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BOUNDARY MARKERS of the NATION'S CAPITAL

A PROPOSAL for THEIR PRESERVATION & PROTECTION

A U.S. NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION. BICENTENNIAL REPORT

Washington, D.C.
Summer 1976

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in appreciation to:

Fred E. Woodward, who was among the first to call attention to the neglect of the boundary markers and to the **Daughters of the American Revolution,** who in 1915 assumed responsibility for having the stones protected.

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This report concerning preservation of mile markers of the original survey for the seat of government of the United States is being published by the National Capital Planning Commission in recognition of the Bicentennial celebration. Special assistance contributed by the National Capital Chapter, American Society of Civil Engineers, and the Daughters of the American Revolution, District of Columbia, is gratefully acknowledged.

DAR Dedication Ceremony of the Fencing of Northwest No. 4 Mile Marker, July 12, 1915

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Southeast No. 6 Mile Marker

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to: (1) describe the current condition of the mile markers of the original boundary of the District of Columbia put in place by Andrew Ellicott during 1791-1792; (2) explain previous efforts to protect the markers - particularly by the Daughters of the American Revolution; (3) solicit comments on proposed recommendations for the perpetual protection and preservation of these historic monuments; (4) to acquaint citizens and visitors to the area with the physical location of the boundaries of the Capital City, which were determined by a survey over 180 years ago.

A secondary purpose of the report is to serve as a guide. Using the locational maps and descriptions it is now possible to easily locate each boundary stone in its approximate original setting. Suggested methods for viewing the markers, depending on time, include a tour by neighborhood, quadrant or state. A round trip including stops at all of the markers provides a fascinating experience.

In 1846 the Federal Government retroceded to the State of Virginia the thirty-three square miles of land the State had ceded to the Federal Government by the Act of December 3, 1789. At the time of original survey forty markers were put in place along the boundary of the ten mile square. The majority are still in place. All of the markers have been designated as Category II Landmarks* by the Joint Committee on Landmarks of the National Capital. Fourteen are located in Virginia and twenty six are located along the District-Maryland boundary line.

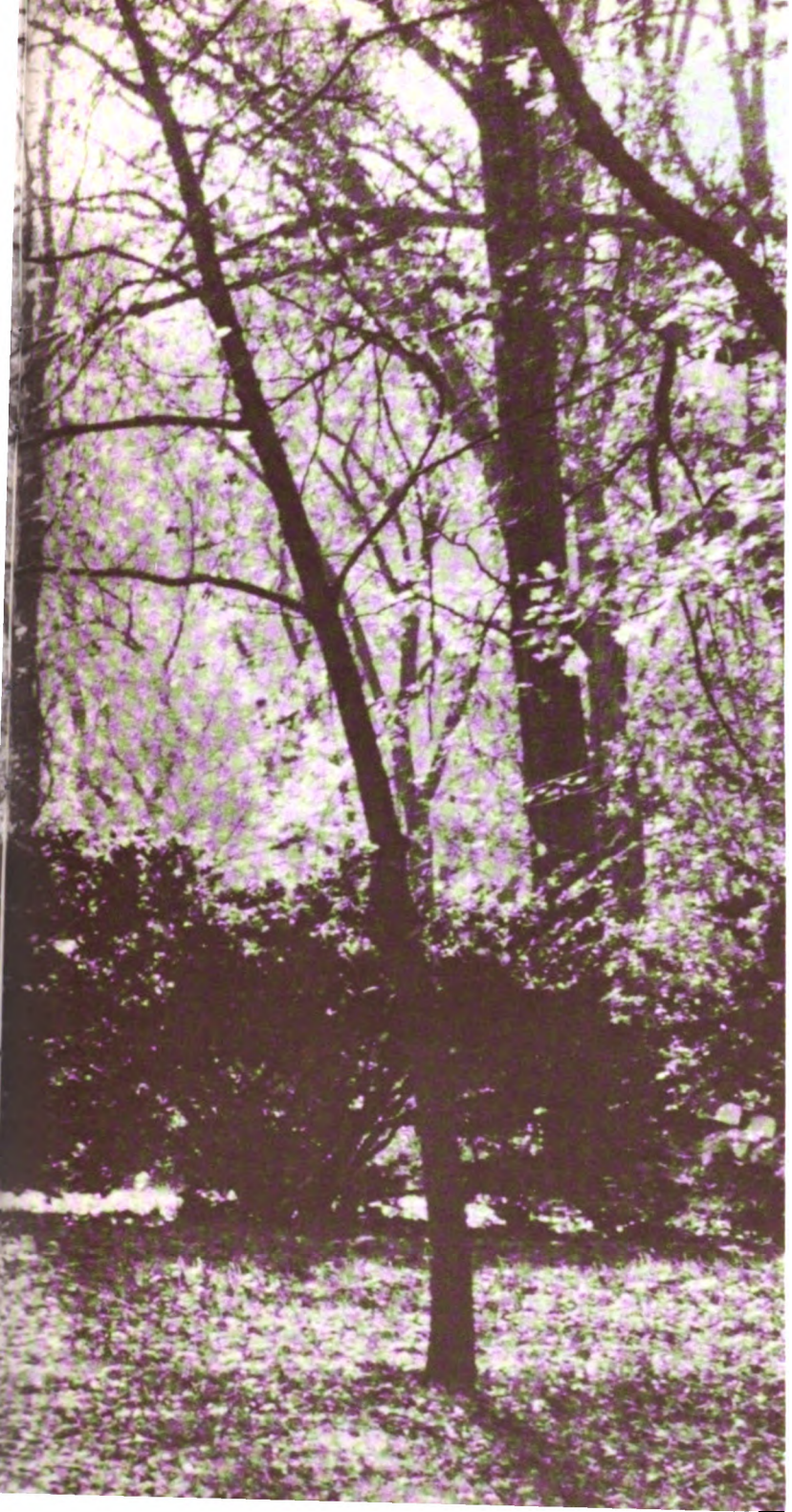
*Landmarks of importance which contribute significantly to the cultural heritage or visual beauty and interest of the District of Columbia and its environs, and which should be preserved or restored if possible.



Unveiling of the Northeast No. 1 Mile Marker Fence by the DAR on June 13, 1916

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HISTORY

Congress discussed the need for a permanent capital as early as 1779 but did not give the matter serious consideration until 1783. The need for a permanent Seat of Government was accepted by Congress from the very beginning, but final selection of the site came only after years of controversy and debate.

During 1783 five sites were offered: Kingston, New York was willing to give Congress "exempt jurisdiction" over one square mile within the town limits; Annapolis, Maryland offered 300 acres, its state house, and accommodations for the President and legislators; New Jersey was willing to give Congress jurisdiction over twenty square miles anywhere in the state and to donate 30,000 pounds in specie for any necessary buildings; Nottingham, New Jersey, at the head of the Delaware, agreed to donate as much territory as Congress wished; and the Virginia legislature offered its capital at Williamsburg, all of the public buildings, 300 acres adjoining the city, and 100,000 pounds in state's currency to build "hotels" for the delegates to Congress. If Williamsburg were unacceptable the Virginia legislators were willing to cede territory anywhere along the Potomac (the local inhabitants were to determine the extent of Congressional jurisdiction over the cession) and to appropriate funds for "hotels," and they went on to suggest that Maryland make an equal, contiguous cession on the Maryland side of the river. This was the first recorded mention of land adjacent to the Potomac River as a possible site for the capital. Congress had been meeting in Philadelphia, but adjourned hastily late in July 1783 after being threatened by 250-300 soldiers demanding back pay from the Federal Government. The legislators then reconvened at Princeton, New Jersey and immediately took up the "residence question." A committee was appointed to determine how large a site for a capital was needed and the extent of Congressional

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Map of Maryland and Virginia by J. Fry and P. Jefferson, 1751

and the Conococheague, a tributary which joins the Potomac at Williamsport, Maryland, approximately 70 miles northwest of the Eastern Branch. Under the terms of the Act final selection of the ten mile square which was to comprise the actual capital rested with the President. The President also was authorized to appoint three commissioners to supervise a survey of the site and to purchase land for the government.

President Washington went to Georgetown in October 1790, and for several days toured the entire stretch of river designated in the Residence Act. Before departing he assured local residents that he would announce his choice for the exact location within a few months. On his return to Philadelphia the President ordered plats of three sections of the Potomac shore: the vicinity of the Conococheague; the mouth of the Monacacy, 40 miles upriver from Georgetown; and the vicinity of Georgetown.

Late in January 1791 Washington appointed the three commissioners authorized in the Residence Act - Thomas Johnson and Daniel Carroll, both of Maryland, and David Stuart of Virginia - to act as the government's official representatives. In an attempt to outmaneuver local real estate speculators the President instructed Col. William Deakins and Benjamin Stoddert of Georgetown to buy property in the vicinity of Georgetown without admitting that they were acting for the government. The same day he appointed the commissioners, January 24, 1791, Washington issued a proclamation directing the commissioners "to survey and limit a part of the territory of the ten mile square on both sides of the river Potomac so as to comprehend Georgetown in Maryland and to extend to the Eastern Branch."

Washington had consulted with Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson about an exact site in December 1790. With an eye to potential commercial development Jefferson suggested that the eastern shore of the Eastern Branch be included and that the lower limit of the Federal territory be extended south to include the port of Alexandria and its bustling wharves. The President rejected Jefferson's view that the site of the Seat of Government needed to cover only 1500 acres (Washington envisioned a site nearly four times that size). In January 1791 the President suggested to Congress that the Residence Act be amended in order to "authorize the location of the residence at the lower end of the present site so as to comprehend the Eastern Branch itself and some of the lower country on its lower side in Maryland and the town of Alexandria in Virginia." Congress approved the desired amendment without debate on March 3, 1791, thereby extending the boundary to inclu

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jurisdiction over it. In September 1783 the committee recommended that the site be between three and six miles square and that Congress have exclusive jurisdiction over it, but no action was taken on these recommendations.

When actual debate on the residence question began during the first week in October 1783 southern delegates supported the idea of a site on the Potomac. Southern opinion notwithstanding, however, Congress voted at the end of the week to establish a permanent seat just above Trenton at the falls of the Delaware, and appointed a committee to inspect the proposed site. Ten days later on October 17 Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts introduced a resolution proposing that a national capital be located at or near the lower falls of the Potomac as well as at the falls of the Delaware and that Congress meet in the two capitals alternately. Gerry maintained that two capitals were necessary because a majority of Congress would never permit just one location to enjoy all the benefits of being the capital. But Gerry's scheme failed to gain necessary support, and in April 1784, while meeting at Annapolis, Congress passed a resolution canceling a planned inspection trip. During this session Congress authorized the appointment of three commissioners to acquire land for a two-to-three mile square district along the Delaware and to begin construction of public buildings. Those measures were not carried out.

In late 1786 the residence question was taken up again when supporters of a Potomac site launched yet another effort to substitute their site for one on the Delaware. No decision was reached, and once the Constitutional Convention convened in February 1787 the matter of the capital's location faded into the background.

The new Constitution was transmitted to Congress in September 1787. Section 8, Article 1 included among Congress' enumerated powers the right "to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of Government of the United States. . .," but it made no mention of the new capital's location.

The first Congress under the Constitution met in New York City (where the government had been since January 1785) in April 1789, and the city made every effort to convince the legislators to select it as the permanent capital. The New Yorkers failed in their efforts, and in August 1789 the debate began once again. This time it centered on Georgetown on the Potomac and Wrights Ferry, Pennsylvania near the falls of the Susquehanna. Late in September the House approved the Wrights Ferry site, despite the efforts of the Potomac advocates led by James Madison and Richard Bland Lee. The Senate rejected Wrights Ferry and suggested Germantown and part of Philadelphia's northern liberties as an alternative, but the session ended before a compromise was reached.

In June 1790 a Senate committee reported favorably on a proposal to locate the capital on the Maryland side of the Potomac. The full Senate approved the measure on July 1, 1790 by a vote of 14 to 12 and sent it to the House.

Although strongly opposed in the House the bill passed by 32 to 29 on July 9th. Finally, on July 16, 1790 the President signed the Residence Act into law. The act's passage was closely tied to passage of Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton's Assumption Act which authorized Federal payment of the states' war debts. Hamilton persuaded northern representatives who favored the Assumption Act to agree to a capital on the Potomac in exchange for southern support of payment of the states' debts by the Federal government. The Assumption Act was passed early in August 1790.

