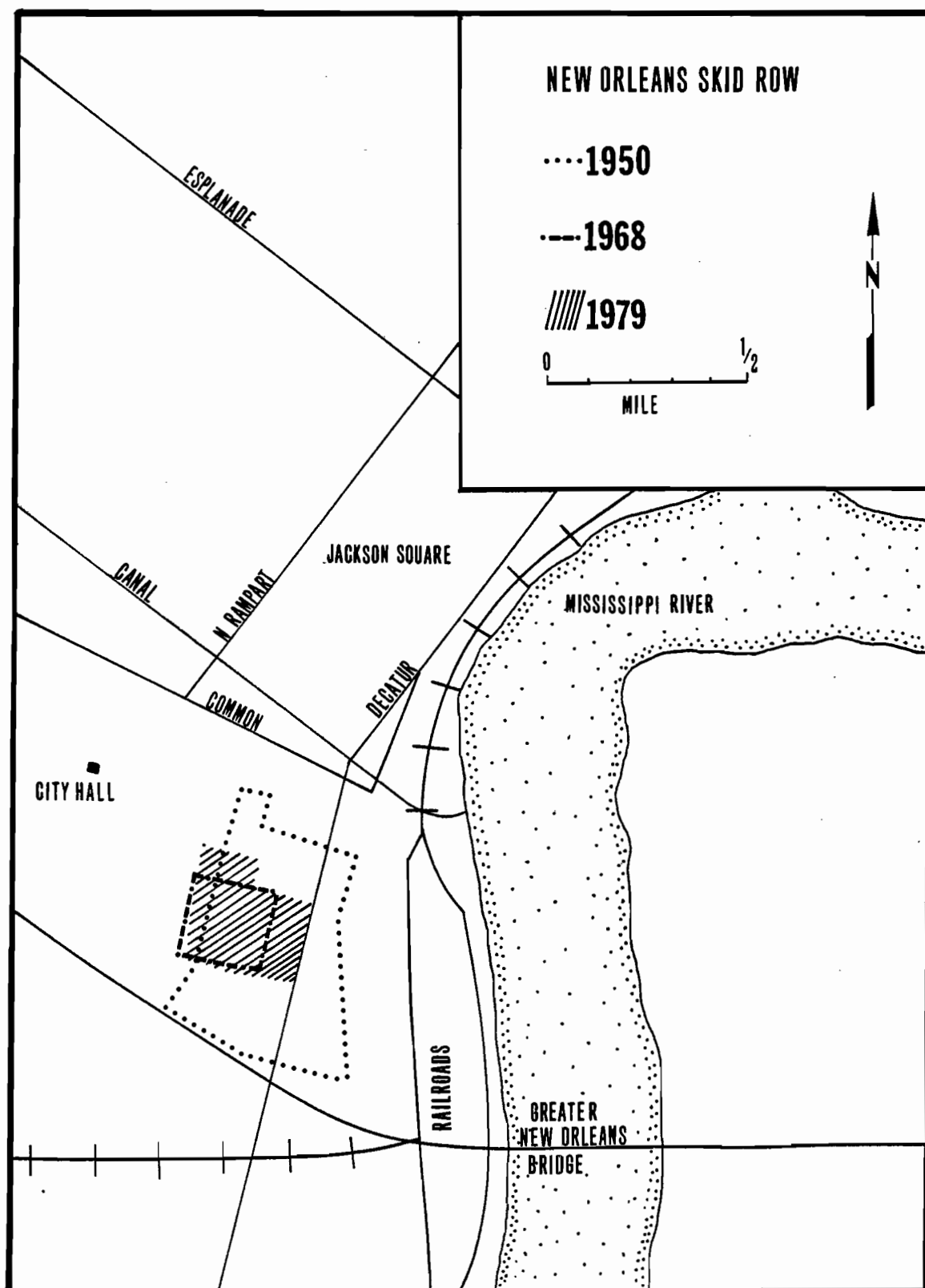


Figure 8

TABLE 6  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 1%                      | 18%                          | 13%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 9%                                 | 8%                     | 27%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 6%                      | 15%                          | 17%                                | NA  | 25%                                   | 5%                                 | 26%                    | 22%                                    | 82%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 3%                      | 21%                          | 19%                                | \$3822                                      | 10%                                   | 5%                                 | 7%                     | 18%                                    | 67%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 2%                      | 17%                          | 23%                                | \$2211                                      | 11%                                   | 4%                                 | 4%                     | 5%                                     | 49%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 0%                      | 13%                          | 13%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 7%                                 | 10%                    | 31%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 15%                          | 15%                                | NA  | 45%                                   | 7%                                 | 52%                    | 23%                                    | 100%                        |
|                      | 1960 | 22%                     | 14%                          | 19%                                | \$2327                                      | 54%                                   | 7%                                 | 21%                    | 14%                                    | 82%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 17%                     | 12%                          | 17%                                | \$2337                                      | 35%                                   | 4%                                 | 9%                     | 7%                                     | 48%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, New Orleans, Louisiana SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

Oakland. In 1950, Oakland had a skid row district which was 10 blocks in size. By 1968, the skid row had shifted slightly to the south and was still large enough to be classified a district. Finally, in 1979, the skid row had relocated one block north of the 1950 skid row and had undergone a size reduction to four blocks. (See Figure 9.) Oakland's planning department states that this decrease is partially a result of the establishment of an Old Town project.

A comparison of census data reveals that Oakland's 1970 skid row differs considerably from the national average on three accounts. First, the percentage of unrelated individuals in Oakland's skid row is much higher. Second, the percentage of dilapidated housing is 34 percentage points larger than the national skid row average. Finally, Oakland has a higher percentage of structures built 1939 or earlier. (See Table 7.) These same factors are also much higher than Oakland's city average.

Portland. Portland's 1950 skid row district was huge, according to Bogue's definition. By 1968 it had declined, leaving two smaller districts. The current skid row is the remnant of the northern 1968 district and is designated an Old Town area. Like other skid rows it is gradually decreasing in size as skid row land uses are replaced by businesses catering to non-skid row customers. (See Figure 10.)

Table 8 clearly reveals the differences between Portland's Skid Row and the City of Portland. For example, it can be seen that in both 1960 and 1970, Portland's Skid Row had a much greater percentage of people living in group quarters than the city. Other marked

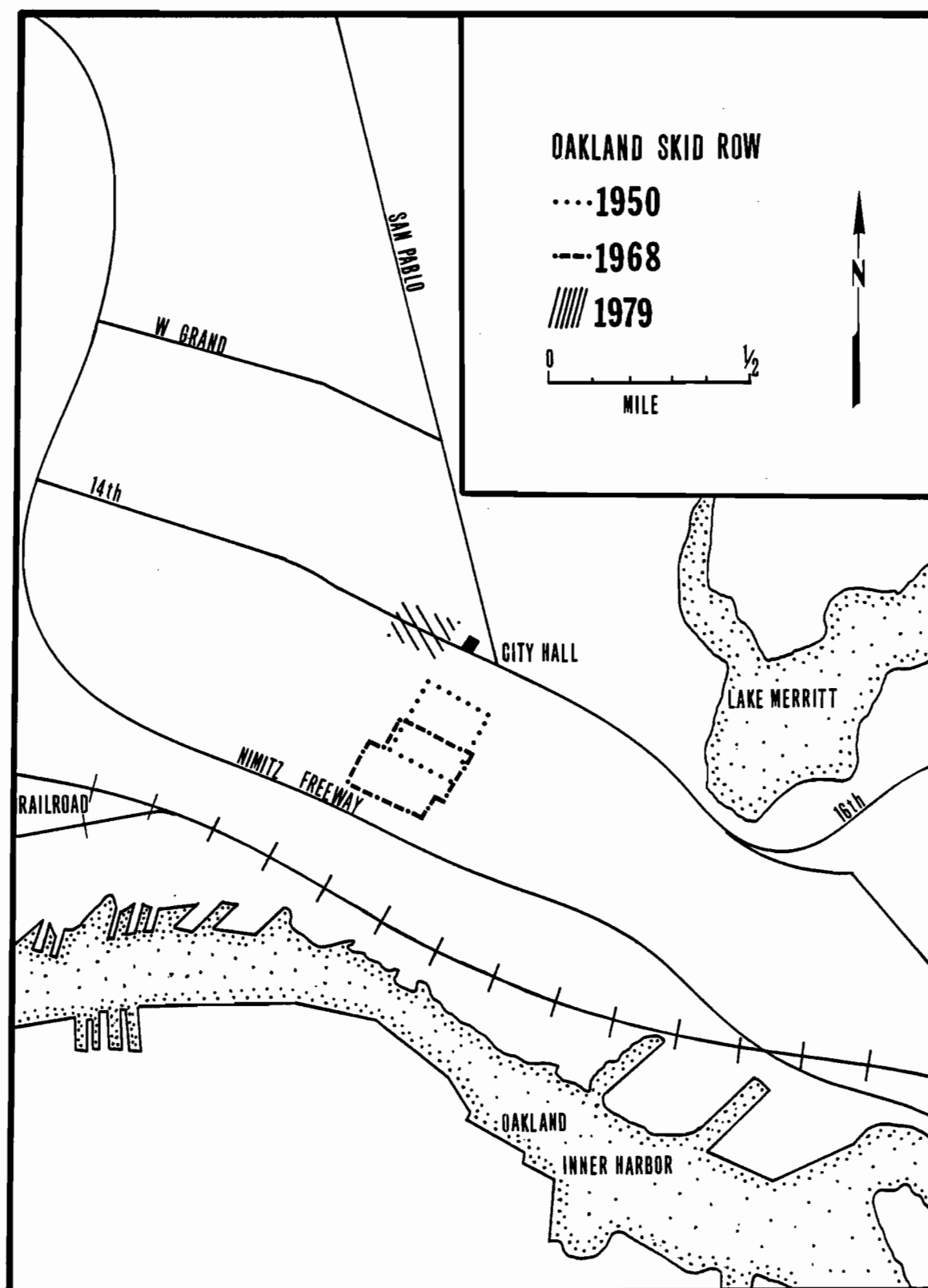


Figure 9

TABLE 7  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 0%                      | 7%                           | 25%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 7%                                 | 14%                    | 8%                                     | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 2%                      | 6%                           | 28%                                | NA  | 13%                                   | 7%                                 | 12%                    | 9%                                     | 85%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 2%                      | 12%                          | 27%                                | \$5038                                      | 13%                                   | 6%                                 | 2%                     | 9%                                     | 74%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 3%                      | 9%                           | 30%                                | \$3033                                      | 18%                                   | 5%                                 | 4%                     | 2%                                     | 53%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 2%                      | 11%                          | 13%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 12%                                | 13%                    | 14%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 3%                      | 10%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 58%                                   | 15%                                | 49%                    | 20%                                    | 100%                        |
|                      | 1960 | 9%                      | 20%                          | 17%                                | \$1883                                      | 67%                                   | 10%                                | 1%                     | 6%                                     | 96%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 13%                     | 13%                          | 22%                                | \$2507                                      | 67%                                   | 9%                                 | 62%                    | 4%                                     | 91%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Oakland, California SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

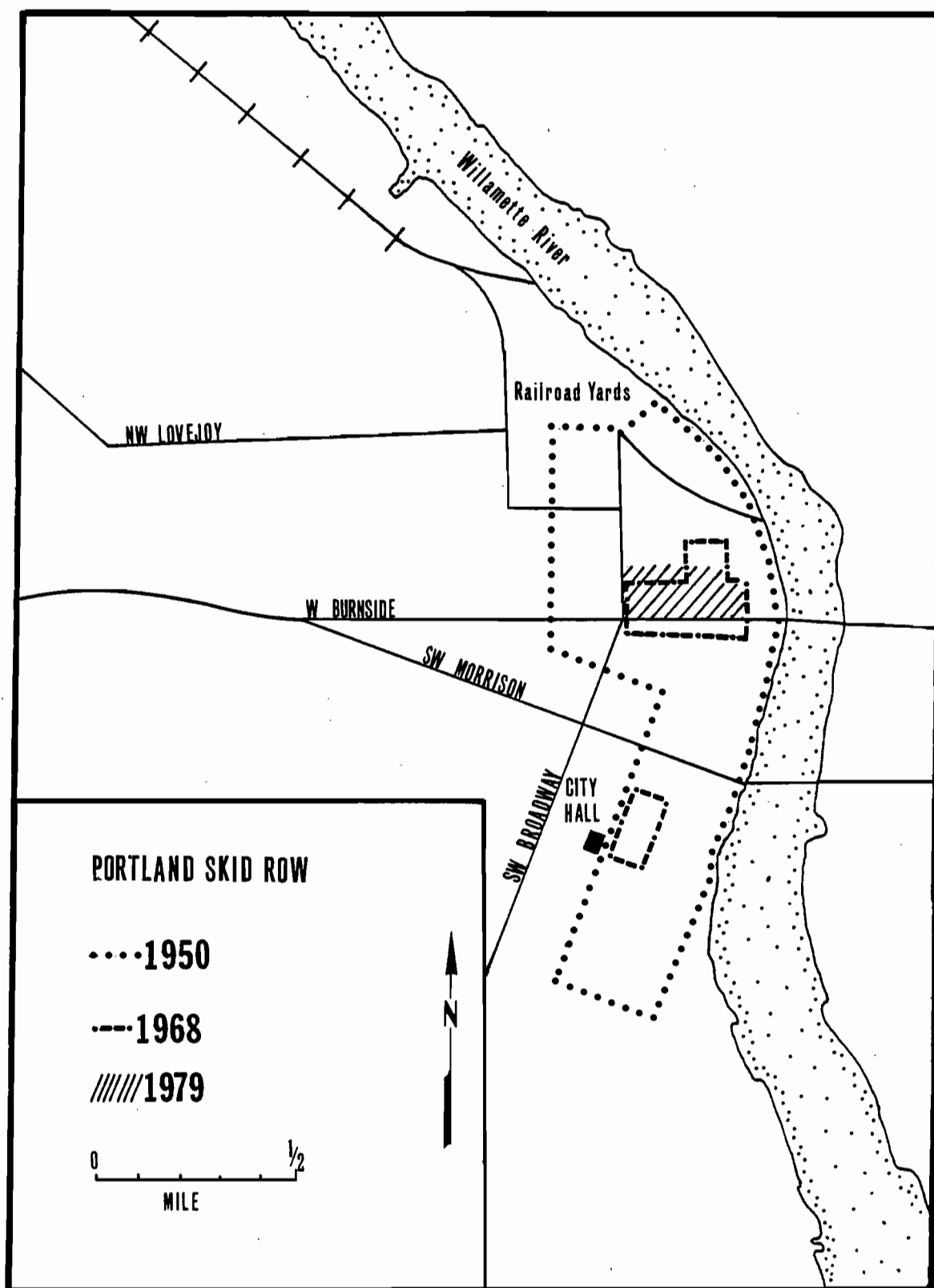


Figure 10

TABLE 8  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR PORTLAND, OREGON,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 0%                      | 5%                           | 23%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 9%                                 | 7%                     | 6%                                     | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 2%                      | 4%                           | 27%                                | NA  | 13%                                   | 7%                                 | 11%                    | 7%                                     | 80%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 2%                      | 8%                           | 28%                                | \$4918                                      | 14%                                   | 4%                                 | 4%                     | 4%                                     | 72%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 3%                      | 6%                           | 33%                                | \$2806                                      | 5%                                    | 5%                                 | 5%                     | 1%                                     | 57%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 1%                      | 12%                          | 10%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 26%                                | 16%                    | 15%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 2%                      | 10%                          | 13%                                | NA  | 63%                                   | 17%                                | 79%                    | 13%                                    | 100%                        |
|                      | 1960 | 20%                     | 18%                          | 13%                                | \$1344                                      | 66%                                   | 14%                                | 12%                    | 4%                                     | 99%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 35%                     | 14%                          | 23%                                | \$3347                                      | 72%                                   | 7%                                 | 59%                    | 3%                                     | 74%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Portland, Oregon SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).



differences are seen in percent of unrelated individuals, percent of dilapidated housing, and percent of housing build in 1939 or earlier.

Median income for unrelated individuals is significantly lower for Portland's Skid Row than the city in 1960. In contrast, the 1970 Skid Row median income is higher than the city median. If census tract 57 is excluded, the skid row median income becomes \$1656. This figure is more reflective of the nature of skid row. (See Table 9.)

When only census tract 51 is considered, a sharper perspective of skid row can be drawn. (See Table 9.) In 1970, over 50% of the inhabitants lived in group quarters, which was considerably higher than the national skid row percent. Furthermore, census tract 51 had 94% of its inhabitants classified as unrelated individuals. This figure far exceeded the national percentage. Other data indicate that over 80% of the housing in tract 51 is dilapidated and 100% of these housing units were built in 1939 or earlier. Also, since 1950, there has been a significant population decline in tract 51. Population dropped from 2859 in 1950 to 2149 in 1960 and to 1487 in 1970. This pattern of population decrease coincides with the physical demise of Portland's Skid Row mentioned earlier. Portland's Skid Row will be studied in more detail in Chapter III.

San Diego. The Skid Row District in San Diego has essentially remained in the same location from 1968 through 1979. However, within the next five years, it will be dramatically affected by redevelopment efforts. Four major redevelopment projects have been initiated and will ultimately eliminate skid row as it is presently known. Of the

TABLE 9

SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR PORTLAND, OREGON,  
CENSUS TRACTS 51, 54, AND 57, 1940-1970

| Tract        | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|--------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 51           | 1940 | 2%                      | 13%                          | 9%                                 | NA  | NA                                    | 31%                                | 17%                    | 20%                                    | NA                          |
|              | 1950 | 4%                      | 10%                          | 12%                                | NA  | 79%                                   | 12%                                | 87%                    | 17%                                    | 100%                        |
|              | 1960 | 26%                     | 23%                          | 13%                                | \$1177                                      | 84%                                   | 18%                                | 11%                    | 5%                                     | 99%                         |
|              | 1970 | 56%                     | 19%                          | 20%                                | \$1695                                      | 94%                                   | 13%                                | 82%                    | 4%                                     | 100%                        |
| 54           | 1940 | 1%                      | 13%                          | 9%                                 | NA  | NA                                    | 26%                                | 24%                    | 13%                                    | NA                          |
|              | 1950 | 1%                      | 12%                          | 10%                                | NA  | 73%                                   | 23%                                | 92%                    | 12%                                    | 100%                        |
|              | 1960 | 30%                     | 17%                          | 12%                                | \$1252                                      | 72%                                   | 12%                                | 0%                     | 3%                                     | 99%                         |
|              | 1970 | 50%                     | 18%                          | 20%                                | \$1618                                      | 82%                                   | 8%                                 | 89%                    | 4%                                     | 99%                         |
| 57           | 1940 | 0%                      | 9%                           | 12%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 20%                                | 8%                     | 11%                                    | NA                          |
|              | 1950 | 1%                      | 9%                           | 17%                                | NA  | 37%                                   | 17%                                | 58%                    | 9%                                     | 100%                        |
|              | 1960 | 3%                      | 15%                          | 14%                                | \$1602                                      | 42%                                   | 13%                                | 25%                    | 5%                                     | 99%                         |
|              | 1970 | 0%                      | 6%                           | 30%                                | \$6727                                      | 41%                                   | 1%                                 | 6%                     | 1%                                     | 24%                         |
| City<br>Avg. | 1940 | 0%                      | 5%                           | 23%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 9%                                 | 7%                     | 6%                                     | NA                          |
|              | 1950 | 2%                      | 4%                           | 27%                                | NA  | 13%                                   | 7%                                 | 11%                    | 7%                                     | 80%                         |
|              | 1960 | 2%                      | 8%                           | 28%                                | \$4918                                      | 14%                                   | 4%                                 | 4%                     | 4%                                     | 72%                         |
|              | 1970 | 3%                      | 6%                           | 33%                                | \$2806                                      | 5%                                    | 5%                                 | 5%                     | 1%                                     | 57%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Portland, Oregon SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

projects, three are purely redevelopment in nature and will provide new retailing, residential, and hotel/convention facilities. The fourth project is a revitalization project designed to restore the turn-of-the-century commercial atmosphere to a 16-block area. (See Figure 11.)

### Single Unit Nodes

Boston. In 1950, as Figure 12 indicates, Boston had two skid row districts. The northern district was approximately 9 blocks in size, while the southern district covered about 65 blocks. By 1968, the southern district remained identical to that of 1950. But the northern district relocated to the east along the waterfront, which is dominated by abandoned warehouses. However, as Ralph Memolo of the Boston Redevelopment Authority states, these skid row boundaries may not truly reflect the activities of its inhabitants. He writes,

Generally speaking, vagrants have frequented the South End of the city and the waterfront areas. But since Boston is such a small city in terms of its land mass (downtown is only 2 square miles), many of the vagrants tend to move throughout the downtown area, particularly during good weather.

Between 1968 and 1979, significant changes alter the size and shape of Boston's skid row districts. As Figure 12 indicates, both districts disappear from the landscape and are replaced with a single node in 1979. Mr. Memolo describes these changes in the following manner:

. . . renewal activities have been underway for more than ten years in both the South End and the waterfront and this has resulted in some changes as relates to Skid Row. Thousands of units of housing have been rehabilitated in the South End and the area now has a rather large middle-income population. Likewise, the waterfront

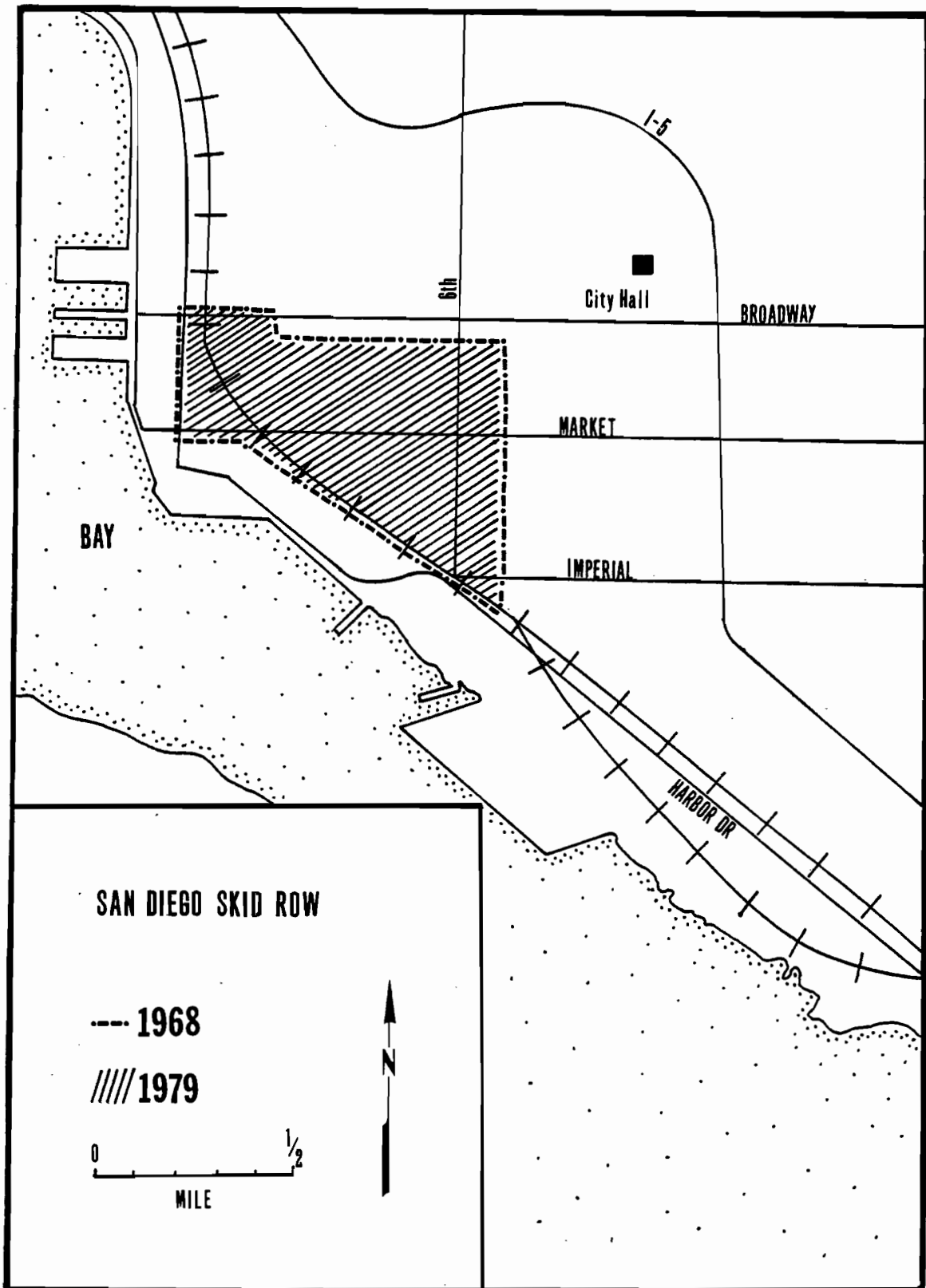


Figure 11

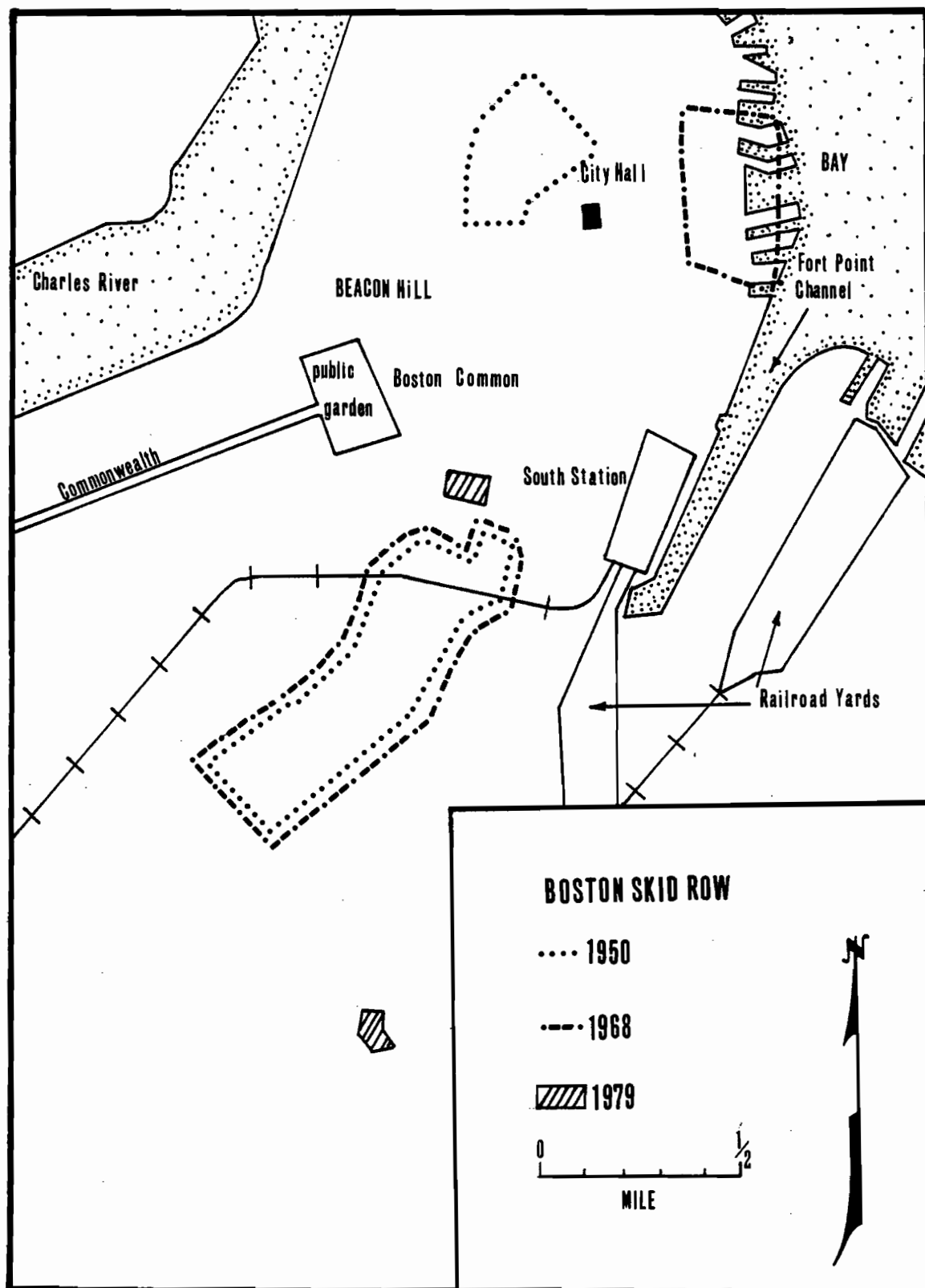


Figure 12

has gone from an area of abandoned warehouses to a new residential community made up largely of upper income residents.<sup>9</sup>

The 1979 node, known as Pine Street Inn, is also in the process of being relocated. Its present site, a couple of blocks north of the 1968 southern district, is in the middle of Boston's Chinese community. The Boston Redevelopment Authority, as part of its renewal program for Chinatown, is relocating the Pine Street Inn. A new facility is being built in the former Boston Fire Department headquarters in the South End. (See Figure 12.) The Pine Street Inn is the one place where many of the skid row men can find shelter and food. Mr. Memolo points out that the new location of the Pine Street Inn caused some community opposition in the South End. However, it is felt by the BRA that the site is located far enough away from any residential neighborhoods not to cause problems. It is also located near social agencies and hospitals which are sometimes used by these men.

With the exception of two 1970 characteristics (unrelated individuals and structures built 1939 or earlier), the census data for Boston's skid row tracts (1950 to 1970) are very similar to that of the national skid row average. (See Table 10.) This finding suggests two conclusions in terms of the effectiveness of census data as a measure of Boston's skid row character. The drastic changes in Boston's skid row, especially between 1968 and 1979, either occurred after 1970 and consequently were not reflected by the 1970 census reports, or the census data are not an accurate reflection of a skid row lifestyle or landscape.

TABLE 10  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 1%                      | 7%                           | 22%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 11%                                | 9%                     | 15%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 6%                      | 6%                           | 29%                                | NA  | 12%                                   | 6%                                 | 15%                    | 13%                                    | 95%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 6%                      | 10%                          | 29%                                | \$4264                                      | 15%                                   | 4%                                 | 4%                     | 8%                                     | 91%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 6%                      | 10%                          | 34%                                | \$2819                                      | 20%                                   | 3%                                 | 6%                     | 2%                                     | 77%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 6%                      | 11%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 14%                                | 20%                    | 16%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 11%                          | 16%                                | NA  | 36%                                   | 14%                                | 41%                    | 16%                                    | 100%                        |
|                      | 1960 | 3%                      | 18%                          | 15%                                | \$2205                                      | 40%                                   | 6%                                 | 14%                    | 9%                                     | 93%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 7%                      | 14%                          | 25%                                | \$2843                                      | 30%                                   | 5%                                 | 22%                    | 5%                                     | 52%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Boston, Massachusetts SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

Dayton. In 1968, Dayton had an 8-block skid row district which was reduced to a node by 1979. Urban renewal was responsible for the decline of the 1968 district. Part of the district was razed and replaced with a hotel/convention center complex. Other land uses include a bus station, parking garages, a park, church, and offices. (See Figure 13.)

El Paso. According to El Paso's Department of Planning, El Paso does not have a distinguishable skid row that fits the definition as expressed by Wallace and Bogue. Hobos usually congregate around the railroad yards, but no skid row is located in the vicinity of these.

El Paso does have a rescue mission. The land adjacent to the mission is used for warehousing. There are no flop houses or other skid row uses nearby. (See Figure 14.)

Toledo. Toledo had an 11-block skid row district in 1950 which remained in approximately the same location in 1968, but changed its configuration and experienced a slight reduction in size. As Figure 15 indicates, by 1979 these earlier districts have disappeared to be replaced by a node of approximately two blocks. These changes are outlined by Toledo's Planning Commission in the following statement.

During the past decade, the area has been cleared of such properties largely through Urban Renewal activities. These structures (skid row oriented) have been replaced by four apartment complexes serving families, the elderly, and the handicapped. Structures under the sponsorship of the Roman Catholic Diocese and the Lutheran Church house elderly persons, while an eight-story facility sponsored by the Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority is designed especially to house the elderly and the physically handicapped. A complex of 24 one-story single and two-family apartment



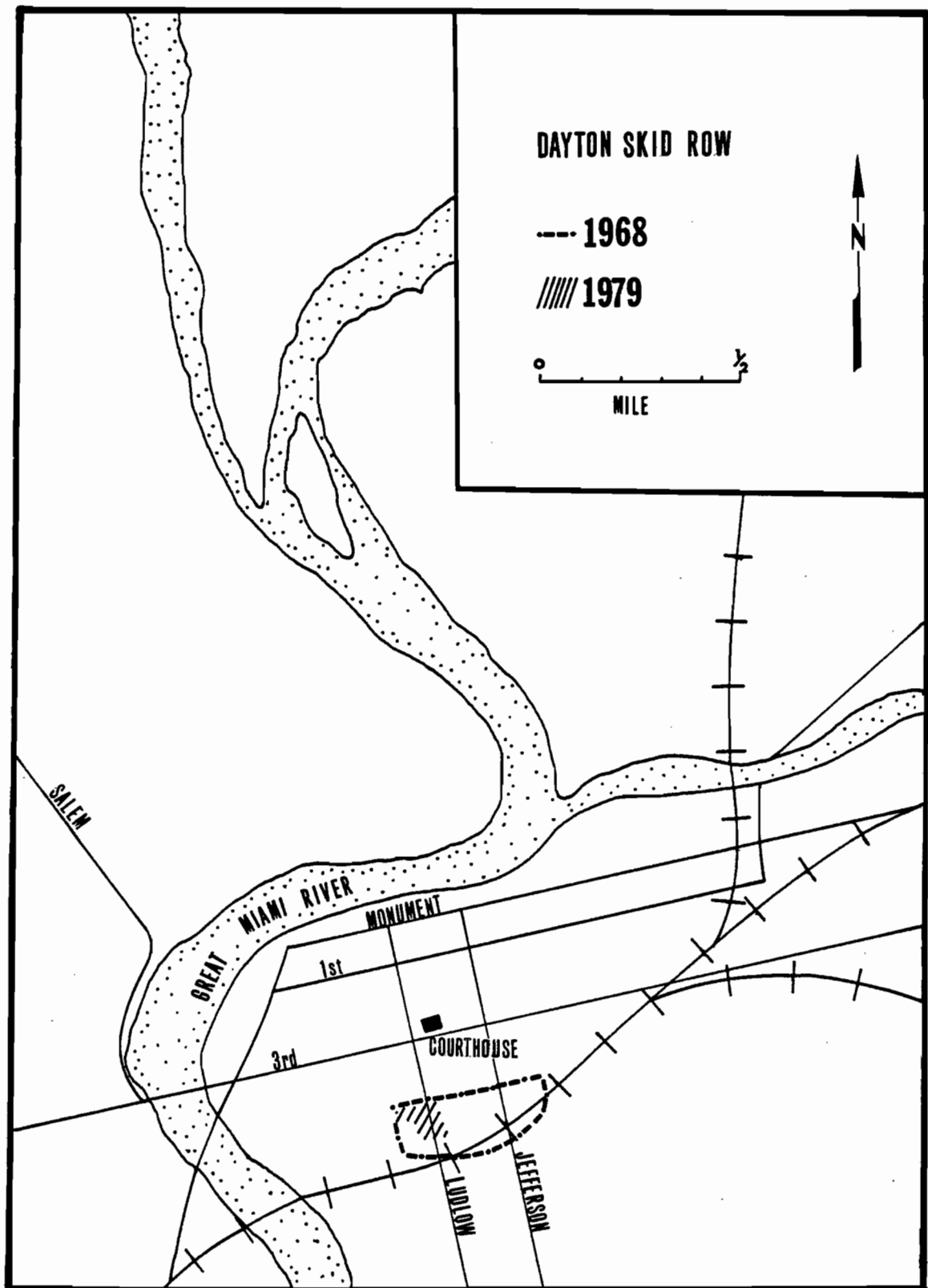


Figure 13

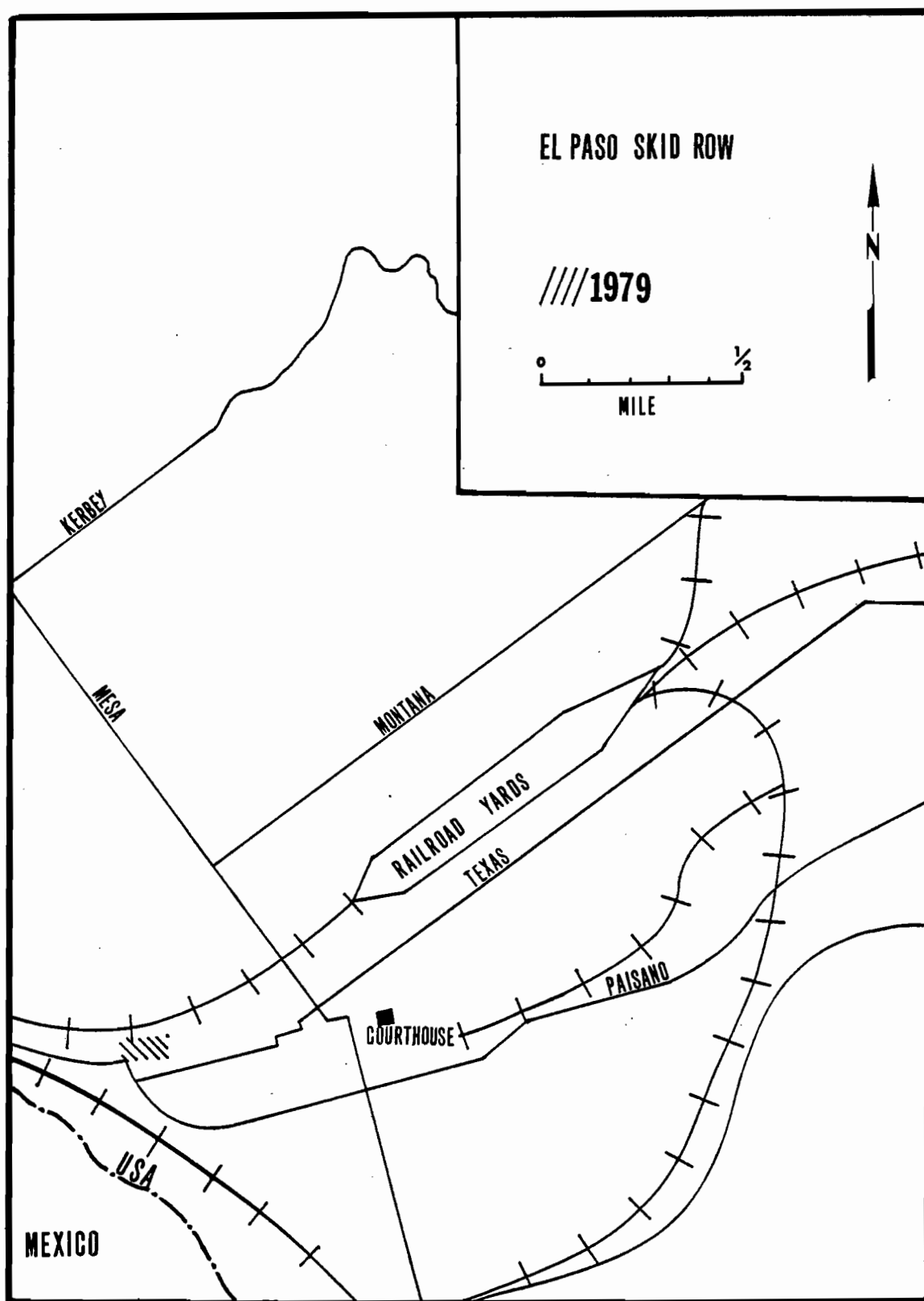


Figure 14

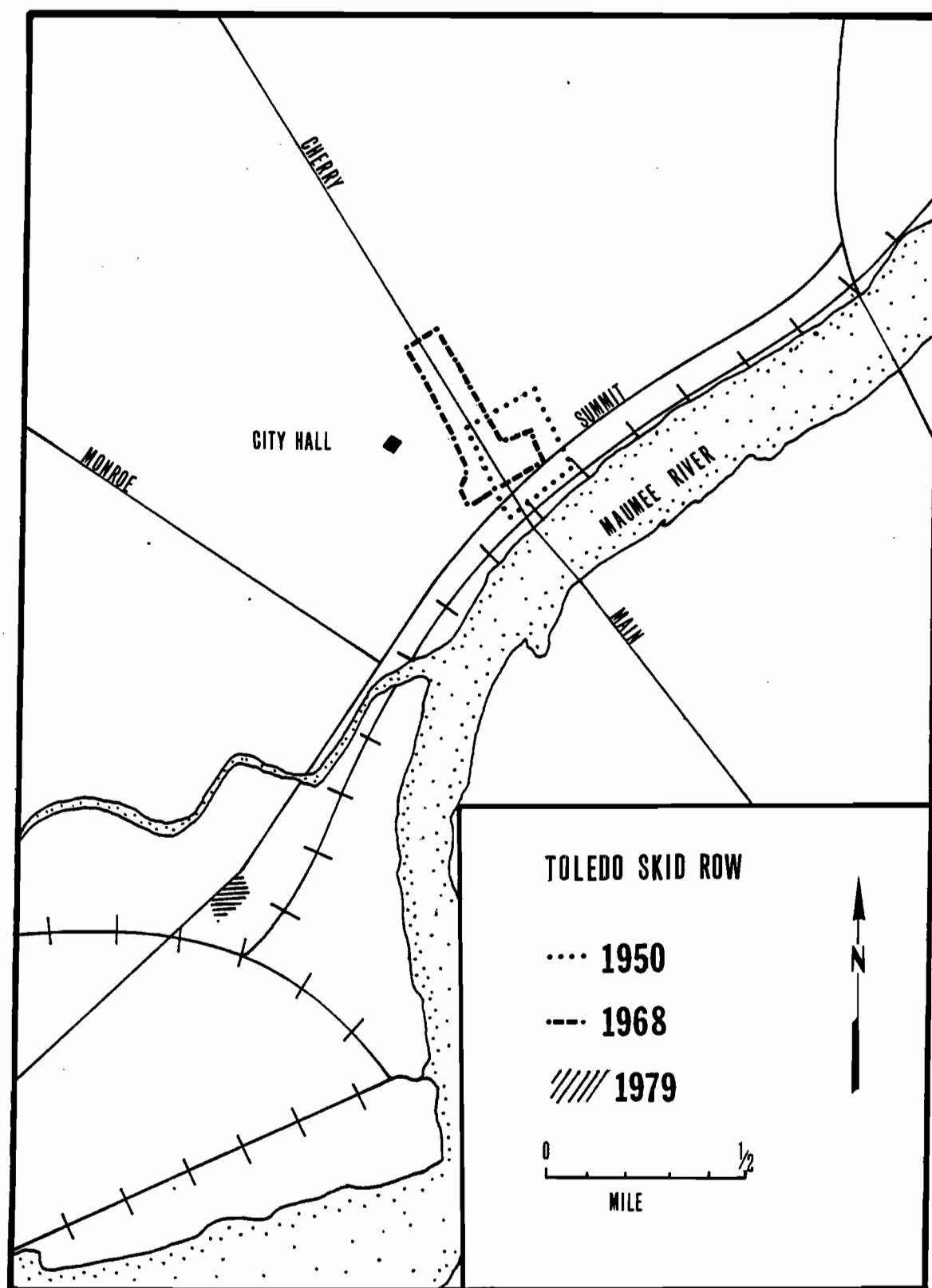


Figure 15

units developed by the Boise-Cascade Company occupies the north-western sector of the former skid row area.