The general site authorized by the Residence Act was large, consisting of the region between the Eastern Branch (today the Anacostia River)

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Map of Maryland and Virginia by J. Fry and P. Jefferson, 1751

and the Conococheague, a tributary which joins the Potomac at Williamsport, Maryland, approximately 70 miles northwest of the Eastern Branch. Under the terms of the Act final selection of the ten mile square which was to comprise the actual capital rested with the President. The President also was authorized to appoint three commissioners to supervise a survey of the site and to purchase land for the government.

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Original Topographic Survey Map by A. Ellicott
Showing Boundaries of the City of Washington and the Territory of Columbia with Mile Markers, Jan. 1793.



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Major Andrew Ellicott

the additional territory Jefferson had suggested in 1790.

Secretary Jefferson sent detailed instructions to Major Andrew Ellicott of Philadelphia early in February 1791, and requested that he begin the survey of the ten mile square at once. Ellicott had been a professional surveyor most of his adult life, was a member of the American Philosophical Society and owned what have been described as the finest surveying instruments in the United States at that time. (These instruments are now housed in the National Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution.) Born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania in 1754 he moved his family to Ellicott's Upper Mills (which his father had established several years earlier) near Baltimore in 1774, and then to Baltimore in 1785 and Philadelphia in 1789. Ellicott and David Rittenhouse of Philadelphia were appointed in 1785 to locate Pennsylvania's western and northern boundaries. During 1788 Ellicott and his younger brothers surveyed the western portions of the New York/Pennsylvania boundary; this survey included the first accurate measurement of "the entire length of the Niagara River, the fall of the river from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, and the height of the great falls and the rapids."*

After his work on the capital site in 1791-93 Ellicott spent a number of years surveying roads from central Pennsylvania to Presque Isle on Lake Erie and laying out lots in Presque Isle (now Erie, Pennsylvania). From 1796 to 1800 he served as United States Commissioner to determine "the boundary between the United States and the possessions of his Catholic Majesty in America." He did other survey work in Pennsylvania and Georgia between 1803 and 1811. He was appointed professor of mathematics at West Point in 1815, and in 1817, was ordered to Montreal "to make astronomical observations and to carry into effect some of the articles of the Treaty of Ghent."* Ellicott died at West Point in 1820 at the age of 67.

Ellicott accepted the commission to survey the ten mile square and immediately began the search for a competent assistant who could make the necessary astronomical observations. His younger brothers, Joseph and Benjamin (who had assisted him in western Pennsylvania and who later did join him in working on the survey of the capital), were both surveying in New York State and his younger cousin, George Ellicott of Ellicott's Mills, was

*Sally K. Alexander, "A Sketch of the Life of Major Andrew Ellicott," *Records* of Columbia Historical Society, Vol. 2 (1899), pp. 168-169.

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unable to leave his obligations there. However, George Ellicott did suggest that the elder Ellicott contact a friend and neighbor of his, Benjamin Banneker. Banneker was a free black who had been born near the Mills in 1731. Like the younger Ellicott, Banneker had a lifelong interest in mathematics and had succeeded in teaching himself the basic principles of astronomy. He gained great notoriety before his death in 1806 for the ephemerides which he calculated for the years 1792-1796 and for the almanacs in which they were published. With Jefferson's approval Andrew Ellicott retained Banneker to make the astronomical observations and the calculations necessary to establish the location of the south corner stone while Ellicott and the field crews did the actual surveying. Banneker who was over 60 at the time worked on the survey from February 1791 to April 1791, when ill health forced him to return home.

A base camp was set up near Jones' Point where Hunting Creek met the Potomac, and the actual survey began on February 12, 1791. Ellicott's procedure for laying out the square was a simple one.

*...traced a meridian at Jones' Point on the west side of the Potomac River and then laid off an angle of 45° from this meridian to the northwest, and continued a straight line in that direction for ten miles. He made a right angle at the termination of this line with a straight line which he carried in a northeasterly direction, also for ten miles, and then from the termination of this second line he carried yet a third line for the same distance at a right angle to it, to the southeast. Finally he carried a line from the terminal point at Jones' Point to meet the termination of the third line. He measured these lines by means of a chain, which he examined and corrected each day to ensure that the links had not opened and that there was no other change affecting its accuracy. He plumbed it wherever the ground proved to be uneven, and traced it with his transit and equal altitude instrument.**

By mid-March the preliminary survey had progressed far enough for Ellicott to move his lodgings to Georgetown and establish an office there. He was joined by Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant who had been selected to prepare the actual plan of the new city to be created within the ten mile square.

President Washington arrived in Georgetown late in March in order to meet with the local landowners and to examine Ellicott's surveys and L'Enfant's plans. The President and the three commissioners rode over the site once again. He then met with Georgetown's officials and the landowners at Suters Tavern (located on the northwest corner of 31st and K Streets where a sidewalk placque identifies the site today) and explained the government's terms for acquiring the land for the proposed Federal territory. Washington enjoyed dinner that evening, at the home of his old friend Uriah Forrest and the next day again met with the landowners who had decided to accept his terms. The President then issued a proclamation giving the exact boundaries of the "district for the permanent seat of government." A number of the landowners protested that the area announced was greater than that to which they had agreed, and it was late June 1791 before all of them signed the necessary deeds.

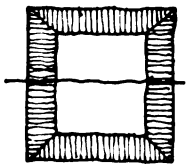
After Ellicott completed the preliminary survey of the boundaries of the Federal territory the south corner stone was ceremoniously laid at Jones' Point on April 15, 1791. Work then began on the final survey of the boundaries and of the major streets and avenues called for in L'Enfant's plan. L'Enfant's relationship with the Commissioners steadily deteriorated during 1791, and in March

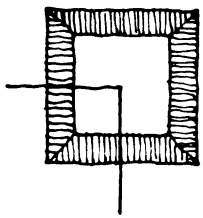
*Silvio A. Bedini, *The Life of Benjamin Banneker*, New York: Charles Scribners Sons (1972), pp. 116-117.

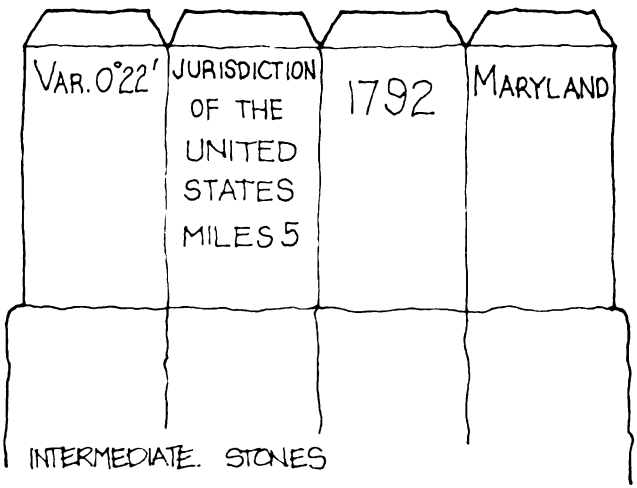
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1792, Ellicott was placed in charge of the entire project, including the plan of the city. On January 1, 1793 Ellicott submitted a formal report certifying that the boundary survey had been completed and the markers (stones) set. He indicated that the survey:

> *. . .lines are opened and cleared forty feet wide that is twenty feet on each side of the lines limiting the Territory, and in order to perpetuate the work I have set up square mile stones marked progressively with the number of miles from the beginning on Jones' Point to the West corner thence from the West corner to the North corner to the East corner and from thence to the place of beginning on Jones' Point; except in a few cases where the miles terminated on declivities or in waters; the stones are then placed on the first firm ground, and their true distances in miles and poles marked on them. On the sides of the stones facing the Territory is inscribed, 'Jurisdiction of the United States.' On the opposite side of those placed in the commonwealth of Virginia is inscribed 'Virginia.' And on those in the State of Maryland, 'Maryland.' On the third and fourth sides, or faces, inscribed the year in which the stone was set up, and the conditions of the Magnetic Needle at that place.*







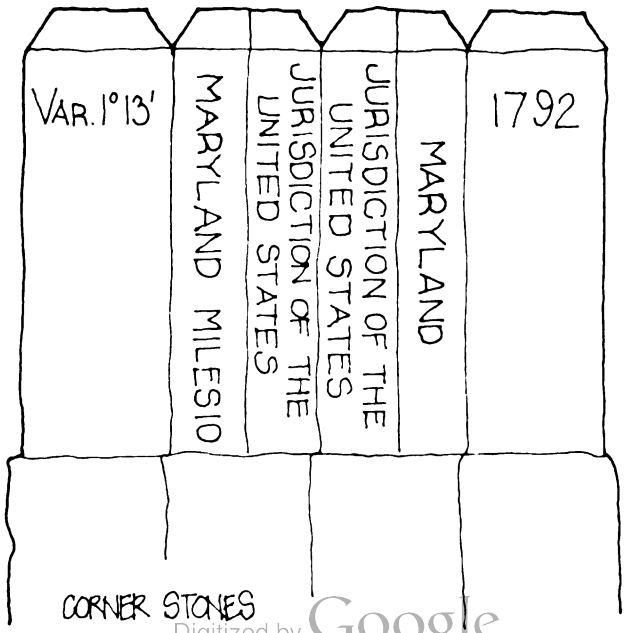
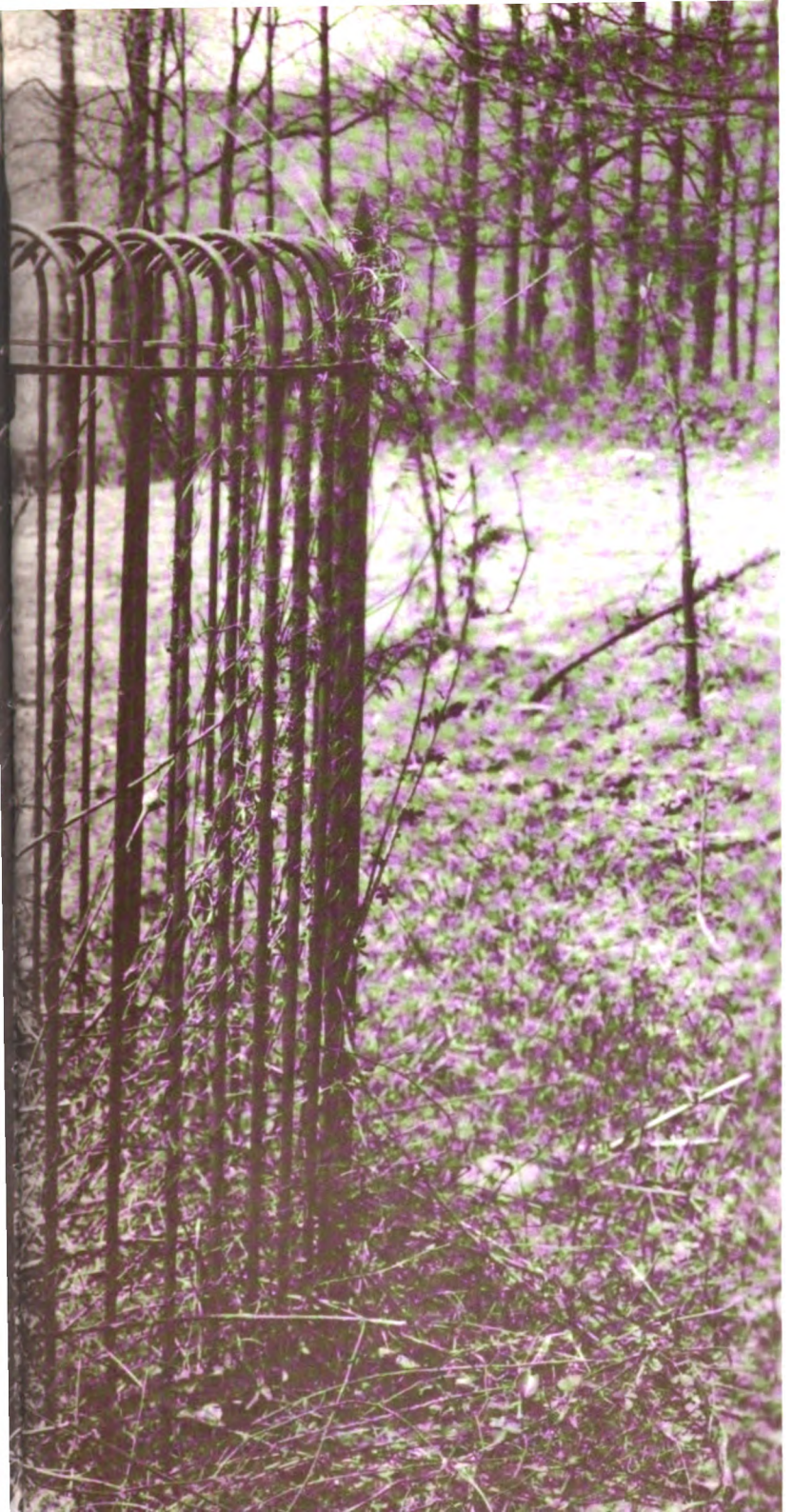


Diagram Showing Scheme of Lettering on the Mile and Corner Stones

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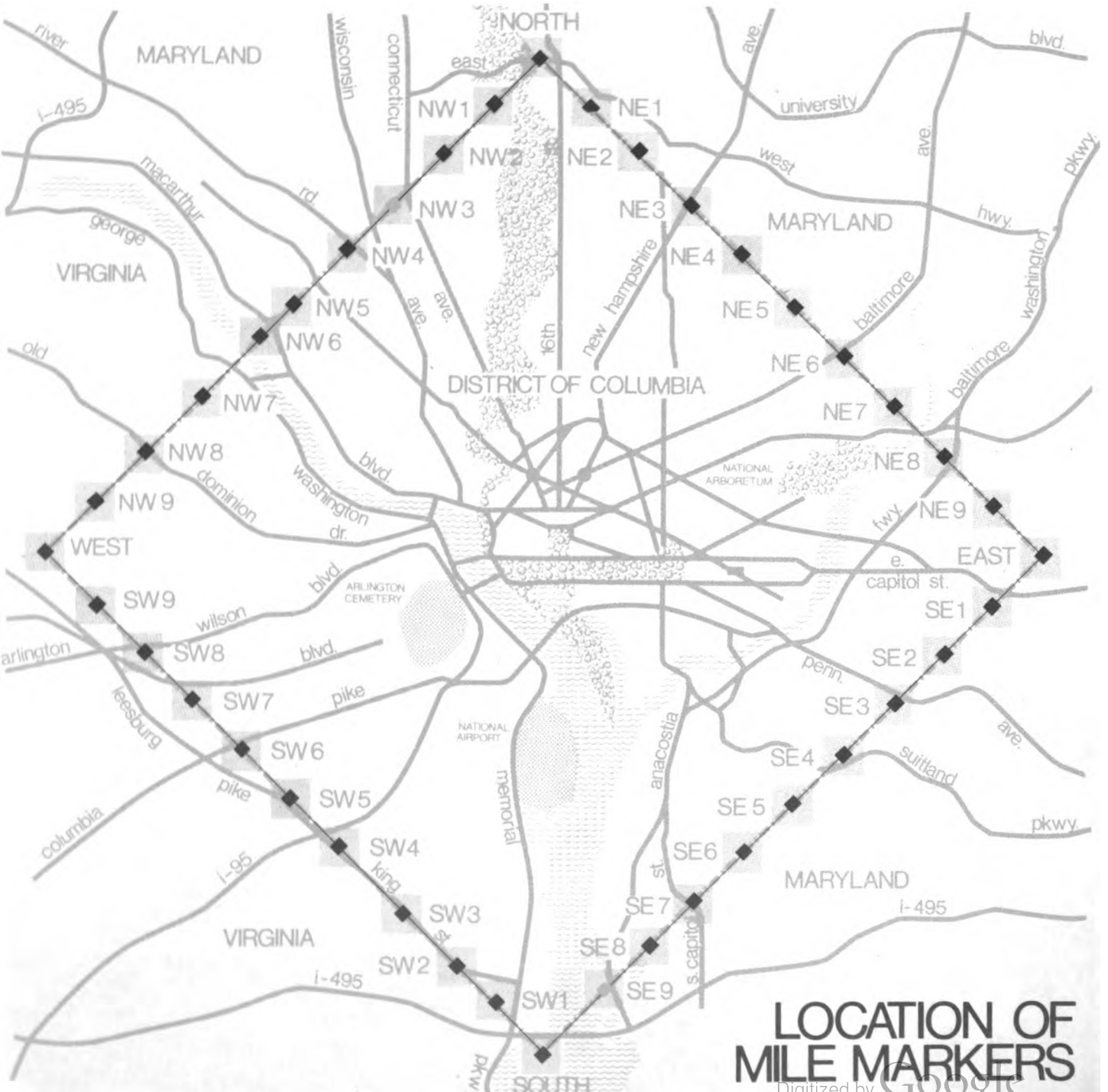


LOCATION & CONDITION

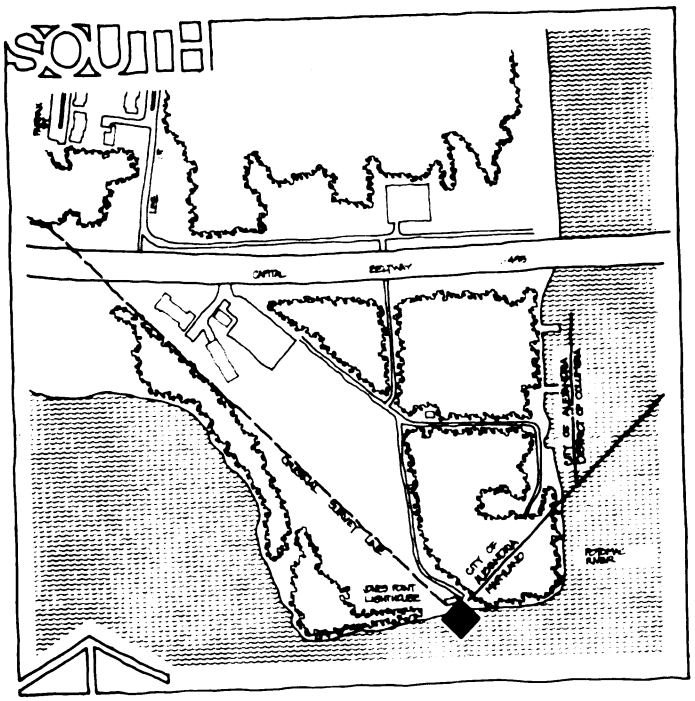
There has been a gradual deterioration of the historic boundary markers of the District of Columbia brought about by general neglect and a lack of concern. Many of these stones - first monuments to be erected in the new National Capital - have been buried or destroyed. In general, chronological data have revealed that stones on private property have been better protected than those located on public land; therefore, it is hoped that this report will create a public awareness of the deterioration of the markers and of the need to protect and preserve them as historical monuments.

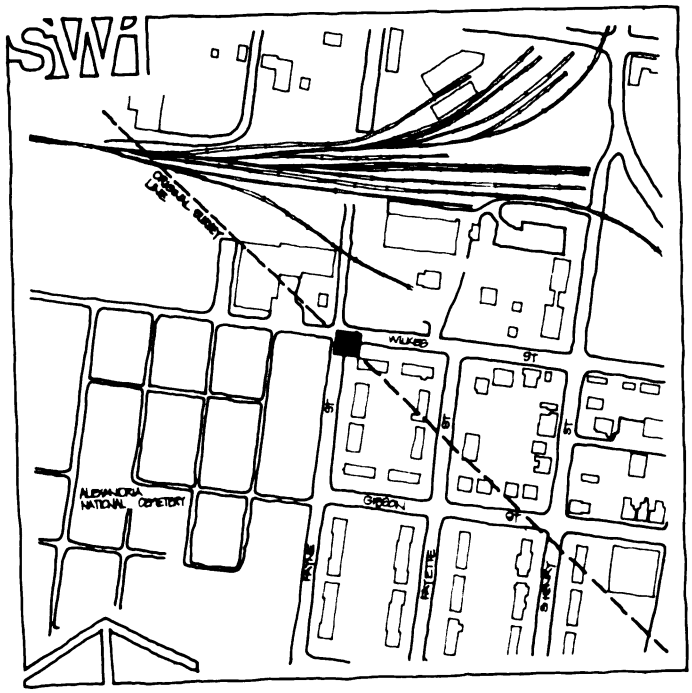
North Corner Stone

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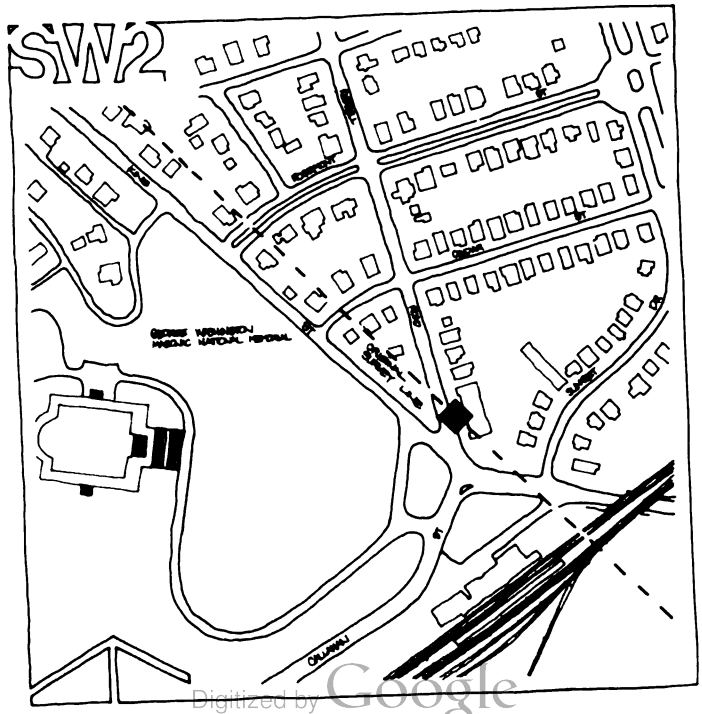


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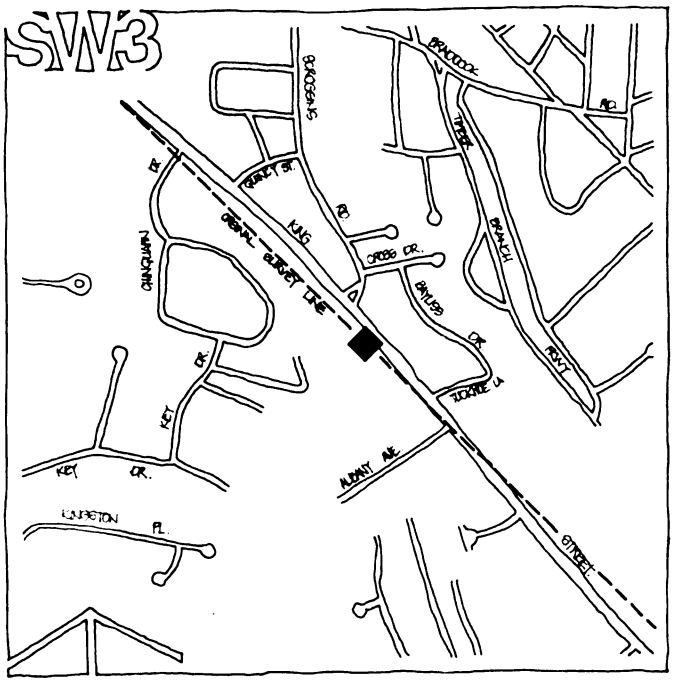
SOUTH CORNER STONE–Located in the seawall in front of the Jones' Point Lighthouse on the Potomac River side in Alexandria, this stone was buried for 121 years. In 1855 the U.S. Government built a lighthouse near the stone at Jones' Point. Six years later a seawall was constructed over the stone where it remained covered until 1912. At present the stone, resting in the seawall, can be viewed only from the water. At low tide it is possible to walk out on the river bed and see the stone; however, it is in poor condition, covered with moss and littered with trash.

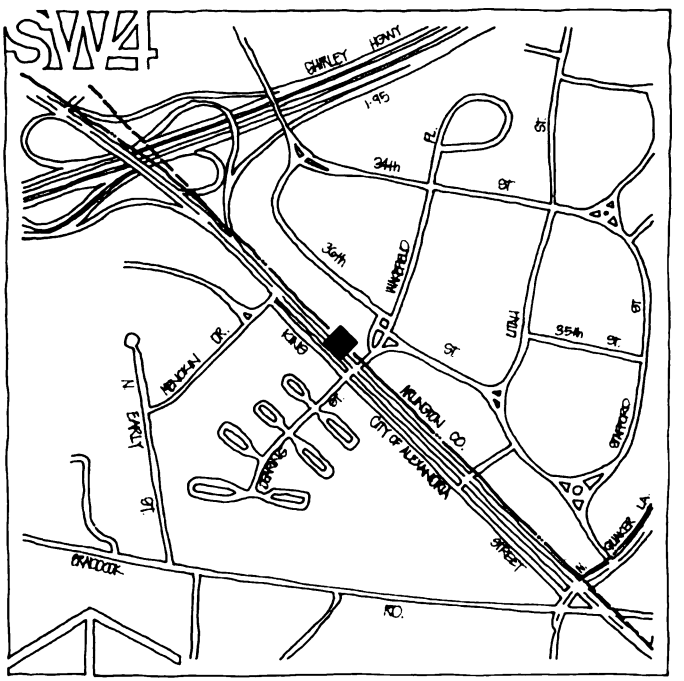
SOUTHWEST NO. 1 MILE MARKER–At the Southwest corner of the intersection of Wilkes and S. Payne Streets in Alexandria, a stone marks the end of the first mile of the survey. It is located near the sidewalk under a large tree in the front yard of a row house. Easily seen from an automobile this marker is in very good condition, and the inscriptions remain legible.