The remaining vestiges of skid row areas in the City of Toledo are widely fragmented. The only concentration of activity of this nature is south of the Central Business District, along Broadway, adjacent to the Central Union Terminal.<sup>10</sup>

Statistically, Toledo's skid row census tracts closely match those of the national skid row average. (See Table 11.)

### Multiple Unit Skid Rows

Figure 16 shows that of the ten cities which have multiple unit skid rows, five of them have multiple districts and four have multiple nodes. It is obvious that the eastern half of the United States contains the greatest number of cities with multiple units.

Multiple unit skid rows started as one district in 1950 and by 1979 had either divided into smaller units or disappeared entirely with new skid row units appearing to take their place in other parts of the city. These new units were, with some exceptions, located within a couple of blocks of the original district. The disappearance of the original district (1950 and 1968) was the result of urban renewal programs and housing code enforcement. In short, many of the findings for multiple unit skid rows are very similar to those of single unit skid rows.

TABLE 11  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR TOLEDO, OHIO,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 0%                      | 11%                          | 16%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 10%                                | 11%                    | 8%                                     | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 8%                           | 22%                                | NA  | 8%                                    | 5%                                 | 11%                    | 7%                                     | 93%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 3%                      | 14%                          | 24%                                | \$5337                                      | 9%                                    | 6%                                 | 2%                     | 6%                                     | 80%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 2%                      | 10%                          | 32%                                | \$2772                                      | 10%                                   | 3%                                 | 2%                     | 1%                                     | 57%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 1%                      | 15%                          | 9%                                 | NA  | NA                                    | 17%                                | 18%                    | 17%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 3%                      | 13%                          | 15%                                | NA  | 35%                                   | 14%                                | 49%                    | 16%                                    | 99%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 12%                     | 23%                          | 13%                                | \$2162                                      | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 6%                     | 9%                                     | 98%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 14%                     | 19%                          | 15%                                | \$2250                                      | 41%                                   | 7%                                 | 23%                    | 2%                                     | 83%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Toledo, Ohio SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

# MULTIPLE UNIT SKID ROWS, 1979

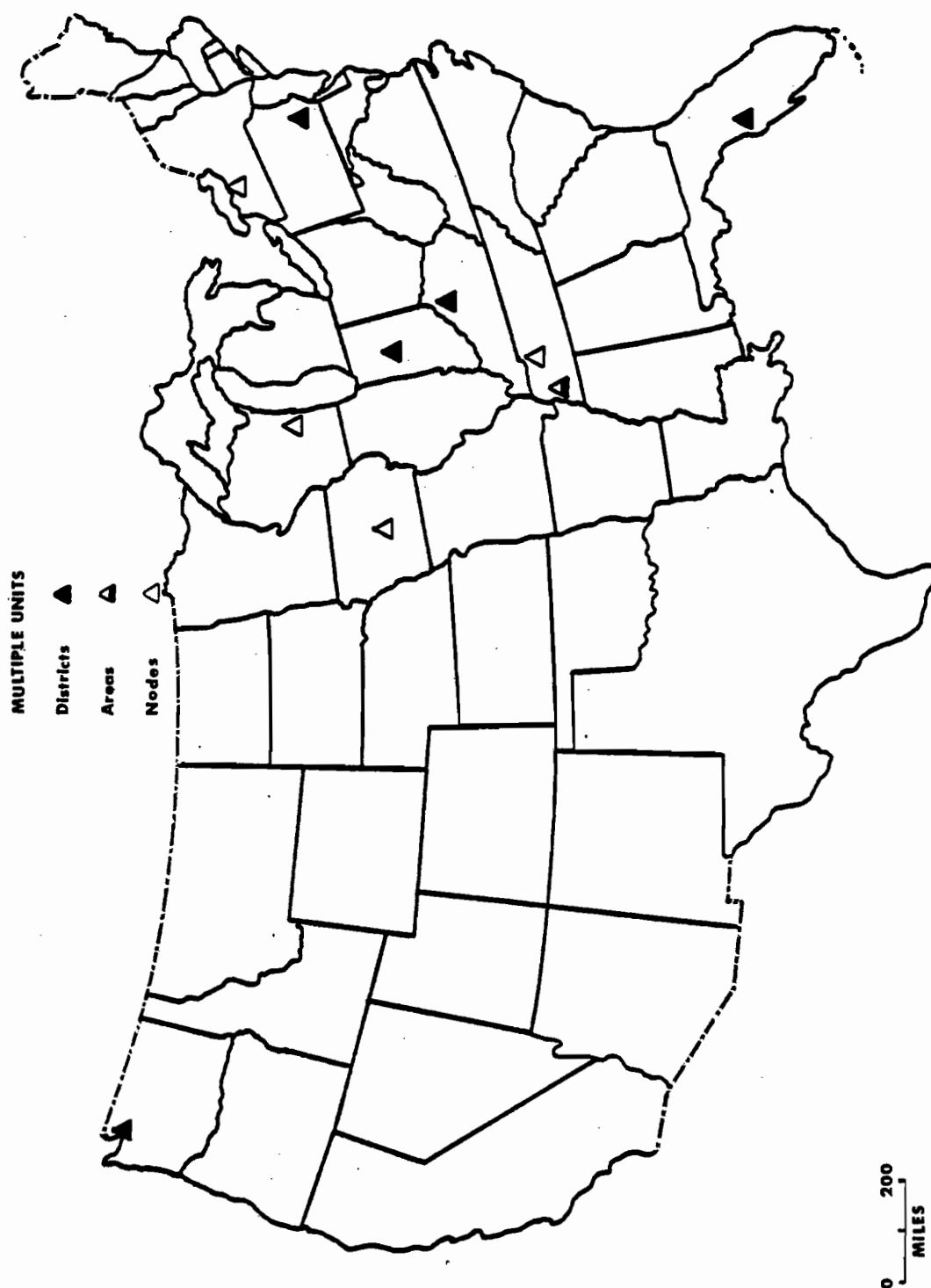


Figure 16

### Multiple Unit Districts

Indianapolis. The Division of Planning and Zoning states that, "Historically, Indianapolis has never had a concentrated area that could be defined as Skid Row."<sup>11</sup> However, as Bogue's study reveals, Indianapolis did have a 14-block skid row district in 1950. Whatever the earlier situation, the current skid row does not fit any of the criteria utilized in the skid row classification system. As Figure 17 indicates, the 1968 and 1979 skid row is not concentrated, but instead exhibits a ribbon or shoe string pattern. According to the Division of Planning and Zoning, the streets which are included in this linear pattern meet the criteria used to define skid row. For example, Indiana Avenue is currently characterized by pawn shops, low class restaurants, barber shops, pool halls, gambling, liquor stores, and rooming houses. Several of these characteristics match those included on the questionnaire sent to each planning department.

Another example is Massachusetts Avenue, which is characterized by old apartments and rooming houses, taverns, neighborhood restaurants, and second hand shops. Finally, Illinois Street extends through the middle of the 1950 skid row district for several blocks. According to the Division of Planning and Zoning, "This street is part of the Central Business District; however, interwoven here and there are some of the Skid Row criteria. In this area is a closed down burlesque house which, however, still has a hotel on the upper floors; bus station, small taverns, substandard hotels . . ."<sup>12</sup>

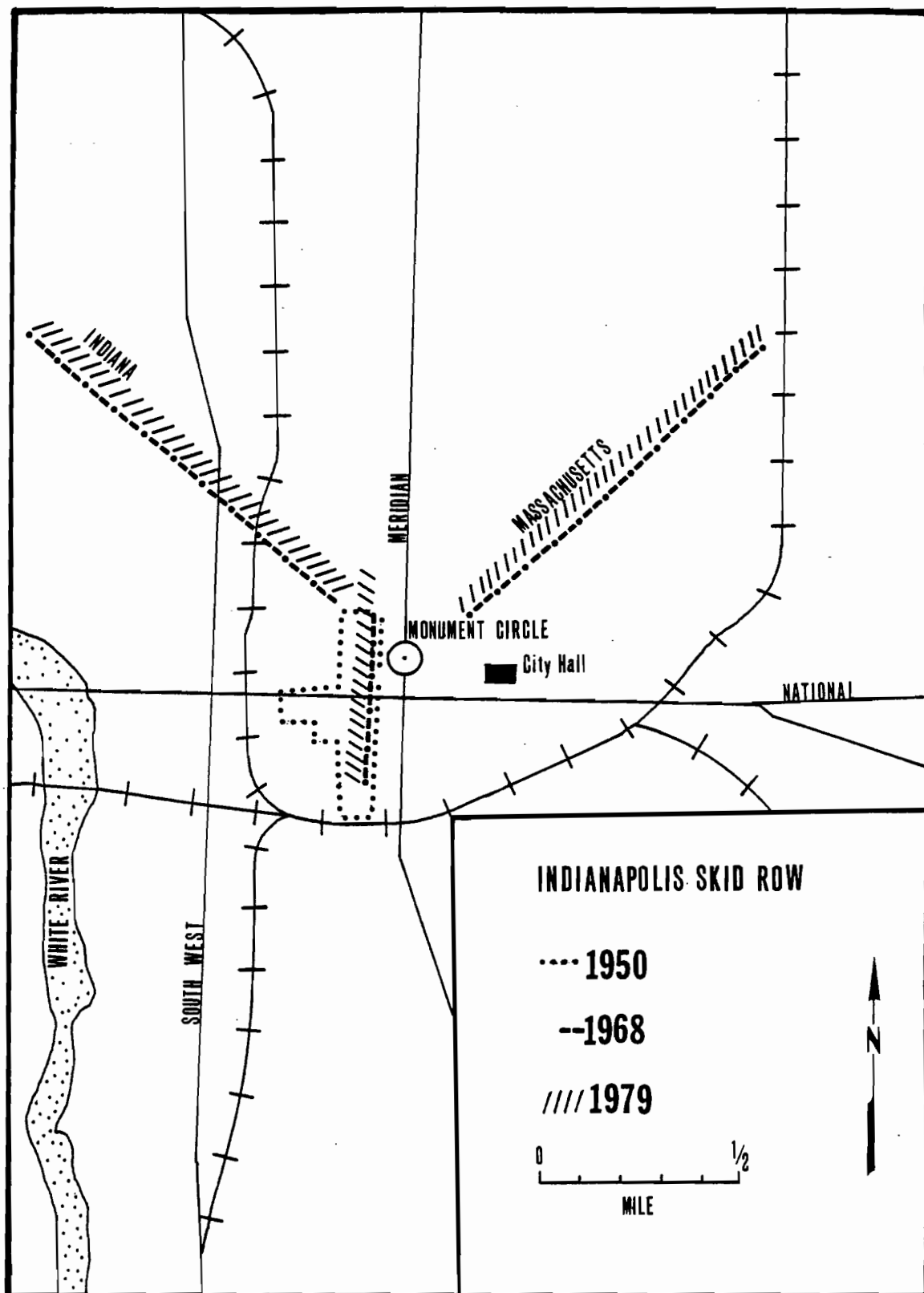


Figure 17



Currently, changes are occurring in Indianapolis' Skid Row. These include: (1) a study considering the restoration of selected buildings on Indiana and Massachusetts Avenues; and (2) as a result of the 236 Housing Program, there have been urban renewal projects on these same avenues. Indiana Avenue has experienced considerable urban renewal efforts with the expansion of Indiana-Purdue University into the area. The Division of Planning and Zoning states, "This institutional expansion will have considerable impact on the restoration of the area and consequently will minimize the Skid Row elements. Likewise, the urban renewal efforts and historic preservation in the Massachusetts area will in the long run have some positive impact on the adverse elements there."<sup>13</sup>

Statistically, Indianapolis skid row census tracts are almost identical to the national skid row average for the census years 1950 through 1970. Conversely, as Table 12 indicates, there are significant differences between Indianapolis' city average and its skid row averages. These differences are those that might be expected to exist when comparing a city and its skid row. However, as other city-skid row comparisons have demonstrated, these differences are not always as obvious as they are in Indianapolis.

Philadelphia. Philadelphia's 1950 skid row district decreased in size from 39 blocks to approximately 6 blocks in 1968. (See Figure 18.) By 1979, the earlier skid row district disappears from the landscape and is replaced by two districts. Skid row oriented commercial activities are located in the northern district while hotels

TABLE 12  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 0%                      | 8%                           | 19%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 8%                                 | 16%                    | 13%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 6%                           | 24%                                | NA  | 9%                                    | 3%                                 | 26%                    | 13%                                    | 88%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 2%                      | 12%                          | 25%                                | \$5130                                      | 10%                                   | 4%                                 | 4%                     | 12%                                    | 74%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 2%                      | 8%                           | 33%                                | \$3573                                      | 9%                                    | 3%                                 | 4%                     | 2%                                     | 40%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 1%                      | 13%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 12%                                | 34%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 5%                      | 11%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 30%                                   | 7%                                 | 61%                    | 24%                                    | 100%                        |
|                      | 1960 | 8%                      | 19%                          | 15%                                | \$2507                                      | 39%                                   | 6%                                 | 17%                    | 14%                                    | 96%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 15%                     | 16%                          | 19%                                | \$2579                                      | 52%                                   | 9%                                 | 27%                    | 4%                                     | 79%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Indianapolis, Indiana SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

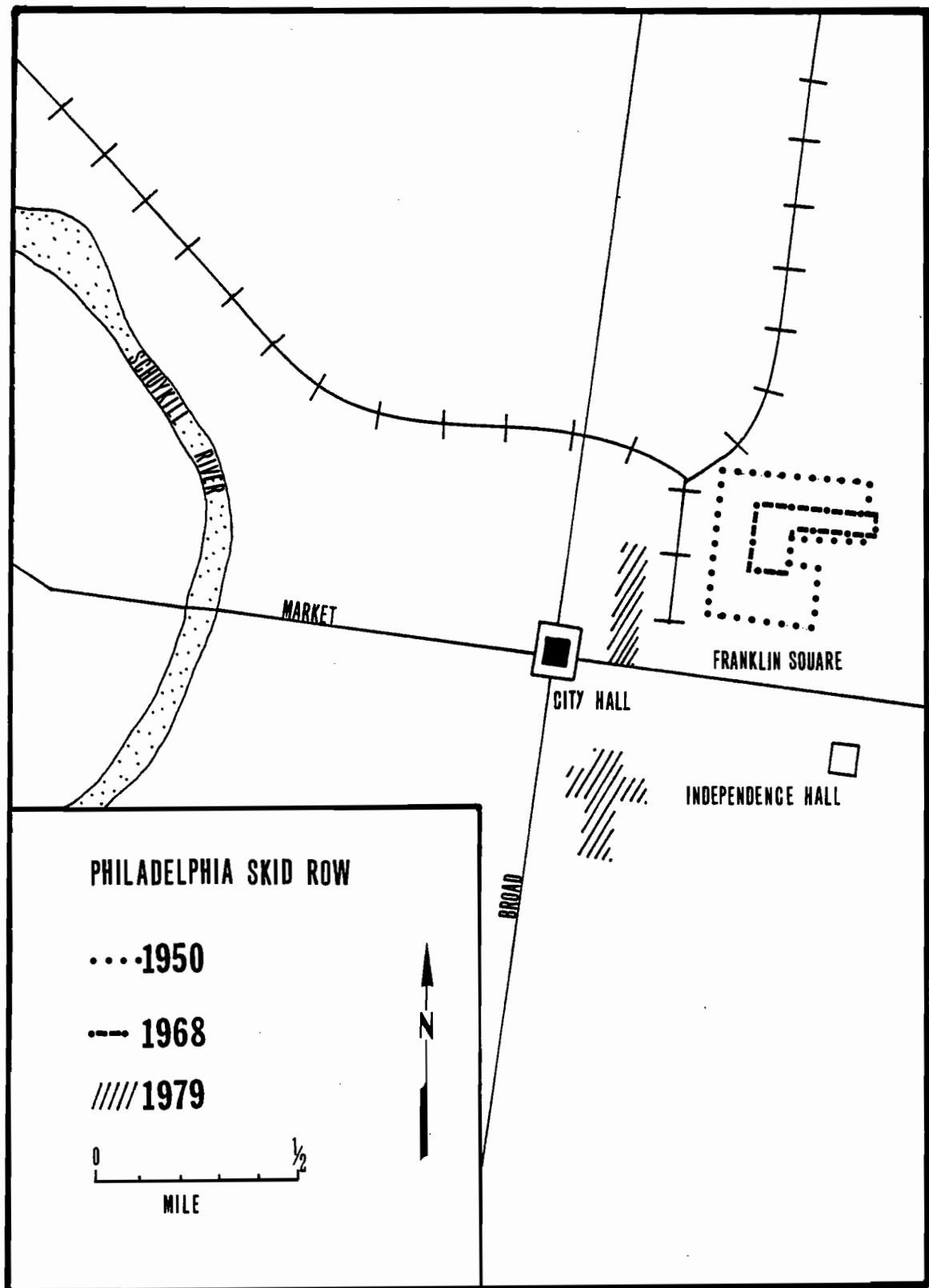


Figure 18

and rooming houses dominate the southern district. According to the Philadelphia Planning Commission, the demise of Philadelphia's 1968 skid row district resulted from the acquisition of land for the Vine Street Expressway and Independence Mall projects. The Expressway has not been built to date, but the land has been cleared for several years. Independence Mall is virtually complete. In addition, the planning commission evaluates the future of the two current skid row districts by saying:

Both of the present skid row areas are undergoing changes. Parts of the commercial area are scheduled for acquisition for the last phase of the Market Street East Project. This will include new office and retail space forming part of a 6-block mall. The residential area is one which is undergoing gentrification. Many of the old buildings are being bought and renovated for homes and commercial usage. In addition, Thomas Jefferson Hospital and Medical School has been expanding into this area.<sup>14</sup>

As Table 13 shows, Philadelphia's skid row census tract data from 1950 to 1970 are very similar to that of the national skid row average for the same census years.

Seattle. Seattle's skid row has undergone several changes in the last thirty years. In 1950 it consisted of one skid row district 18 blocks in size. This district expanded to the north and by 1968 totaled 54 blocks. Finally, in 1979 three separate districts exist in Seattle's Central Business District. (See Figure 19.) Two of these districts are remnants of the 1968 district and one is newly developed. The Director of Seattle's Downtown Projects Division accounts for the change in skid row boundaries over the last ten years (1968-78) by stating that it:

TABLE 13  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 1%                      | 12%                          | 12%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 10%                                | 6%                     | 12%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 5%                      | 10%                          | 19%                                | NA  | 9%                                    | 5%                                 | 12%                    | 10%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 3%                      | 17%                          | 20%                                | \$4789                                      | 10%                                   | 5%                                 | 2%                     | 7%                                     | 82%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 28%                                | \$2788                                      | 12%                                   | 3%                                 | 2%                     | 1%                                     | 7%                          |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 3%                      | 15%                          | 9%                                 | NA  | NA                                    | 22%                                | 19%                    | 14%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 8%                      | 13%                          | 12%                                | NA  | 53%                                   | 14%                                | 48%                    | 20%                                    | 100%                        |
|                      | 1960 | 23%                     | 25%                          | 17%                                | \$1947                                      | 53%                                   | 7%                                 | 17%                    | 8%                                     | 94%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 20%                     | 15%                          | 22%                                | \$2012                                      | 51%                                   | 6%                                 | 38%                    | 4%                                     | 69%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

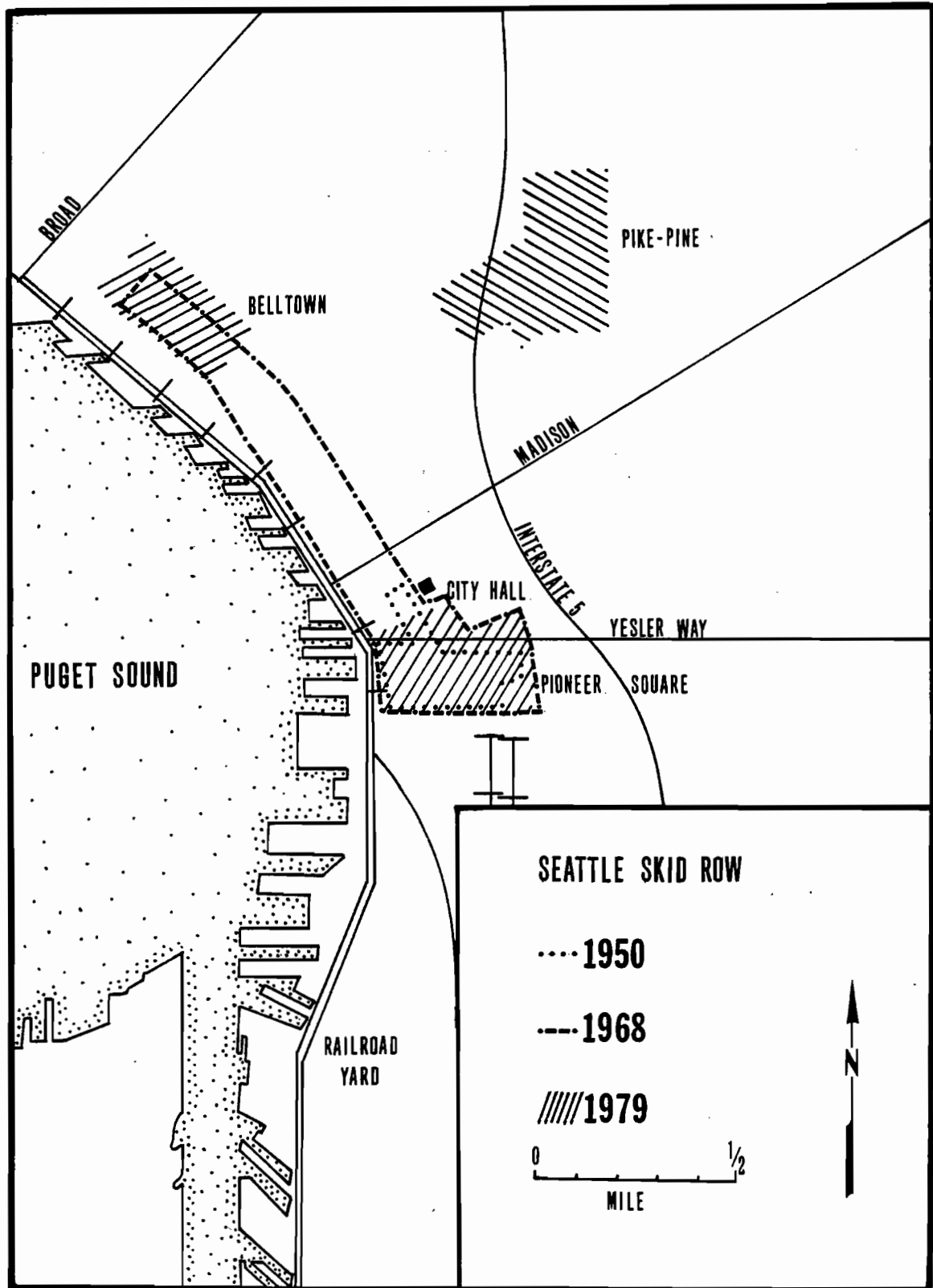


Figure 19

. . . is primarily a function of the loss of housing opportunities for the Skid Row population either through closure or demolitions of older residential hotels. The City's Office of Housing Development estimates that 50% of all downtown housing, or approximately 15,000 units, were either closed or demolished in the period from 1960-1974. Approximately one third of these units were lost as a result of an intensive code enforcement program which was enacted by the city after major fires in downtown residential hotels. Presumably, many other buildings were closed or demolished because of their age and deteriorated condition and because of new commercial development.<sup>15</sup>

Each of the 1979 skid row districts has its own unique set of circumstances which will be reviewed in the following paragraphs. Pike Place is the southern extension of Belltown. Redevelopment activities in the Pike Place Urban Renewal area have resulted in the demolition of several run-down residential hotels. Although Seattle has made a commitment to provide 350 units of new or rehabilitated low-income housing units, these units do not necessarily provide housing opportunities for the Skid Row population.

In addition, the Pike Place Market is being rehabilitated into a complex of small shops, restaurants, and residences. In spite of this rehabilitation activity, Pike Place will continue to attract Skid Row residents because of the availability of relatively inexpensive food products, the thrift shops, and the low-income medical clinic.

The Belltown district, north of Pike Place, has also experienced some residential hotel closures. A relatively small Skid Row community still exists here. However, the substandard condition of many of the older residential hotels in this district coupled with rising land values probably indicates a limited existence for much

of the skid row housing in this district, unless the City of Seattle steps in.

Seattle's major skid row district continues to be Pioneer Square. Although Pioneer Square has undergone a major period of public and private reinvestment since 1971, when the area was designated an Historic District, the skid row population has not been entirely displaced. Pioneer Square is expected to experience further historic preservation activity in the future. However, the impacts on the skid row population will not be as substantial as in the past, due primarily to the fact that the majority of skid row housing remaining in Pioneer Square is operated by charitable or other social service agencies. In some respects, skid row housing in this area appears to have stabilized. In addition, the Seattle Housing Authority has recently acquired and renovated an old hotel which provides 245 single-room occupancy units for transient and low-income residents.

As shown in Figure 19, a new skid row district appears to be developing in the area near Pike and Pine Streets adjacent to Interstate 5. The primary reason for its appearance is the availability of inexpensive housing in this area.

Compared to the national skid row averages, Seattle's skid row demonstrates several statistical differences. In 1970, Seattle's in group quarters dramatically exceeded that of other skid rows. Also, for the past twenty years, Seattle has demonstrated a very high percentage of unrelated individuals occupying its skid row census tracts. Finally, there are some significant differences between



Seattle's 1970 skid row housing with those of other skid rows. The percentage of dilapidated structures far exceeds the national skid row average. This may partially be explained by the high (95%) percentage of structures built in 1939 or before. If many of these older housing units have recently been demolished, as was pointed out by the Director of Seattle's Downtown Projects, then the 1980 census data should reflect these changes. (See Table 14.)

Tampa. Tampa's skid row has experienced decline and growth similar to several other skid rows reviewed in this study. As the map indicates, the 1968 skid row district disappeared to be replaced by three other districts in 1979. (See Figure 20.) The current skid row reflects the disruption and dispersal that has been caused by new construction, demolitions, the conversion of part of Franklin Street to a pedestrian mall, and construction of the Crosstown Expressway.

Skid row residents have always lived under the bridges, on Franklin Street, and in the northern part of Hyde Park. They have been diverted from Hyde Park as that residential neighborhood is upgraded by an influx of young professional homeowners and the conversion of some of the more stately homes into professional offices. Portions of Hyde Park have been declared a historic area. The University of Tampa was put on the National Register of historic places as were some of the residences in Hyde Park, and the City Hall. In addition, rising property values in the Hyde Park area are forcing out the rooming houses that are inhabited by some of the down-and-outers.

TABLE 14  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR SEATTLE, WASHINGTON,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 0%                      | 5%                           | 25%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 9%                                 | 4%                     | 7%                                     | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 2%                      | 4%                           | 28%                                | NA  | 16%                                   | 7%                                 | 12%                    | 6%                                     | 80%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 3%                      | 8%                           | 29%                                | \$5311                                      | 15%                                   | 5%                                 | 2%                     | 5%                                     | 63%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 4%                      | 6%                           | 33%                                | \$3387                                      | 20%                                   | 7%                                 | 4%                     | 1%                                     | 48%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 0%                      | 11%                          | 14%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 22%                                | 4%                     | 10%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 0%                      | 10%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 71%                                   | 22%                                | 82%                    | 15%                                    | 100%                        |
|                      | 1960 | 14%                     | 17%                          | 16%                                | \$1782                                      | 76%                                   | 15%                                | 6%                     | 4%                                     | 100%                        |
|                      | 1970 | 28%                     | 15%                          | 24%                                | \$2765                                      | 78%                                   | 14%                                | 62%                    | 4%                                     | 95%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Seattle, Washington SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

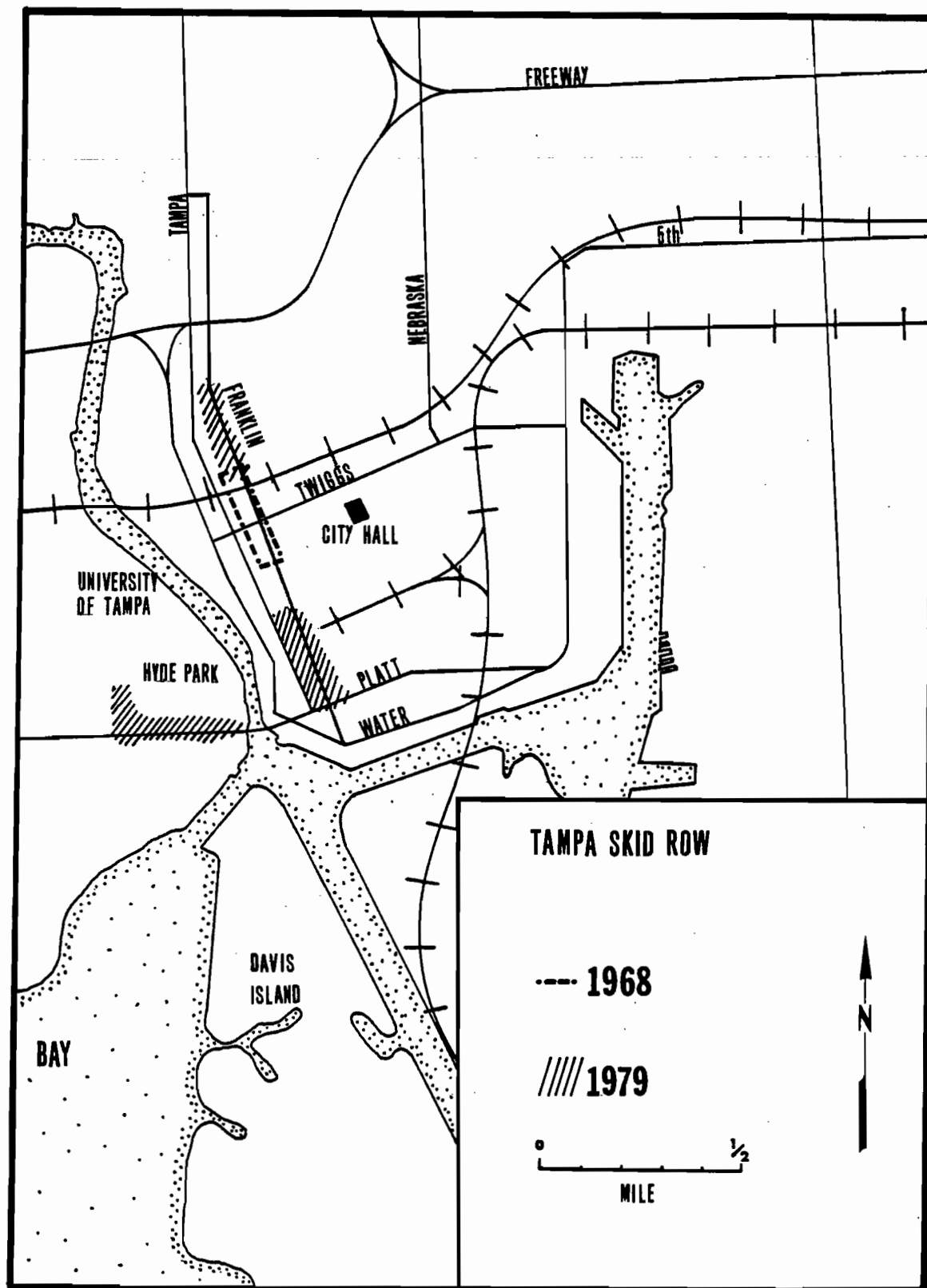


Figure 20

Skid row inhabitants have been disturbed in the downtown area by a pedestrian mall, extensive urban renewal demolition and, now, by the construction of new office buildings. The 1968 skid row district has been partially replaced by the Franklin Street Pedestrian Mall. A new City Hall and State Office Building are the latest additions to the offices being built in the area. The new State Building infringes on the remainder of the 1968 skid row district that was left after the Franklin Street Mall was constructed. Under the bridges remains a dry, protected place to live and it is relatively unaffected by the demolition and construction. However, the center of the Skid Row is no longer there. It is now the pedestrian mall or the expressway.

This replacement is both a unified planned effort and an individual one. Urban renewal projects which demolished some of the downtown buildings, construction of the Crosstown Expressway, and a federally backed urban neighborhood renovation program represent some of the planned or governmental forces that have affected the area and its residents. The fact that young middle income families and professional offices are moving into the Hyde Park area reflects individual decisions that are having a major impact. Despite these various private and public efforts, the skid row in Tampa has not been eliminated, but has instead shifted to a new location.

### Multiple Unit Nodes

Des Moines. The city of Des Moines historically has not experienced the formation of a skid row district as defined by sociologists Bogue and Wallace.

Des Moines' Central Business District is the location of some scattered, blighted uses. These uses consist of three pawn shops, a couple of dilapidated hotels, various bars, and burlesque shops. On the whole, these skid row type uses are separated by many blocks of prime office and commercial land use. Recent revitalization efforts have replaced or further separated these kinds of uses and, thus, prevented formation of any skid row district. (See Figure 21.)

Milwaukee. As Figure 22 reveals, Milwaukee's skid row has evolved from two skid row districts of 23 and 9 blocks in 1950 to three widely scattered nodes in 1979. The disappearance of Milwaukee's 1950 skid row districts is explained by William Drew, the Commissioner of Milwaukee's Department of City Development. He states,

Skid row began to disappear in the mid 1950's with the adoption of a new Housing Code by the City of Milwaukee. The beginning enforcement was aimed at rooming houses, boarding houses, and 2nd class dwelling units. Rooming houses implied no food, boarding houses included meals or food available, and 2nd class dwelling units included shared facilities, general both and/or toilet facilities.

The number of taverns providing rooms has steadily declined since the beginning of the enforcement of the Housing Code. In many instances, not only the rooming license was in jeopardy, but more importantly, the tavern license could be adversely affected by the unacceptable operation of a secondary business.