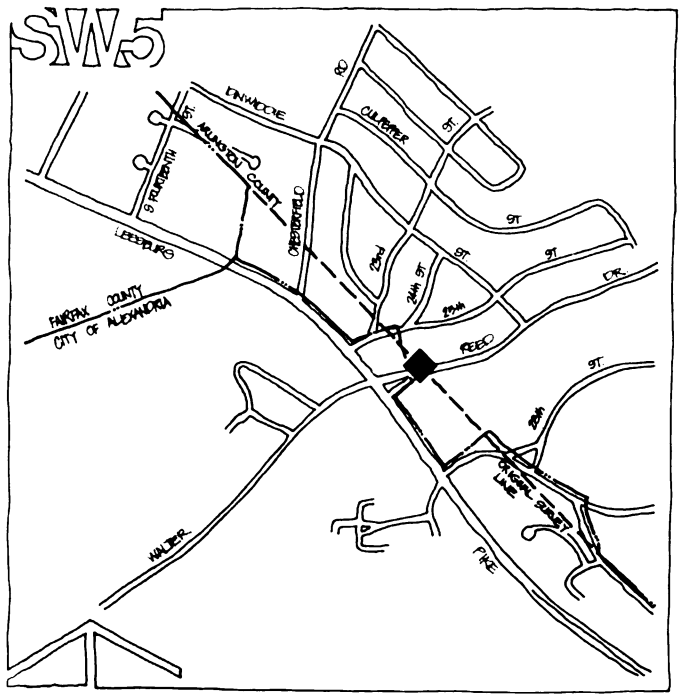
SOUTHWEST NO. 2 MILE MARKER–Fronting on the east side of Russell Road just north of King Street is a prominently displayed stone which can be easily seen; however, this marker bears no inscriptions, and therefore is obviously not one of the original boundary stones.



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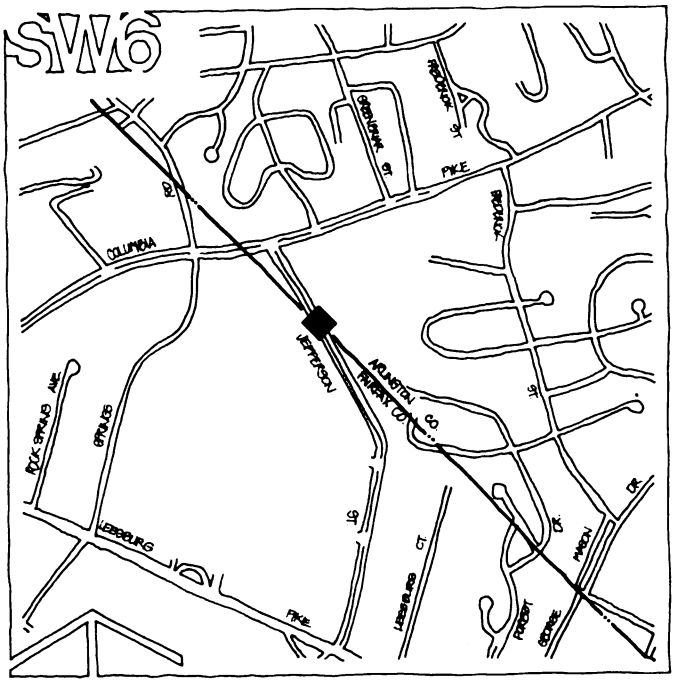


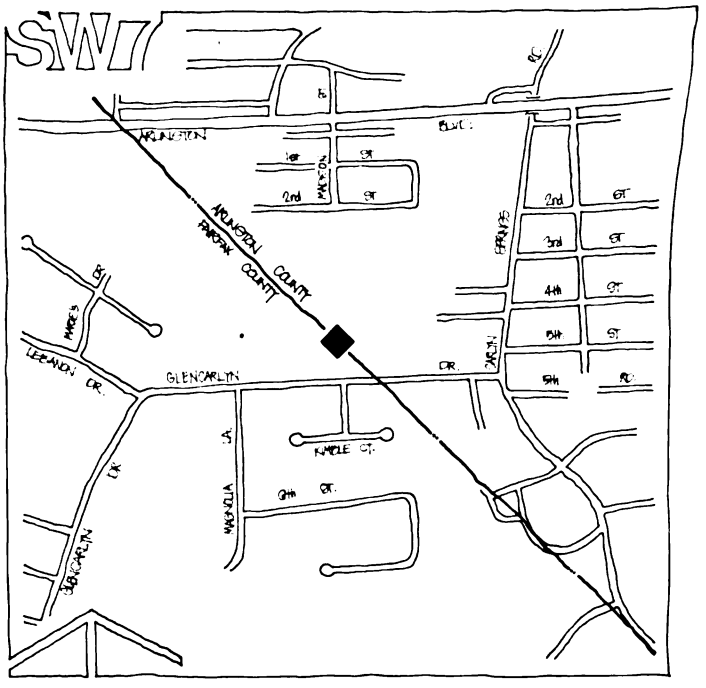
SOUTHWEST NO. 3 MILE MARKER—The first stone in Virginia to be placed at other than equal miles rests at the north end of the parking lot of the First Baptist Church, 2932 King Street, Alexandria. Since the end of the mile was in a ravine, this marker is located slightly less than three miles from the south corner. Although badly chipped it is fairly well protected. Weeds and vines, however, have obscured it somewhat, and it is best viewed from the parking lot.

SOUTHWEST NO. 4 MILE MARKER—Partially concealed by weeds and trash the marker is located adjacent to Fairlington Village at the edge of King Street just north of Wakefield Street. It has been broken off even with the ground, and the stump partially covered by reconstruction of the highway. It is best seen by parking on Wakefield Street and viewing the stone on foot.

SOUTHWEST NO. 5 MILE MARKER—This stone is in a nice setting on the edge of a stream valley park next to Walter Reed Parkway just east of King Street. As with number four it has been broken off near the ground. Rebuilding of the roadway has almost covered the stone; however, the fence is easily seen.

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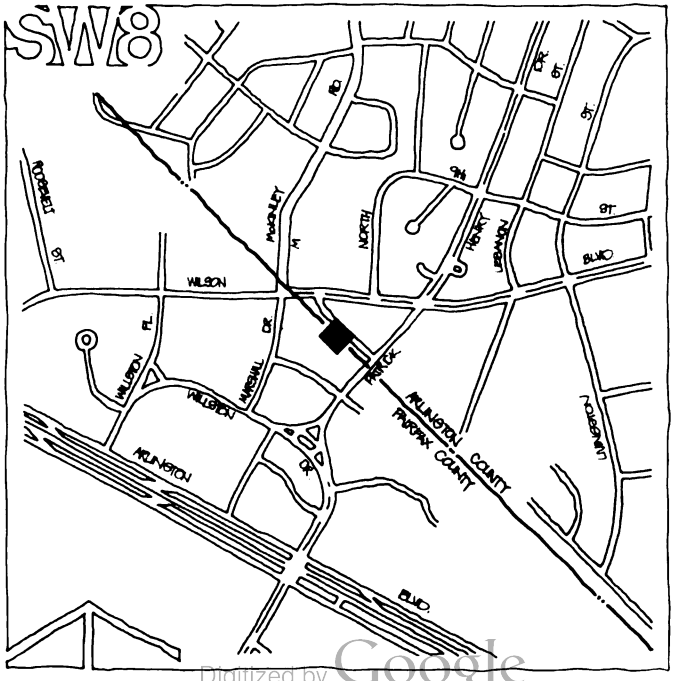


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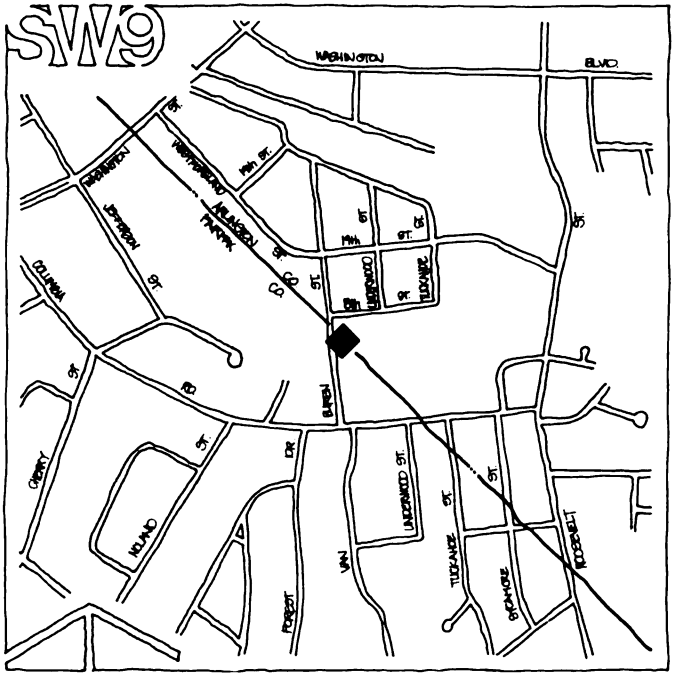
SOUTHWEST NO. 6 MILE MARKER—The second Virginia stone to be placed at an uneven distance (this time because the end of the mile was in a stream), this marker has been moved and is now in the median strip of Jefferson Street just south of Columbia Pike in Arlington. It was relocated because it's original site is now occupied by an apartment. Although badly cracked it has been repaired and rests in a prominent location.

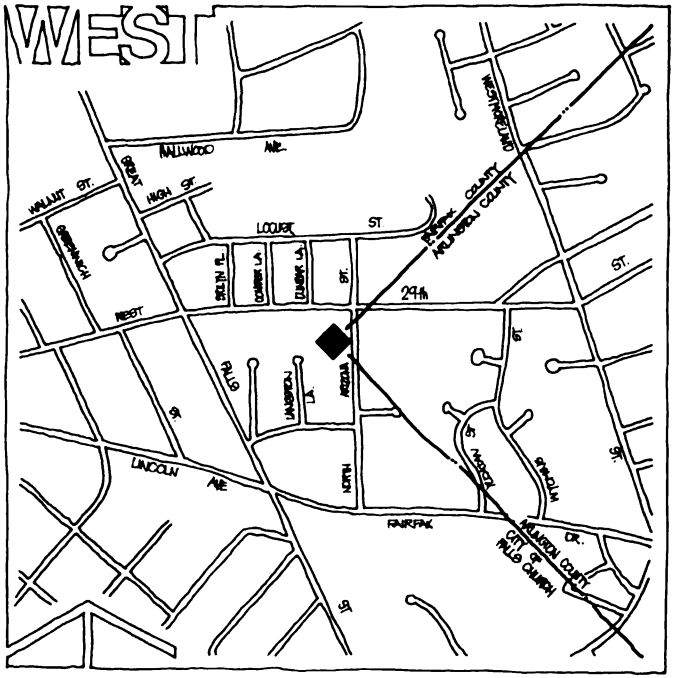
SOUTHWEST NO. 7 MILE MARKER—The only stone in this quadrant that cannot be seen from the street is next to a fence on the edge of a woods some distance from a road. It is well protected by surrounding vegetation; nevertheless, it remains badly chipped and in very poor condition. Much of its destruction has been attributed to bullets or shot.

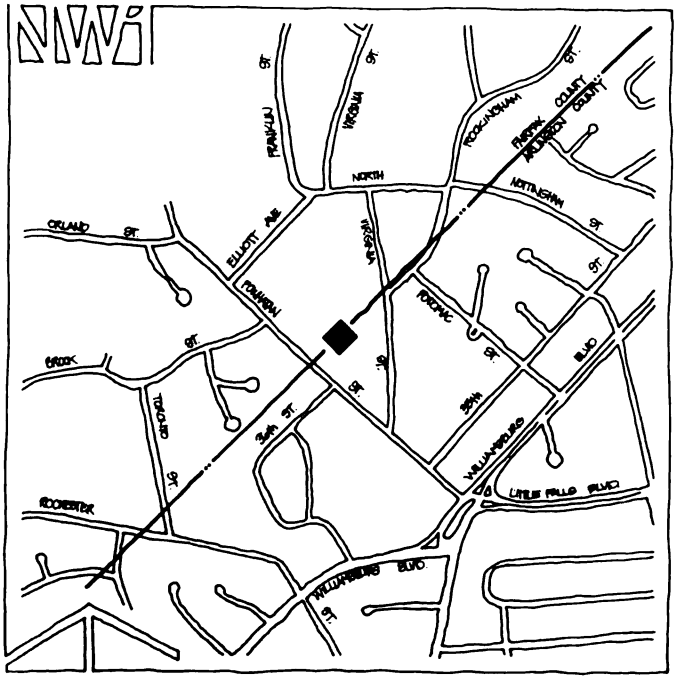
SOUTHWEST NO. 8 MILE MARKER—After disappearing twice this stone has been recovered and is now located on the edge of a parking lot behind an apartment building at the intersection of John Marshall Drive and Wilson Blvd. in Arlington. Despite its well protected location within an iron enclosure, the marker, which had been relocated and rotated, is badly chipped and weathered.



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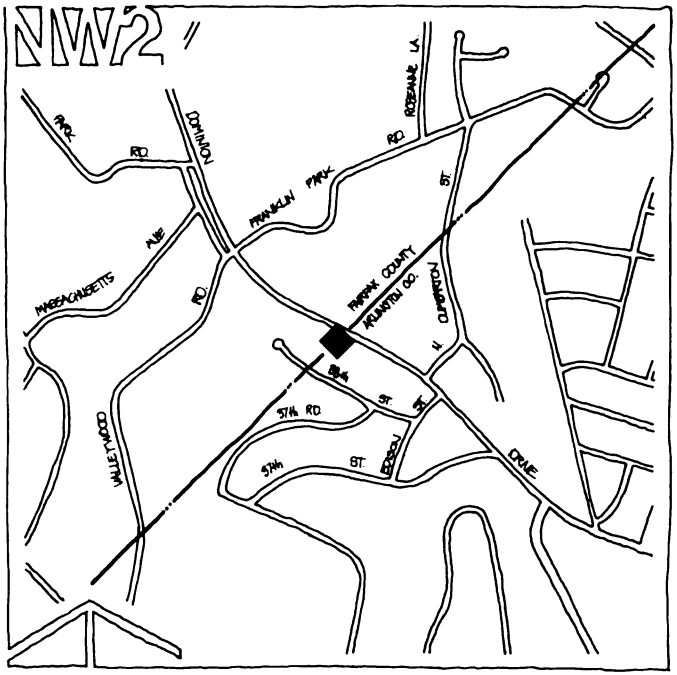


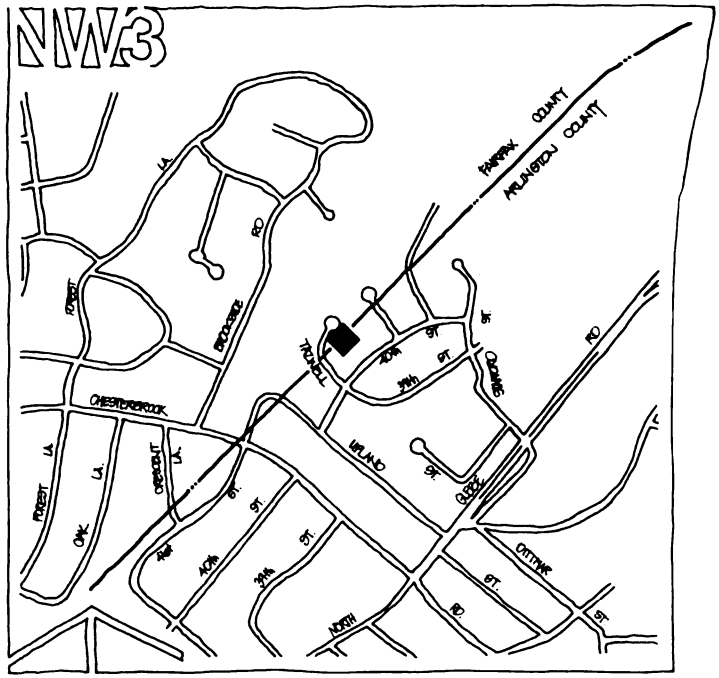
SOUTHWEST NO. 9 MILE MARKER—A stream valley park along Van Buren Street north of Columbia Street in Falls Church is the setting for this boundary stone. The marker is in very good condition - probably because of its protected location - and is easily seen from an automobile.

WEST CORNER STONE—Located off of Meridian Street just south of West Street in Falls Church, this marker is in perhaps the nicest setting of all the boundary stones. It rests in an attractive park which is cleared and fenced. An iron enclosure surrounds both the stone and stump of a large oak tree that used to stand beside it. Two rows of white stones have been laid across the area, extending from the corner stone that marks the actual boundary line. Unlike the north and east markers the west stone bears horizontal inscriptions.

NORTHWEST NO. 1 MILE MARKER—The side yard of a home at 3607 Powaton Street on the Arlington County line is the location of this fairly well maintained stone. Its protected wooded environment, however, obscures a view of the marker from the road.

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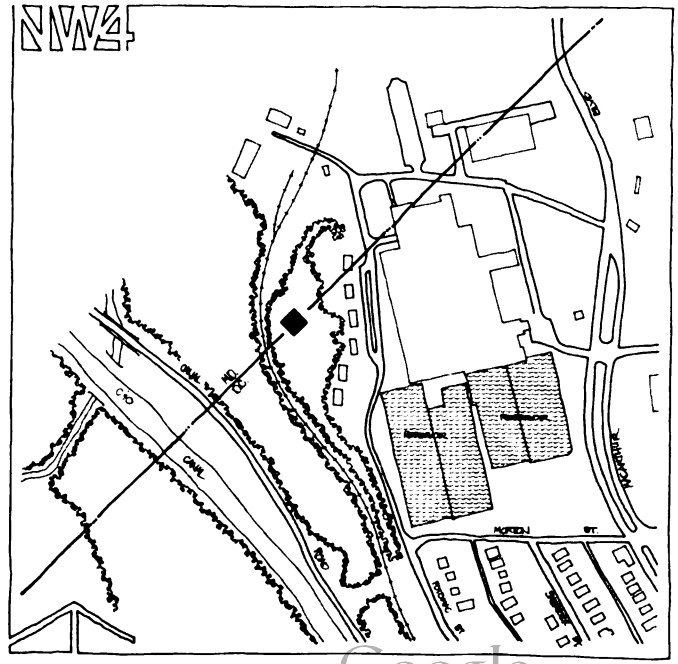


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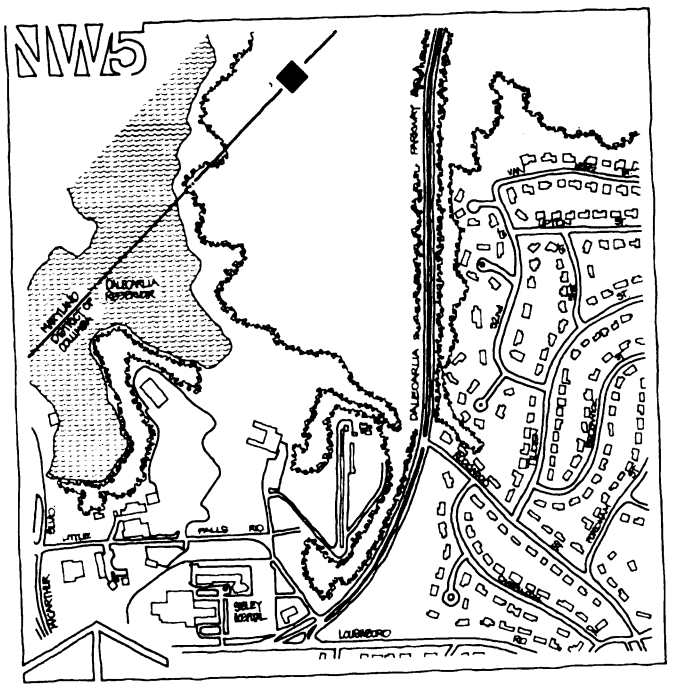
NORTHWEST NO. 2 MILE MARKER—Chipped and in poor condition, this stone is located on the edge of a deep woods next to a private home at 5298 Old Dominion Drive. Because of its well protected setting it is necessary to drive up to the house to view the marker.

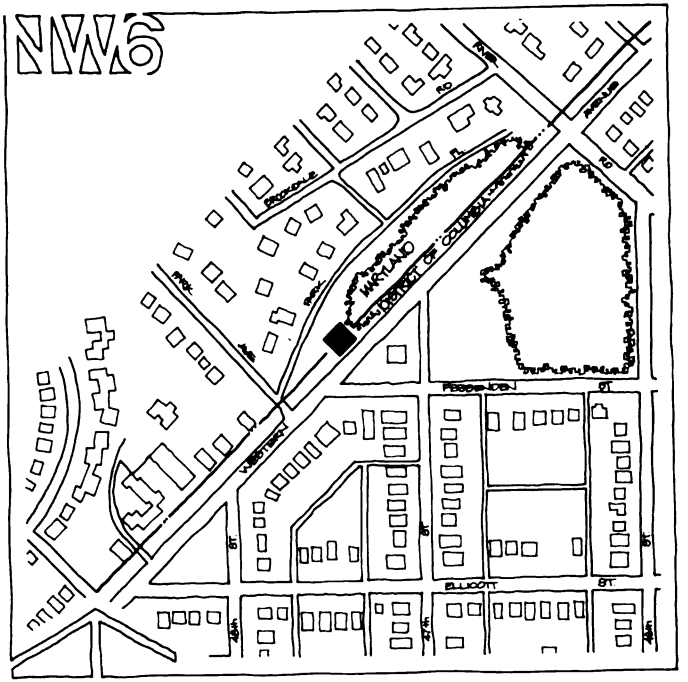
NORTHWEST NO. 3 MILE MARKER—Located in the center of the backyard of a home at 4013 Tazwell Street, Arlington, this slightly chipped stone rests in a well protected setting. It was placed slightly beyond its mile distance from NW 2 because the higher, firmer ground would provide a more permanent site. The marker must be seen on foot, as it is not visible from the street.

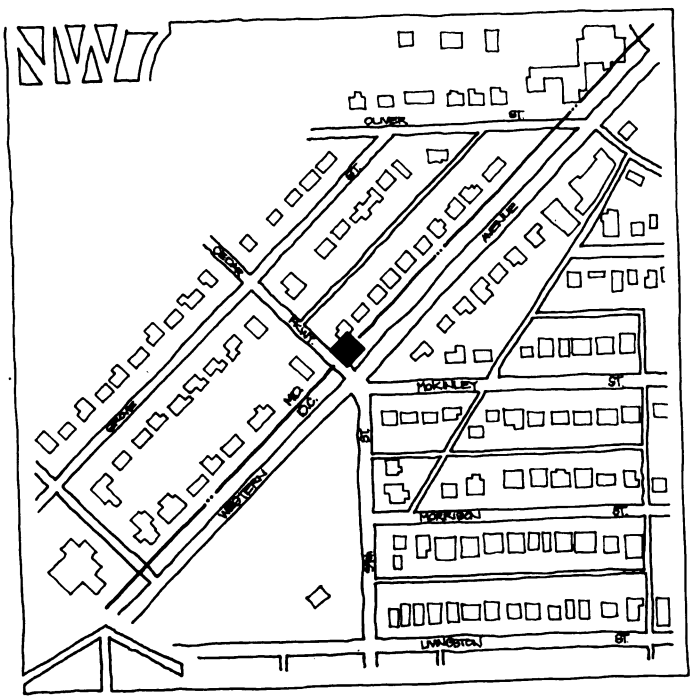
NORTHWEST NO. 4 MILE MARKER—The first stone in Maryland and the first to have a protective fence around it, this ivy covered stone is located in the back yard of a home within the fenced Dalecarlia Reservation. It is located beyond its proper location which would have been in the Potomac Gorge. It is also the first stone to bear the inscription 1792, as do all the Maryland markers. Because of its location behind the house it is not visible from the street; however, it is easily accessible on foot.