The change in the type of housing in the CBD has also taken a heavy toll (of Skid Row population) in that replacement housing has catered to a much higher income level.<sup>16</sup>

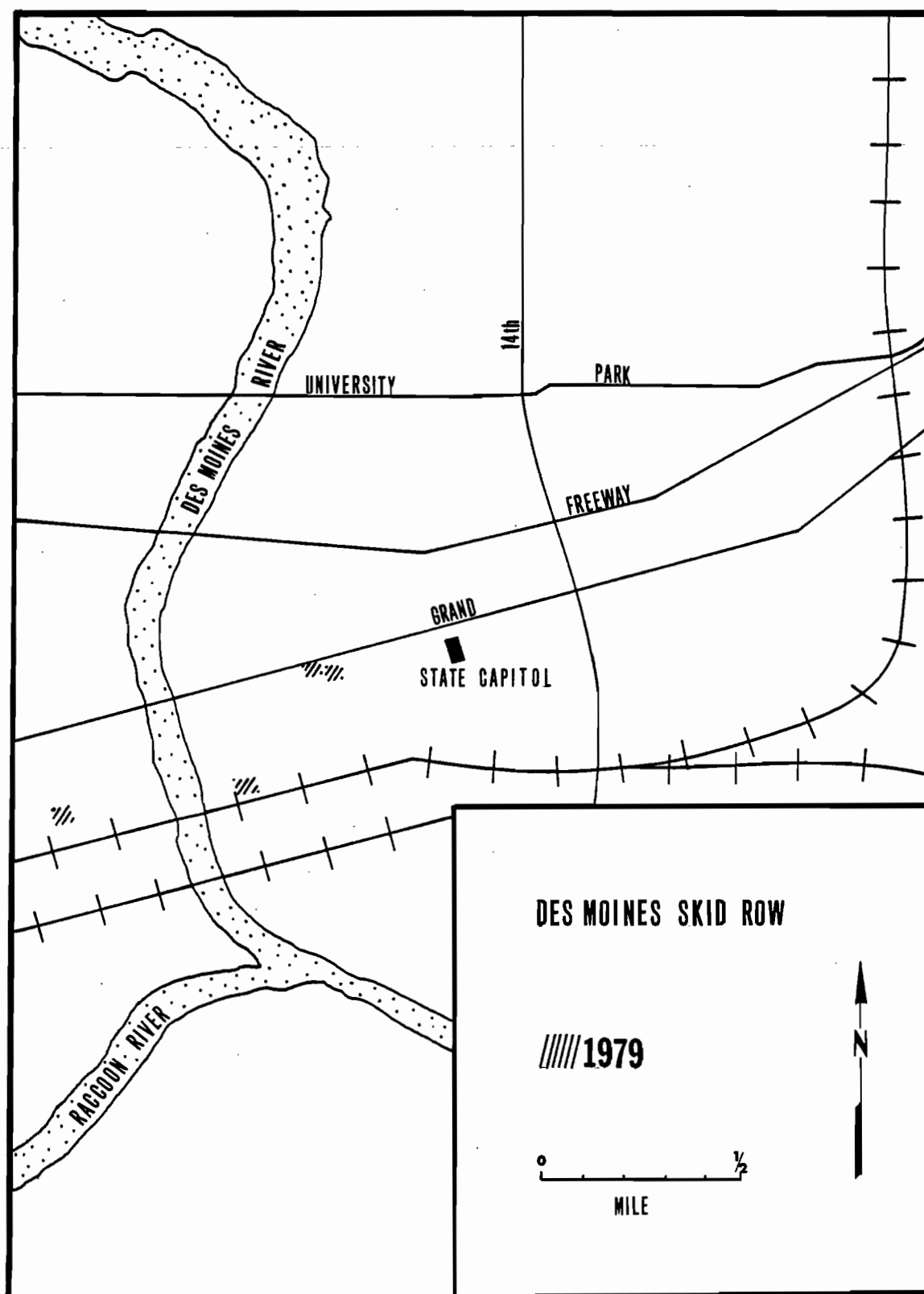


Figure 21

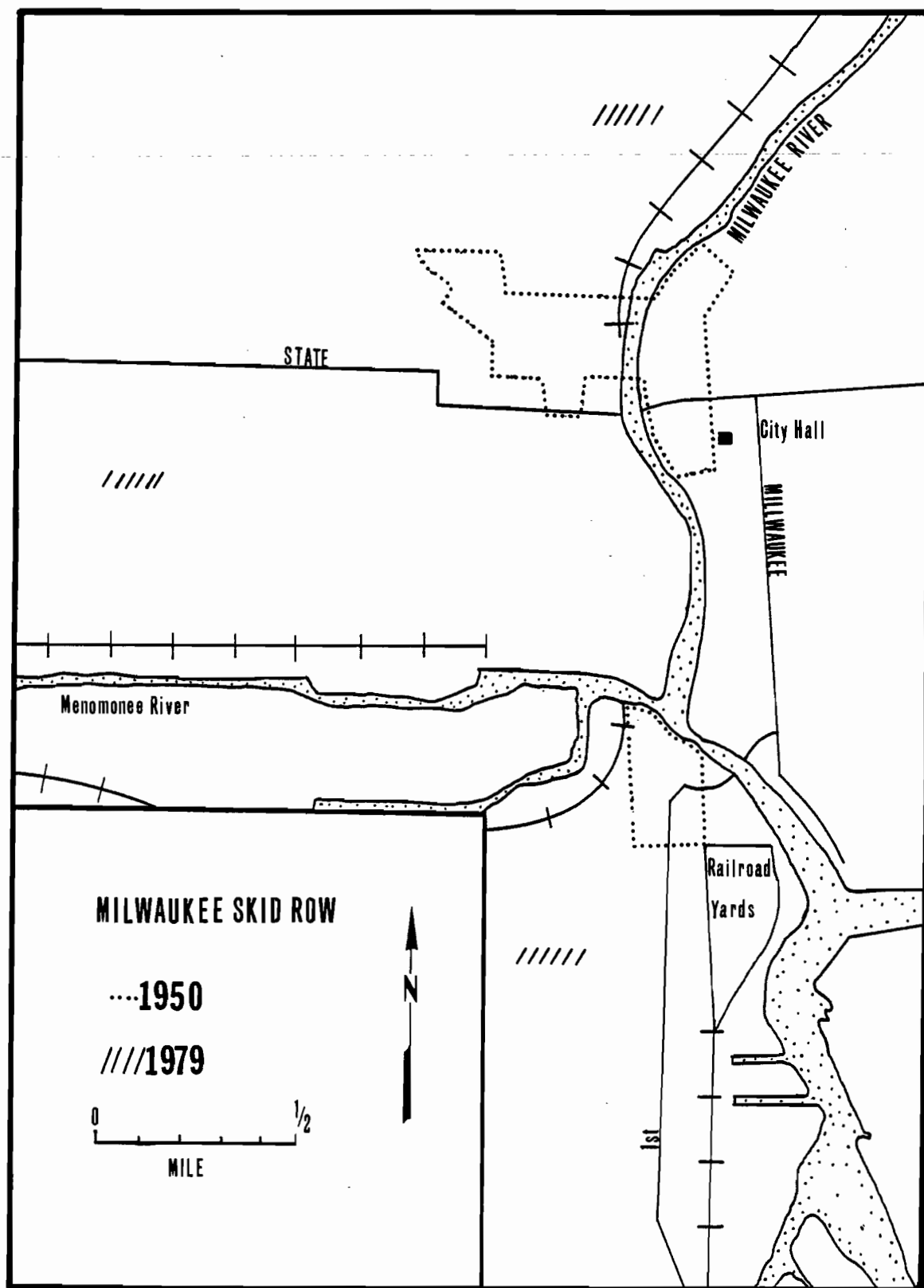


Figure 22

Partly because of Milwaukee's stringent enforcement of its housing code, only three skid row nodes remain today. However, there are other factors which have also affected the disappearance of the skid row district. The severity of Milwaukee's inclement weather, which is roughly nine months of the year, and the diligence of the police department has generally discouraged the concentration of the bum, the alcoholic, and the drifter from any definable area of the city. Also, the tavern owner may jeopardize his license, business, and investment by serving as a focal point for skid row inhabitants.

With the exception of percent of unrelated individuals and percent of dilapidated structures, Milwaukee's skid row compares favorably with the national skid row average. (See Table 15.) Furthermore, there does not appear to be such striking differences between Milwaukee's city averages and those of its skid row. The 1970 similarities could be explained by the absence of a large skid row district.

Nashville. According to Nashville's planning department, "Nashville appears to be a 'transit town' or stopover point for this population segment, and no recognizable skid row has ever developed."<sup>17</sup> In 1979 approximately 100 men received services from two missions shown on Figure 23.

Rochester. Rochester maintained a skid row district from 1950 through 1968. After 1968, this district was totally demolished and replaced with a park, hotel, and office buildings. As a result of this



TABLE 15  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 0%                      | 12%                          | 13%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 10%                                | 4%                     | 12%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 9%                           | 22%                                | NA  | 9%                                    | 3%                                 | 16%                    | 10%                                    | 91%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 2%                      | 13%                          | 26%                                | \$5694                                      | 10%                                   | 4%                                 | 2%                     | 9%                                     | 71%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 2%                      | 9%                           | 33%                                | \$3235                                      | 12%                                   | 3%                                 | 4%                     | 1%                                     | 55%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 1%                      | 14%                          | 10%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 23%                                | 5%                     | 18%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 6%                      | 12%                          | 16%                                | NA  | 21%                                   | 6%                                 | 41%                    | 21%                                    | 99%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 9%                      | 18%                          | 17%                                | \$3024                                      | 26%                                   | 9%                                 | 8%                     | 17%                                    | 89%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 11%                     | 13%                          | 22%                                | \$2610                                      | 29%                                   | 5%                                 | 9%                     | 3%                                     | 63%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Milwaukee, Wisconsin SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

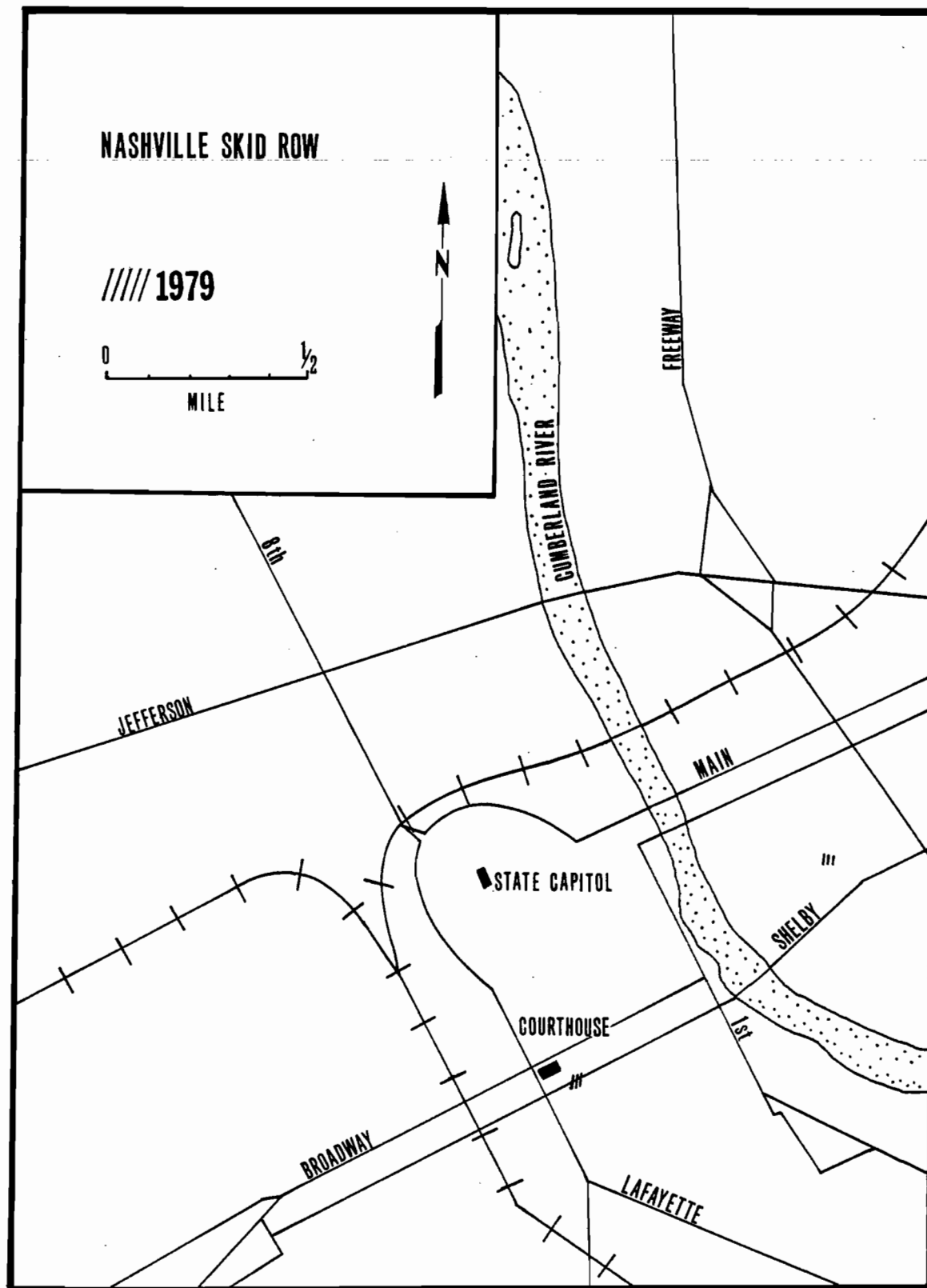


Figure 23

urban renewal effort, skid row nodes developed in other parts of Rochester's Central Business District. (See Figure 24.)

When compared with the national skid row averages, Rochester is significantly different on three census characteristics. Rochester has a much higher percentage of individuals living in group quarters for the census years 1960 and 1970 than do the national skid rows. Though Rochester's skid row census tracts have a higher percentage of structures built in 1939 or earlier than the national average, the percentage of dilapidated structures is much lower than those in other skid rows. (See Table 16.)

#### Combination Unit Skid Rows

Figure 25 shows that the greatest number of combination skid row units are located in the southern half of the United States. A lack of this type of skid row is apparent in the western states where the single skid row unit dominates.

The nine skid rows which will be discussed started as districts and have all changed to the point where they have a combination of skid row units (district(s)-area(s)-node(s)) today. Seven out of nine have declined significantly in size, leaving smaller skid row remnants in their places. In three cases (Minneapolis, Sacramento, and Tulsa) new skid rows have replaced those which have disappeared. The decline of these skid rows is the result of urban renewal programs.

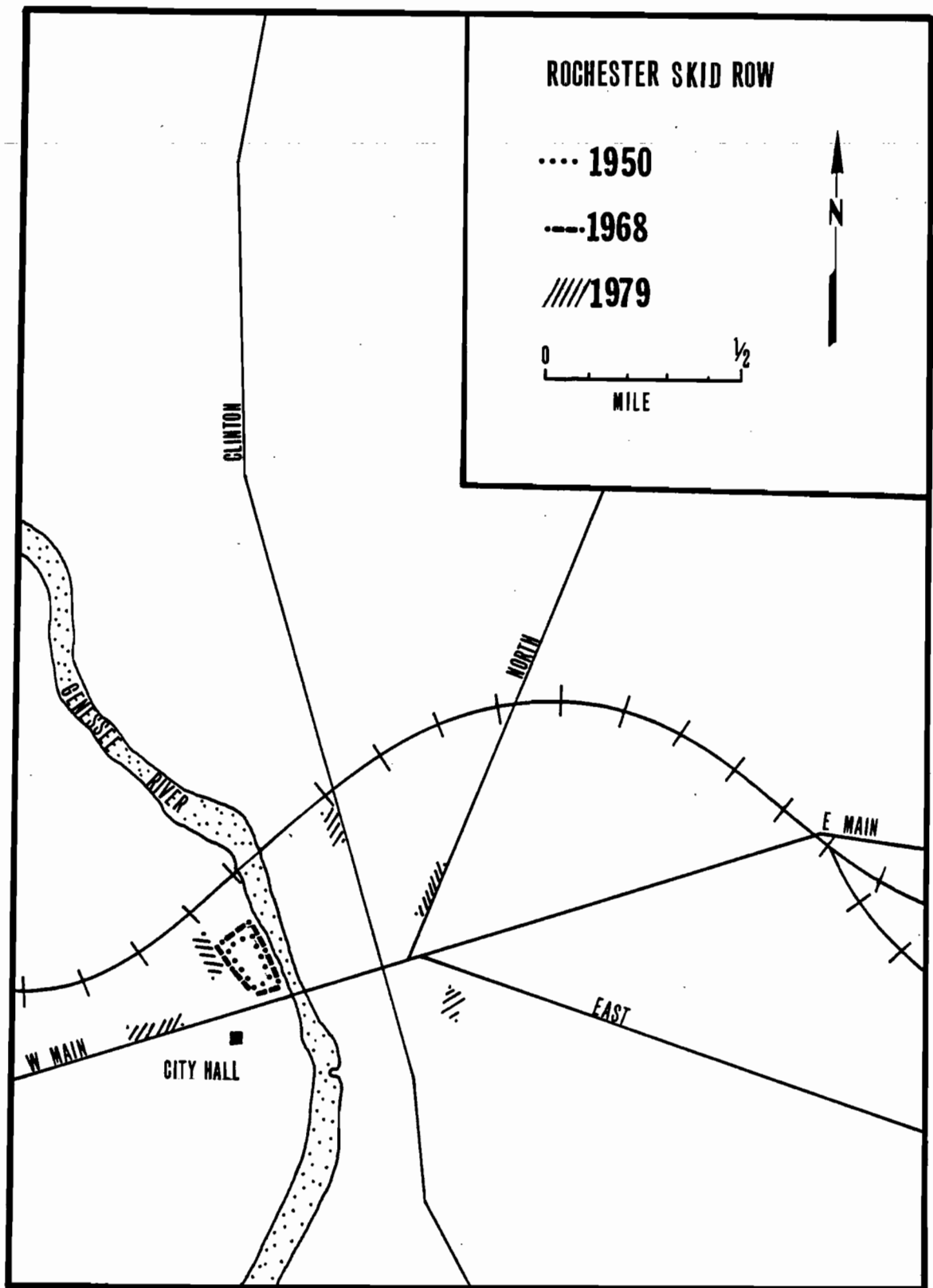


Figure 24

TABLE 16  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR ROCHESTER, NEW YORK,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 0%                      | 9%                           | 14%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 10%                                | 11%                    | 7%                                     | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 3%                      | 8%                           | 22%                                | NA  | 10%                                   | 5%                                 | 9%                     | 6%                                     | 96%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 2%                      | 15%                          | 15%                                | \$5104                                      | 1%                                    | 4%                                 | 2%                     | 6%                                     | 91%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 27%                                | \$3345                                      | 27%                                   | 3%                                 | 4%                     | 1%                                     | 79%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 2%                      | 24%                          | 10%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 18%                                | 12%                    | 5%                                     | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 2%                      | 12%                          | 8%                                 | NA  | 68%                                   | 12%                                | 53%                    | 11%                                    | 100%                        |
|                      | 1960 | 63%                     | 27%                          | 7%                                 | \$1551                                      | NA                                    | 8%                                 | 0%                     | 14%                                    | 98%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 36%                     | 8%                           | 21%                                | \$2532                                      | 54%                                   | 8%                                 | 11%                    | 5%                                     | 100%                        |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Rochester, New York SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

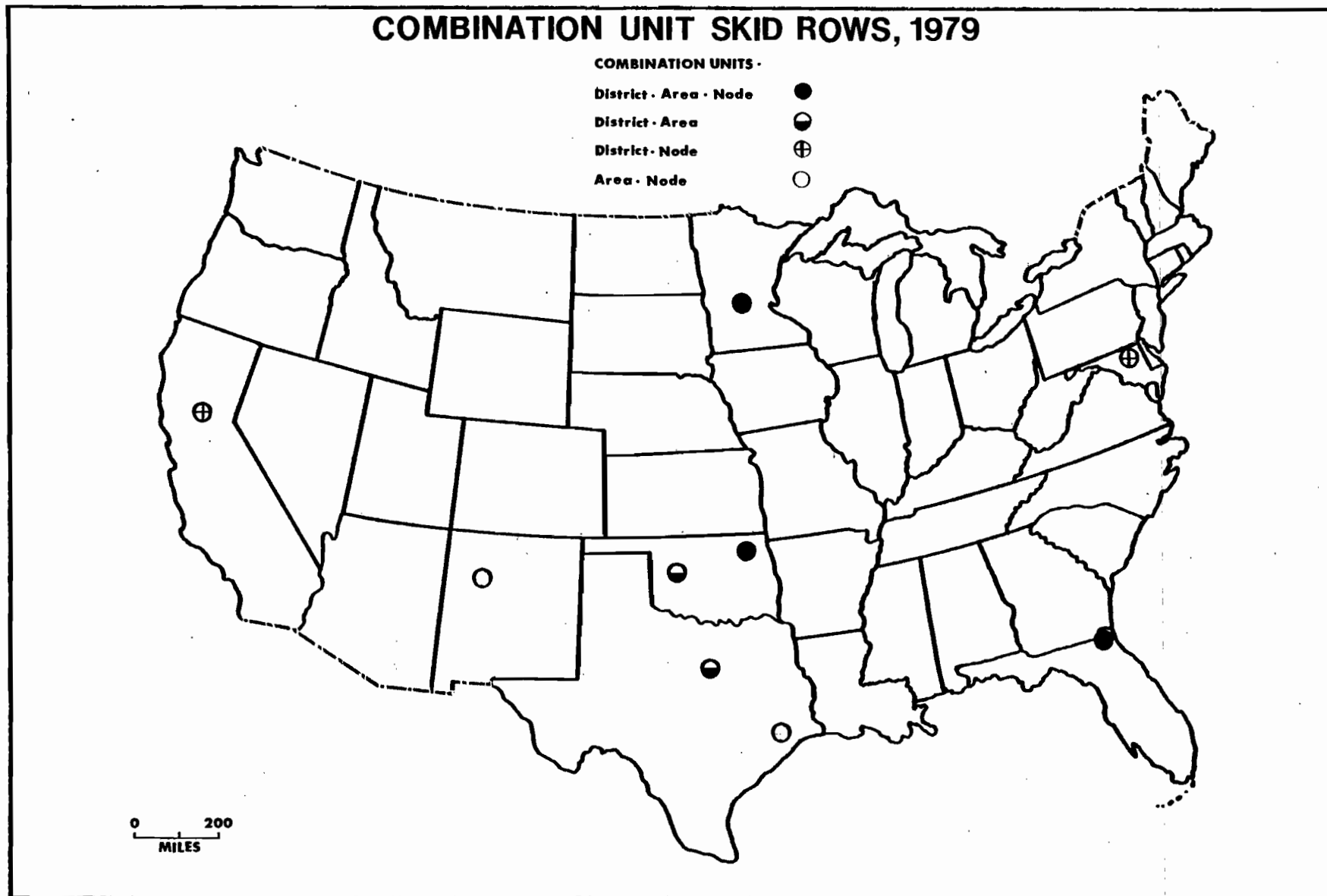


Figure 25

Combination Unit District(s)-Area(s)-Node(s)

Jacksonville. Jacksonville's skid row has relocated in the past ten years. In the 1960's the skid row was centered along Bay Street. Today, due to several factors, Bay Street has undergone numerous changes. In the early 1970's Union Station was closed to railroad traffic. It is now being developed into a Tourist Entertainment Complex to be called Railroad Square, and has had a significant effect on land speculation and redevelopment in its immediate area. Also, since 1968, many new private and public buildings have been constructed on Bay Street, including a thirty story office building and a new Federal Building. Jacksonville has also had several older buildings in the Courthouse vicinity of Bay Street redeveloped into law offices. (See Figure 26.) Jacksonville's assistant planner describes the attitude toward redevelopment in the following statement.

A new awareness of the urban waterfront has also been responsible. Since 1971, it has been the active policy of the Planning Board and the Downtown Development Authority to encourage and assist in the redevelopment of the Urban river front and other CBD areas. A "Plan for Downtown Jacksonville" exists, and with its updated portions, provides the blueprint for redevelopment as well as outlined strategies and proposals.<sup>18</sup>

Minneapolis. In 1950, Minneapolis contained a large skid row district of 24 blocks and a 4-block skid row area. By 1979, both of these skid rows were replaced by four new skid row sites. According to the skid row classification system, the new skid rows consisted of a node, two areas, and a district. As Figure 27 shows, these 1979 skid rows were located several blocks from each other. Richard Indmitz of

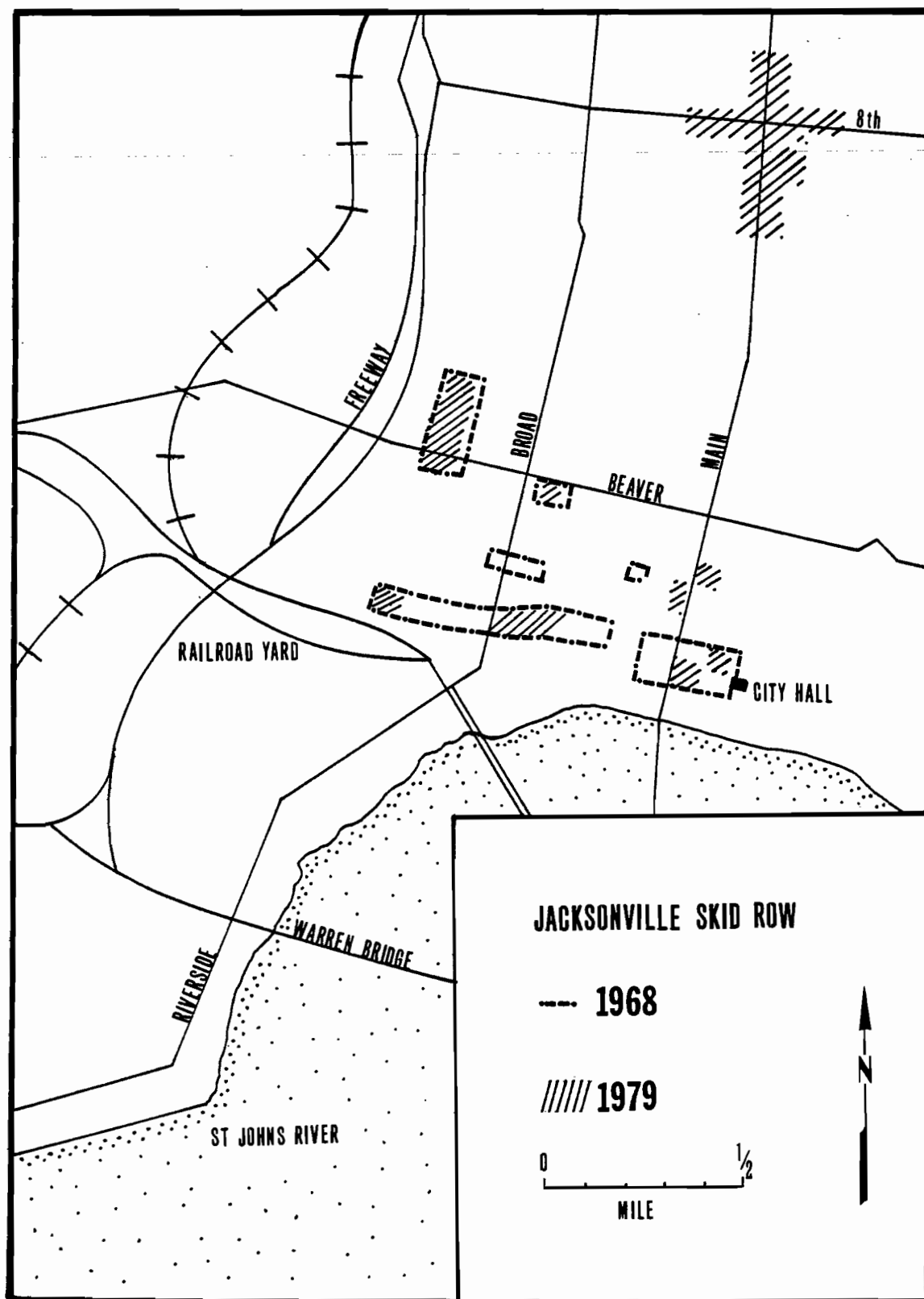


Figure 26



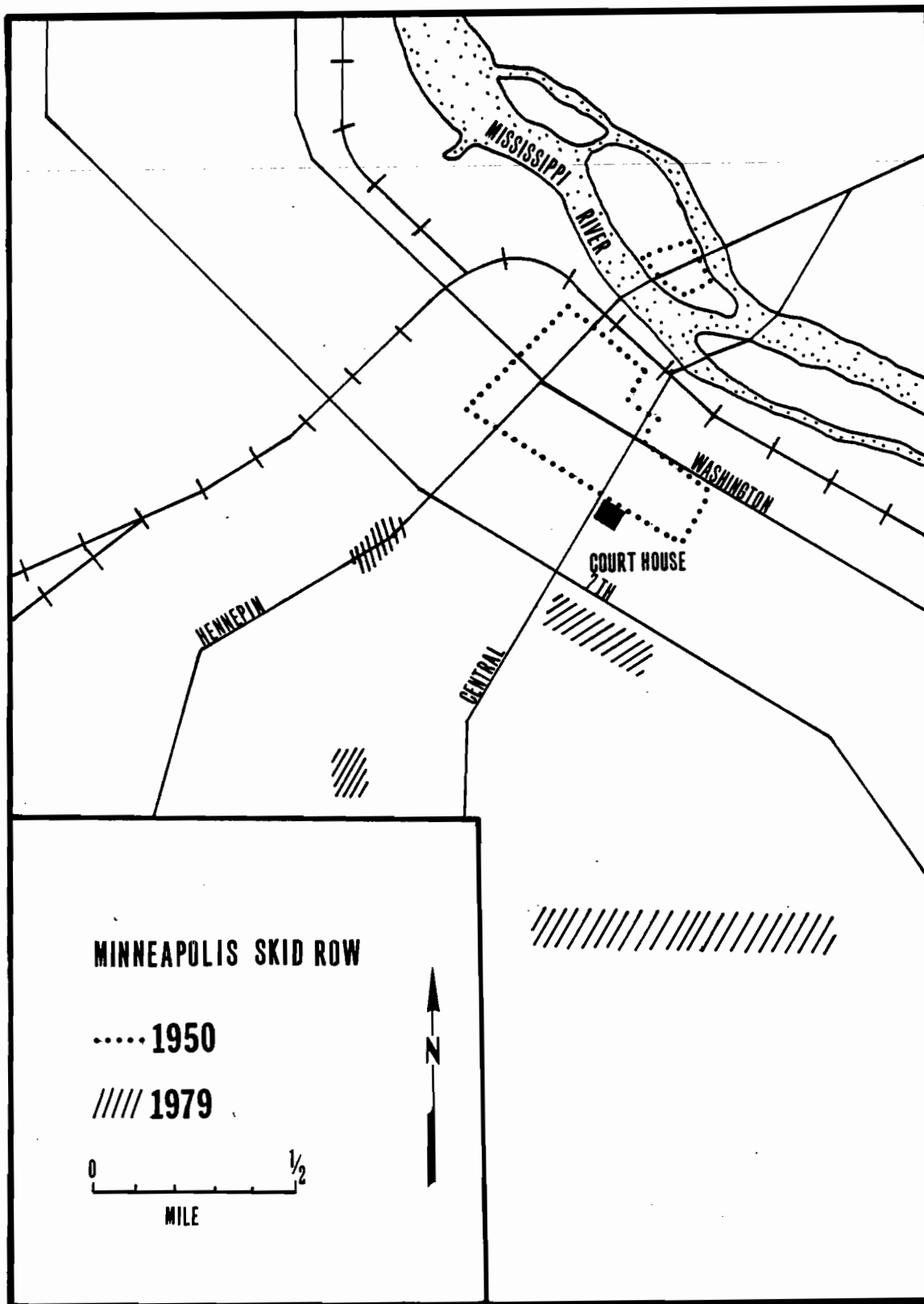


Figure 27

the Planning Department describes the changes from 1950 to 1979 in the following words.

Minneapolis does not have a Skid Row-type district, and has not had one for many years. During the late 1950's and early 1960's, a well-defined Skid Row district was located at the north end of Downtown Minneapolis, along the railroad tracks fronting the river. Fed by the once-mighty railroad, logging, and mining industries, this was the area in which they (skid row inhabitants) congregated. A large number of social and religious services were located in this Gateway Center area and on Nicollet Island, in the Mississippi River, to cater to the needs of these people. The Minneapolis Skid Row population was, reportedly, one of the largest in the country in its time.

However, the Urban Renewal Program of the late 1950's leveled much of the Gateway Center area. The land was turned over to the Minneapolis Housing and Rehabilitation agency for site preparation and development. Although a sizeable population lingered, this action effectively dispersed the Skid Row district. By 1968, Skid Row, as a definable district, was gone.

Although there remain some "seedy" areas, and social and religious agencies serving the short-term needs of the needy, these are so small and so dispersed that they do not qualify as a district. Although it seems that some of the displaced Skid Row inhabitants moved to St. Paul, most moved to other parts of the country.<sup>19</sup>

Minneapolis' Skid Row coincides statistically with the national skid row averages. On the other hand, as Table 17 reveals, those census tracts with skid rows differ substantially from the city average for Minneapolis.

Tulsa. According to Tulsa planners, historically there is little question that skid row was along First Street. (See Figure 28.) All along First Street were flophouses, pawnshops, and the like. It was precisely the kind of skid row Bogue and Wallace describe. This was the skid row district of 1968.

A major construction project--the Williams Center--removed the 1968 district. This area is presently occupied by the 52-story Bank of

TABLE 17  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 0%                      | 6%                           | 22%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 10%                                | 8%                     | 13%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 3%                      | 5%                           | 27%                                | NA  | 13%                                   | 4%                                 | 20%                    | 11%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 4%                      | 9%                           | 27%                                | \$4716                                      | 16%                                   | 4%                                 | 3%                     | 6%                                     | 83%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 4%                      | 7%                           | 33%                                | \$3156                                      | 20%                                   | 3%                                 | 6%                     | 1%                                     | 68%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 1%                      | 10%                          | 15%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 19%                                | 14%                    | 17%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 1%                      | 8%                           | 22%                                | NA  | 53%                                   | 10%                                | 61%                    | 20%                                    | 100%                        |
|                      | 1960 | 22%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2368                                      | 63%                                   | 9%                                 | 18%                    | 6%                                     | 90%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 13%                     | 9%                           | 26%                                | \$3266                                      | 55%                                   | 4%                                 | 34%                    | 3%                                     | 77%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Minneapolis, Minnesota SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

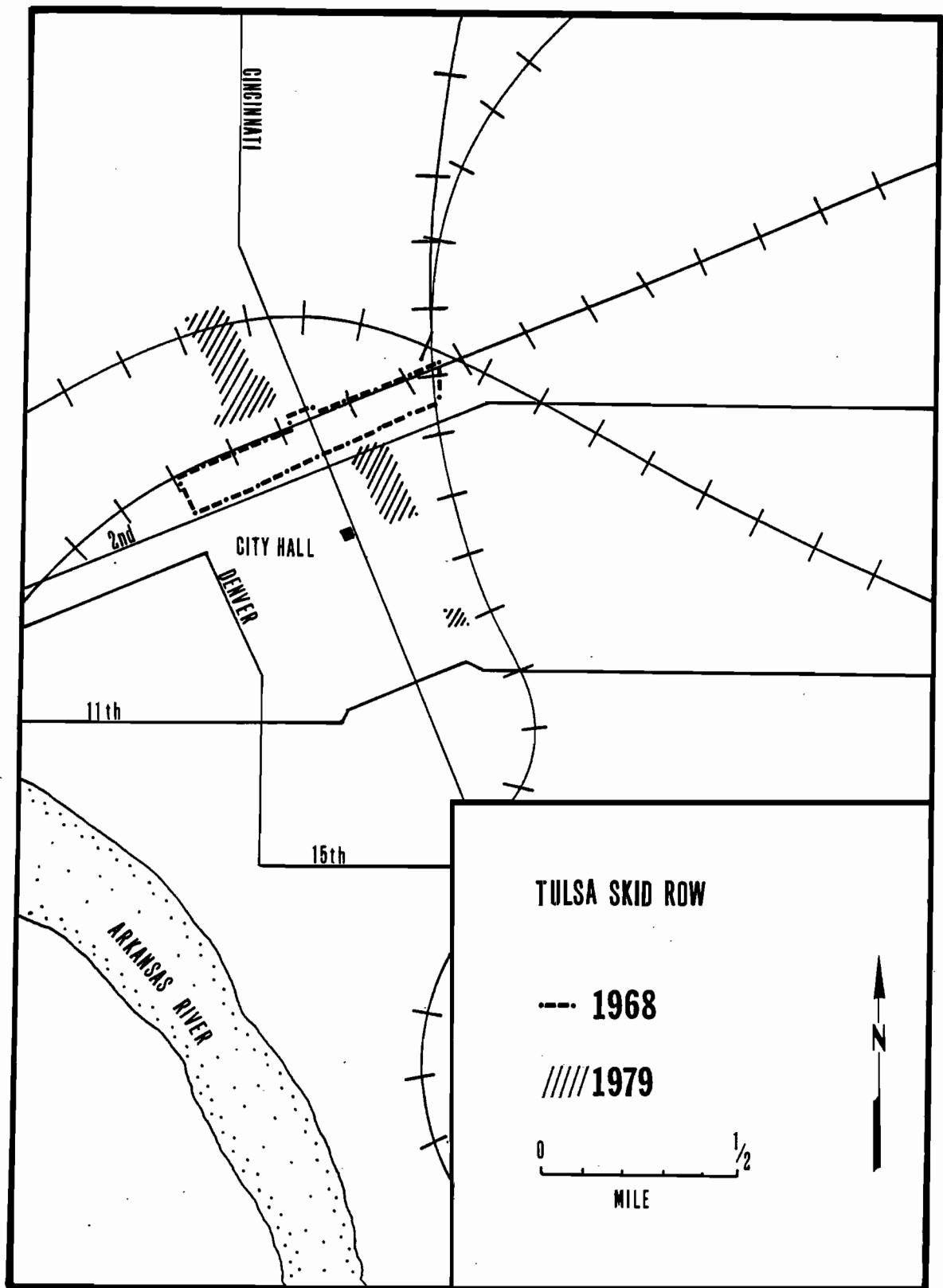


Figure 28

Oklahoma Tower. Beside it is the elegant Forum shopping mall. The rest was replaced by parking garages and lots.

Tulsa's current skid row consists of a district, an area, and a node. The node is the abandoned Tulsa Union Railroad Depot. Tulsa lost its passenger rail service years ago, and the landmark structure has been a heaven for the down-and-out ever since. The interior is largely wretched and every window is broken, but it provides shelter for a sizeable number of transients.

To a lesser extent, Main Street north of the tracks, and Archer Street (which parallels First Street and the tracks on the north) were always extensions of skid row. Since the regeneration of First Street, these have taken on many more of the typical skid row characteristics. (See Figure 28.)

Another small skid row area exists east of the bus station, around Detroit Avenue and Third Street. There are a few old hotels, as well as a blood-bank in front of which out-of-work men can be seen standing every morning, waiting to sell their plasma for cash.