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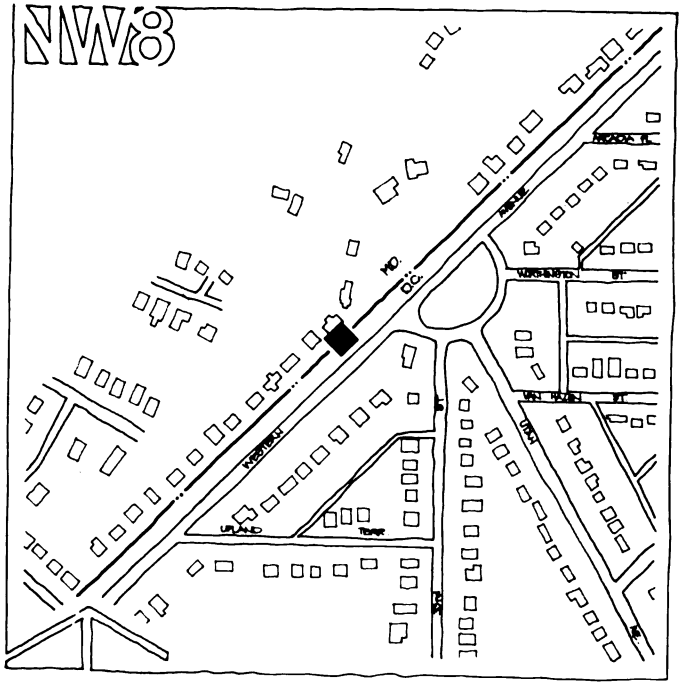


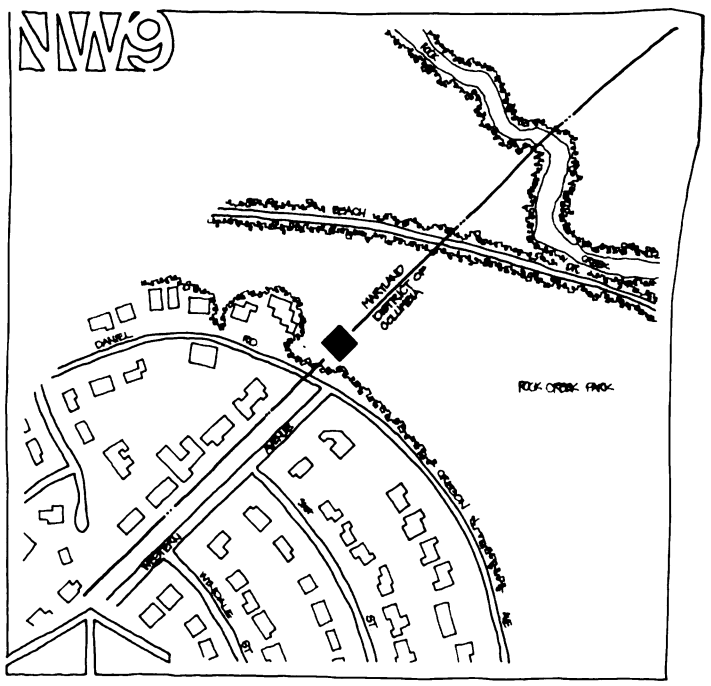
NORTHWEST NO. 5 MILE MARKER—The second stone within the Dalecarlia Reservation, this one is located near Westmoreland Circle at Massachusetts Avenue in the mist of a deep woods. In only fair condition the marker cannot be seen from an automobile; permission to view it must be obtained from reservoir guards.

NORTHWEST NO. 6 MILE MARKER—This stone is badly damaged and rests within an iron fence in the middle of a small field along Western Avenue near Fessenden Street. It is easily seen from an automobile on Western Avenue or by driving along Park Place which branches from Western.

NORTHWEST NO. 7 MILE MARKER—In perfect condition this stone is located in the well-manicured front lawn of a home at 5600 Western Avenue. It's protective grill is missing; nevertheless, the stone is obviously well cared for, and the very fine carvings are legible. A high hedge blocks a view of the marker from the road, but it is easily accessible on foot.

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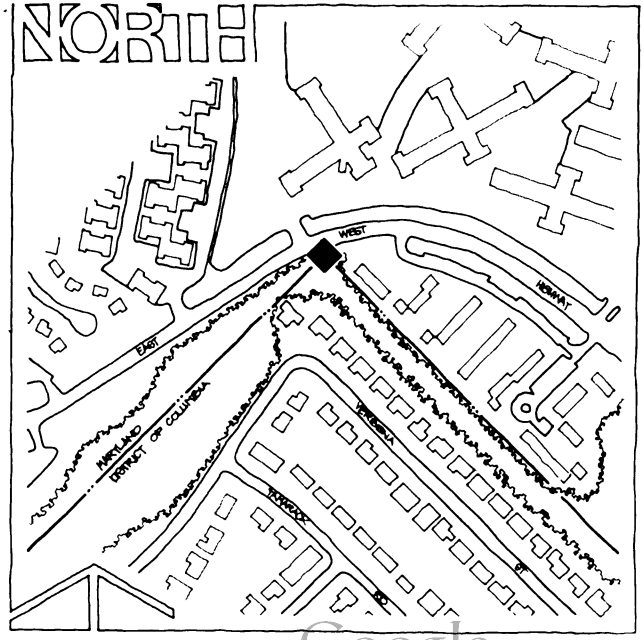


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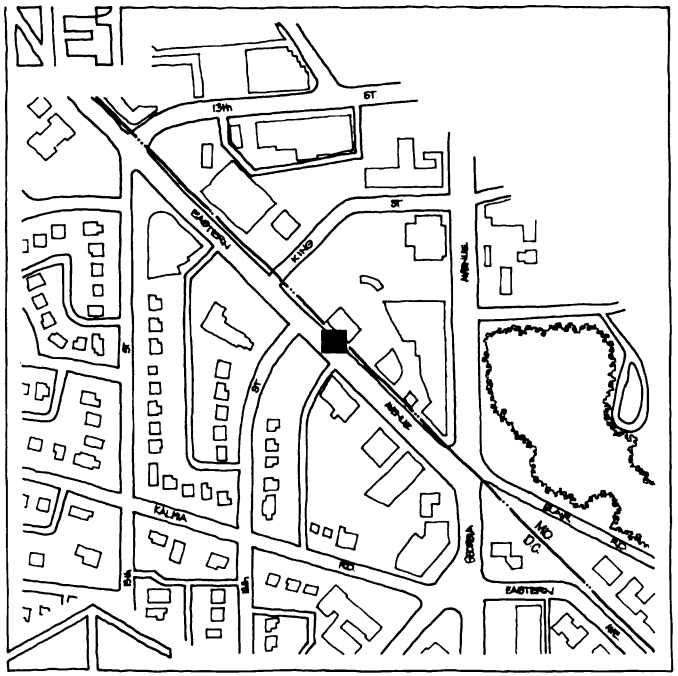
NORTHWEST NO. 8 MILE MARKER—Located in the front yard of a private home at 6422 Western Avenue at Pinehurst Circle, this stone is well protected and remains in good condition. It can be seen from an automobile. Surveys of the boundary markers indicate that NW 7 and NW 8 are the only stones precisely one mile apart. These same two are also the only ones without protective iron grill enclosures.

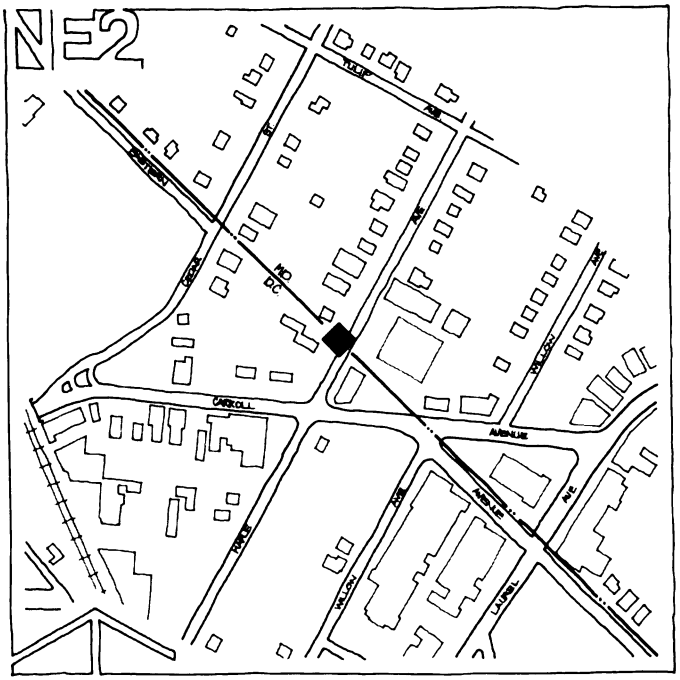
NORTHWEST NO. 9 MILE MARKER—The site of this stone is a wooded area of Rock Creek Park about 50 yards from the end of Western and Oregon Avenues, N.W. Although chipped somewhat, this stone is in fair condition and easily accessible by a foot path into the park.

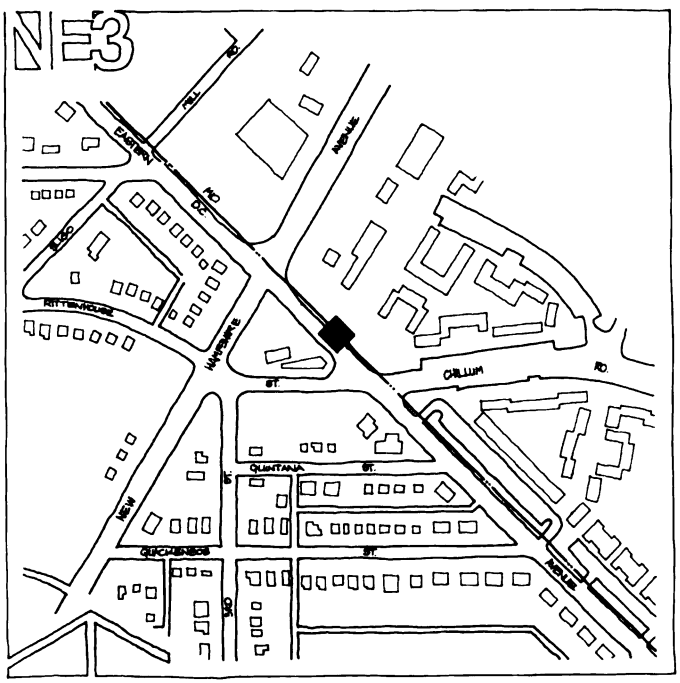
NORTH CORNER STONE—The North Corner Stone is located immediately south of East-West Highway west of 16th Street. It is in good condition despite the trash and leaf littered environment which also contributes to its relative obscurity.



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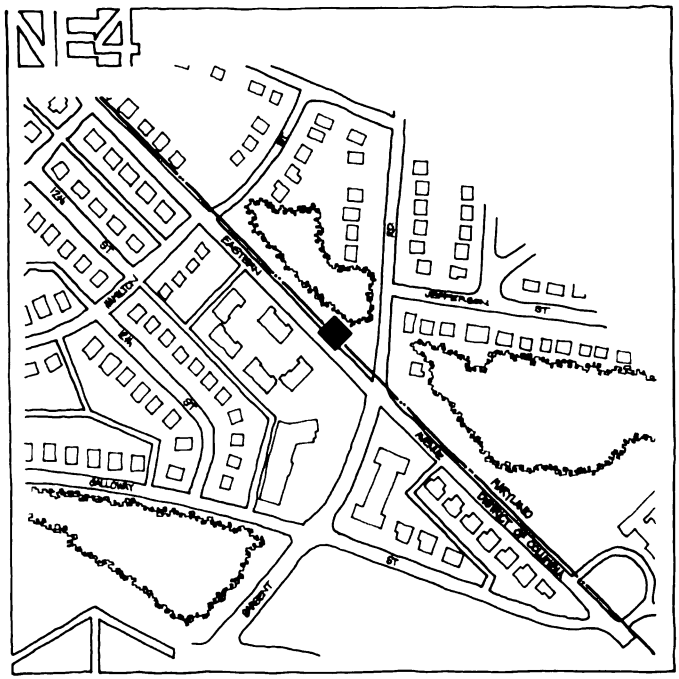


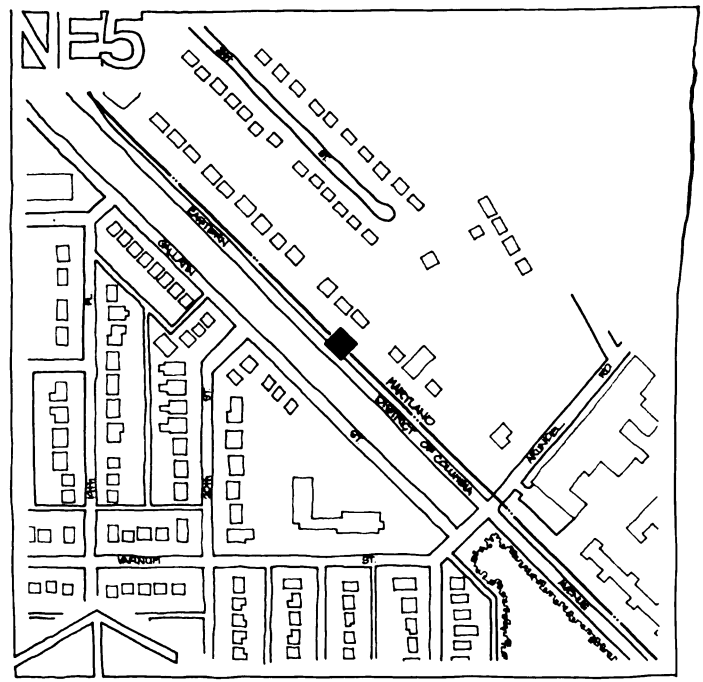
NORTHEAST NO. 1 MILE MARKER—A bronze plaque in the sidewalk in front of a shop at 7847 Eastern Avenue replaces this marker. It is possible that the stone and fence have been put in storage; however, there is no evidence to bear this out. This site and SW 2 are the only ones where the boundary stone is missing.