#### Combination Unit District(s) - Area(s)

Fort Worth. In 1950 Fort Worth's skid row was 38 blocks in size. (See Figure 29.) By 1968, this district divided into two smaller districts. The larger of the two, approximately 20 blocks, is the southern remnant of the 1950 district. A smaller five-block district (not shown on the map) is located out of the central business district about 3 miles to the north. Finally, in 1979, two areas and a

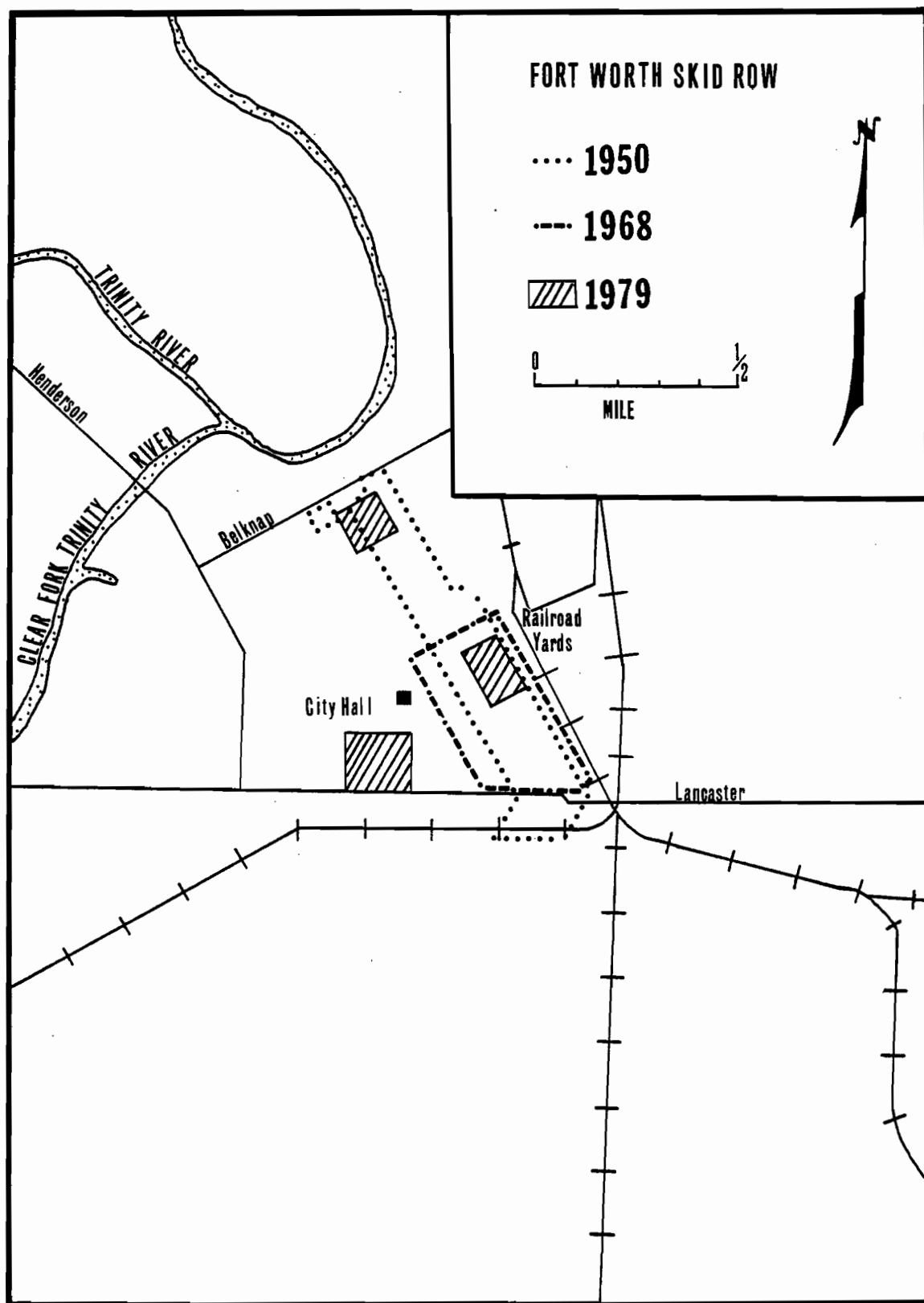


Figure 29

district remain in Fort Worth. The district, located to the west of the 1950 and 1968 districts, appeared on the landscape since 1968. However, both skid row areas are located where past skid rows have existed. The northern area reappeared in the defunct 1950 district, while the southern area is the result of a shrinkage in the 1968 district. The decline of the 1968 district was precipitated by the construction of a convention center and arena. According to Fort Worth planners, this was an urban renewal project.

When Fort Worth's skid row census data are compared with the national skid row figures, no significant differences are apparent. In fact, Fort Worth, census year by census year, is almost identical to the national average. (See Table 18.) On the other hand, when the skid row is compared to Fort Worth's city data, there are enough differences to make it obvious that the skid row census tract does, in fact, contain a skid row. (See Table 18.) Examples of these differences can be seen when comparing percentages of unrelated individuals, dilapidated structures, and structures built 1939 or earlier.

Oklahoma City. As Figure 30 indicates, the skid row in Oklahoma City has evolved from a 15-block district in 1950 to two linear strips by 1979. The dissolution of Oklahoma City's 1968 skid row district was affected by a planned urban renewal project. This project included a convention center and a regional shopping center. Skid Row inhabitants leaving the renewal area moved to new locations which contained low price hotels. Consequently, two linear skid rows appear on the 1979 landscape.

TABLE 18  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR FORT WORTH, TEXAS,  
1950-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 |                         |                              |                                    |   |                                       |                                    |                        |  |                             |
|                      | 1950 | 3%                      | 8%                           | 23%                                | NA  | 9%                                    | 2%                                 | 24%                    | 17%                                    | 65%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 2%                      | 15%                          | 24%                                | \$4622                                      | 8%                                    | 3%                                 | 4%                     | 12%                                    | 42%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 2%                      | 12%                          | 24%                                | \$2753                                      | 10%                                   | 3%                                 | 2%                     | 3%                                     | 27%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 |                         |                              |                                    |   |                                       |                                    |                        |  |                             |
|                      | 1950 | 5%                      | 10%                          | 17%                                | NA  | 45%                                   | 4%                                 | 62%                    | 27%                                    | 98%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 7%                      | 20%                          | 17%                                | \$1539                                      | 50%                                   | 5%                                 | 19%                    | 11%                                    | 95%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 21%                     | 23%                          | 15%                                | \$2345                                      | 62%                                   | 3%                                 | 36%                    | 5%                                     | 73%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 |                         |                              |                                    |   |                                       |                                    |                        |  |                             |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1950-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Fort Worth, Texas SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1952-1972).



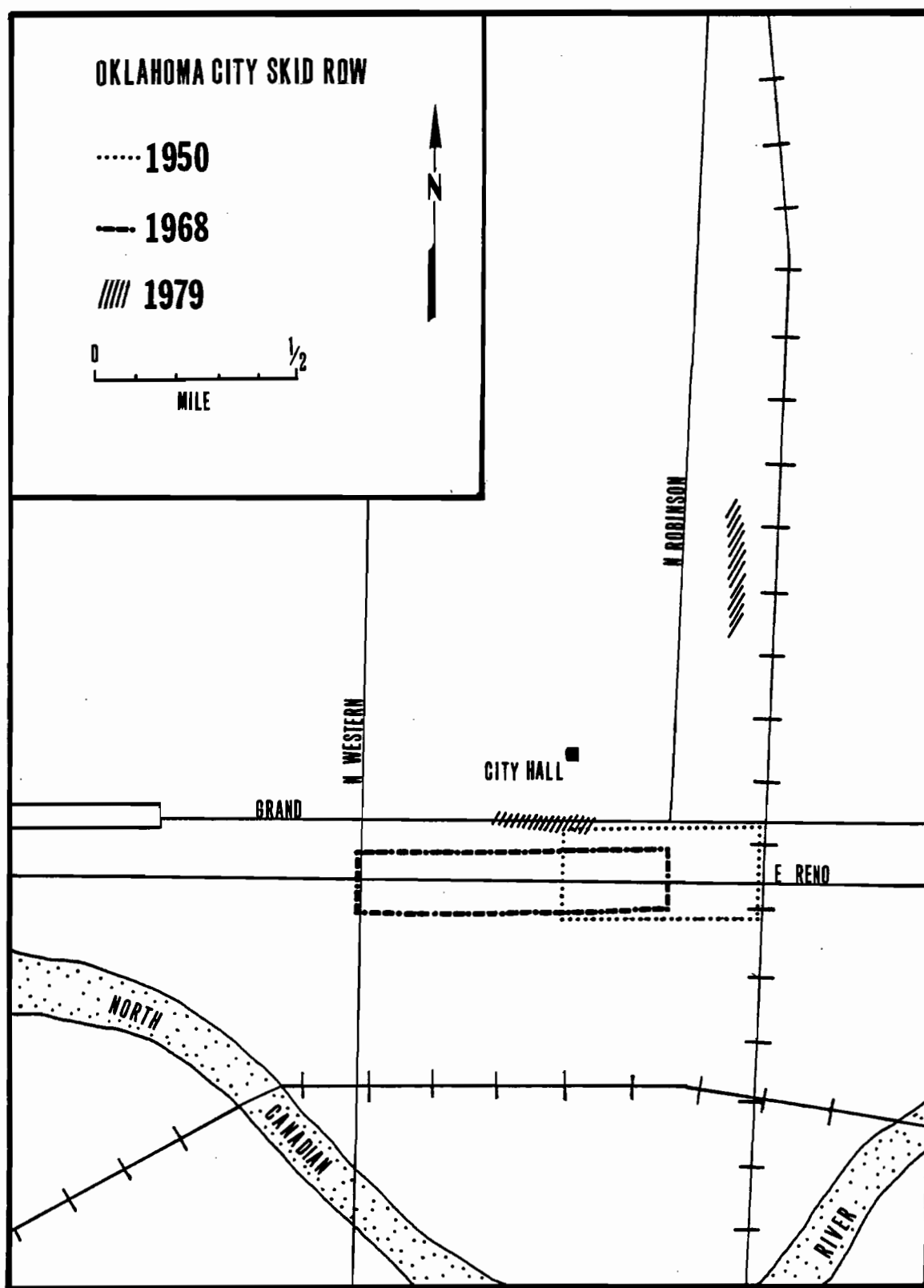


Figure 30

There seem to be no significant census differences between Oklahoma City's skid row and the national average. (See Table 19.)

Combination Unit District(s) - Node(s)

Baltimore. As Figure 31 indicates, there was a drastic decrease in the size of Baltimore's skid row. In 1950, there were two districts totaling approximately 60 blocks. By 1968, there was one district about six blocks in size. Finally, by 1979, the 1968 district is reduced to a five block district and a node appears eight blocks to the west of the current skid row district. According to Baltimore planners, the size reduction occurring between 1968 and 1979 is a planned urban renewal effort. A portion of the 1968 skid row has been replaced with a community college and the addition of a police building to the municipal center. Beside this renewal effort, other buildings in the present skid row area are being rehabilitated in accordance with design standards. This includes mostly cleaning and painting of buildings and storefronts.

When Baltimore's census tract data for the census years 1940 through 1970 are compared with those of all skid rows, a few significant differences are discernible. (See Table 20.) Baltimore's percentage of unrelated individuals for 1960 and 1970 is 17 to 23 percent below the national skid row average. Also, the percentage of dilapidated housing (1970) in Baltimore's skid row is 25% lower than all other skid rows. This figure is more understandable when the percentage of structures built 1939 or earlier is examined. Baltimore, for the years 1960 and 1970, is 28 and 27 percent lower than the

TABLE 19  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 0%                      | 7%                           | 22%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 9%                                 | 4%                     | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 3%                      | 6%                           | 25%                                | NA  | 9%                                    | 3%                                 | 21%                    | 14%                                    | 73%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 36%                                | \$5033                                      | 9%                                    | 3%                                 | 4%                     | 11%                                    | 50%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 2%                      | 8%                           | 31%                                | \$2788                                      | 10%                                   | 2%                                 | 3%                     | 2%                                     | 29%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 2%                      | 10%                          | 13%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 13%                                | 5%                     | 37%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 3%                      | 10%                          | 12%                                | NA  | 37%                                   | 6%                                 | 62%                    | 24%                                    | 99%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 15%                          | 19%                                | \$2064                                      | 49%                                   | 4%                                 | 7%                     | 12%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 14%                     | 18%                          | 21%                                | \$2319                                      | 50%                                   | 6%                                 | 38%                    | 3%                                     | 83%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

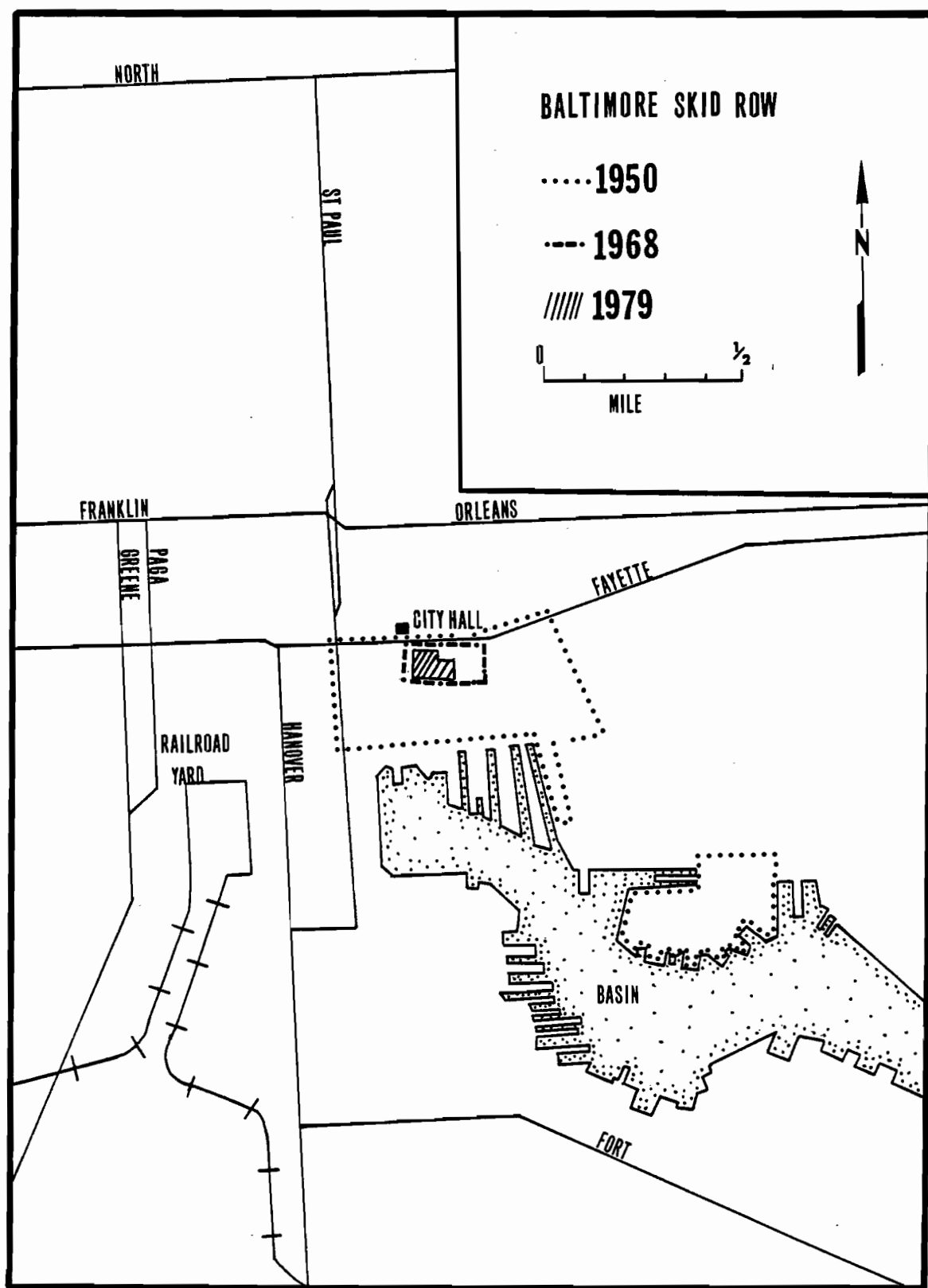


Figure 31

TABLE 20  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR BALTIMORE, MARYLAND,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 1%                      | 18%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 7%                                 | 8%                     | 13%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 6%                      | 15%                          | 16%                                | NA  | 9%                                    | 5%                                 | 17%                    | 12%                                    | 85%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 2%                      | 24%                          | 17%                                | \$4676                                      | 9%                                    | 5%                                 | 3%                     | 11%                                    | 73%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 2%                      | 20%                          | 21%                                | \$2992                                      | 12%                                   | 3%                                 | 2%                     | 2%                                     | 60%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 2%                      | 19%                          | 6%                                 | NA  | NA                                    | 11%                                | 15%                    | 18%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 8%                      | 18%                          | 7%                                 | NA  | 34%                                   | 11%                                | 48%                    | 21%                                    | 91%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 27%                          | 14%                                | \$1933                                      | 29%                                   | 8%                                 | 11%                    | 20%                                    | 64%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 9%                      | 25%                          | 14%                                | \$3026                                      | 24%                                   | 3%                                 | 3%                     | 4%                                     | 40%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Baltimore, Maryland SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

national average. It seems obvious that with fewer older structures, Baltimore should have a lower percentage of dilapidated housing than the national average in 1970.

When the census tract which continues to possess a skid row area in 1979 is compared with other census tracts which no longer have skid rows, some interesting differences are observable. As Table 20 indicates, the 1970 skid row census tract has a much higher percentage of individuals living in group quarters than the non-skid row tracts. This finding is reinforced by the extremely high percentage of unrelated individuals, about 59 percent. Utilizing these characteristics alone, it would seem that they are proof of an existing skid row, as identified by the city planner. However, other characteristics suggest a more modified conclusion. Median income for unrelated individuals and percent of high school completions are higher in this tract than those identified as non-skid row tracts. According to Baltimore's city planner, a college was built in the skid row census tract after 1968. The students living close to the school would give the census tract a high percentage of unrelated individuals living in group quarters. This population would also have a fairly high median income and high school completion rate. This is not to say that skid row does not exist in this census tract because the planning department indicates that it does. However, it is likely that some of the unrelated individuals living in group quarters are not skid row inhabitants but are, instead, students.

Sacramento. Sacramento's 1950 skid row district has been replaced with skid rows which are somewhat unusual. (See Figure 32.) The city manager describes this evolution in the following manner:

The skid row doesn't exist in the classical sense of the term. Urban renewal destroyed it. As a result, several areas have developed quasi-skid row characteristics. If you were to visit them, however, you would find many factors inconsistent.<sup>20</sup>

He elaborates on the inconsistencies by indicating that the northern skid row is an industrial area with missions and no other skid row land uses. Also, the linear skid row, along 12th, could develop into a classic skid row district except that land value prohibits such under-utilization.

Other factors, according to Sacramento's city manager, which are affecting the stabilization of a skid row in Sacramento are:

- (1) The down and out population is not sufficient to support a real skid row which matches the skid row criteria mentioned earlier.
- (2) The central city is thriving. New development and rehabilitation activities are influencing land values. Skid row is no longer economically feasible.
- (3) Federal, state, and local government social programs have done away with many motivations for living on skid row.
- (4) Agricultural mechanization has eliminated literally thousands of itinerant farm workers from the potential skid row population.
- (5) Middle class individuals and families are moving into potential skid row districts and restoring old buildings as residences and offices.
- (6) The employment market in Sacramento is very stable compared with other cities in the California Central Valley.

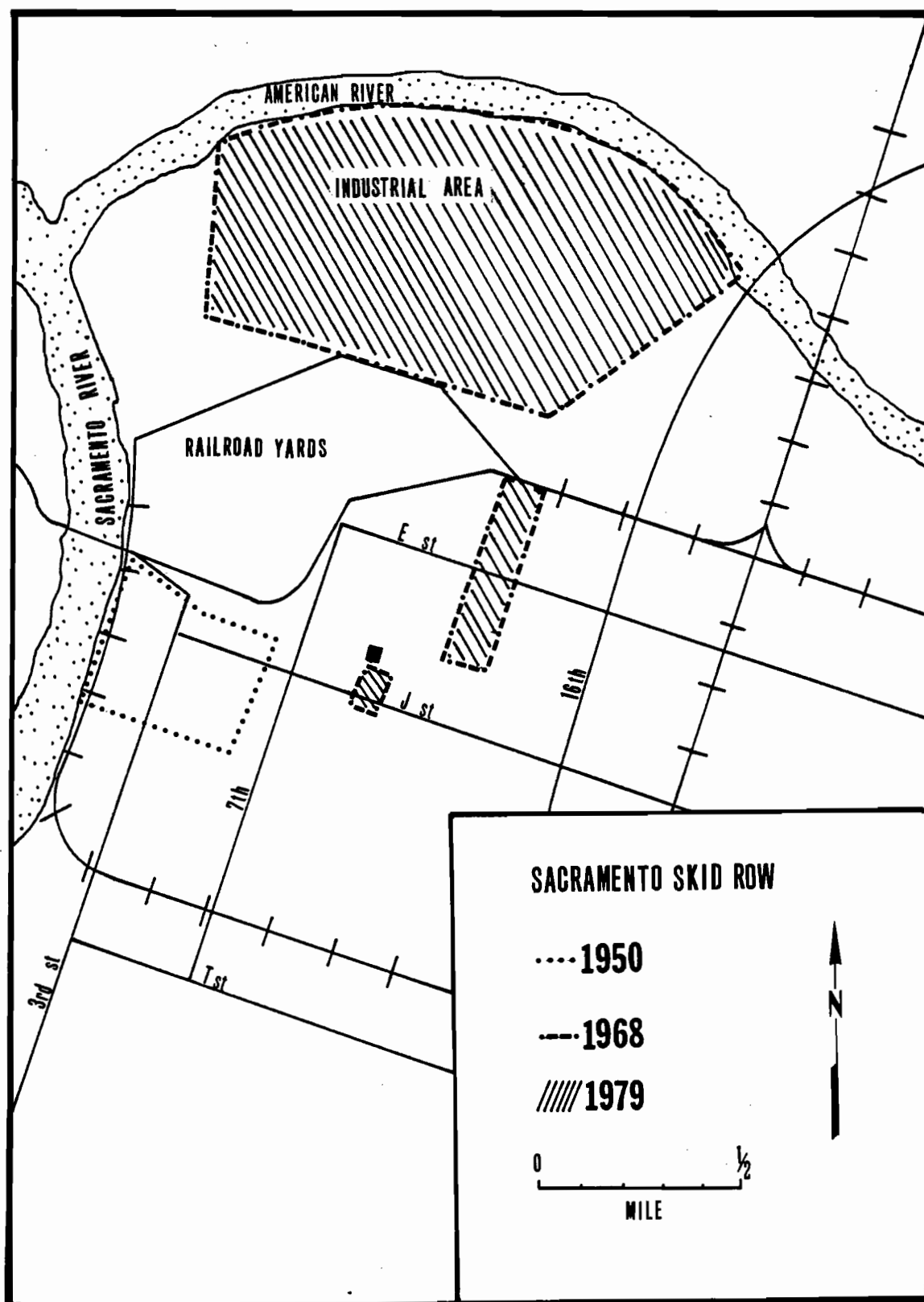


Figure 32



Several census characteristics stand out when Sacramento is compared to the national skid row data. As Table 21 illustrates, the percentage of people living in group quarters in Sacramento is substantially below the national skid row average. However, this low percentage is matched by the city of Sacramento, and both places demonstrate a pattern of low percentage throughout the thirty year time span. Another difference exists between median income for unrelated individuals. Sacramento's skid row census tracts are \$2300 higher than the national average. This may reflect the influx of middle class individuals who are moving into the skid row areas and establishing permanent residence. Furthermore, this process may help explain the low percent of dilapidated structures in these census tracts.

Combination Unit Area(s) - Node(s)

Albuquerque. The 1968 skid row district designated on Figure 33 existed in Albuquerque until about 1970. In the early '70's, urban renewal targeted Second and Central Avenues, not necessarily for the removal of skid row but, rather, the deteriorated, blighted conditions which housed it. Many of the structures (hotels, bars, etc.) were torn down and have not been replaced. Consequently, skid row no longer exists in Albuquerque in a concentrated form, but has been dispersed to the area and nodes outlined on Figure 33.

Probably the factor which has most affected Albuquerque's skid row and population stems from a state policy which apportions bars relative to population. This particularly affects Albuquerque in that

TABLE 21  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA,  
1950-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | NA                      | NA                           | NA                                 | NA  | NA                                    | NA                                 | NA                     | NA                                     | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 2%                      | 6%                           | 28%                                | NA  | 14%                                   | 6%                                 | 9%                     | 8%                                     | 75%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 3%                      | 8%                           | 30%                                | \$5448                                      | 13%                                   | 5%                                 | 2%                     | 7%                                     | 52%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 0%                      | 8%                           | 33%                                | \$2896                                      | 12%                                   | 6%                                 | 1%                     | 2%                                     | 28%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | NA                      | NA                           | NA                                 | NA  | NA                                    | NA                                 | NA                     | NA                                     | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 11%                          | 16%                                | NA  | 39%                                   | 11%                                | 42%                    | 17%                                    | 99%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 1%                      | 15%                          | 17%                                | \$2308                                      | 47%                                   | 17%                                | 15%                    | 9%                                     | 99%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 2%                      | 12%                          | 21%                                | \$4931                                      | 61%                                   | 3%                                 | 9%                     | 4%                                     | 57%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1950-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Sacramento, California SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1952-1972).

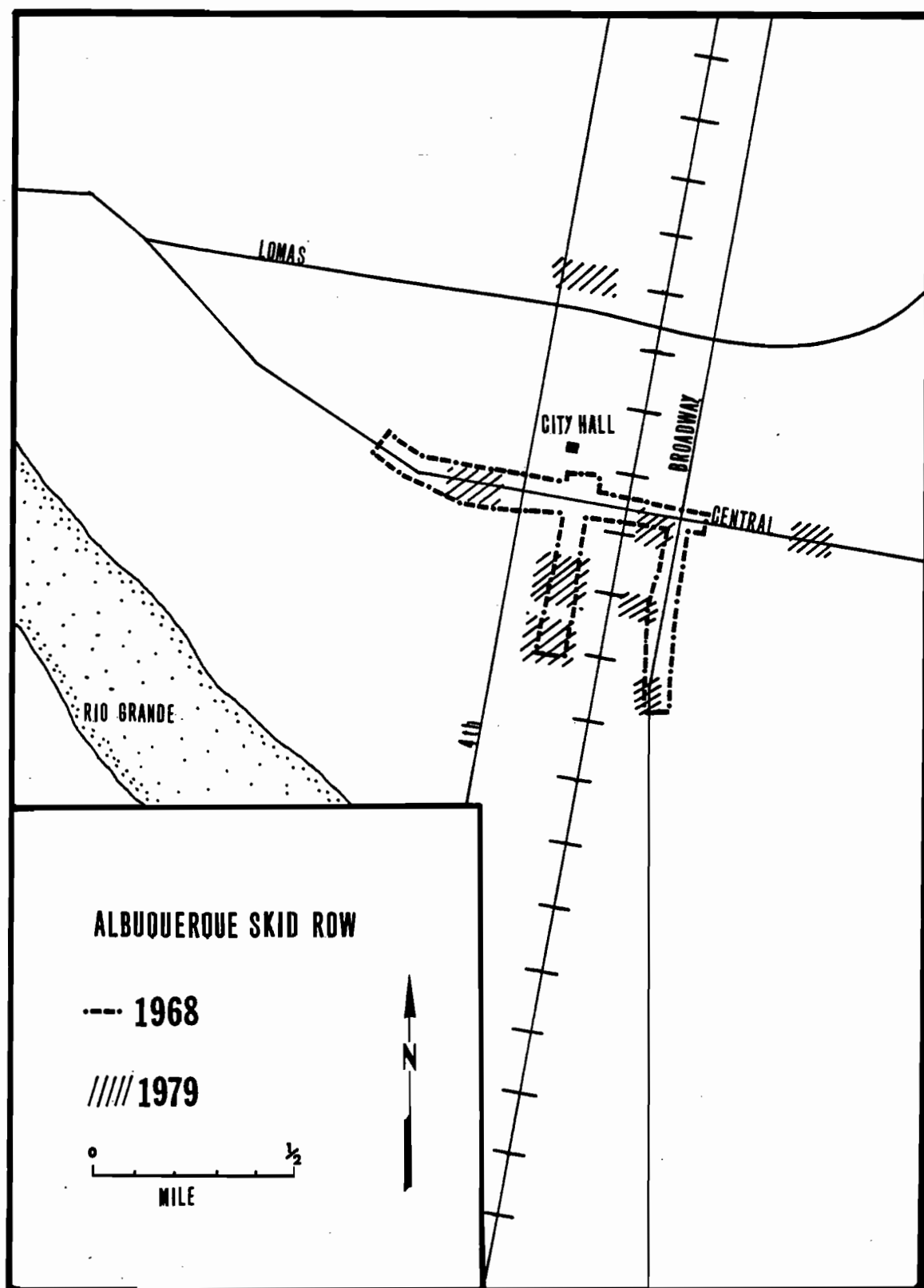


Figure 33

the number of licenses issued is far below demand and, thus, liquor licenses are bought and sold for about \$210,000. This means that the wealthier areas of town have gradually bought the licenses of low-profit downtown bars and moved them to other areas of the city. The cost of licenses demands a relatively good profit if a bar is to continue in business rather than sell its license.

Another point to consider is that Albuquerque is relatively poor, particularly the portion shown on the map, so that many services (housing, inexpensive eating places, etc.) are available in a broad geographical area. Consequently, poverty-related skid row facilities and inhabitants don't necessarily cluster the way they do in the wealthier cities of the country.

Houston. In 1950, according to Bogue's study, Houston had a skid row district that was 137 blocks in size. By 1979, city planners in Houston identified two skid row areas and several nodes. As the map indicates, the two areas are remnants of the larger 1950 district. (See Figure 34.) Houston's director of city planning makes the following comment in reference to skid row:

. . . there is little or no evidence of a classic 'skid row' within the city. There are, of course, several areas having some 'skid row' characteristics with the most noteworthy being in the vicinity of the Harris County Court House and around Market Square Park. There are other areas in the vicinity of various rescue missions and Salvation Army facilities located outside the central business district which have some 'skid row' characteristics and are focal points for concentrations of transients and itinerants and the business establishments which cater to these persons.<sup>21</sup>

As Table 22 indicates, the 1970 census tract, which contains the current skid row areas, is little different from the census tracts

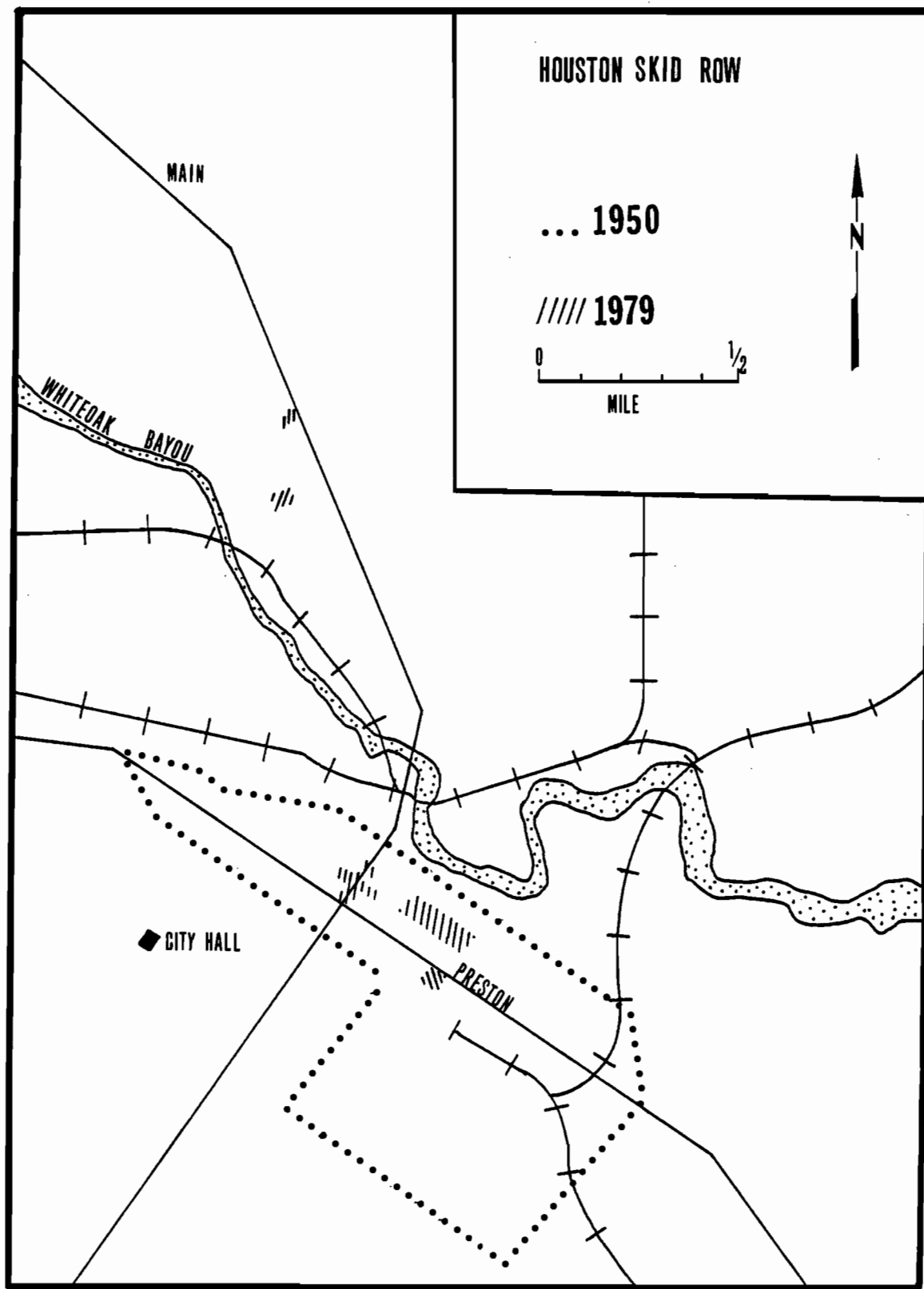


Figure 34

TABLE 22  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR HOUSTON, TEXAS,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 1%                      | 13%                          | 20%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 7%                                 | 11%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 10%                          | 19%                                | NA  | 9%                                    | 3%                                 | 18%                    | 16%                                    | 64%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 1%                      | 15%                          | 11%                                | \$5093                                      | 7%                                    | 4%                                 | 3%                     | 13%                                    | 34%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 1%                      | 12%                          | 24%                                | \$3600                                      | 9%                                    | 2%                                 | 2%                     | 3%                                     | 17%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 1%                      | 12%                          | 18%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 11%                                | 22%                    | 41%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 8%                           | 11%                                | NA  | 36%                                   | 7%                                 | 44%                    | 24%                                    | 99%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 25%                     | 24%                          | 14%                                | \$2573                                      | 38%                                   | 5%                                 | 11%                    | 16%                                    | 96%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 13%                     | 23%                          | 13%                                | \$2760                                      | 31%                                   | 4%                                 | 16%                    | 8%                                     | 61%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Houston, Texas SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

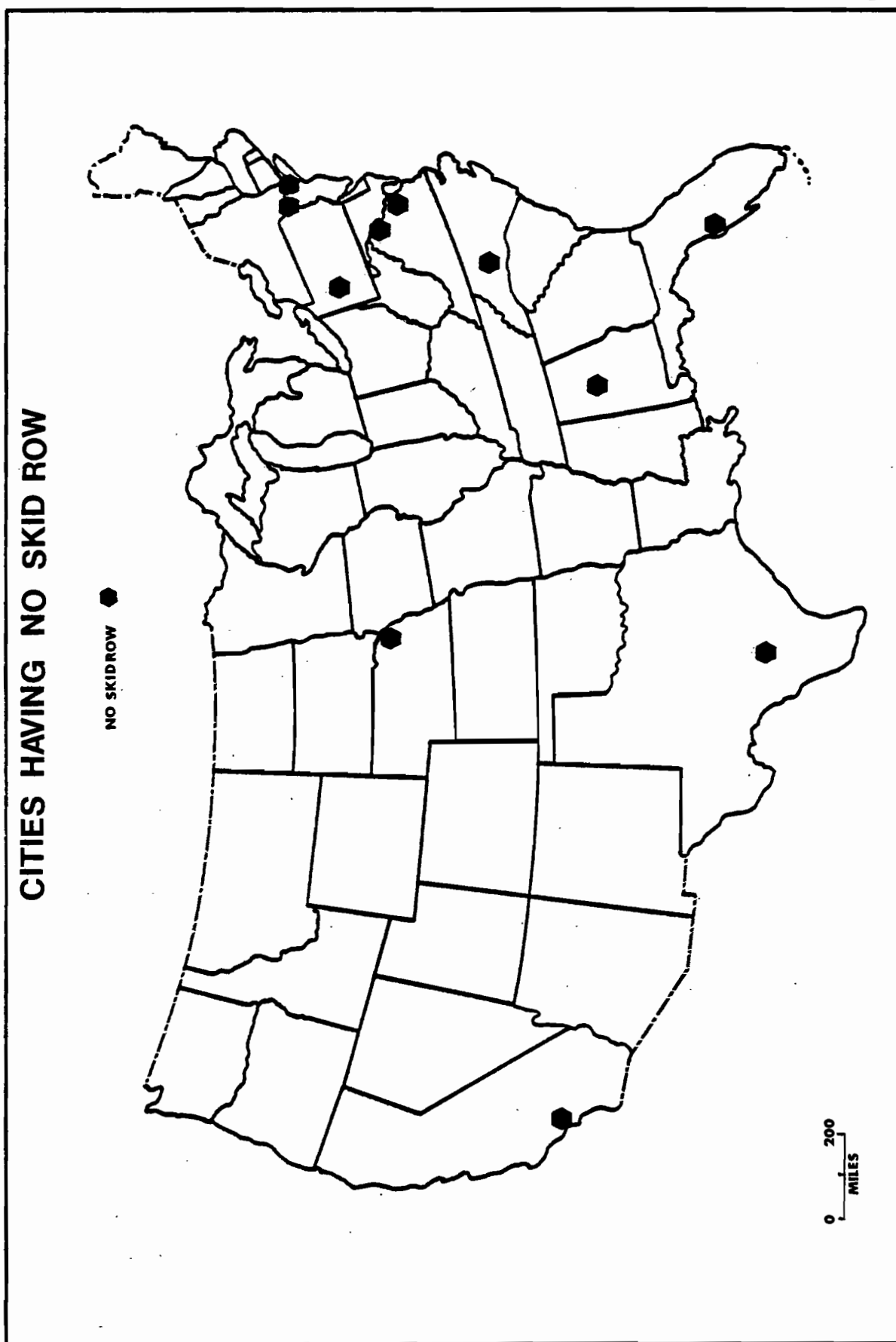
which no longer have skid rows. However, in both cases, with few exceptions, these census tracts demonstrate significant differences when compared to Houston's 1970 city average.

### No Skid Rows

Several of the cities sampled claimed they no longer had a skid row. Of the many shown on Figure 35, three are discussed in more detail.

Birmingham. According to Birmingham's head planner, "There is no area of the city's downtown which meets your definition of a Skid Row area."<sup>22</sup> Consequently, the map shows only the 1950 skid row district as identified by Bogue's study. (See Figure 36.) Even though this 1950 district supposedly no longer exists, census data for the census tracts in which it was located in 1950 were collected for the census years 1950, 1960, and 1970. The reason for doing this was to determine whether an area once identified as a skid row continues to show any skid row characteristics, as revealed by census data, after its demise. Birmingham provides an opportunity to conduct this comparative analysis.

In many ways, Birmingham's defunct skid row of 1960 and 1970 has similar characteristics to the national skid row averages. In other words, with a few exceptions, the area which no longer exists as a skid row in Birmingham has many characteristics which match those of functioning skid rows in other cities. Though the 1960 and 1970 median income for unrelated individuals in Birmingham's non-existent skid row





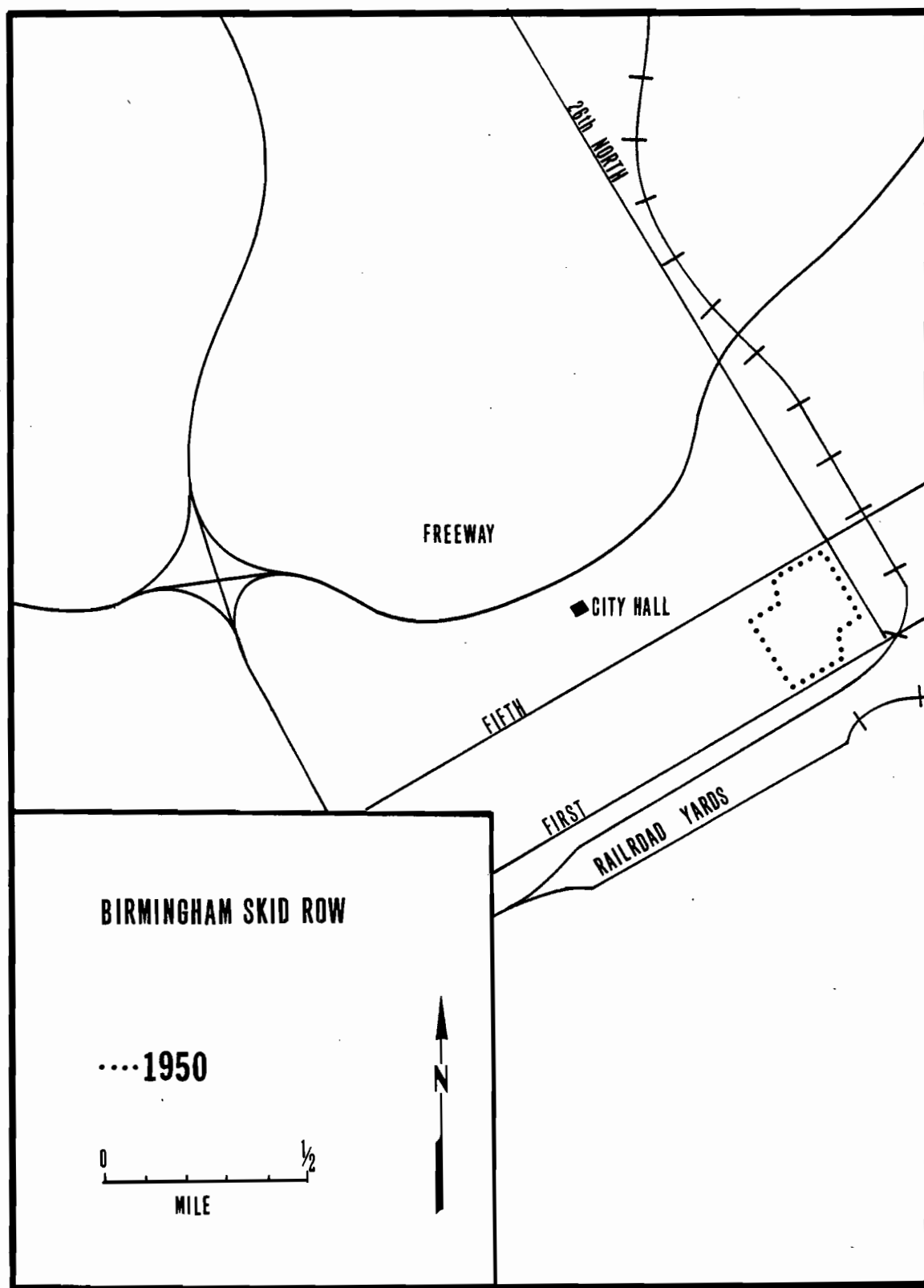


Figure 36

is significantly below the national skid row average, so is the median income for the City of Birmingham lower than that of other cities. However, the difference between national median incomes in cities and skid rows is comparable to the difference between the City of Birmingham and its skid row. (See Table 23.) Other factors which show a close correlation include in-group quarters, amount of education, and unemployment.

There are, on the other hand, some significant differences between Birmingham's defunct skid row and those which continue to exist in other cities. For example, the percentage of unrelated individuals in 1960 differs markedly from that of national skid rows. Also, the 1970 percentage of dilapidated structures is much lower than the national average. Finally, the 1960 and 1970 percentage of structures built in 1939 or earlier is less in Birmingham's non-existent skid row than in other cities.

The analysis presented above should be footnoted with two additional comments. First, the census data characteristics which match those of other existing skid rows are of such a nature that they could apply to individuals who are not living a skid row lifestyle. These characteristics, median income, in-group quarters, amount of education, and unemployment, may represent non-skid row people who are undereducated, unemployed, and poor. They live in this section of Birmingham's Central Business District out of economic necessity. Second, with the exception of dilapidated structures, the 1960 and 1970 census tract characteristics for Birmingham's defunct skid row are very

TABLE 23  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 1%                      | 14%                          | 16%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 8%                                 | 20%                    | 28%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 6%                      | 11%                          | 20%                                | NA  | 7%                                    | 4%                                 | 39%                    | 21%                                    | 81%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 1%                      | 17%                          | 23%                                | \$4135                                      | 7%                                    | 5%                                 | 8%                     | 16%                                    | 62%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 28%                                | \$2149                                      | 10%                                   | 3%                                 | 3%                     | 4%                                     | 43%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 2%                      | 18%                          | 9%                                 | NA  | NA                                    | 10%                                | 39%                    | 41%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 5%                      | 13%                          | 12%                                | NA  | 21%                                   | 6%                                 | 46%                    | 24%                                    | 58%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 8%                      | 23%                          | 13%                                | \$1738                                      | 26%                                   | 7%                                 | 15%                    | 21%                                    | 69%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 15%                     | 15%                          | 25%                                | \$1616                                      | 40%                                   | 5%                                 | 13%                    | 7%                                     | 57%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Birmingham, Alabama SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

similar to its 1950 existing skid row characteristics. As this analysis and earlier comments have suggested, the accuracy, interpretation, and conclusions resulting from census data utilization is to be questioned.

Omaha. Planners for the City of Omaha state that the 1950 skid row district shown on Figure 37 no longer exists. Reasons for its disappearance include the establishment of an historic district and construction of a highway through the skid row district.

It is interesting to note that the census data for Omaha's 1950 skid row compare favorably with the same non-skid row census tracts in 1970. (See Table 24.) Apparently the census data are not capable of reflecting the 1950 to 1970 changes which have occurred. Furthermore, the 1970 data, with the exception of median income for unrelated individuals and structures built in 1939 or earlier, compare closely with that of the 1970 national skid row averages.

Richmond. Bogue's 1950 study identified four separate and distinct skid row districts in Richmond totaling 108 blocks. (See Figure 38.) However, by 1979, according to Mr. Park, Director of Richmond's Department of Planning and Community Development, Richmond had no skid row. He states,

Although it may be hard to believe, we have no skid row, as such. There is no area of the city that approaches the characterizations by sociologists Wallace and Bogue . . . There are scattered facilities, such as a Salvation Army Center, cheap rooming houses and declining retail shops. However, these are not clustered and there is no identifiable phenomenon resembling a skid row.<sup>23</sup>

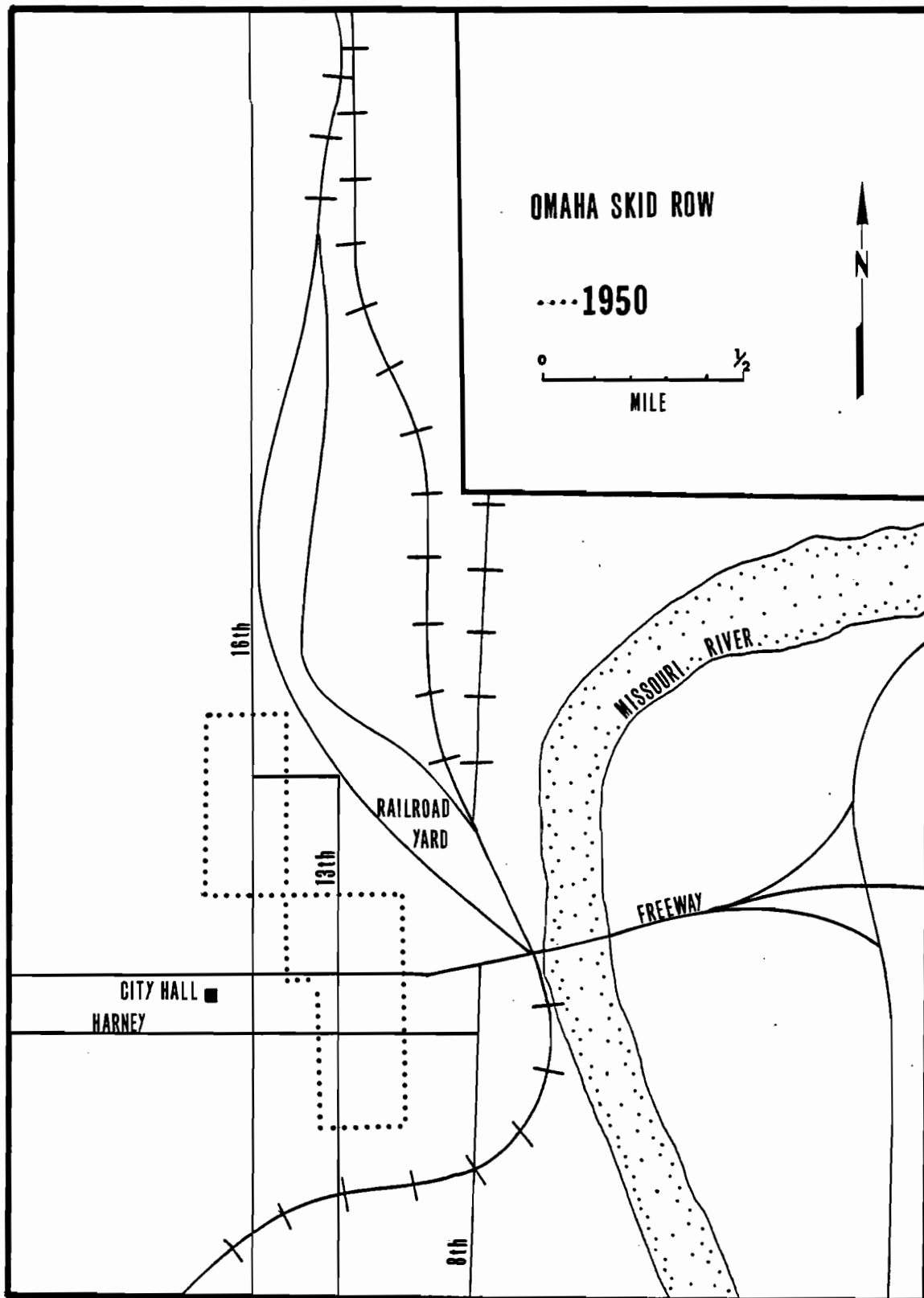


Figure 37

TABLE 24  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR OMAHA, NEBRASKA,  
1950-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | NA                      | NA                           | NA                                 | NA  | NA                                    | NA                                 | NA                     | NA                                     | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 5%                           | 29%                                | NA  | 10%                                   | 2%                                 | 17%                    | 11%                                    | 89%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 2%                      | 8%                           | 30%                                | \$5310                                      | 9%                                    | 3%                                 | 3%                     | 11%                                    | 70%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 2%                      | 6%                           | 37%                                | \$2881                                      | 11%                                   | 2%                                 | 3%                     | 1%                                     | 46%                         |
|                      |      |                         |                              |                                    |   |                                       |                                    |                        |  |                             |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | NA                      | NA                           | NA                                 | NA  | NA                                    | NA                                 | NA                     | NA                                     | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 3%                      | 8%                           | 20%                                | NA  | 32%                                   | 4%                                 | 39%                    | 18%                                    | 99%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 8%                      | 15%                          | 19%                                | \$2657                                      | 37%                                   | 5%                                 | 8%                     | 11%                                    | 99%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 7%                      | 17%                          | 22%                                | \$2055                                      | 43%                                   | 3%                                 | 29%                    | 2%                                     | 91%                         |
|                      |      |                         |                              |                                    |   |                                       |                                    |                        |  |                             |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |
|                      |      |                         |                              |                                    |   |                                       |                                    |                        |  |                             |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1950-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Omaha, Nebraska SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1952-1972).

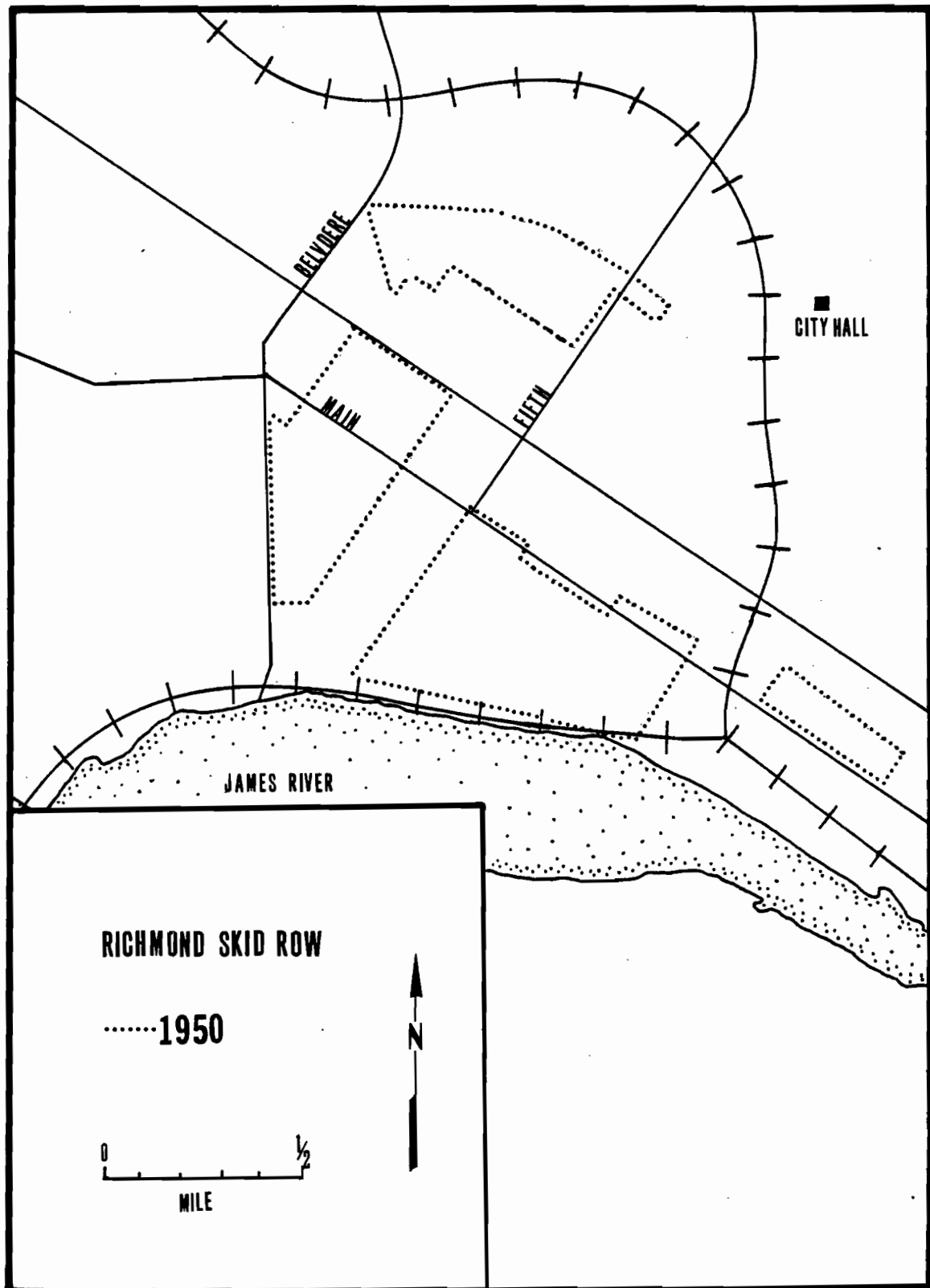


Figure 38

With the exception of in-group quarters, the census data seem accurately to reflect the dissolution of Richmond's 1950 skid row districts. As Table 25 indicates, the percentage of educational attainment increases from 1950, as does median income. On the other hand, percentages of unrelated individuals, dilapidated structures, and structures built 1939 or earlier decline. It seems reasonable to expect these types of statistical changes in census tracts where skid rows cease to exist.

#### Analysis of Selected Census Data

A small number of cities was selected for a census data comparison. (See Table 26.) These cities represent examples of the three skid row classification types (single units, multiple units, and combination units) and are also regional representatives (one city from the south, two from the Pacific Northwest, one from the west, and two from the east). Two census factors are analyzed.

Until 1970 the eastern and southern cities show a small difference between the percentage of high school graduates in the city when compared to their skid rows. The only exceptions to this were Philadelphia and Baltimore in 1950. The three western cities reveal considerable percentage differences between city and skid row high school graduates throughout the 30-year period. By 1970 the differences between city and skid row have narrowed for all selected cities. These differences seem to be regional rather than a result of the skid row classification type.



TABLE 25  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR RICHMOND, VIRGINIA,  
1940-1970

|                      | Year | In<br>Group<br>Quarters | Percent<br>Elem.<br>5-7 Yrs. | Percent<br>High<br>School<br>Grad. | Median<br>Income<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Percent of<br>Unrelated<br>Individual | Unemployed<br>Male 14<br>and Older | Housing<br>Dilapidated | 1.01 or<br>More<br>Persons<br>Per Room | Built<br>1939 or<br>Earlier |
|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| City                 | 1940 | 1%                      | 14%                          | 17%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 7%                                 | 8%                     | 19%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 5%                      | 11%                          | 18%                                | NA  | 11%                                   | 4%                                 | 28%                    | 14%                                    | 85%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 5%                      | 20%                          | 20%                                | \$3889                                      | 13%                                   | 3%                                 | 4%                     | 12%                                    | 73%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 4%                      | 17%                          | 21%                                | \$2658                                      | 14%                                   | 2%                                 | 4%                     | 2%                                     | 45%                         |
| Skid<br>Row          | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 9%                                 | 9%                     | 27%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 8%                      | 15%                          | 11%                                | NA  | 32%                                   | 5%                                 | 56%                    | 29%                                    | 100%                        |
|                      | 1960 | 40%                     | 22%                          | 13%                                | \$1662                                      | 40%                                   | 3%                                 | 13%                    | 14%                                    | 93%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 28%                     | 24%                          | 20%                                | \$2635                                      | 20%                                   | 5%                                 | 28%                    | 3%                                     | 39%                         |
| U.S.<br>Skid<br>Rows | 1940 | 2%                      | 14%                          | 11%                                | NA  | NA                                    | 15%                                | 17%                    | 22%                                    | NA                          |
|                      | 1950 | 4%                      | 12%                          | 14%                                | NA  | 42%                                   | 10%                                | 55%                    | 21%                                    | 97%                         |
|                      | 1960 | 16%                     | 20%                          | 15%                                | \$2105                                      | 46%                                   | 8%                                 | 12%                    | 13%                                    | 92%                         |
|                      | 1970 | 16%                     | 16%                          | 20%                                | \$2636                                      | 47%                                   | 6%                                 | 28%                    | 4%                                     | 71%                         |

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report, Richmond, Virginia SMSA (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

TABLE 26  
SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR 6 U.S. CITIES  
AND THEIR SKID ROWS, 1940-1970

|   | Single Districts    |                | Multiple Districts |                     | Combination District & Node |                   | Totals |
|---|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------|
|   | New Orleans (South) | Portland (PNW) | Seattle (PNW)      | Philadelphia (East) | Baltimore (East)            | Sacramento (West) |        |
| <u>Percentage High School Graduates</u> |                     |                |                    |                     |                             |                   |        |
| <u>1940</u>                             |                     |                |                    |                     |                             |                   |        |
| City                                    | 13%                 | 23%            | 25%                | 12%                 | 11%                         | NA                | 17%    |
| Skid Row                                | 13%                 | 10%            | 14%                | 9%                  | 6%                          | NA                | 10%    |
| <u>1950</u>                             |                     |                |                    |                     |                             |                   |        |
| City                                    | 17%                 | 27%            | 28%                | 19%                 | 16%                         | 28%               | 23%    |
| Skid Row                                | 15%                 | 13%            | 14%                | 12%                 | 7%                          | 16%               | 13%    |
| <u>1960</u>                             |                     |                |                    |                     |                             |                   |        |
| City                                    | 19%                 | 28%            | 29%                | 20%                 | 17%                         | 30%               | 24%    |
| Skid Row                                | 19%                 | 13%            | 16%                | 17%                 | 14%                         | 17%               | 16%    |
| <u>1970</u>                             |                     |                |                    |                     |                             |                   |        |
| City                                    | 23%                 | 33%            | 33%                | 28%                 | 21%                         | 33%               | 29%    |
| Skid Row                                | 17%                 | 23%            | 24%                | 22%                 | 14%                         | 21%               | 20%    |

TABLE 26 (Continued)

SELECTED SOCIAL DATA COMPARISONS FOR 6 U.S. CITIES  
AND THEIR SKID ROWS, 1940-1970

|  | Single Districts       |                   | Multiple Districts |                        | Combination District & Node |                      | Totals |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------|
|  | New Orleans<br>(South) | Portland<br>(PNW) | Seattle<br>(PNW)   | Philadelphia<br>(East) | Baltimore<br>(East)         | Sacramento<br>(West) |        |
| <u>Percentage of<br/>Unrelated Individuals</u> |                        |                   |                    |                        |                             |                      |        |
| <u>1940</u>                                    |                        |                   |                    |                        |                             |                      |        |
| City   | NA                     | NA                | NA                 | NA                     | NA                          | NA                   | NA     |
| Skid Row                                       | NA                     | NA                | NA                 | NA                     | NA                          | NA                   | NA     |
| <u>1950</u>                                    |                        |                   |                    |                        |                             |                      |        |
| City   | 25%                    | 13%               | 16%                | 9%                     | 9%                          | 14%                  | 14%    |
| Skid Row                                       | 45%                    | 63%               | 71%                | 53%                    | 34%                         | 39%                  | 51%    |
| <u>1960</u>                                    |                        |                   |                    |                        |                             |                      |        |
| City   | 10%                    | 14%               | 15%                | 10%                    | 9%                          | 13%                  | 12%    |
| Skid Row                                       | 54%                    | 66%               | 76%                | 53%                    | 29%                         | 47%                  | 54%    |
| <u>1970</u>                                    |                        |                   |                    |                        |                             |                      |        |
| City   | 11%                    | 5%                | 20%                | 12%                    | 12%                         | 12%                  | 12%    |
| Skid Row                                       | 35%                    | 72%               | 78%                | 51%                    | 24%                         | 61%                  | 54%    |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1940-1970, Census Tracts, Final Report (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1942-1972).

If only the skid row percentages of high school graduates are compared, very few regional differences are apparent. However, it is interesting to note that in both eastern and Pacific Northwest cities there has been a significant increase in the skid row percentage of high school graduates from 1940 to 1970. In short, it appears that the skid row inhabitants in these cities are becoming better educated.

A comparison of the percentage of unrelated individuals living in skid rows as opposed to the city percentage reveals that in all cases throughout the 30-year time period skid rows have had a substantially higher percentage of unrelated inhabitants. Some regional differences are apparent when only skid rows are compared. For example, the two northwest skid rows (Portland and Seattle) have a significantly higher percentage of unrelated individuals than do the other selected cities. Also the particular skid row classification type by which a skid row is grouped does not seem to have a bearing on the percentage differences of unrelated individuals occupying them.

#### Treatment of Skid Row Inhabitants

Most of the discussion to this point has focused on land use evolution in the skid rows of selected large cities. However, the inhabitants who occupy these skid rows should also be considered. In short, how has the planning process treated the skid row as it has implemented changes in the "physical plant" which provides support services that help to sustain these men? A brief review of three

cities will shed some light on how they handle the problem of skid row inhabitants who are being affected by changing skid rows.

New Orleans. Planning officials in New Orleans reported that their goal was to remove skid row men completely out of the central business district. Their strategy was to comply with all Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) relocation guidelines while letting skid row men relocate themselves. No special effort was made to influence the direction in which the transients shifted. The city did, however, rewrite its zoning ordinance to prohibit "flop houses" in the central business district.

Seattle. Seattle's planning goal was not to relocate skid row but to renovate and upgrade the project area while allowing skid row men to continue residing there. Some relocation did occur, however, due to stringent enforcement of their housing code. Efforts are now underway to obtain 1,000 housing units for skid row men by rehabilitating existing structures. The units are eventually to be self-supporting with rents ranging from \$60-\$90 per month per unit.

Philadelphia. In 1963, the City of Philadelphia, in cooperation with Temple University and the local housing authority opened a Diagnostic and Relocation Center. It was designed to serve as an "intake center" in that all skid row men desiring service were given an intake interview which probed the man's work history, family background, marital status, medical and psychological history as well as

his personal stability. After completing the diagnostic process, a practical relocation plan would be developed for each client.

Once a client is judged physically, emotionally, and economically able to leave skid row, his processing is taken over by the City Redevelopment Authority's relocation staff who help clients obtain decent, safe, and sanitary housing in non-skid row neighborhoods. For those men who cannot make it in an independent living situation or halfway house, the Diagnostic and Rehabilitation Center acquired property for use as a dormitory.

Based on the brief comments presented above, it is obvious that cities vary widely in their treatment of the skid row inhabitants. Their programs span the range from ignoring the needs of skid row men to one of establishing very sophisticated diagnosis and treatment programs for them. Many of the cities that ignored skid row men while carrying out their downtown renewal programs found that skid row men will merely shift over into another area adjacent to the renewal project area and create another skid row. Other cities, like Seattle and Philadelphia, have taken a more formal, long term approach to relocating skid row men and appear to have had more success with removing them from the streets.

### Conclusion

The data show that skid row in large U.S. cities is undergoing major changes. With few exceptions, skid rows in the cities which have been examined have been affected by either urban renewal, redevelopment

or revitalization. Urban renewal, which seems to have had the greatest impact, has caused the loss of many skid rows and the relocation of others. Several of the urban renewal projects have resulted in public buildings, usually convention centers, replacing the city's skid row.

Skid rows not affected by urban renewal programs have been altered by planned revitalization efforts. In some cases, the skid row has been classified as an historic district, and attempts to restore ancient buildings have led to its demise. Similarly, local designations known as "Old Town Districts" have also had adverse impacts on some skid rows.

A comparison of 19 skid rows from 1950 to 1979 reveals that over this time period the average size of skid row has significantly declined. In 1950, the mean for the 19 skid rows was 37 blocks which decreased to 22 blocks in 1968. By 1979 the average size of skid row had further declined to 7 blocks. Median statistics reflect the dramatic skid row decline from 1950 to 1968. The median size for 1950 skid rows was 32 blocks. In 1968 the median was 11 blocks. Of the 19 skid rows compared, 12 experienced a decrease in size from 1950 to 1979. Three declined in size from 1950 to 1968 and then increased from 1968 to 1979. Two skid rows increased in size from 1950 to 1968 and then stabilized from 1968 to 1979. One skid row (Rochester) showed no change from 1950 to 1979 and another (Seattle) grew throughout the thirty-year period. The previous comments do not reflect shifts or disappearance and reappearance of skid rows. As the maps have shown, several skid rows have disappeared in one section of the downtown only

to reappear somewhere else. The data only indicate that skid rows as a whole have been declining in size over the past thirty years.

The shrinkage of skid row has been partially the result of urban renewal and revitalization efforts by local and federal agencies. These programs are based on the premise that skid row is an unwanted area. In fact, one prominent geographer labeled the skid row landscape "valueless space."<sup>24</sup> Several of the planners who participated in this study used the term "underutilized" when referring to the skid row in their city. In brief, the impact of inflating land values on skid rows is one major factor leading to their demise. A Sacramento planner put it more succinctly when he stated, "Skid Row is no longer economically feasible." Finally, a Jacksonville planner was even more abrupt when he said, "Skid Row populations are an interesting and challenging group when planning considerations are made. Nobody wants them in their city."<sup>25</sup>

Utilization of census data to analyze skid row evolution and change is to be questioned. It appears that census tracts which may have had a skid row in 1950 but do not in 1970 often continue to reflect skid row tendencies or characteristics. It may be that the characteristics utilized by this study are either inadequate measurements of skid row or improper data. The data are of such a nature that it may be the reflection of an older section of the Central Business District which has many of the characteristics of a skid row but is in fact not a true skid row.



This chapter also presented a model for classifying the current skid row. Whereas skid row districts may have once existed, the present trend is for smaller units and/or combinations of units. It is accurate to say that the concept of a skid row district fits very few skid rows today and should be discarded for a more refined definition.

## Chapter II Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Donald J. Bogue, Skid Row in American Cities (Chicago: Community and Family Study Center, 1963), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Samuel E. Wallace, Skid Row As a Way of Life (Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster Press, 1965), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Bogue, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from Gary Dumas, Corpus Christi Department of Planning and Urban Development, June 1979.

<sup>5</sup>Ronald Vander Kooi, "The Main Stem: Skid Row Revisited," Society 10 (1973):65.

<sup>6</sup>Letter from H. Stevens, Cincinnati City Planning Commission, February 1972.

<sup>7</sup>Letter from James M. Schroeder, Jr., Dallas Department of Planning and Urban Development, February 1972.

<sup>8</sup>Letter from Ralph Memolo, Boston Redevelopment Authority, June 1979.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Letter from John F. McCarty, Toledo-Lucas County Plan Commissions, May 1979.

<sup>11</sup>Letter from Department of Metropolitan Department, Division of Indianapolis Planning and Zoning, April 1979.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Letter from William J. Burke, Jr., Philadelphia City Planning Commission, April 1979.

<sup>15</sup>Letter from William M. Stalzer, Seattle Downtown Projects Division, March 1979.

<sup>16</sup>Letter from William R. Drew, Milwaukee Department of City Development, June 1979.

<sup>17</sup>Letter from Cecil R. Herrell, Nashville Planning Commission, June 1979.

<sup>18</sup>Letter from Andy W. Sikes, Jacksonville Area Planning Board, April 1979.

<sup>19</sup>Letter from Richard Indritz, Minneapolis City Planning Department, April 1979.

<sup>20</sup>Letter from Felton Mailes, Sacramento Assistant City Manager for Community Development, April 1979.

<sup>21</sup>Letter from Roscoe H. Jones, Houston City Planning Department, April 1979.

<sup>22</sup>Letter from Larry Watts, Birmingham Department of Community Development, June 1979.

<sup>23</sup>Letter from James C. Park, Richmond Department of Planning and Community Development, April 1979.

<sup>24</sup>David A. Lanegran and Risa Palm, An Invitation to Geography (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973), p. 18.

<sup>25</sup>Mailes.

## CHAPTER III

### SKID ROW IN PORTLAND, OREGON

#### Methods

Portland's skid row development is presented through an analysis of land use. Land use data came from Sanborn Insurance Maps and Portland City Directories. However, both of these data sources are unavailable for Portland's early years, 1846-1872. Consequently, the investigation of Portland's Skid Row begins with the year 1873 and concludes with the current year.

The physical area identified for study is at best a compromise with which others might argue. But, as was suggested in Chapter I, very few people can agree on a definition of skid row let alone its boundaries. Boundaries for Portland's Skid Row, as established by this author, are similar to those utilized by early writers, such as Scott and Gaston, who used the term "North End" to identify this area. Thus, the boundaries of Portland's Skid Row include Burnside on the south, Glisan to the north, Broadway on the west, and Front Avenue on the east. (See Figure 39.) These boundaries encompass a 45-block area upon which this study focuses. This area is referred to as the "study area" in the ensuing narrative. For comparative purposes, an area of equal size south of Burnside is also examined. The boundaries of this

# PORTLAND, OREGON STUDY AREA

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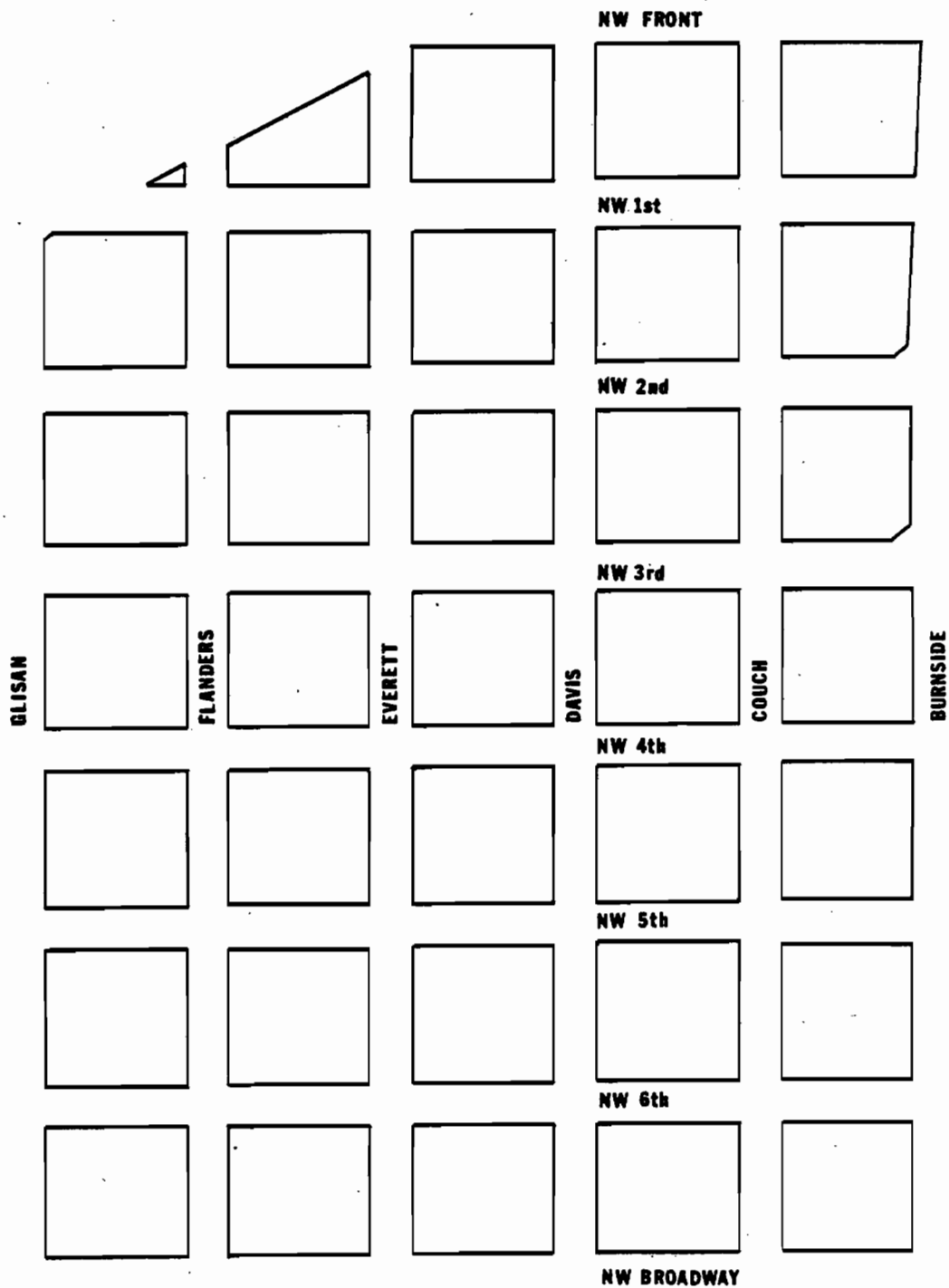


Figure 39

area include Burnside on the north, Stark to the south, Broadway on the west, and Front to the east. (See Figure 40.)

The majority of the material pertaining to land use trends and changes in Portland's Skid Row was obtained from two sources, the Sanborn Insurance Maps and the Portland City Directory. After reviewing other data sources such as historical accounts of Portland (Gaston and Scott), police records, and newspaper articles, it became obvious that these references are not land use oriented. Consequently, these sources are used when appropriate to support or elaborate on conclusions arrived at from analysis of the Sanborn Maps and City Directories.

Portland Sanborn Maps exist for the years 1879, 1885, 1895, 1898, 1908, 1926, 1932, 1955, and 1965. I decided for comparative purposes to select dates that represented approximately 20-year intervals. Because of this consideration, the years 1879, 1898, 1932, and 1955 are analyzed utilizing a series of maps depicting several land-use categories. In some cases these land-use categories are quite general because the Sanborn Maps do not specify, for example, types of stores.

Beside Sanborn Map data, the Portland City Directory, the most recent of these, known as the Portland Polk City Directory, was consulted for land use information which is utilized in analyzing developmental trends in Portland's Skid Row. Data from this source cover consecutive years from 1873 to 1900. After 1900, data were gathered for 10-year increments (1910, 1920, etc.) to the present year.

## PORTLAND, OREGON COMPARISON AREA

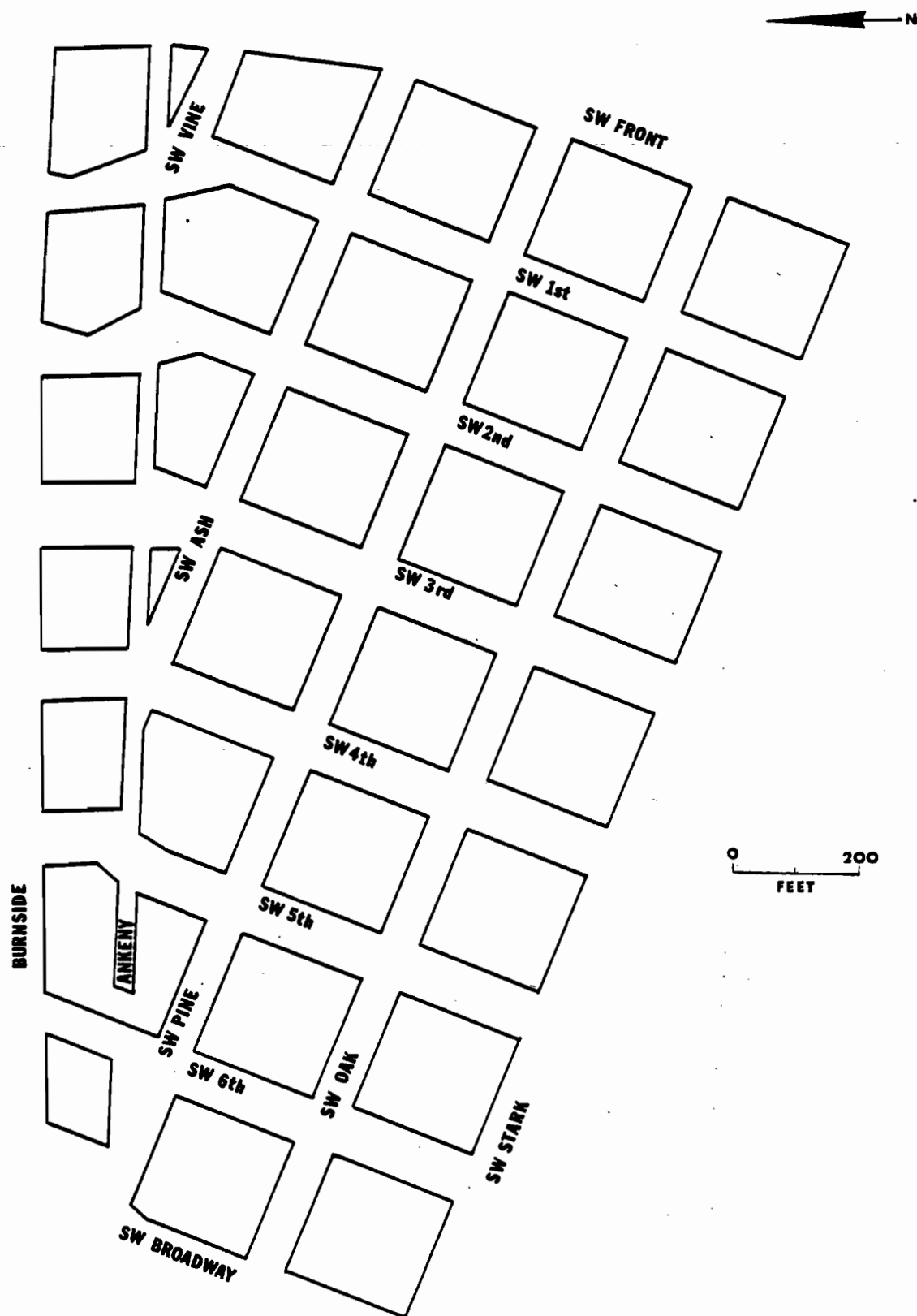


Figure 40

Basically, seven categories of land use data were collected. These included boarding houses, lodging houses, furnished rooms, employment offices, pawnbrokers, second-hand stores, and missions.