NORTHEAST NO. 2 MILE MARKER—Easily seen from an automobile this stone is located on the corner of a lawn near Maple and Carroll Avenue in Takoma Park. It has remained in good condition throughout the years.

NORTHEAST NO. 3 MILE MARKER—Located on the edge of a commercial parking lot on Eastern Avenue just south of New Hampshire, this stone has sunk into the ground somewhat and is difficult to see from an automobile. The battered iron enclosure is partially covered by weeds and has become filled with trash.

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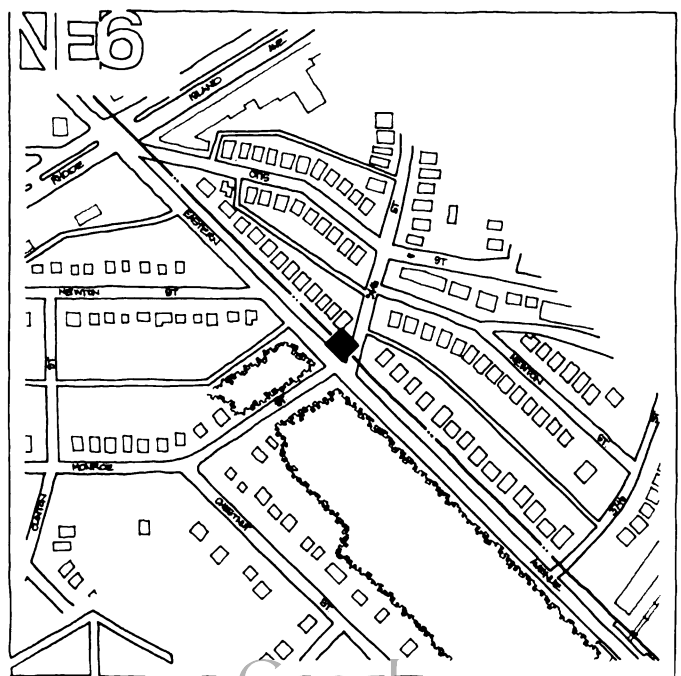




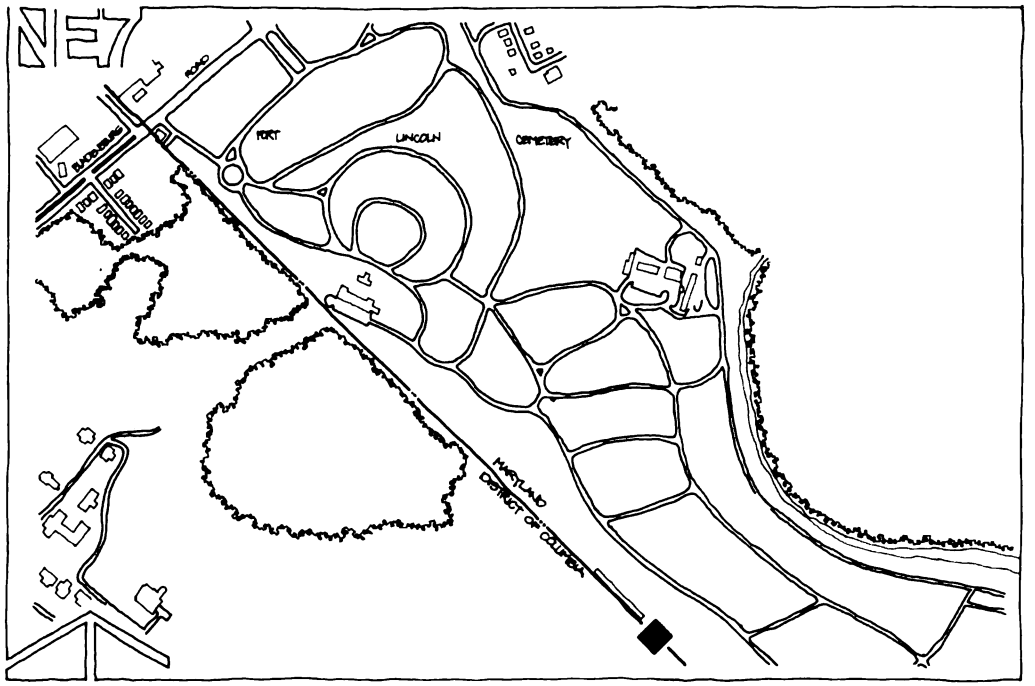
NORTHEAST NO. 4 MILE MARKER—Partially covered during road construction, this stone is located under a large tree at the side of Eastern Avenue just north of Sargent Road. It is in good condition, however, and can easily be seen from the street.

NORTHEAST NO. 5 MILE MARKER—A well maintained private lawn offers good protection for this stone, located at 4609 Eastern Avenue. In good condition this marker is easily seen from an automobile.

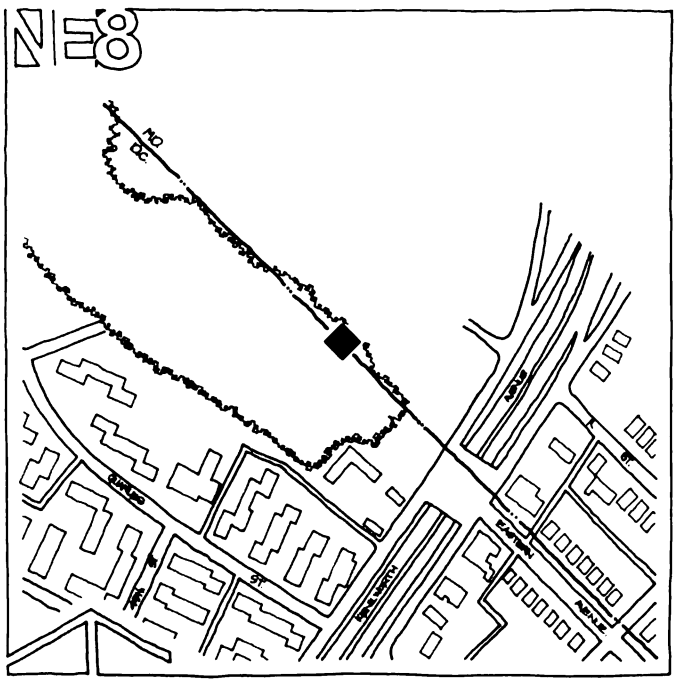
NORTHEAST NO. 6 MILE MARKER—A private home at 3601 Eastern Avenue is the site for this well protected stone. The marker remains in very good condition despite its location for over a century and a half near one of the oldest roads leading into Washington. It has been set in cement, and can easily be seen from the street.



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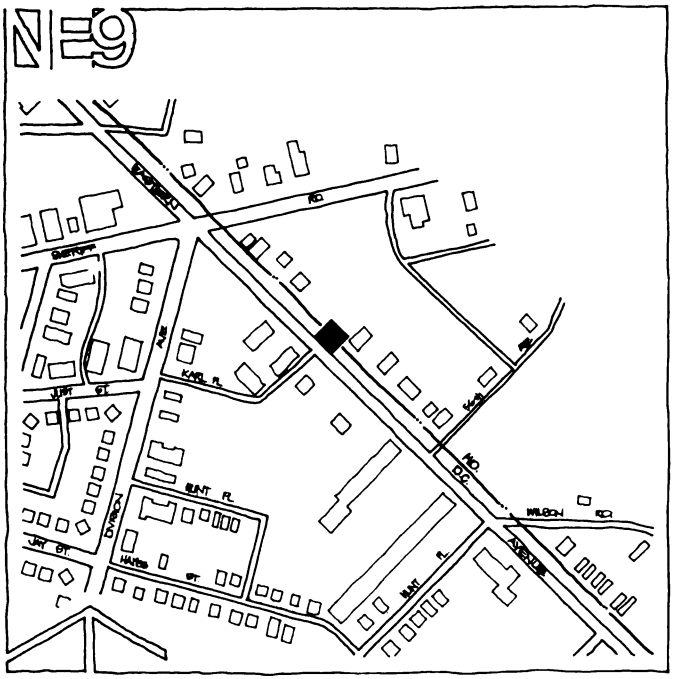
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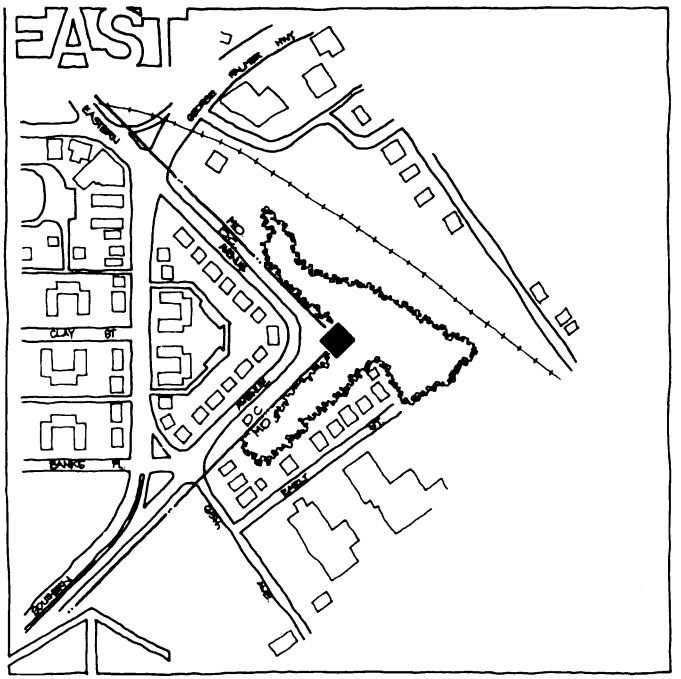


NORTHEAST NO. 7 MILE MARKER—An iron band holds together this stone which is located in Fort Lincoln Cemetery near an equipment storage facility. Sunken and nearly covered with leaves and mulch, it is not visible from Bladensburg Road but can be reached through the cemetery.

NORTHEAST NO. 8 MILE MARKER—This difficult to find stone rests in a clearing in a wooded area behind an apartment development near the intersection of Eastern and Kenilworth Avenues in the vicinity of the Aquatic Gardens. It has been badly ravaged by what appears to have been bullets.

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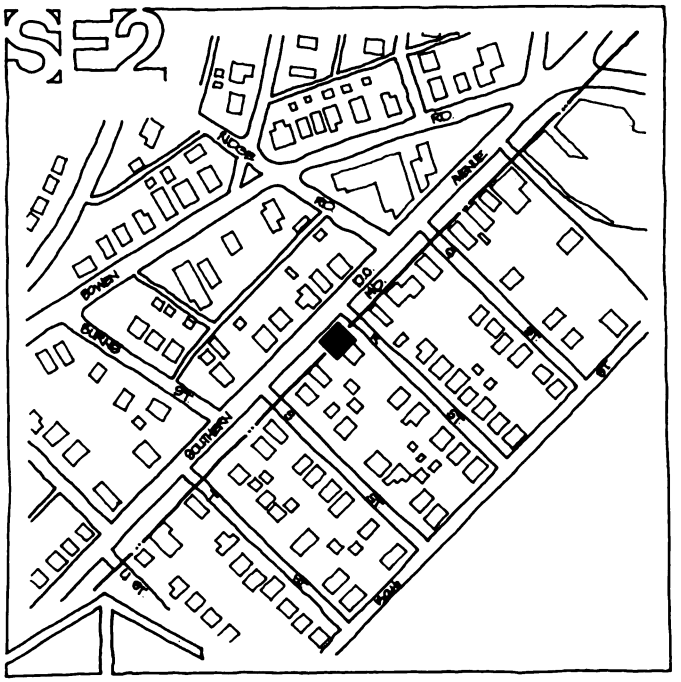
NORTHEAST NO. 9 MILE MARKER–This well protected stone is in the front yard of a private home at 919 Eastern Avenue. At one time a large cherry tree next to the marker threatened to upheave it. Aside from this it has remained in excellent condition.