As Ward states in his article on skid row, land use can be used to indicate developmental trends in skid row. He writes:

One of the notable features of skid row is the physical plant that houses essential skid row services. (Barber colleges, Blood clinics, Employment Agencies, Hotels, Liquor stores, Men's Clothing stores, Missions, Pawn shops, Restaurants, Rooming houses, Second-hand clothing stores, Taverns). They tend to cluster in certain areas of particular cities because of the strong pull of a highly specialized market population because of the latter's very high tolerance for these particular services, this fact being in large part linked to the generally impecunious nature of most skid row inhabitants. For example, the barber colleges on New York's Bowery will give haircuts for 50 cents whereas those just a few blocks away would charge at least three times that amount, but the high tolerance of the skid row inhabitants for poor quality haircuts is probably as important as the low price. The rooming houses (flop-houses) offering beds for one dollar per night on Toronto's skid row can only hope to attract those with a high tolerance for bed bugs and filth and with too little ready cash to opt for better accommodations. Similar forces are at work in determining a high concentration of secondhand clothing stores in skid row areas; the high tolerance in this case is that for out-of-style clothing, as a walk down any skid row will show.

Thus, the spatial clustering of such services offers important visual clues regarding the presence and magnitude of a particular skid row. Changeover can be measured by perusal of city business directories, such data providing an indication of development trends.<sup>1</sup>

Bahr, in his book on skid row, is even more specific than Ward when discussing land use characteristics peculiar to skid row. He states:

Three institutions dominate the skid row scene. They are distinctive, necessary elements which, when they appear in close proximity, indelibly mark a neighborhood as a skid row. In descending order of importance, they are the cheap hotels, and lodging houses, the gospel missions, and the bars. The structure of these institutions reflects the disaffiliation and the problems of the homeless men whom they serve.<sup>2</sup>



Bahr briefly elaborates on the importance of these institutions. He states that the cubicle hotel or lodging house is the most important skid row facility. "There are other sleeping facilities available--public shelters, gospel missions, rooming houses, and hotels with rooms--but most skid row men are lodging house residents; in Chicago, the proportion is two out of three."<sup>3</sup> He goes on to say that next to the lodging houses, the most distinctive institutions which set skid row apart from other sections of the city are the gospel missions.

Finally, Bahr discusses the significance of bars in the skid row. He writes, "the bars must be close, preferably scattered among the lodging houses and the missions."<sup>4</sup>

### Patterns

Findings will be presented in three sections. First, Portland's Skid Row development is examined utilizing Sanborn map data. In the second section city directory data are presented to illustrate skid row developmental trends. Finally, the current Skid Row is examined utilizing field observations.

#### Section One: Sanborn Map Analysis

##### Study Area in 1879

Observation of the 1879 map indicates that the western half of the study area is dominated by single-family residents. In fact, of the 45 blocks which constituted the study area, 21 consisted mainly of

single-family residents. (See Figure 41.) Most of these houses are surrounded by significant amounts of open space. Other land uses in the study area reveal an interesting mixture. For example, along First and Second Avenue is found a combination of industry, retail (some Chinese), single-family residents, saloons, hotels, and boarding houses. (See Figure 42.)

Based on the Sanborn data, it is apparent that the study area contains some of the skid row characteristics mentioned by Ward and Bahr. There are a number of hotels (ten), boarding houses (six), and saloons (fourteen). Also, it should be noted that the Portland Wharf, constructed in 1865, stood at the foot of B (Burnside), C (Couch), and D (Davis). According to Mike Jones, the Portland Wharf was one of the earliest public wharfs on the Willamette River and contributed in a major way to the increased prosperity of the Burnside area.<sup>5</sup>

Another land use in the area was the Seamen's Bethel, located at 3rd and Davis. Apparently this institution was catering to seamen who were between ships and looking for a temporary home. Here they could acquire a place to sleep and decent meals.

It is difficult to determine whether the study area constitutes a skid row or even a partial skid row at this time. However, there is enough information to draw some tentative conclusions. The proximity of the Portland Wharf to the study area and the location of the Seamen's Bethel within it, suggests that this area was servicing sailors whose ships were loading or unloading cargo along Portland's

# STUDY AREA SINGLE FAMILY HOUSES, 1879

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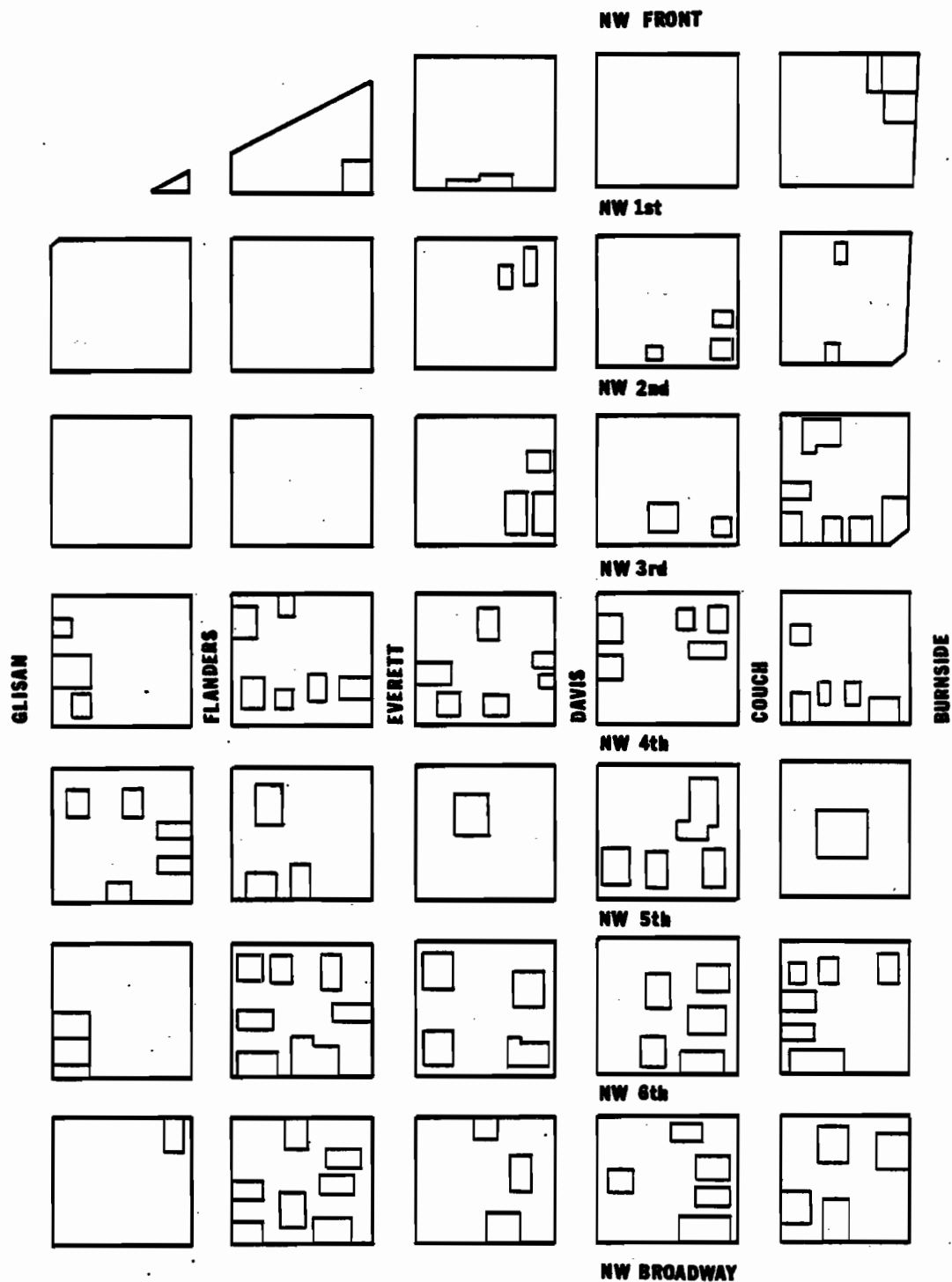


Figure 41

# STUDY AREA LAND USE, 1879

-  Wholesale - Industry
-  Rooming - Boarding Houses
-  Service - Office
-  Retail

-  Hotel
-  Mission
-  Restaurant
-  Saloon
-  Chinese



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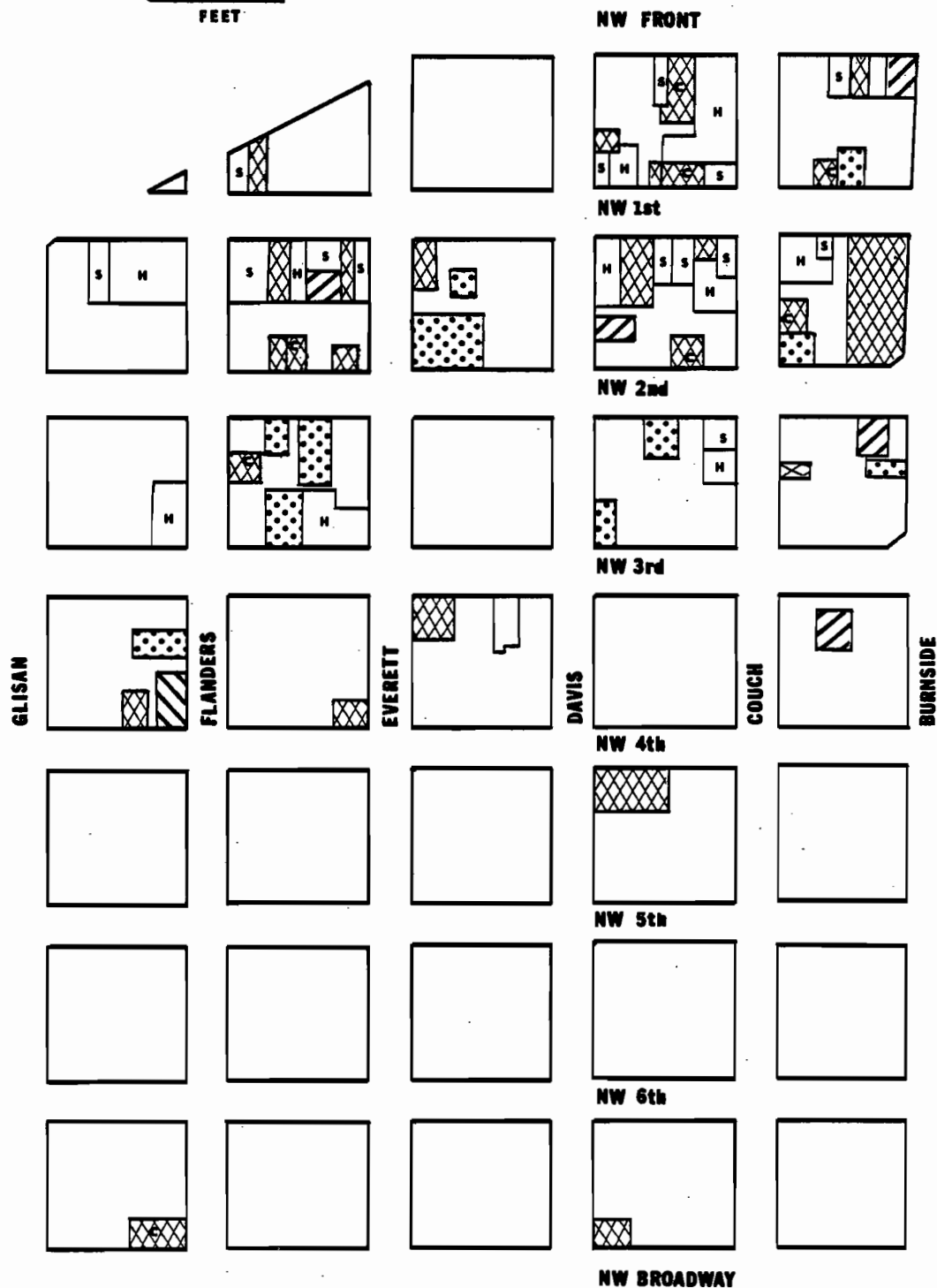


Figure 42

waterfront. This conclusion is reinforced by the numerous hotels, boarding houses, and saloons located within the study area.

According to one well-known Portland historian, the study area was catering to more than just sailors. Stewart Holbrook states that Portland's "north end" or Skid Road was a place where loggers gathered to drink and recreate. He writes:

One of the first things he (logger) learned--whether he arrived on the coast in the eighties or forty years later--was that the place where he spent his hard-earned dough when he went to town was the skidroad. The skidroad of a city might be known to the solid citizens thereof as Front Avenue, Yesler Way, Powell Street, Pacific Avenue, Burnside Street, or by some other official name, but to the logger it was simply the Skidroad of Spokane, Seattle, Vancouver, British Columbia, Tacoma, Portland, or of one of a score of lesser towns.<sup>6</sup>

Holbrook goes on to elaborate on the men who utilized skidroad and also on the unique character of skidroads. He states:

Skidroads were where you blew her in. A skidroad might be one, two, or a dozen streets of a lumber city. You didn't have to ask how to find it, for it had a character of its own. It was usually handy to the waterfront, whether of river or ocean, and not far from the railroad depot. Its places of business catered to loggers, miners, cowhands, fishermen, and sailors, and construction workers, but on the West Coast loggers were the most numerous customers.

Saloons, restaurants, and lodging houses were in greatest number, and many of them had names with a timber flavor. The High Lead was popular for saloons. Restaurants ran the gamut from The Loggers Waldorf to the Cookhouse. There was generally a Hotel Michigan; a Saginaw Rooms, and a Bangor House.

Until well into the present century, open gambling was a feature of Western skidroads. But gambling, like food, clothing, dentistry, and other minor needs, was of secondary importance to loggers. Saloons and fancy-houses got their stakes.<sup>7</sup>

If a comparison of the study area is made with another area of equal size south of Burnside, several differences in the land use pattern are apparent. As Figure 43 indicates, there is a total absence

# COMPARISON AREA LAND USE, 1879

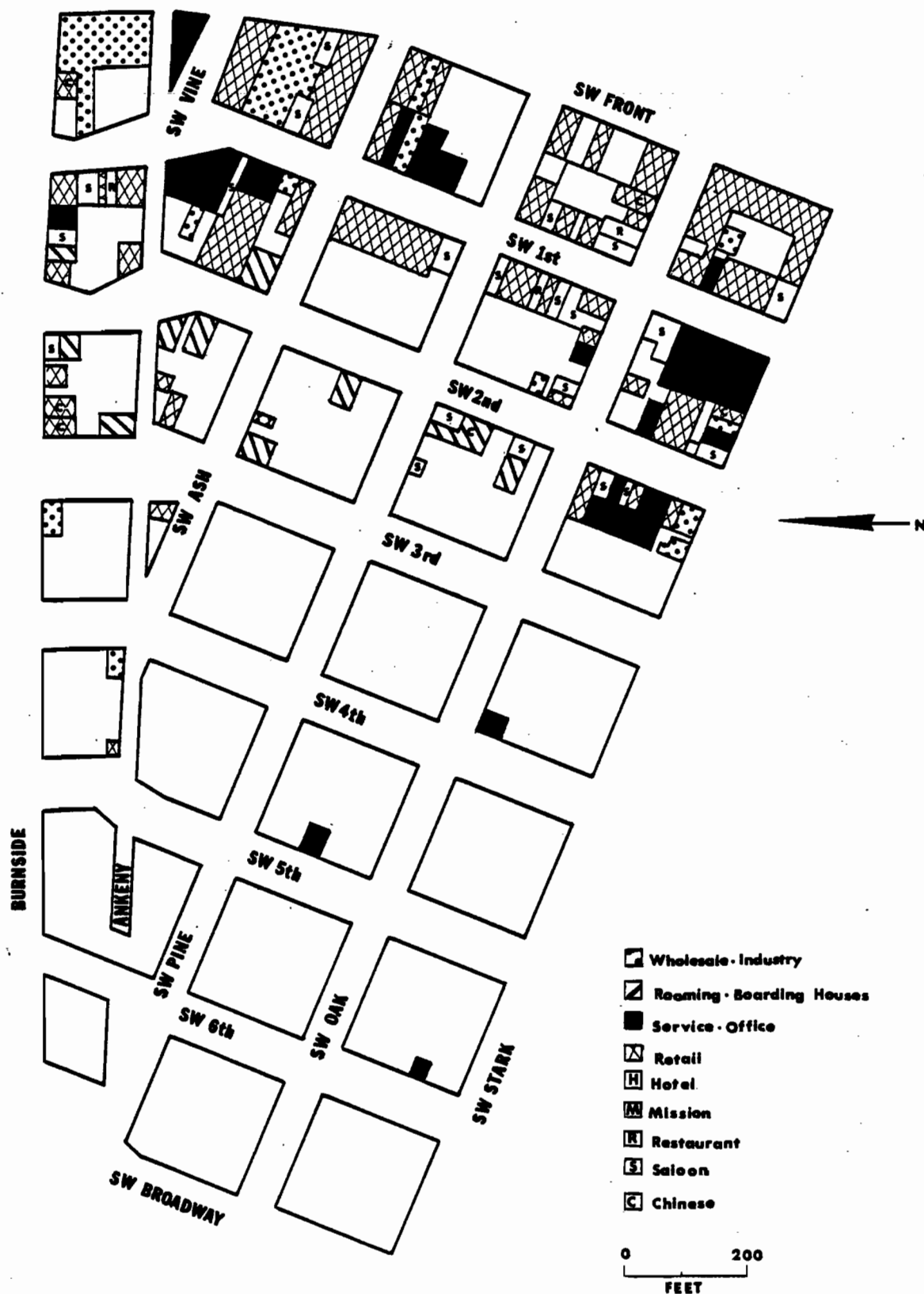


Figure 43

of hotels in the area south of Burnside. Also, the number of saloons (23) and boarding houses (9) south of Burnside is greater than the area to the north. Other significant differences, in the southern area as compared to the northern area, include: less industrial land use, a greater number of wholesale and retail outlets, and the existence of service (mainly banks) and office land uses. It is also obvious that east of Third Avenue the intensity of land use is greater in the south than to the north of Burnside. The comparison area also has a high number of single family houses. (See Figure 44.)

In summary, the data suggest that in 1879 the study area contained some of the physical elements which would distinguish it as a skid row. However, one important element was missing. There is no mention of missions being located in the area. As Ward and others have pointed out, this is a vital skid row feature. Presence of a mission or missions implies that there are individuals who are in need of physical and spiritual assistance. Based on this fact, it seems apparent that the study area in 1879 could be termed a pre-skid row. It was an area where working men, mainly loggers and sailors, drank and lived on a temporary basis. Some of these individuals would later, because of drinking problems and other personal tragedies, become the "down and outer" who would refer to the study area as a home rather than a place to have recreation.

# COMPARISON AREA SINGLE FAMILY HOUSES, 1879

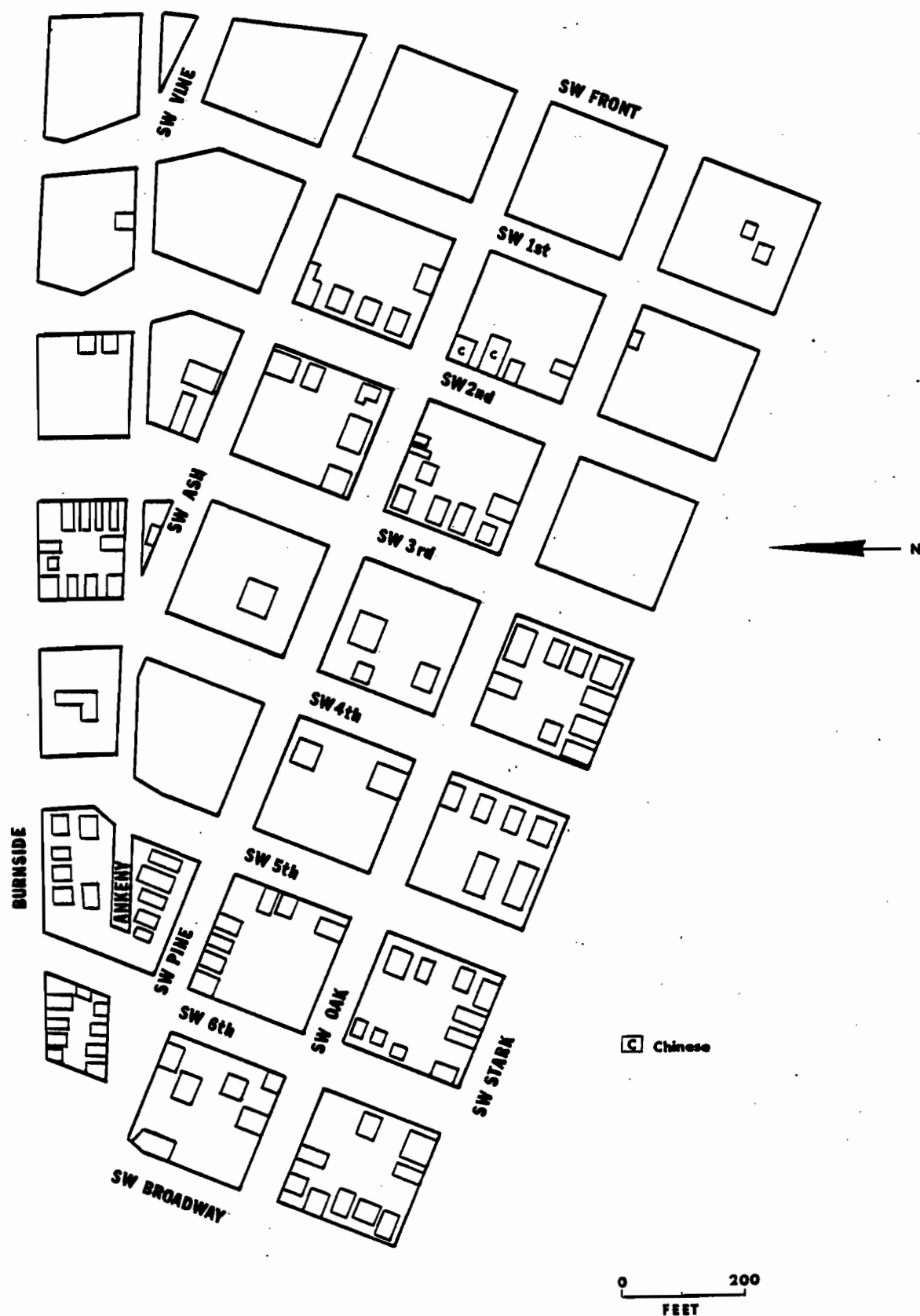


Figure 44



### Study Area in 1898

Since 1879, the study area experienced many changes. This is especially evident in the transformation which occurred along Fourth Avenue from Burnside to Glisan. In 1879, this street was mainly residential with a sprinkling of other land uses. By 1898, there is a mix of land uses ranging from industry to female boarding houses. (See Figure 45.)

According to Ward's land use criteria, it appears that the study area has become a bona fide skid row. This conclusion is based, in part, on the location of three gospel halls in the area. If the area were still serving the same function that it did in 1879, catering to sailors and loggers, it would seem unusual to find gospel halls (missions) established in the area. Existence of these religious institutions suggests that there was a need to serve the "down and outer." The 1898 map reveals that one of these missions was that of the Salvation Army located between 4th and 5th Avenue on the south side of Burnside. According to Gaston, an early Portland historian, the Salvation Army opened operations in Portland in 1886 by "renting a small hall and commencing its spiritual work by holding street meetings and outdoor meetings every evening. The first officers, Captain and Mrs. Stillwell, received nothing but insults and persecutions for months."<sup>8</sup> Gaston goes on to state that despite the unfriendly welcome, the spiritual work of the army gained a good hold in Portland. This encouraged the salvationists to further operations. "Thus in 1898, social and industrial institutions were opened where the "down and

# STUDY AREA LAND USE, 1898

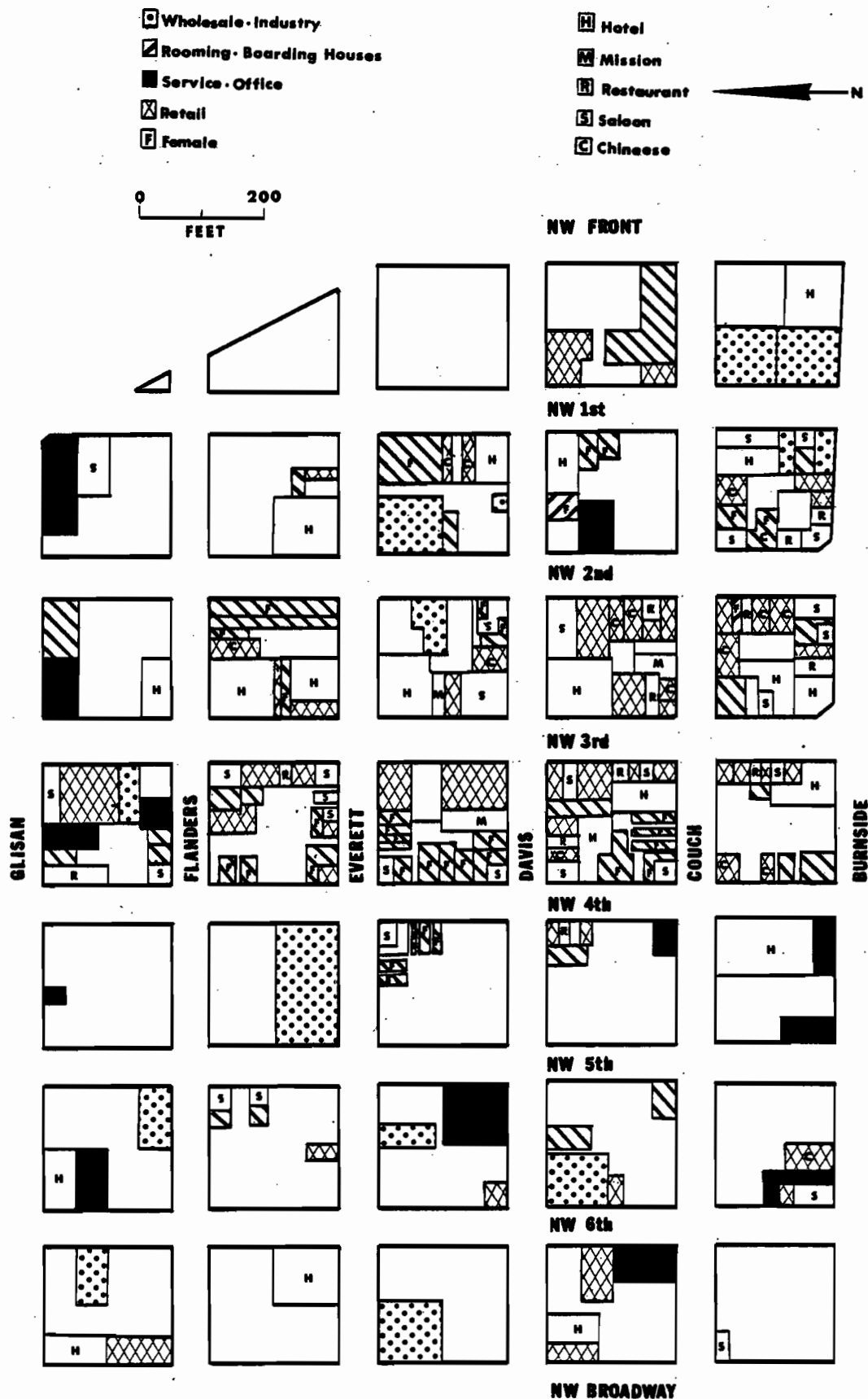


Figure 45

outs" could begin life over again. Thousands of men have been started on the road to success again by the institutions."<sup>9</sup>

Further proof of skid row characteristics is illustrated by the dramatic increase in saloons and boarding houses. Twenty-one of the boarding houses, compared to six in 1879, were considered legitimate, while 38 labeled female boarding houses were operating as houses of prostitution. In 1879, there were 14 saloons in the study area. By 1898, this number had more than doubled to 30.

The comparison area south of Burnside is significantly different from the study area. As was the case in 1879, the southern area is almost devoid of hotels and has fewer boarding houses (excluding Chinese boarding houses) than the study area. Other differences exist in the number of service activities, wholesale outlets, and industries in the two areas. (See Figure 46.) It is evident from the land use patterns that the two areas are serving two different functions by 1898. The study area, north of Burnside, was serving a skid row function, while the area south of Burnside has the land use characteristics of a central business district. Eugene Snyder, one of Portland's current historians, discusses the part of this southern area around First and Ankeny. He writes:

In 1888 when the Skidmore Fountain was put up, the intersection at First and A streets was still close to the retail and business center of the city. Shortly after the unveiling, a newspaper commented, "The fountain is situated at a prominent location where it will be seen by the greatest number of our citizens and visitors to the city."<sup>10</sup>

In summary, all the data from the Sanborn maps and supporting information from several other sources make it clear that by 1898

## COMPARISON AREA LAND USE, 1898

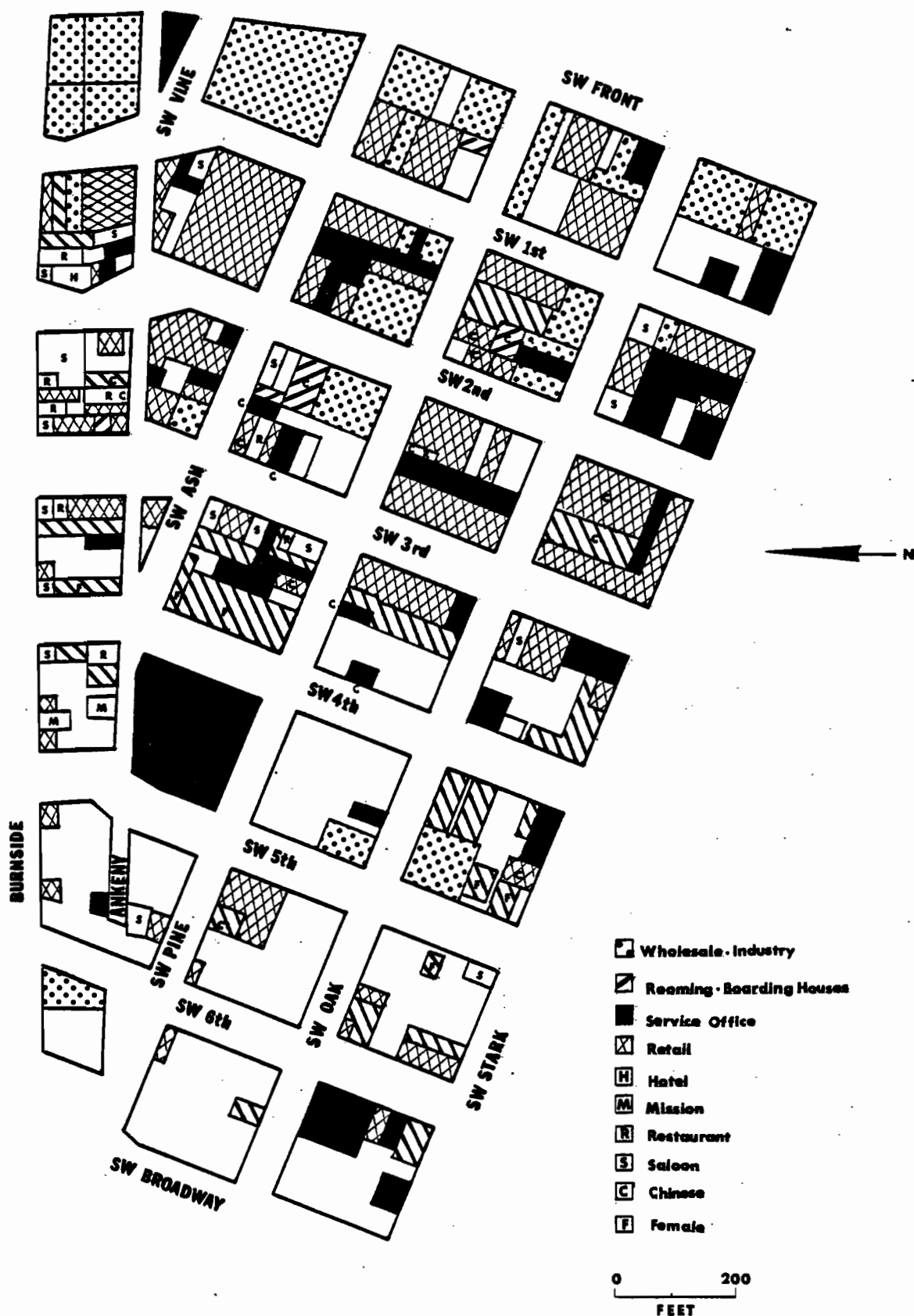


Figure 46

Portland's North End or Skid Road had become a skid row as defined by the criteria mentioned earlier. The actual conception of Portland's Skid Row probably occurred sometime between 1883 and 1886. (Information to support this conclusion will be presented in the city directory portion of this study.)

### Study Area in 1932

By 1932, the study area had experienced additional changes. (See Figure 47.) It is obvious from a brief examination of the maps that single family residences have been almost totally eliminated from the area. Another striking feature is the intense use of land. In 1898, the majority of the study area's blocks had open space between buildings. By 1932, only a few blocks display this feature.

All of the 1898 saloons (30) have disappeared, but seven new ones have replaced them. The number of missions has increased from four in 1898 to eight in 1932. However, the number of hotels and boarding houses have decreased rather substantially since 1898. Also female boarding houses are absent from the study area. Despite these differences (1898 to 1932), it appears that the study area remains a skid row in 1932. This conclusion is based partially on the hundred percent increase in missions in the study area, and the Sanborn reference to "cheap lodging" places.

The land use contrast between the area south of Burnside and the study area continues to be evident. Whereas the study area consists mainly of restaurants, retail stores, hotels, and lodging

# STUDY AREA LAND USE, 1932

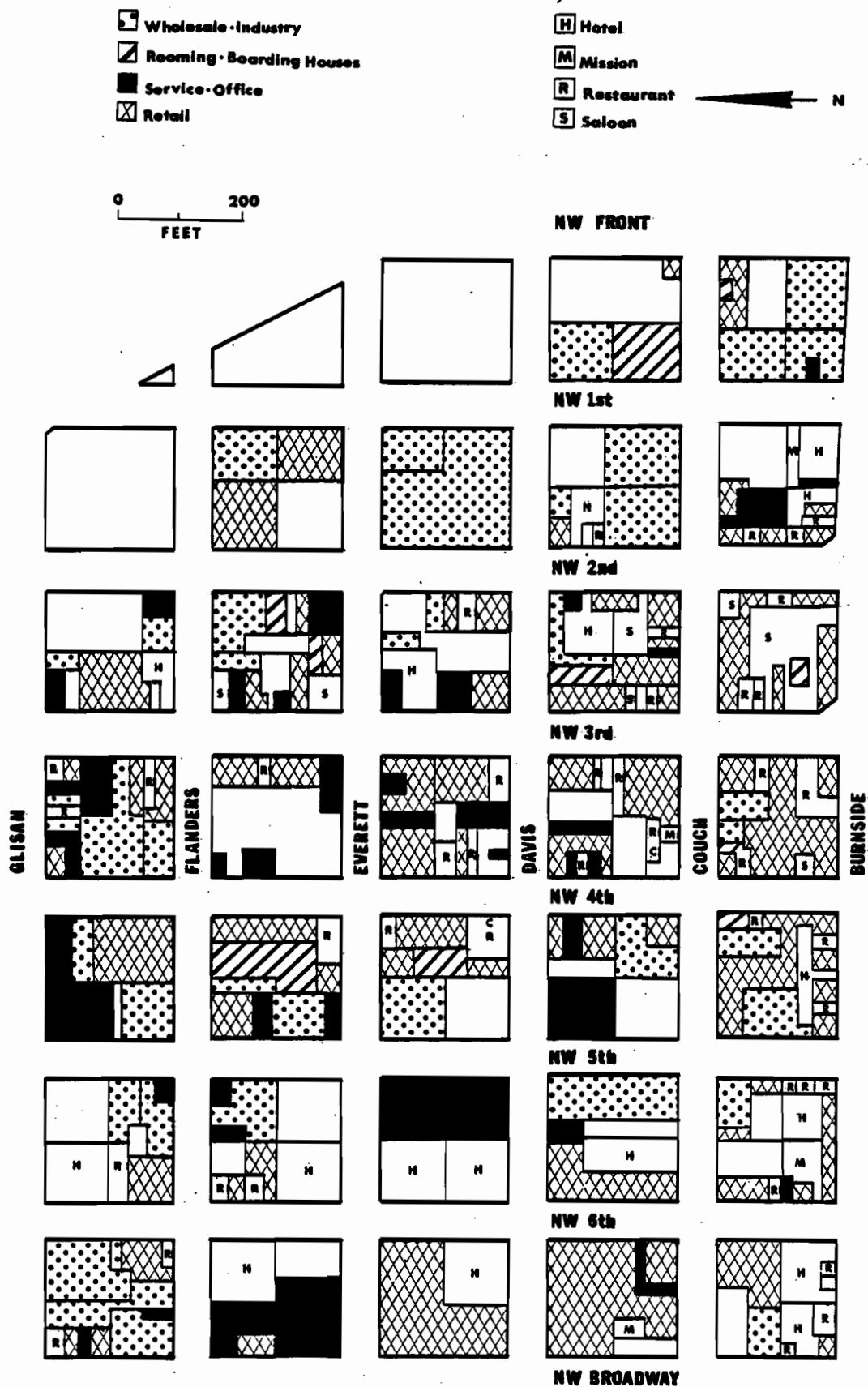


Figure 47

houses, the southern area has fewer restaurants and only one hotel. It also contains retail outlets, service-oriented establishments (banks) and offices. This type of land use reflects that of the Central Business District core while the study area exemplifies the CBD fringe. (See Figure 48.)

#### Study Area in 1955

By 1955, the study area reveals an increase in wholesale outlets and parking lots. (See Figures 49 and 50.) Also, since 1932, the number of industries, saloons, restaurants, boarding houses, and missions has declined. Only hotels have increased from 1932 to 1955. It would appear, based on these findings, that Portland's skid row is gradually declining in size as new land uses replace those that served the skid row inhabitant. Many of the retail stores and other land uses have been replaced by parking lots as the automobile makes its presence felt. As was mentioned, there has been a significant increase in wholesale establishments in the study area since 1932.

In comparison with the area south of Burnside, the study area continues to have most of the hotels. On the other hand, the southern area has a number of blocks dominated by office land use, whereas few offices are found in the study area. Also several banks are located in the southern area and none is found in the study area. Banks tend to avoid areas of the CBD which are considered unruly or are parts of the zone of discard. (See Figure 51.)

# COMPARISON AREA LAND USE, 1932

152

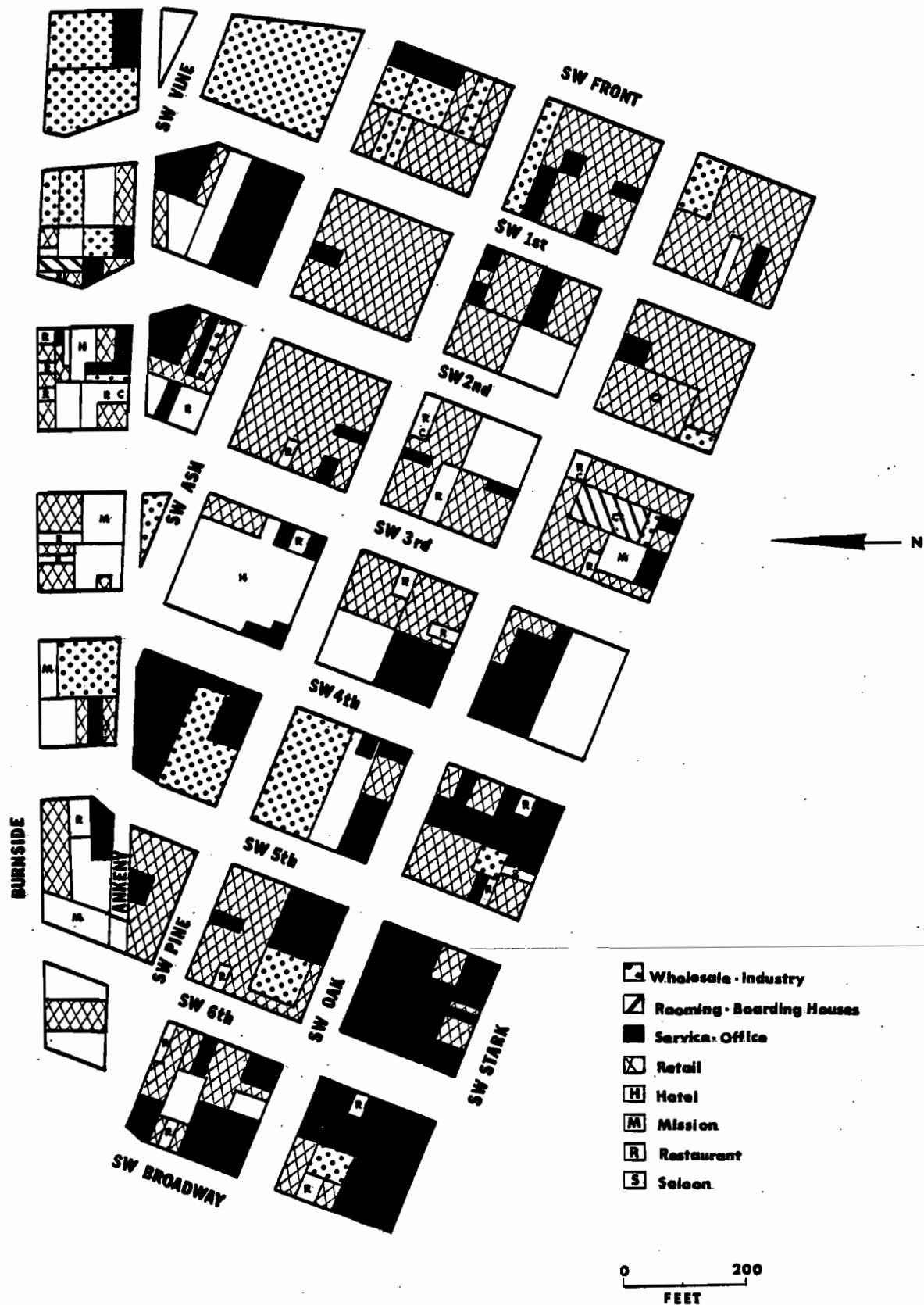


Figure 48



# STUDY AREA LAND USE, 1955

153

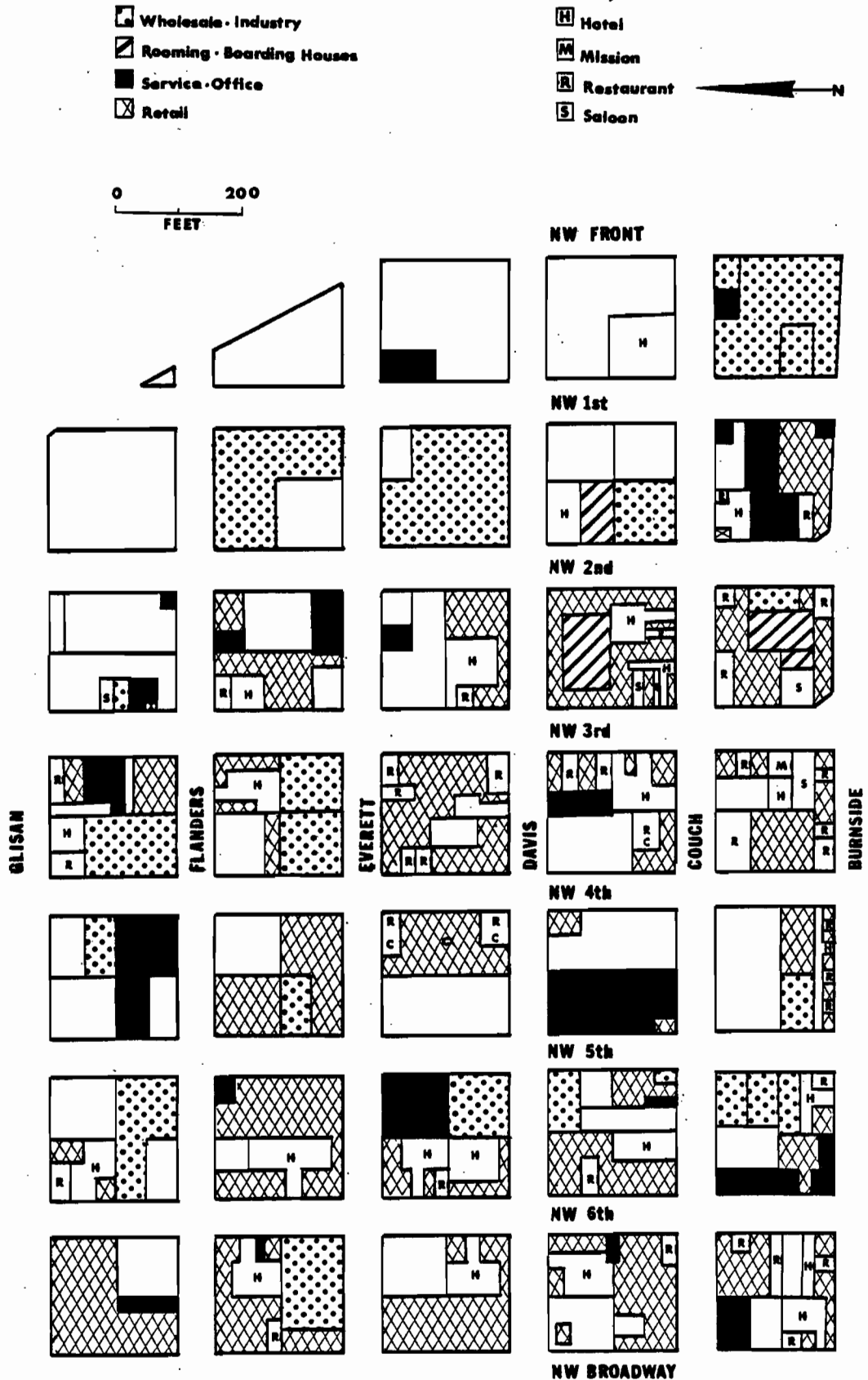


Figure 49

# STUDY AREA PARKING LOTS, 1955

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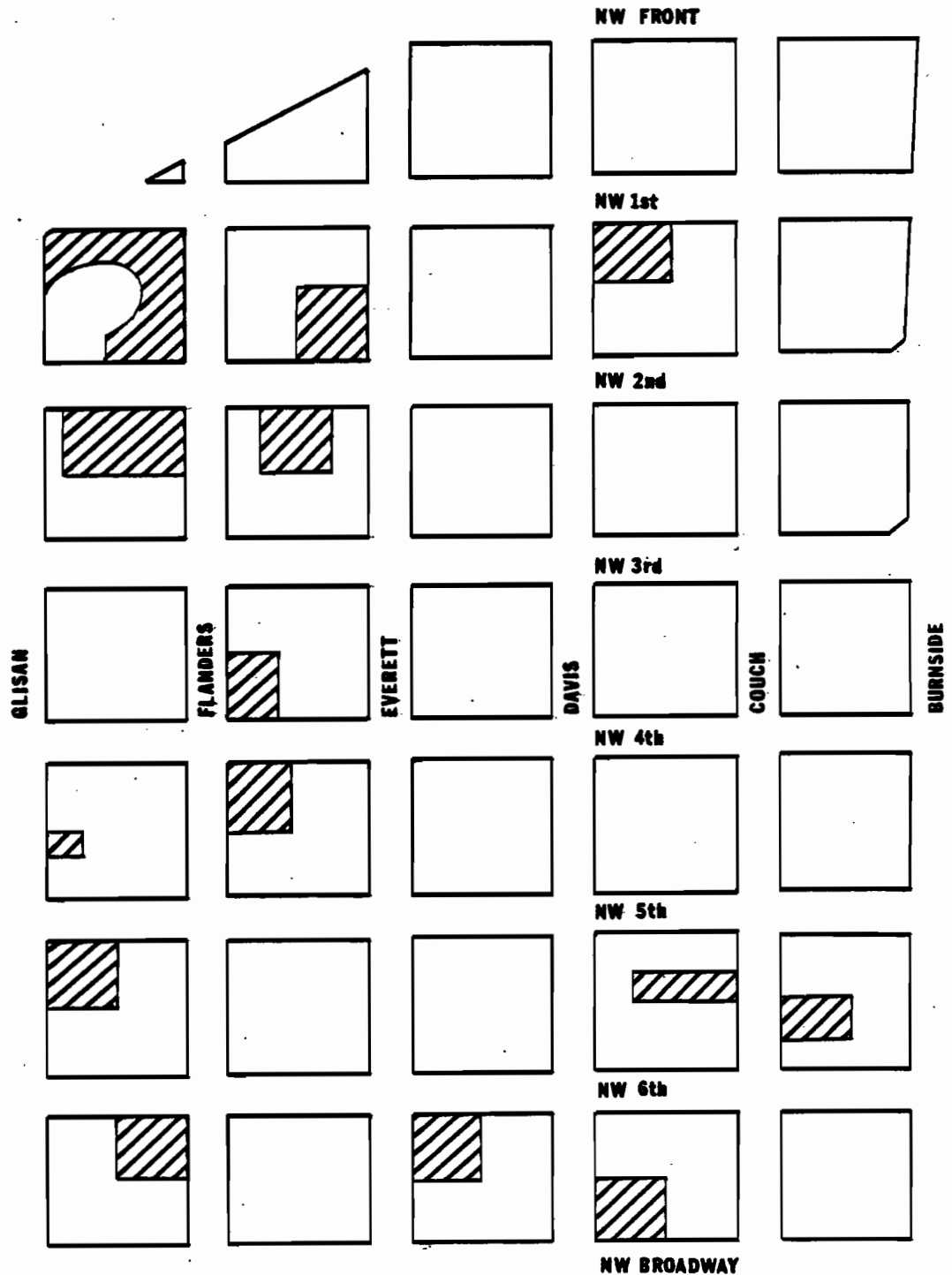


Figure 50

# COMPARISON AREA LAND USE, 1955

155

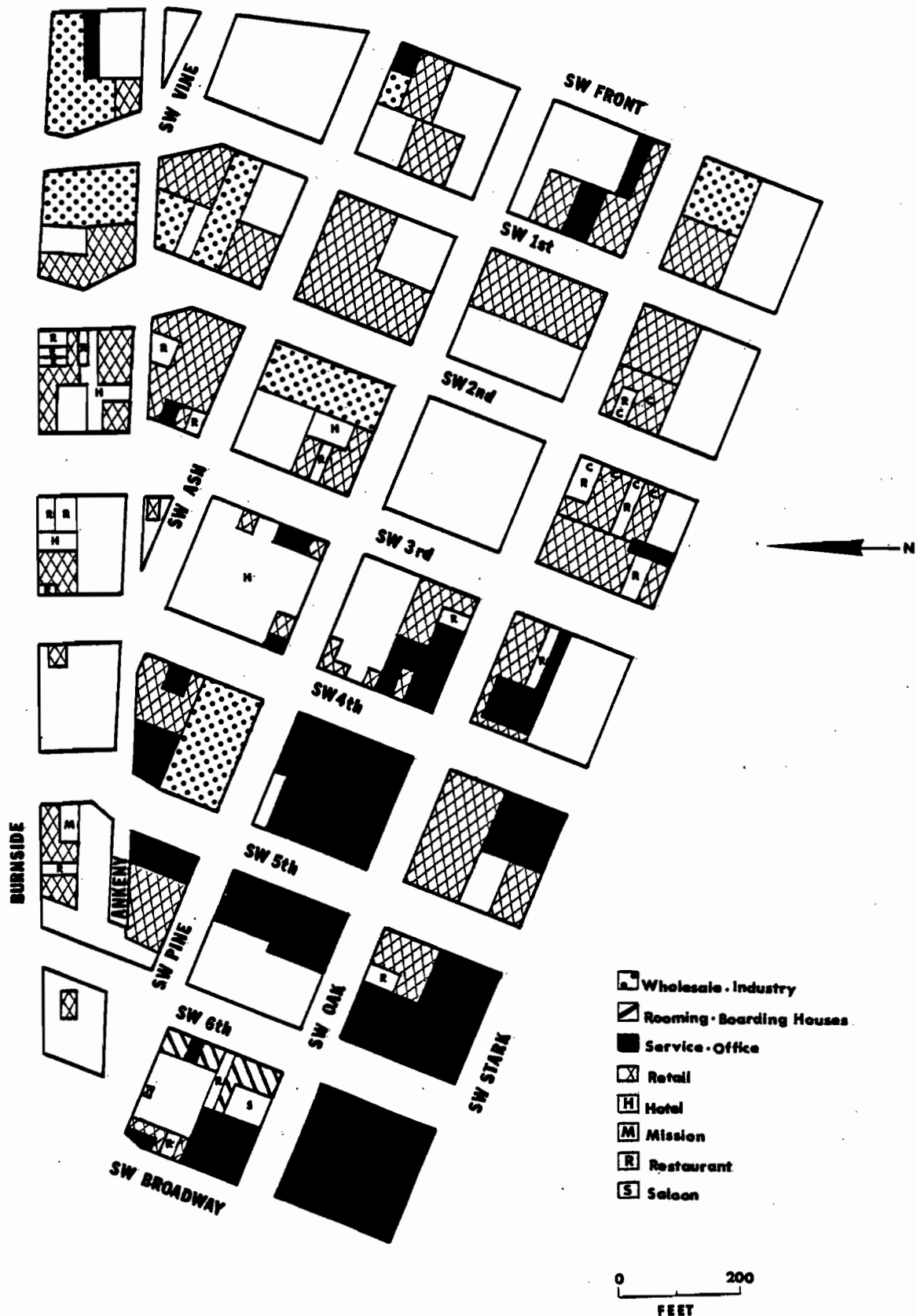


Figure 51

## Summary

Analysis of the Sanborn maps reveals that Portland's Skid Row displayed several changes from 1879 to 1955. These changes included both land use patterns and physical size. As Table 27 illustrates, in 1898 the study area contained more skid row elements and was larger in size than any of the other three dates analyzed.\* This finding coincides closely with the conclusion, stated earlier, that Portland's Skid Row had its beginnings between 1883 and 1886. Consequently, it would seem reasonable to expect a transformation toward a skid row environment to occur over a 12-year period (1886 to 1898). Samuel Wallace, in his book Skid Row As a Way of Life, found a similar developmental pattern in one midwestern city. He writes:

In 1865 the section of one midwestern city which was later to become its skid row contained 21 groceries, 4 banks, 28 retailers and 4 doctor's offices. There were no employment agencies, only 13 saloons and bars, and of the nineteen lodging houses and hotels many were distinctly fashionable--by no means the composition of a skid row area. A short 15 years later, the number of groceries in this rapidly expanding city had dwindled to half, the number of lodging houses and hotels had risen by half, and there were more than three times as many saloons and bars. Eight pawn shops had put in their appearance.<sup>11</sup>

The significant increase in bars (saloons) and hotels matches that which occurred in Portland from 1886 to 1898.

Other conclusions reflected by Table 27 pertain to the gradual shrinkage of Portland's Skid Row. After 1898, skid row declines in

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\* Skid row size was determined by inclusion of any block in the study area which had one or more skid row land use elements (mission, boarding house, etc.) If a block has no elements but blocks on either side did, it was counted.

TABLE 27  
SUMMARY OF PORTLAND, OREGON, SANBORN MAP DATA

| Date | Size of Skid Row<br>in Blocks | Missions | Hotels | Boarding<br>Houses | Saloons | Industries | Restaurants |
|------|-------------------------------|----------|--------|--------------------|---------|------------|-------------|
| 1879 | 19                            | 0        | 10     | 6                  | 14      | 10         | NA          |
| 1898 | 33                            | 4        | 21     | 21                 | 30      | 8          | NA          |
| 1932 | 31                            | 8        | 16     | 9                  | 7       | 15         | 41          |
| 1955 | 25                            | 3        | 23     | 4                  | 4       | 7          | 36          |

SOURCE: Portland Sanborn Block Maps (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co.).

size from 33 blocks to 25 blocks in 1955. This change is also demonstrated by the declining number of skid row elements from 1898 to 1955.

### Section Two: City Directory Analysis

This section is an evaluation of Portland's skid row developmental trends based on an analysis of selected skid row elements. The elements examined include: boarding houses, employment offices, furnished rooms, lodging houses, missions, pawnbrokers, and second hand stores. Consecutive years from 1873 to 1900 are compared and ten year intervals from 1910 to the present are also analyzed. Each land use element is compared by year with itself and, in some cases, with the total number of that type of land use located in Portland's Central Business District. Consequently, the result of these comparisons will indicate when certain land uses first appeared in the study area, how long they have remained in the area, and their pattern of fluctuation.

A distinction between boarding houses, furnished rooms, and lodging houses should be made. Boarding houses are places where meals, or lodging and meals, could be had for pay. Furnished rooms could be a house with one or several rooms for rent. Lodging houses are houses with furnished rooms for rent. Many of the lodging houses were later turned into "flop houses." Flop houses provided a small cubicle, often no bigger than five feet by seven feet, which contained a bed, nightstand (usually an apple crate), and a nail for clothing. In Portland, these "flop houses" were disguised under names such as the Globe Hotel, Holm Hotel, and Western Rooms.

Furnished rooms are first mentioned in the city directory and in the study area in 1886. As Table 28 indicates, the number of furnished rooms fluctuates dramatically with the years. However, this fluctuation was also true of boarding houses and lodging houses. In fact, from 1887 to 1892, the pattern of change was similar for all three establishments. From 1893 to 1899, a different pattern emerges. It is difficult to document the reasons for these changes.

Lodging houses appear in 1880 and remain the most stable form of group living unit through 1970. Table 28 reveals that at certain dates a high percentage of the total number of lodging houses were located in the study area. For example, in 1910, 84% of all lodging houses in Portland were found in the skid row.

Employment offices exhibit an interesting growth and decline pattern in the study area. They make their first appearance in 1886, the same year the Salvation Army established itself in the study area. In the early part of the 1890's, there are several employment offices in the area, followed by a six year absence. From 1910 through 1940, the number and percentage of employment offices in the study area is impressive.

Pawnbrokers and second hand stores first appear in the study area in 1885. With a few exceptions at least one pawn broker is found in the skid row throughout the time period being considered. Second hand stores demonstrate greater numbers and more stability than pawnbrokers. (See Table 29.)

TABLE 28  
SUMMARY OF PORTLAND, OREGON, CITY DIRECTORY DATA, 1873-1980

| Year    | Total<br>Number of<br>Skid Row<br>Elements* | Boarding Houses      |              |                               | Employment Office    |              |                               | Furnished<br>Rooms in<br>Skid Row | Lodging Houses       |              |                               |
|---------|---|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
|         |   | Skid<br>Row<br>Total | CBD<br>Total | % loca-<br>ted in<br>Skid Row | Skid<br>Row<br>Total | CBD<br>Total | % loca-<br>ted in<br>Skid Row |                                   | Skid<br>Row<br>Total | CBD<br>Total | % loca-<br>ted in<br>Skid Row |
| 1873    | 4   | 4                    | 37           | 11%                           | 0                    | 1            |                               | NL                                | NL                   | NL           |                               |
| 1874    | 4   | 4                    | 23           | 17%                           | 0                    | 3            |                               | NL                                | NL                   | NL           |                               |
| 1875    | 5   | 5                    | 28           | 18%                           | 0                    | 1            |                               | NL                                | NL                   | NL           |                               |
| 1876    | 8   | 8                    | 26           | 31%                           | 0                    | 3            |                               | NL                                | NL                   | NL           |                               |
| 1877    | 3   | 3                    | 19           | 16%                           | 0                    | 3            |                               | NL                                | NL                   | NL           |                               |
| 1878    | 6   | 6                    | 22           | 27%                           | 0                    | 2            |                               | NL                                | NL                   | NL           |                               |
| 1879    | 5   | 5                    | 20           | 25%                           | 0                    | 4            |                               | NL                                | NL                   | NL           |                               |
| 1880    | 10  | 9                    | 33           | 27%                           | 0                    | 3            |                               | NL                                | 1                    | 5            | 20%                           |
| 1881    | 6   | 6                    | 30           | 20%                           | 0                    | 3            |                               | NL                                | 0                    | 16           |                               |
| 1882-84 | NL  | NL                   | NL           | NL                            | NL                   | NL           |                               | NL                                | NL                   | NL           |                               |
| 1885    | 20  | 5                    | 23           | 22%                           | 0                    | 3            |                               | NL                                | 10                   | 39           | 26%                           |
| 1886    | 24  | 6                    | 29           | 21%                           | 2                    | 6            | 33%                           | 1                                 | 13                   | 35           | 37%                           |
| 1887    | 27  | 12                   | 32           | 38%                           | 0                    | 10           |                               | 13                                | 1                    | 26           | 4%                            |
| 1888    | 13  | 7                    | 32           | 22%                           | 0                    | 11           |                               | 3                                 | 0                    | 13           |                               |
| 1889    | 46  | 7                    | 40           | 18%                           | 2                    | 11           | 18%                           | 23                                | 10                   | 26           | 39%                           |
| 1890    | 50  | 7                    | 37           | 19%                           | 3                    | 14           | 21%                           | 10                                | 6                    |              |                               |
| 1891    | 65  | 9                    |              |                               | 6                    | 14           | 43%                           | 32                                | 12                   |              |                               |
| 1892    | 26  | 4                    |              |                               | 2                    | 9            | 22%                           | 8                                 | 5                    |              |                               |
| 1893    | 52  | 3                    |              |                               | 4                    | 25           | 16%                           | 10                                | 20                   | 54           | 37%                           |
| 1894    | 61  | 9                    |              |                               | 0                    | 9            |                               | 30                                | 12                   |              |                               |
| 1895    | 70  | 8                    |              |                               | 0                    | 8            |                               | 8                                 | 37                   |              |                               |

\* Skid Row elements would include boarding houses, etc.



TABLE 28 (Continued)  
SUMMARY OF PORTLAND, OREGON, CITY DIRECTORY DATA, 1873-1980

| Year      | Total<br>Number of<br>Skid Row<br>Elements * | Boarding Houses      |              |                               | Employment Office    |              |                               | Furnished<br>Rooms in<br>Skid Row | Lodging Houses       |              |                               |
|-----------|--|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
|           |  | Skid<br>Row<br>Total | CBD<br>Total | % loca-<br>ted in<br>Skid Row | Skid<br>Row<br>Total | CBD<br>Total | % loca-<br>ted in<br>Skid Row |                                   | Skid<br>Row<br>Total | CBD<br>Total | % loca-<br>ted in<br>Skid Row |
| 1896      | 73   | 3                    |              |                               | 0                    | 5            |                               | 17                                | 34                   |              |                               |
| 1897      | 57   | 5                    |              |                               | 0                    | 6            |                               | 15                                | 20                   | 41           | 49%                           |
| 1898      | 59   | 7                    |              |                               | 0                    | 4            |                               | 11                                | 22                   | 63           | 35%                           |
| 1899-1900 | 70   | 6                    |              |                               | 0                    | 4            |                               | 14                                | 35                   | 89           | 39%                           |
| 1910      | 128  | 4                    |              |                               | 10                   | 17           | 59%                           | 42                                | 42                   | 50           | 84%                           |
| 1920      | 104  | 0                    |              |                               | 13                   | 20           | 65%                           | 49                                | 28                   | 45           | 62%                           |
| 1930      | 56   | NL                   |              |                               | 16                   | 23           | 70%                           | 0                                 | 25                   |              |                               |
| 1940      | 65   | NL                   |              |                               | 5                    | 9            | 56%                           | 0                                 | 39                   | 145          | 27%                           |
| 1950      | 50   | NL                   |              |                               | 2                    | 21           | 10%                           | NL                                | 43                   | 145          | 30%                           |
| 1960      | 41   | NL                   |              |                               | 2                    | 16           | 13%                           | NL                                | 32                   | 106          | 30%                           |
| 1970      | 15   | NL                   |              |                               | 2                    |              |                               | NL                                | 8                    | 38           | 21%                           |
| 1980      | 3  | NL                   |              |                               | 0                    |              |                               | NL                                | NL                   | NL           |                               |

SOURCE: Portland City Directories (Portland: R.L. Polk & Co., and others).

\* Skid Row elements would include boarding houses, etc.

TABLE 29  
SUMMARY OF PORTLAND, OREGON, CITY DIRECTORY DATA, 1873-1980

| Year    | Missions<br>in Skid Row | Pawnbrokers       |              |                          | Second Hand Stores |              |                          |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
|         |                         | Skid Row<br>Total | CBD<br>Total | % Located<br>in Skid Row | Skid Row<br>Total  | CBD<br>Total | % Located<br>in Skid Row |
| 1873    | 0                       | 0                 | 0            |                          | 0                  |              |                          |
| 1874    | 0                       | 0                 | 2            |                          | 0                  |              |                          |
| 1875    | 0                       | 0                 | 1            |                          | 0                  |              |                          |
| 1876    | 0                       | 0                 | 1            |                          | 0                  |              |                          |
| 1877    | 0                       | 0                 | 1            |                          | 0                  |              |                          |
| 1878    | 0                       | 0                 | 2            |                          | 0                  |              |                          |
| 1879    | 0                       | 0                 | 2            |                          | 0                  |              |                          |
| 1880    | 0                       | 0                 | 2            |                          | 0                  |              |                          |
| 1881    | 0                       | 0                 | 3            |                          | 0                  |              |                          |
| 1882-84 | NL                      | NL                | NL           |                          | NL                 |              |                          |
| 1885    | 0                       | 2                 | 9            | 22%                      | 3                  | 11           | 27%                      |
| 1886    | 1                       | 1                 | 7            | 14%                      | 2                  | 14           | 14%                      |
| 1887    | 1                       | 0                 | 4            |                          | 0                  | 12           | 15%                      |
| 1888    | 3                       | 0                 | 4            |                          | 0                  | 13           |                          |
| 1889    | 2                       | 0                 | 3            |                          | 2                  | 13           |                          |
| 1890    | 0                       | 1                 | 5            | 20%                      | 3                  | 15           | 20%                      |

TABLE 29 (Continued)  
SUMMARY OF PORTLAND, OREGON, CITY DIRECTORY DATA, 1873-1980

| Year      | Missions<br>in Skid Row | Pawnbrokers       |              |                          | Second Hand Stores |              |                          |
|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
|           |                         | Skid Row<br>Total | CBD<br>Total | % located<br>in Skid Row | Skid Row<br>Total  | CBD<br>Total | % located<br>in Skid Row |
| 1891      | 0                       | 3                 | 7            | 43%                      | 3                  | 17           | 18%                      |
| 1892      | 1                       | 4                 | 10           | 40%                      | 2                  | 16           | 13%                      |
| 1893      | 2                       | 4                 | 12           | 33%                      | 9                  | 25           | 36%                      |
| 1894      | 3                       | 2                 | 10           | 20%                      | 5                  | 21           | 24%                      |
| 1895      | 3                       | 2                 | 6            | 33%                      | 12                 | 36           | 33%                      |
| 1896      | 2                       | 2                 | 6            | 33%                      | 15                 | 36           | 42%                      |
| 1897      | 3                       | 0                 | 6            |                          | 14                 | 36           | 39%                      |
| 1898      | 6                       | 1                 | 7            | 14%                      | 12                 | 33           | 36%                      |
| 1899-1900 | 6                       | 2                 | 8            | 13%                      | 7                  | 24           | 29%                      |
| 1910      | 3                       | 13                | 21           | 62%                      | 14                 | 30           | 47%                      |
| 1920      | 4                       | 0                 | 7            |                          | 10                 | 40           | 25%                      |
| 1930      | 5                       | 1                 | 8            | 13%                      | 9                  | 23           | 39%                      |
| 1940      | 6                       | 1                 | 10           | 10%                      | 14                 | 47           | 30%                      |
| 1950      | 3                       | 2                 | 9            | 22%                      | NL                 | NL           |                          |
| 1960      | 6                       | 1                 | 8            | 13%                      | NL                 | NL           |                          |
| 1970      | 5                       | 0                 | 7            |                          | NL                 | NL           |                          |
| 1980      | 3                       | 0                 | 3            |                          | NL                 | NL           |                          |

SOURCE: Portland City Directories (Portland: R. L. Polk & Co., and others).

The first mission to establish in Portland's skid row was the Salvation Army in 1886. By 1888, there were three missions and the number, like other skid row establishments, varied from that date until the present. (See Table 29.)

An analysis of the city directory from 1873 to 1890 indicates that banks have never located in the study area. Banks tend to seek areas with good reputations and apparently have perceived this area as being undesirable for a bank location.

The 1916 city directory lists a barber college located in the study area at 48 2nd North. In 1917, another barber college located in the area at 36 2nd North. By 1920, both colleges had moved out of the area.

### Summary

From this brief analysis, it is apparent that the beginning of a bona fide skid row occurred, in Portland, very close to the years 1885 and 1886. This conclusion is supported by the dramatic increase during these years in skid row oriented land uses, especially the establishment of the first mission in this area in 1886. Of course, it is impossible to state with certainty that a particular boarding house or second hand store was actually frequented by skid row inhabitants, but its existence in the area implies that there were men who for social and economic reasons desired the services these businesses provided. The fact that a high percentage of these skid row elements

clustered in the study area rather than locating in other parts of Portland further emphasizes this point.

The land use data also illustrate the growth and decline cycles which seem to be characteristic of skid rows. Reasons for these fluctuations are tied to both local and national economic and political processes.

### Section Three: Field Observation Analysis

This section is based on current (1980) field observations and field mapping I conducted in the study area. The comments which follow represent my impressions of the area and also an analysis and comparison of the current land use map with those of other time horizons.

#### General Impressions

A walk through Portland's Skid Row is both an enlightening and depressing experience. Besides evoking these emotional differences, the area displays many physical contrasts. On the one hand, a visitor is impressed with the attempts to refurbish some of Portland's first buildings. Weathered exteriors are restored with fresh paint while aged interiors undergo more extensive reclamation. However, mixed with these examples of historical preservation are buildings which continue to show the wear and tear of many hard years of use.

A wide range of land uses occupy the various buildings. Land uses that cater to very different socioeconomic groups. Whereas one block may have middle class shops with boutiques and quaint

restaurants, an adjacent block will be serving the skid rower with a drop-in center and a Grade B restaurant. Clustered on other blocks are Chinese groceries and restaurants. In short, the area serves the needs of many different people.

Although middle-class oriented businesses are invading the area, it is still the home of the skid rower. A visitor is impressed with the many aspects of the skid row lifestyle which persevere in the area. The most obvious element, of course, is the inhabitants. Since many of them have no permanent residence, they are forced to spend much of their time on the streets. Usually they cluster near establishments which provide useful services. Long lines at meal time near the Salvation Army's Harbor Light and the Blanchet House illustrate this fact. Smaller groups of skid rowers can be seen lingering around grocery stores which supply cheap wine. Other inhabitants seek the shelter of doorways. Here they sleep, converse, drink or urinate. It is interesting to note the number of businesses in the area, especially middle-class oriented ones, which have metal gates that are pulled across their entrances at night to prevent men from sleeping there. Some businesses have signs on their doors urging skid rowers to utilize restrooms rather than their doorways. Odors which greet the pedestrian as he passes by indicate that these written pleas have been largely ignored.

Another common sight is wine bottles. They are found throughout the area. Many have been broken and litter lesser-used sidewalks and parking lots. Others are left standing in doorways or

lining the side of buildings. Some bottles are small enough to conceal in coat pockets. Larger ones are carried in brown paper bags.

Probably the most interesting feature of Portland's Skid Row is the mixture of people found there. To the author's knowledge, it is the only area in Portland where down-and-outers clad in second hand clothes mingle with fashion conscious, well-off outsiders on a common turf. Where else can one witness individuals wearing the current fad stepping over other individuals who are sprawled on the sidewalk from too much drinking? The fact that this occurs is a reflection of the changes which Portland's Skid Row has undergone.

#### 1980 Field Observation

Analysis of the study area in 1980 reveals an area dominated by taverns, restaurants and parking lots. (See Figures 52 and 55.) Retail outlets are of two distinct types, those that serve the skid row inhabitants and others which cater to non-resident customers. Skid Row oriented retail stores include second hand stores, check rooms, and grocery stores which supply the needs of the skid rower and the skid row pensioner.\* Figure 53 illustrates the location of those land uses

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\* A distinction should be made between the terms "skid rower" and skid row inhabitants. Skid Row inhabitants would include any individual living in the study area. This would include, in Portland's case, a wide variety of people. For example, research data show the area to be occupied by Chinese, Gypsies, old age pensioners, and street people. However, the term skid row inhabitant, as used by the author, refers only to the pensioners. These men live in the skid row area because of economic circumstances. They don't live a skid row life style as exemplified by the street people. The pensioner lives in one of several hotels which were once better known but today have

# STUDY AREA LAND USE, 1980

168

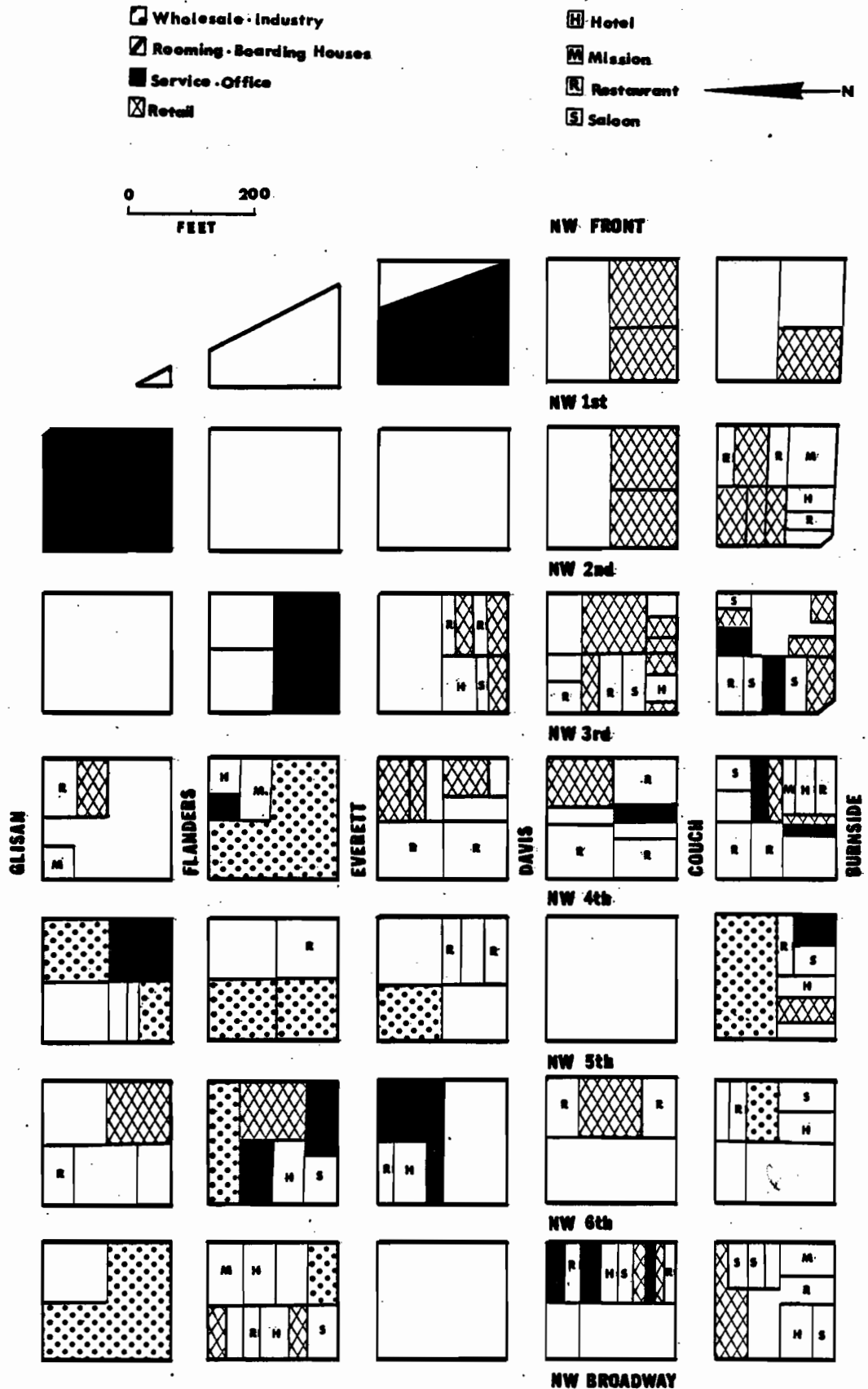


Figure 52



# LAND USE ORIENTED TO SKID ROW INHABITANTS, 1980

169

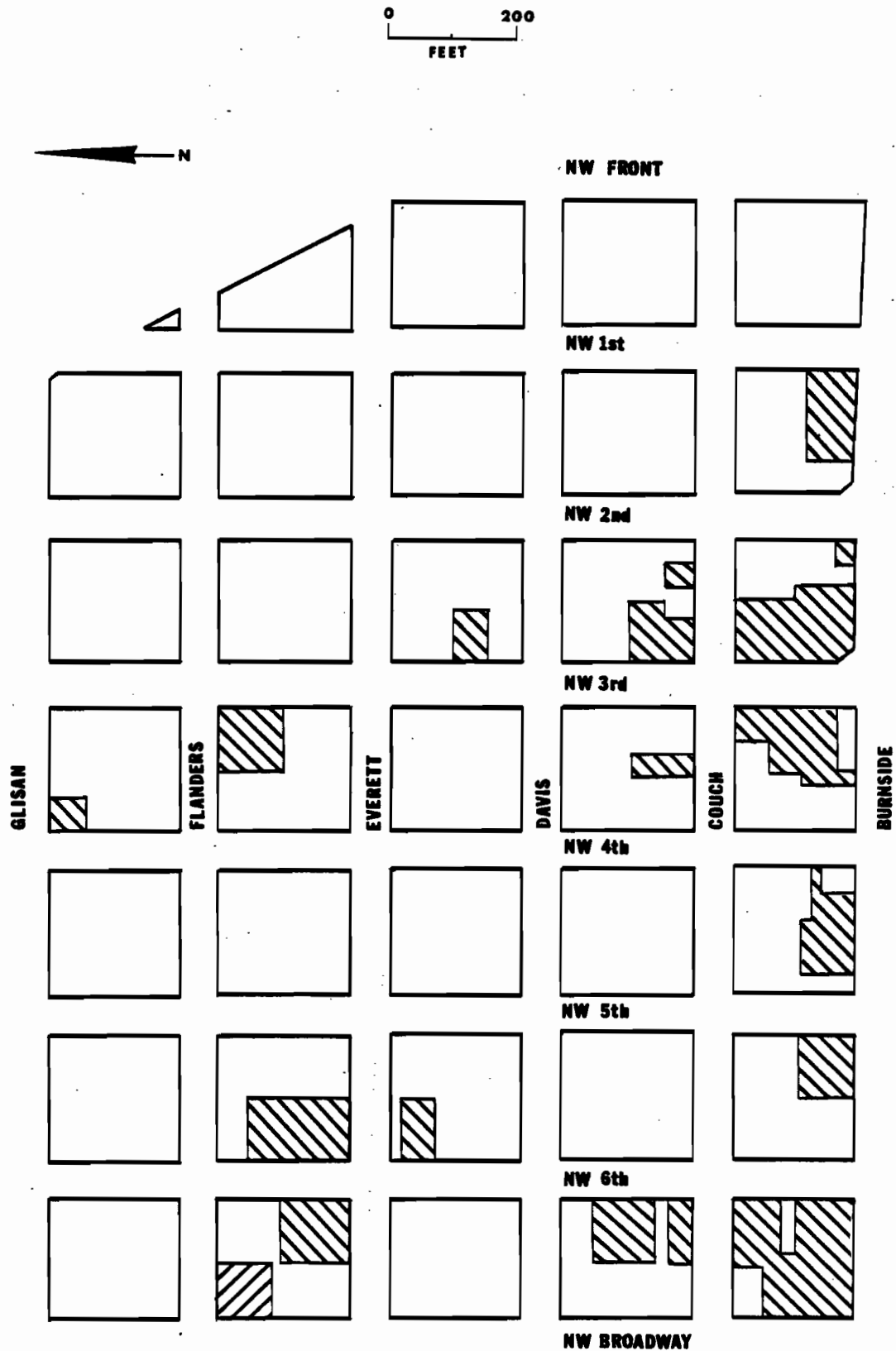


Figure 53

which are oriented toward the skid row. As can be seen, Burnside, as it has been in the past, continues to be the focal point of skid row activities.

A comparison of the study area with a comparable sized area south of Burnside shows that though the study area is slowly becoming dominated by boutiques and other non-skid row land uses, it still has enough skid row characteristics to distinguish it as a skid row. (See Figure 54.) For example, of the 14 taverns located in the study area, 12 were judged, by the author, to be oriented more toward skid row inhabitants (both pensioners and street people) than any other clientele. In contrast, the comparison area had only three taverns, one of which was classified a skid row type. Other differences between the two areas include the number of restaurants, hotels, missions, and offices. (See Table 30.)

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become residential hotels. He pays rent by the week or month. His main source of income is his pension or social security check. The pensioner's life does not evolve around drinking. He cooks many of his meals in his room and goes to the library or visits friends for entertainment.

In contrast to the skid row inhabitants are the street people. Often outsiders refer to them as bums or winos. They call themselves tramps and seem to prefer this title to others. A tramp's lifestyle centers on one activity, drinking. All other aspects of his life take second place to his need for a drink. His priorities would include drinking first, food second, and, finally, a place to sleep. Because of these priorities, a skid row is frequently without housing or is "homeless." The few material items he owns are secured in check rooms. Here he pays a small fee per item per day to have his valuables held.

# COMPARISON AREA LAND USE, 1980

171

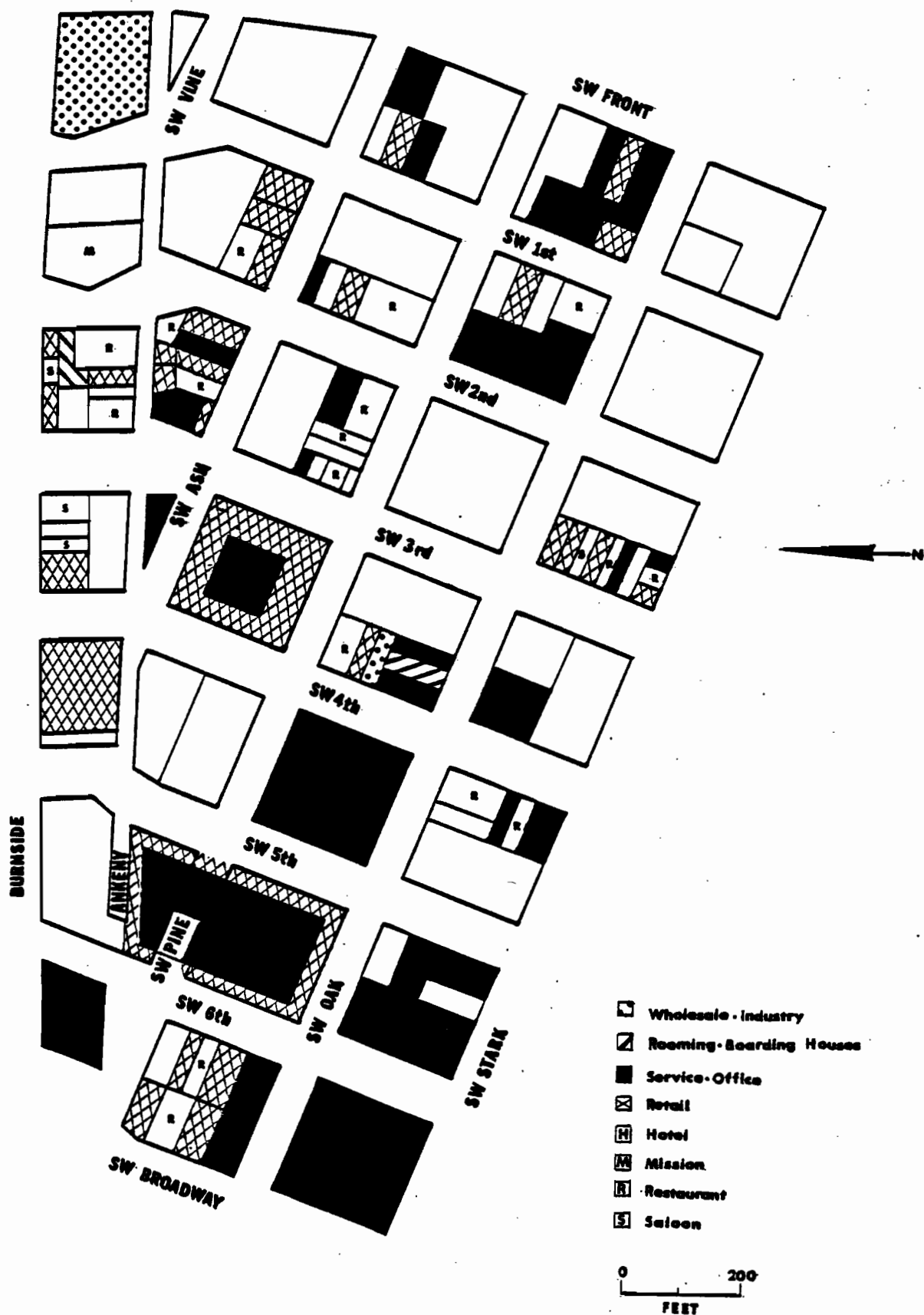


Figure 54

TABLE 30  
SUMMARY OF PORTLAND, OREGON, FIELD OBSERVATIONS, 1980

| <u>Study Area (North of Burnside)</u>      |       |                   |                |
|--|-------|-------------------|----------------|
| Land Use                                   | Total | Skid Row Oriented | Other Oriented |
| Taverns                                    | 14    | 12                | 2              |
| Restaurants                                | 31    | 4                 | 27             |
| Parking Lots                               | 17    | —                 | —              |
| Offices                                    | 2     | —                 | —              |
| Vacant                                     | 13    | —                 | —              |
| Missions                                   | 6     | 6                 | —              |
| Hotels                                     | 13    | —                 | —              |
| Services                                   | 19    | —                 | —              |
| <u>Comparison Area (South of Burnside)</u> |       |                   |                |
| Land Use                                   | Total | Skid Row Oriented | Other Oriented |
| Taverns                                    | 3     | 1                 | 2              |
| Restaurants                                | 17    | 0                 | 17             |
| Parking Lots                               | 18    | —                 | —              |
| Offices                                    | 13    | —                 | —              |
| Vacant                                     | 7     | —                 | —              |
| Missions                                   | 0     | —                 | —              |
| Hotels                                     | 0     | —                 | —              |
| Services                                   | 20    | —                 | —              |

A comparison of the 1980 landscape with that of 1955 reveals many differences. Though the maps may not immediately make it obvious, one of the differences between the two time horizons is that of size. Whereas the study area had 25 blocks containing skid row elements in 1955, by 1980 this had declined to 18 blocks. More obvious changes can be seen in the increase of parking lots. (See Figures 50 and 55.) Some of the 1980 lots removed hotels, lodging houses, and retail stores which, apparently, were catering to the skid row inhabitant in 1955. The other land use which has had a significant impact on the area is restaurants. Though there were more restaurants in 1955 (36) than in 1980 (31), it is probable that in 1955 more restaurants were geared to skid row inhabitants than in 1980. (See Table 30.) This conclusion is based partially on population differences in the area between 1950 and 1970. Census data show the 1950 population to be 2,850, compared to 1,487 in 1970.\* Currently, restaurants in the area, with the exception of four, are serving the non-skid row inhabitant. Specifically, they are restaurants that attract people to the area because they are quaint. In some cases, they exploit the environment in which they are located. For example, it is unlikely that the Hobo Inn, located near Third and Couch, has ever served a true "hobo" (tramp). A tramp could

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\* Census data are gathered in April of the census year. It is a known fact that skid row areas (Portland's as well as others) have their lowest population totals during the spring months. This condition is reflective of the manpower needs in the skid row. For example, in the Portland area the demand for farm labor varies from 20 men per day in April to 1,000 to 2,000 per day during the major harvest months. Consequently, the actual population in Portland's skid row, at the peak of the summer harvest, may be closer to 5,000.

# STUDY AREA PARKING LOTS, 1980

174

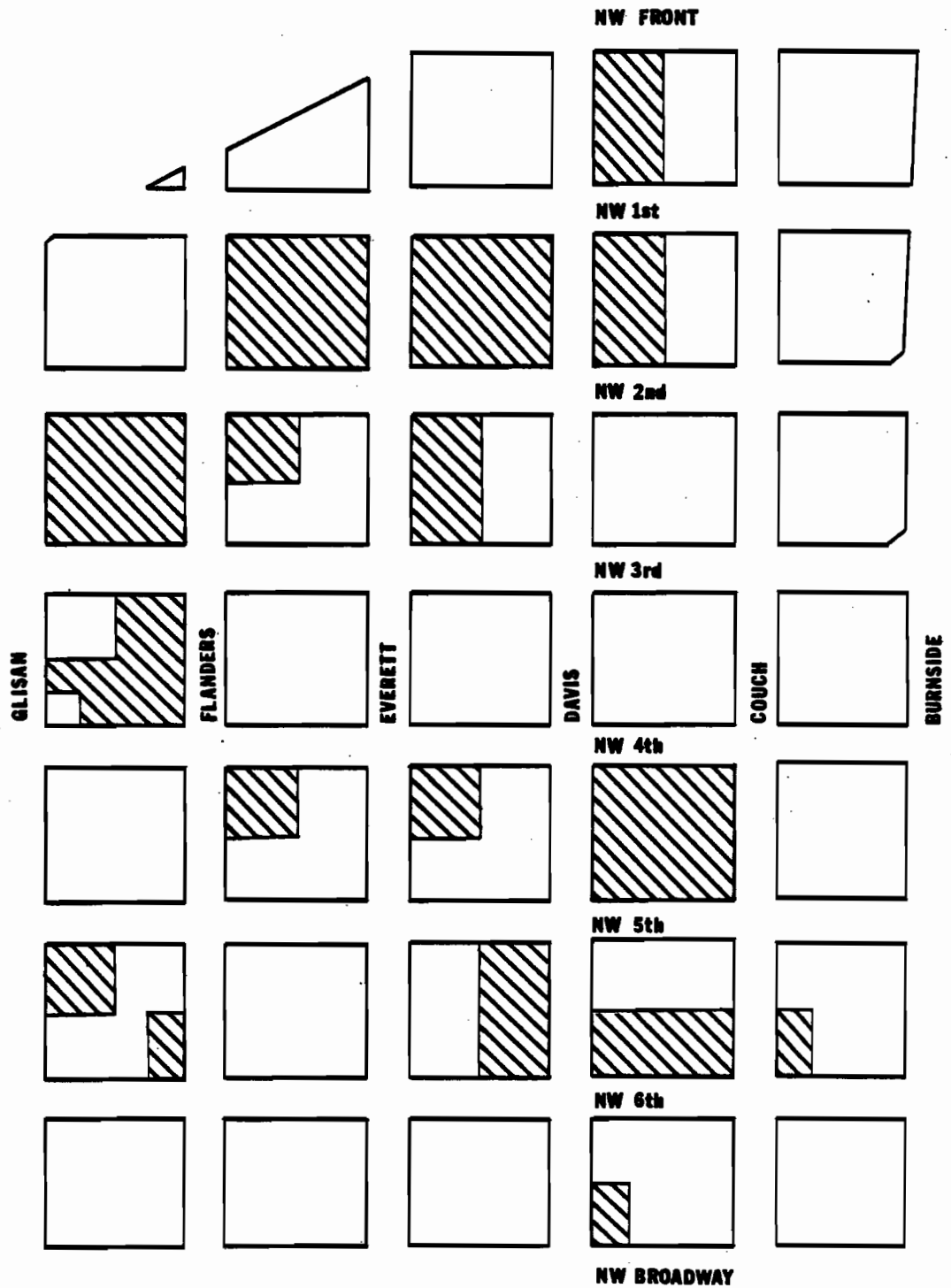


Figure 55

not afford the prices or feel comfortable with the decor. The Couch Street Fish House and the Old Town Pizza Restaurant are two more examples of restaurants taking advantage of the Old Town atmosphere and utilizing buildings which once held skid row oriented activities.

### Summary

Field observations reveal that the study area is evolving as other skid rows in the United States. Businessmen and planners are slowly replacing the original skid row land use with businesses that cater to outsiders. Consequently, Portland's skid row, much like those in other parts of the United States, is shrinking and shifting, but not disappearing. Instead, it is reappearing in other parts of Portland. The most notable area of relocation is along Southeast Grand Avenue. This area offers many of the same affordable services that were once located in the original skid row.

### Conclusion

Both Sandborn Maps and City Directories have illustrated the gradual growth of Portland's skid row, with periodic fluctuations, from approximately 1885 through the 1920's. The subsequent decline of this district is also documented by these data.

Currently, planners and other officials are concerned with implementing significant changes in Portland's Skid Row. A review of various plans and reports pertaining to this area from the early 1960's to the present illustrates the changes these agencies have proposed.

A 1963 report on Homeless Men contained several conclusions and recommendations pertinent both to skid row's inhabitants and the area itself. For example, the report states:

Because of its location, Portland's Skid Road is in a valuable area that can become more valuable as time passes. There will be increasing pressures to reclaim the area. This process is already under way and as it continues to take place, the question of the relocation of the people who live in the area will need to be given careful consideration. Suitable living quarters need to be available for them elsewhere, and the creation of another skid road in some other part of the city must be avoided.<sup>12</sup>

The report also recommended that a drop-in center be established for the purpose of providing a place for the men to congregate, receive information, clean up, and receive tickets for meals or a bed when necessary. Other recommendations included: (1) the establishment of an alcoholic treatment center, (2) the curtailment of mass feeding programs which require men to stand in line on the streets, (3) the strict enforcement of building and sanitation codes to bring about an upgrading of housing facilities in the skid row area as rapidly as possible, and (4) a reduction in the number of liquor outlets licensed by the state and city in the skid row area.

A 1971 report titled "A Profile of the People Who Live in Downtown Portland" prepared by the consulting firm of CH2M arrived at conclusions and made recommendations similar to those quoted above from the 1963 report. Specifically, the report stated:

The men on Skid Road seem to be locked into a life of destitution. The conditions of their lives are among the worst of any group in the nation. They suffer from chronic health problems, lack of employable skills, severe alcohol related disabilities, housing problems, lack of food and clothing, and broken non-existent family ties.



For most of the men these problems are beyond their capacity to solve. Smaller problems that are major in the context of their daily lives include body vermin, jackrollers, lack of safe and free depositories for possessions and money, first aid for cuts, lack of places to wash their bodies and clothes, and inadequate shelter.

They are a passive group, rarely acting out to reform their lives but instead are acted upon by numerous agencies in the area. The involvement of many agencies seem to perpetuate or worsen their condition.

A major problem confronting the area is the slow encroachment of non-skid road related uses into the Skid Road area. The population of the area has declined steadily over the past several decades and this is expected to continue. There is some evidence to indicate that the Skid Road is merely moving to other parts of the city such as along S.E. Grand Avenue. If Skid Road is not declining, but is merely moving incrementally to other parts of the city, the city faces a major policy question of whether or how this should be allowed to occur.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, the report discusses the housing problem in Portland's Central Business District with specific reference to the skid row area. It points out that the current system of land ownership, assessment, taxation, and income distribution works against the possibility of providing improved living conditions for low- and middle-income residents Downtown.

Their needs are weighted less heavily than those of others in the market place and, hence, as Downtown land becomes valuable for uses other than low and middle-income housing, these people will be displaced. In the near future, the residents of . . . Skid Road are expected to be displaced. Most of this displacement will be by private development and those displaced will not be eligible for federal relocation assistance. They will be thrown into a housing market that, according to recent housing studies, has insufficient housing within their income range. This prospect leads us to recommend that the city establish clear policies for providing housing for low- and middle-income residents and that programs be initiated to implement those policies.<sup>14</sup>

By the early 1970's the City of Portland was in the process of generating a comprehensive downtown plan. In 1972, the Burnside Neighborhood Committee, composed of people who live in the Burnside

area (Skid Row area) and those who work there in social service agencies or their own businesses, issued a proposal which urged the Burnside community in conjunction with local government to designate a planning team whose specific task it would be to produce an implementable long-range physical and social plan for the area. The plan would have input from people who live in the area, people who work in the area, and those who have interests, whether economic or human, in the area. In contrast to this plea for cooperative planning, the Burnside Neighborhood Committee states the more common attitude toward skid row.

Skid Row has no advocates. Few people have shown positive human concern for the old, the disabled, the sick and the alienated of the area. The dirt, the style, the difference of value systems, the physical and social pain so apparent in the area makes the outer community wish the whole area would disappear into a welter of shops and smart boutiques. The person who could invent disappearing dust to sprinkle over the so-called bums, tramps, winos, prostitutes and pensioners could make substantial profit in Portland.<sup>15</sup>

In October, 1973, a series of newspaper articles published by the Oregon Journal was forecasting the demise of Portland's Skid Row district. In an article titled "Skid Road Future Bleak," the Journal stated:

The current situation on Portland's Skid Road is bleak; its future is even bleaker for the people who live there and the social services they need.

In a few years, Skid Road will not exist in a recognizable form in the area in which it has been located for decades.<sup>16</sup>

According to planners and other authorities, the stability of Skid Row is affected by the availability of housing. As one official said, "Portland's Skid Road could not exist without cheap

hotels."<sup>17</sup> In short, if housing is available and affordable, then men will continue to inhabit the Skid Row area. However, as older hotels and lodging houses begin to decay, the cost of bringing them up to code becomes exorbitant. If the refurbishing costs are not subsidized, the owner either sells the property or utilizes the space for a more profitable venture. According to a 1973 newspaper article, most of the hotels in the Skid Row district reportedly grossed less than \$15,000 per year and netted less than \$6,000.<sup>18</sup> From these figures, it is easy to see why a disenchanted owner might prefer alternative land uses. Consequently, as the previous data have shown, some of these cheap hotels are closing. Pushed by the closure of these hotels and the encroachment of new business and construction, Skid Row residents are beginning to disperse into other sections of the city. According to residents, police officers, and social workers, there has been a migration into Northwest and Southeast Portland. This dispersal may have some adverse effects. According to one city official, "Allowing the current residents to spread out is not a good idea because it will be more difficult for the city to provide them with services such as detoxification."<sup>19</sup>

The Burnside Neighborhood Committee made two recommendations in reference to housing in Portland's Skid Row. First, they suggested code enforcement, with possible subsidies to building owners to help them meet extra-ordinary costs, of all existing rental units in the Burnside area in order to bring present housing resources to an acceptable level of sanitation and compliance with fire regulations.

Second, they encouraged that replacement housing be provided for residents of the Skid Row area prior to any reconstruction in the area. The replacement housing is to be located in a designated neighborhood, not just isolated boarding houses or hotels scattered all over the city.<sup>20</sup>

In 1974, the City of Portland commissioned Irving Shandler, a social planning consultant, to develop a social policy for the Skid Row district. His report contained some interesting attitudes and recommendations. For example, he described skid rows as ". . . unpleasant and unhealthy. The buildings emanate the odor of despair and the flavor of death. There is no charm and little humor. It is a dirty, diseased, foul smelling place that becomes a living purgatory for those trapped by its system."<sup>21</sup>

Shandler suggests two contrasting approaches which can be applied to skid row. One he labels the maintenance and reinforcement program. The other is known as the control and prevention policy. The maintenance and reinforcement or clean Skid Row approach suggests the inevitability of skid rows; that government's responsibility is limited to keeping the men reasonably safe and alive--but out of the way of areas to be developed for housing and business.<sup>22</sup>

The ghettoization of Skid Road reinforces the negatives of a life style. When a man is labeled as undesirable and viewed as incapable of leading a healthier, more productive life, the tendency is for him to respond by playing out the roles assigned. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy: I am on Skid Road; Skid Road is for bums; therefore, I must be a bum. This tends to produce the unwritten contracts between city officials, the institutions, and the men, that sanctions an arrangement of quiet exploitation in return for minimal, contained standards of living.<sup>23</sup>

Shandler's second approach concerns control and prevention of Skid Row. This approach is basically a three-phase operation with programs and policies focusing on the residents, the institution/business, and housing.

The program for the residents involves the rendering of a number of services by a lead agency charged with this duty. Services would include: general medical examination, referral and treatment, special alcoholism services, leisure and recreational activities, and food and nutritional assistance. The efforts to reach out through medical care and other services is not to coddle people. Rather, it is a vital series of first steps that are necessary to determine how many Skid Row residents can be assisted in "making it" on their own and how many will require additional, ongoing types of support. In short, this phase of Shandler's recommendations utilizes various services as a mechanism for involving the Skid Row resident in a program that would improve their life style as an integral part of redeveloping the area in which they live.

The second half of the equation deals with the institutions and business community, i.e., flop houses, cheap restaurants, missions, bars, blood banks, etc. According to Shandler, "If the approach is one of control and prevention of skid roads, then the city must make certain that these operations which have historically drawn and hold men to the skid road not be permitted to function as in the past."<sup>24</sup> In brief, Shandler is saying that if

Portland has a plan that prevents the institution/business activities from opening or operating in a specific geographic area, the city reduces the magnet that draws potential Skid Row men to the area. On the other hand, a policy that prevents large numbers of Skid Row men from living in a particular area will destroy the market for the institution/business.

The final part of Shandler's control and prevention approach to Skid Row involves housing. Though he suggests several types of housing to handle Skid Row residents, he recommends that it be located out of the Skid Row area. This suggestion, of course, corresponds to Shandler's concern for reducing the "magnets" which draw men to the Skid Row area in the first place.

Several of Shandler's suggestions were incorporated into a 1974 Social Policy Report on the Downtown Urban Renewal Area. This report recommended establishing a minimum of 1,150 low-income housing units in the downtown area.<sup>25</sup> An article in Metropolis entitled "Burnside: A Case of Planned Neglect" stated:

Portland has a shortage of low-cost housing, but the city appears uninterested in maintaining the low-cost stock in the downtown area at its current level. This is in line with the social policy report's proposed gradual dispersal of the Burnside population throughout the city.<sup>26</sup>

The same article pointed out that since there was a lack of services for Skid Row residents in other areas of Portland, it was questionable whether they could or would be helped as well elsewhere as they were in the existing Burnside Skid Row district. Also, better low-cost housing did not exist elsewhere in the city, except for public housing, which in November, 1974, had a waiting

list of approximately 5,000 families and individuals. Furthermore, the Burnside district has one of the lowest-cost pools of housing in the city. Housing is furnished and can be rented on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.<sup>27</sup> This is a type of accommodation for low-income persons found nowhere else in Portland in such quantity.

If Skid Row residents migrate out of the Burnside area, there will be a need for survival services, which are provided today in Burnside, in other areas of the city as new skid rows appear. The end result will negate any social policy planning done for the Burnside Skid Row district.

Since 1974, Portland's Skid Row has undergone a slow transformation from Skid Row to Old Town Historical District. According to current planning and assessment reports, there appears little chance that this process will be curtailed. Most of these reports view the area as having potential for increased retail-office-commercial development. There seems to be little concern for providing low-cost housing for Skid Row residents or preserving the sense of neighborhood which, according to some spokesmen, exists. Because of the socioeconomic conditions in the Skid Row area, development and operation of low-income housing will depend upon governmental funding assistance.

One 1980 assessment study reflects the future of Portland's Skid Row district if the law of supply and demand operates unhindered. The report states:

During the next decade (1980-1990), between 450 and 1,300 households may be displaced by the pressures for increased

office and retail trade space in the Study Area. Assuming a 5 percent vacancy rate, this displacement represents a need for between 474 and 1,370 low income housing units to accommodate the displaced population.<sup>28</sup>

Whether or not these housing units will be provided and how this may affect Portland's Skid Row remains to be seen.



### Chapter III Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Jim Ward, "Skid Row As a Geographic Entity," The Professional Geographer 27 (August 1975):286.

<sup>2</sup>Howard M. Bahr, Skid Row: An Introduction to Disaffiliation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 123.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>5</sup>Mike Jones, "Skid Row--Past, Present and Future," Oregon Geographer 5 (September 1971):11.

<sup>6</sup>Stewart Holbrook, Holy Old Mackinaw (New York: Ballantine Books, 1956), p. 182.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 183-184.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph Gaston, Portland, Its History and Builders (Portland: S.J. Clarke Co., 1911), p. 476.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Eugene E. Snyder, Skidmore's Portland: His Fountain and Its Sculptor (Portland: Binfords & Mort, 1973), p. 138.

<sup>11</sup>Samuel E. Wallace, Skid Row As a Way of Life (Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster Press, 1965), p. 15.

<sup>12</sup>Committee on Homeless Men, Report of Committee on Homeless Men, Portland, Oregon (1963), p. 10.

<sup>13</sup>Portland Planning Commission, A Profile of the People Who Live in Downtown Portland (December 1971), pp. 13-14.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>15</sup>Portland Planning Commission, A Preliminary Proposal for a Comprehensive Planning Effort (West Burnside, Lawnsdale, Grand Union) (1972), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>Paul Schindler and Maureen McNassar, "Skid Road Future Bleak," The Journal, 1 October 1973.

<sup>17</sup>Paul Schindler and Maureen McNassar, "Cheap Hotels Hold Key to Skid Road," The Journal, 2 October 1973.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Paul Schindler and Maureen McNassar, "Residents of Skid Road Drifting Away," The Journal, 5 October 1973.

<sup>20</sup>Burnside Neighborhood Committee, Position Statement of the Burnside Neighborhood Committee on the Downtown Plan (September 1972).

<sup>21</sup>Irving W. Shandler, Portland, Oregon, Skid Road Project (February 28, 1974), p. 2.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>25</sup>Portland Planning Commission, Social Policy Report on the Downtown Urban Renewal Area (1974).

<sup>26</sup>Connie Fitzgerald, "Burnside: A Case of Planned Neglect," Metropolis (November 1974), p. 1.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Portland Planning Commission, North of Burnside Study: Analysis of Economic Impacts--Assessment of Development Potentials (September 1980), p. 28.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Findings

The findings presented in this study clearly illustrate the human and physical changes which have occurred and are occurring in skid rows throughout the United States. As this and other studies indicate, the future of skid row is uncertain. Many experts are predicting the disappearance of skid row, possibly by the end of the 1980's. There are several studies to support this conclusion. Lee examined Bogue's 1950 conclusions utilizing 1970 census data and found that all but one of Bogue's 41 skid row neighborhoods lost population between 1950 and 1970. The smallest decrease was approximately 2 per cent while the largest exceeded 83 per cent. Between these two extremes, the losses concentrated in the 50-75 per cent range, where 25 of the cases fall. According to Lee, this decline was well underway prior to 1960, despite the fact that skid row populations had grown by almost 3 per cent from 1940 to 1950 and had undergone substantial increases during the depression.<sup>1</sup>

To a certain degree, the demise of skid row can be considered a manifestation of the more general decline of the city center; available evidence indicates that the large-scale deconcentration of metropolitan residents and activities did not begin until some-time around 1950. But there is an additional factor--ironically, a

response to central city decline--which appears to have played a vital role in speeding skid rows' disappearance. According to official records . . . a majority of the cities in the sample received urban renewal grants during the 1950s. These renewal programs may have taken their heaviest toll on the skid row housing supply between 1950 and 1960 . . .<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to note that the rate of decline for western skid rows was greatest between 1960 and 1970. The central cities in which the western skid rows are located were given the largest amount of their urban renewal funds during that period.

Instead of measuring the population decline for all persons living in skid row census tracts, as mentioned above, unrelated individuals could be used as the indicator of population change.\* However, Lee's data reveal the same decline of unrelated individual population as was true of the all persons classification. The number of unrelated individuals fell by half from 1950 to 1970. Also, the timing of the decline essentially duplicates those reported for all persons. In short, traditional skid row neighborhoods do seem to be losing their residents.

The explanation for the 1950-1970 population decline in skid row involves economic factors. Near the start of this period, the metropolitan population as a whole began to deconcentrate. A decline in the economic role fulfilled by casual laborers stimulated a downward trend in skid row area populations. These areas provided almost

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\* Unrelated individuals are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as persons living either by themselves, with non-relatives, or outside regular households.

perfect targets for urban renewal, given their lack of economic function, their negative reputations, and the powerlessness of their residents. Of course, the impact of renewal efforts on skid row was to further deplete the already declining skid row populations.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, Lee argues that the decline of skid row neighborhoods might have been retarded by the prevalence of negative social definitions applied to skid row areas. The risks associated with the adoption of a stigmatized location may have discouraged new types of functions from moving into the area and replacing older ones.

In the present instance, this same process seems to be operating in reverse: Negative attitudes toward the skid row population, which previously were a source of stability, have ultimately hastened skid row's demise and encouraged the arrival of more profitable activities in the neighborhood. As long as skid row districts fulfilled an important function, providing the city with a reservoir of unskilled labor, their existence on downtown property was tolerated. Once skid row's economic reason for being started to wear thin, however, a public sentiment--fueled by an availability of federal funding and a desire to arrest urban decay--quickly crystallized into action. Subsequent renewal and rehabilitation efforts were presumably directed with greatest fervor at those districts possessing the worst reputations.<sup>4</sup>

As this study has shown, the displacement of skid row began in the 1950's, 60's, and 70's, and continues today. It is clear from the many cities sampled and the Portland case study that skid rows throughout the United States are undergoing radical changes. With few exceptions, the original skid row districts are experiencing a variety of land use changes ranging from complete razings to being designated as historical districts. As these new land uses occur, they are severely eroding the supply of low-cost housing, thus guaranteeing a

further reduction in the size of the skid row population. It is apparent from the findings in this study that in many cities, ex-residents of older skid row districts have already recongregated in other areas to such an extent that mini-skid rows are evident. These mini-neighborhoods tend to be much smaller in population than their predecessors, and they do not possess the mix of institutions--employment agencies, missions, and other services responsible for the distinctive physical identity and social organization of the older districts. Because such areas lack both scale and institutional support, they will probably never match the persistence or notoriety of the traditional skid row neighborhood. Sociologist Vander Kooi makes this same point with a little different emphasis when he writes:

The common assumption is that skid row will simply relocate elsewhere. But if one is to hold to the classical definition of skid row as an ecological "main stem," or to distinguish skid row at all from other slums, then it becomes obvious that a skid row cannot relocate in any cohesive way. For the most part former residents look for their own housing because urban renewal relocation programs are too cumbersome to serve more than a small minority. Men go to areas where they hear other men are going. Businessmen and missionaries have a hard time finding suitable new facilities since they need places where the men will be provided with all their daily needs, not just that which any particular business provides.

Business-lodging areas are no longer available for new skid rows in most cities. Business-slum areas may house new skid row facilities but other inhabitants and businesses do not automatically flee. So there is no room for the rapid development of a main stem nor is there sufficient economic demand to develop a new complete skid row.<sup>5</sup>

The findings of this study concur with Vander Kooi's statement. Skid row will continue to exist for a number of years but not in the

form that it has in the past. The trend is to smaller clumps of skid row-like neighborhoods scattered in more diverse areas around the cities. This move creates new problems for social agencies to provide service to the residents. Economic factors are a major impetus in the diversification. More profitable business enterprises restore the deteriorated and typically historic skid row areas with their appeal to the current interest in architectural preservation.

Chapter IV Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Barrett A. Lee, "The Disappearance of Skid Row: Some Ecological Evidence," Urban Affairs Quarterly 16 (September 1980):90.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>5</sup>Ronald Vander Kooi, "The Main Stem: Skid Row Revisited," Society 10 (1973):69.



## APPENDIX A

## CENSUS DATA CHARACTERISTICS

- (1) In group quarters - This factor was selected because many skid row inhabitants are without a permanent living quarters. (Sociologists use the term "homeless men" to describe this condition.) They rely on "flop houses" to meet their needs.
- (2) Percent completed elementary and high school - These characteristics were chosen to determine the educational level of those inhabiting skid row. The popular belief is that these individuals are poorly educated.
- (3) Median income of unrelated individuals - Skid row inhabitants are perceived as having very low income in relation to the general population. This factor was selected to examine the accuracy of this perception.
- (4) Percentage of unrelated individuals - It has often been assumed that individuals (single men) living outside a family structure account for the majority of skid rows' population. An examination of unrelated individuals will illustrate the validity of this claim.
- (5) Unemployed males 14 and older - Several studies have elaborated on the high unemployment rate in skid rows. This factor was selected to investigate the extent of the unemployment rate.
- (6) Percent of housing dilapidated and percent of housing built 1939 or earlier - These two factors will examine the condition and age of housing located in the skid row areas. It has been assumed by other investigators that skid row dwellings are some of the most unsound and aged on the urban landscape.

## APPENDIX B

## SKID ROW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Would you outline the current (1978) Skid Row boundaries on the enclosed map? The guidelines for defining a skid row are stated in the introductory letter. If no area in the city is similar to these guidelines, would you indicate this in lieu of outlining boundaries. If the map doesn't cover the area of town in which a skid row is located, would you list the street names which comprise the skid row boundaries.
2. If possible, would you outline the boundaries of skid row as they were 10 years ago (ca. 1968). If this is impossible, please indicate the fact.
3. If there are differences between the current skid row boundaries and those of ten years ago, could you briefly account for these differences? Have the boundary differences (1978 vs. 1968) been the result of:
  - a) Historical restoration of the skid row area--"Old Town Projects" or "Historic Districts"?
  - b) Urban Renewal projects in the skid row area?
  - c) Relocation of the skid row area? If relocation has occurred, where to and why? Is a new skid row developing in a different part of town?
  - d) Has there been planned destruction of the skid row area? If so, why?
  - e) Has there been a loss of missions and other public and private agencies which provide services to the skid row inhabitants?
  - f) What factors, other than those mentioned above, have affected the skid row area?
4. If a new skid row is developing in a different part of town, would you indicate the new location by outlining the boundaries on the enclosed map and distinguishing it from the 1978 and 1968 boundaries?

5. If the old skid row (1968) is disappearing or has disappeared, could you indicate, as specifically as possible, what is replacing it (type of buildings and businesses, etc.)? Why have these new buildings or businesses chosen this area? Is the replacement a unified effort (planned) or individual in nature?
6. Would you estimate the population size of the current skid row (1978)? How does it compare with 1968?
7. What seems to be the function of your skid row? A labor reservoir? A "holding tank" for society's dropouts? etc.?
8. Finally, could you indicate what local planning policies, actions or plans might have an impact on skid row in the next five years?

## APPENDIX C

## LETTER TO CITY PLANNERS

12055 S.W. 118th  
Tigard, Oregon 97223

January 15, 1979

Dear Sir:

I have a limited grant through the University of Oregon Geography Department in Eugene, Oregon, to study the changing skid row (row) landscape in several U. S. metropolitan areas with populations of 200,000 or more.

Because a number of cities are involved in this study, it is impossible for me to personally visit each area. Consequently, I am asking you, or a knowledgeable colleague, to serve as my source of information. The enclosed questionnaire asks questions about the skid row in your city. The map is to be used to establish skid row boundaries.

I am aware that the questionnaire is lengthy and involves time and effort on your part. However, to successfully conduct the type of comparative study I am attempting, with the resources available, I must ask for your cooperation.

As a geographer, I am concerned with the changing landscape of skid row through time. I am mainly interested in changes in skid row boundaries and changes in land use in the skid row area. The questionnaire asks questions pertaining to both of these topics. If you have no skid row, I would also be interested in knowing that. If you are aware of information pertinent to the study, but not covered by any of the questions, please include it somewhere on the questionnaire.

One of the questions concerns drawing boundaries for skid row. The definition of a skid row is based on the following criteria. Sociologist Samuel Wallace describes skid row as, "It is that collection of saloons, pawn shops, cheap restaurants, second hand shops, barber colleges, all night movies, missions, flop houses and dilapidated hotels which caters specifically to the needs of the down and outer, the bum, the alcoholic, the drifter." Donald Bogue, another sociologist, defines skid row as, ". . . a district in the city where there

is a concentration of substandard hotels and rooming houses charging very low rates and catering primarily to men with low incomes. These hotels are intermingled with numerous taverns, employment agencies offering jobs as unskilled laborers, restaurants serving low-cost meals, pawnshops, and secondhand stores, and missions that daily provide a free meal after the service. Perhaps there are also barber colleges, burlesque shows or night clubs with strip tease acts, pennyarcades, tattoo palaces, stores selling men's work clothing, bakeries selling stale bread and unclaimed freight stores. Most frequently the skid road is located near the Central Business District and also near a factory district or major heavy transportation facilities such as a waterfront, freight yards, or a trucking and freight depot."

If your skid row differs significantly from the definition outlined by Wallace and Bogue, I would be interested in knowing about the differences.

I appreciate your time and effort in completing the questionnaire. If you are interested, I will supply a summary of my findings when the project is completed.

Sincerely,

Larry King

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