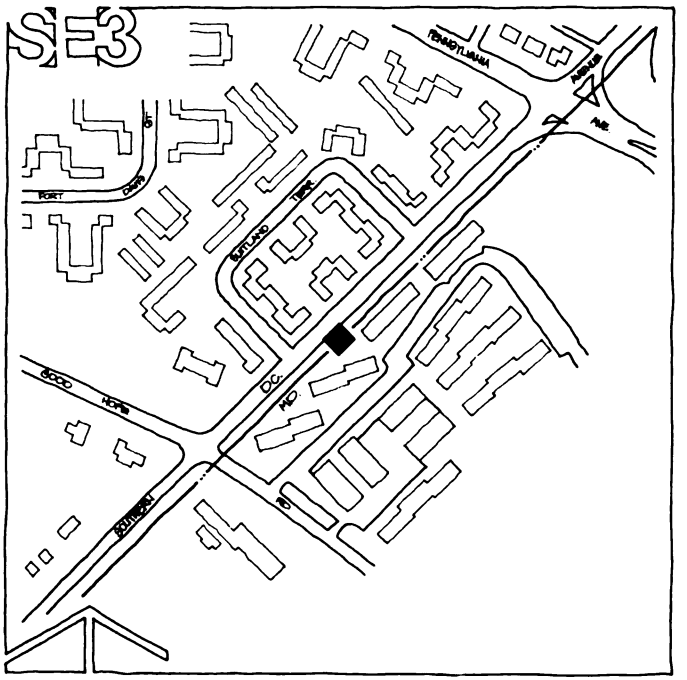
EAST CORNER STONE–The East marker - as with other corner markers - is larger and marked differently from the intermediate stones. Located just southeast of the intersection of Eastern and Southern Avenues, the stone is surrounded by leaves, weeds and trash. It cannot be seen from an automobile but is easily identifiable by the iron fence.

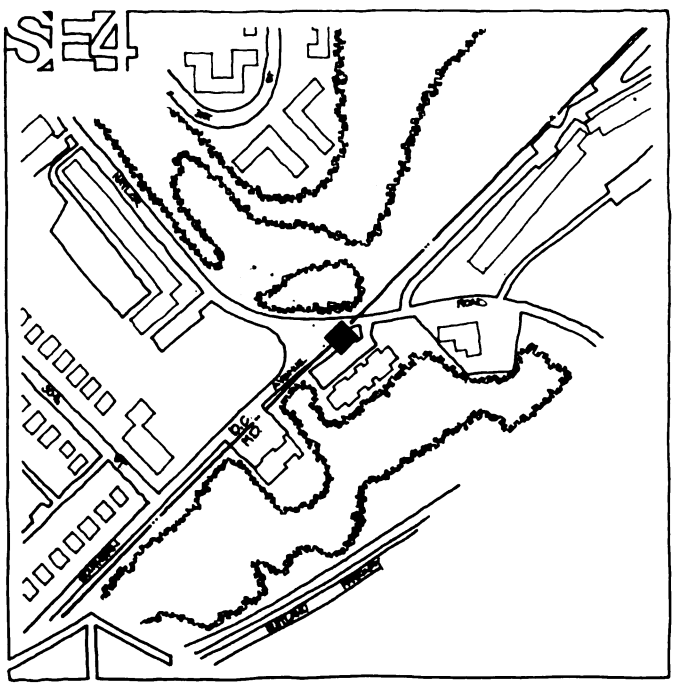
SOUTHEAST NO. 1 MILE MARKER–Located near a small trash dump just east of 54th and D Streets this marker is almost completely covered with weeds and vines. It is in excellent condition, and although not visible from the street is easily reached on foot.



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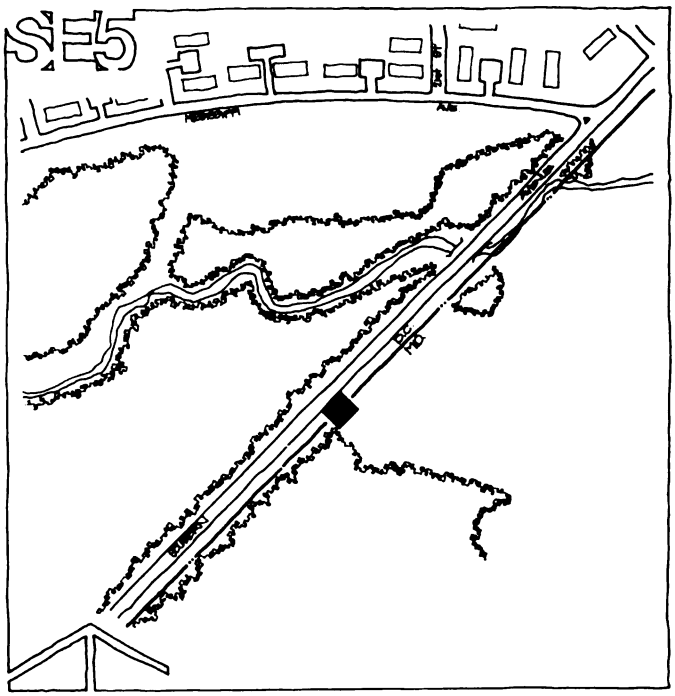


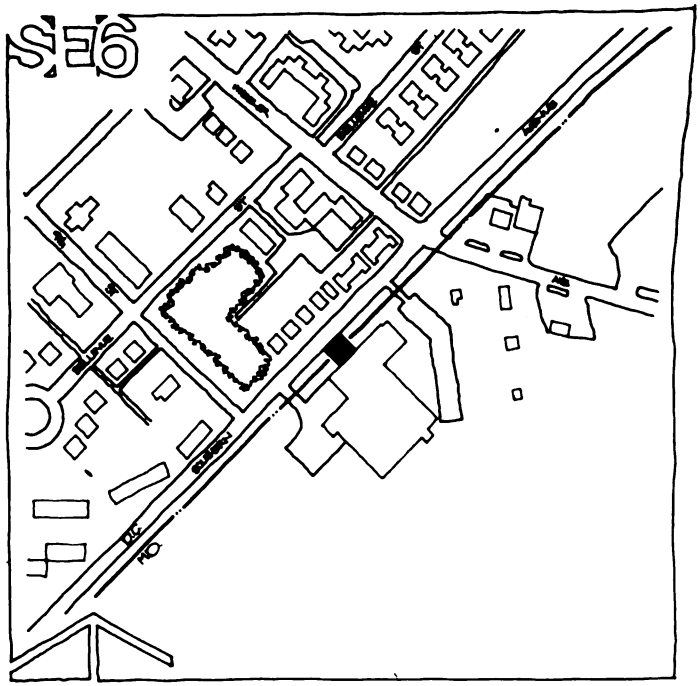
SOUTHEAST NO. 2 MILE MARKER—Nicely integrated into a well manicured front lawn at 4345 Southern Avenue the stone is surrounded by low vegetation and a flagstone wall. A flagpole further enhances the setting for this well preserved marker which is difficult to see because of the bushes around it.

SOUTHEAST NO. 3 MILE MARKER—This marker is larger than the other intermediate stones, and has been incorporated into a niche in a hedge bordering garden apartments at 3908 Southern Avenue. Although somewhat weathered and chipped it is easily recognized from the street.

SOUTHEAST NO. 4 MILE MARKER—All that remains of this stone is an indistinguishable nub. It is located next to Naylor Road near the intersection of Suitland Parkway. Although surrounded by trash it can be seen from the road.

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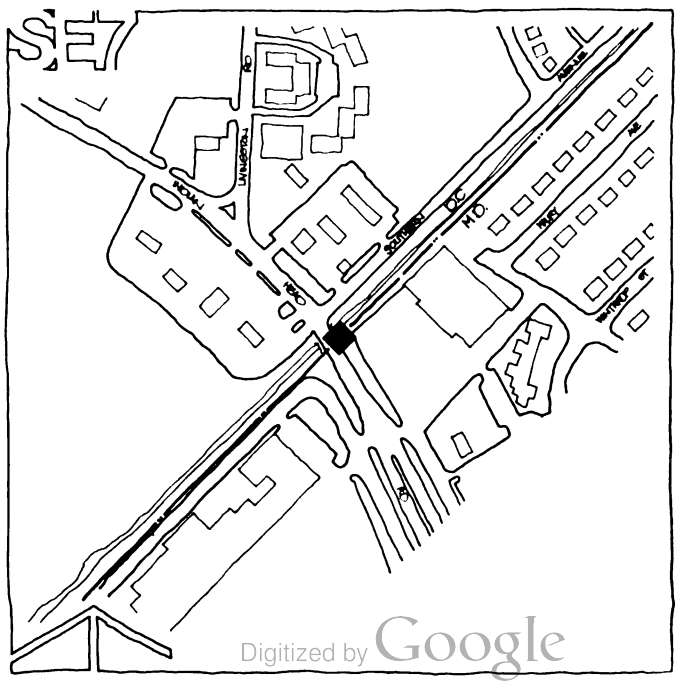




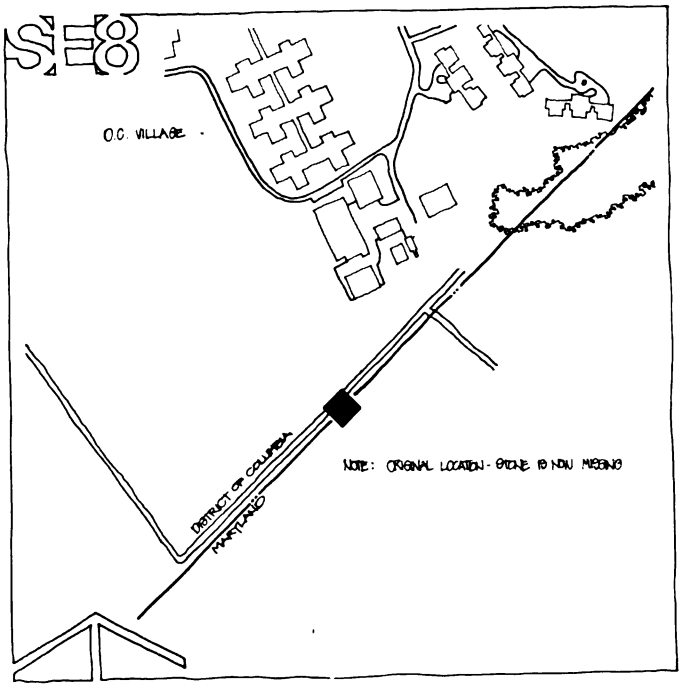
SOUTHEAST NO. 5 MILE MARKER—Covered by weeds and grass this stone rests in the middle of an open field just southeast of the intersection of Mississippi and Southern Avenues. It is difficult to view through the vegetation, but the site is easily seen from Southern Avenue.

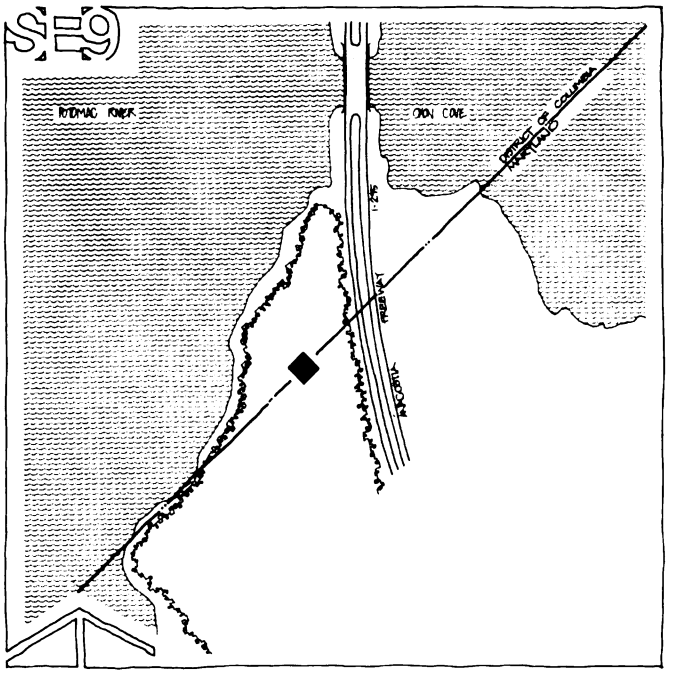
SOUTHEAST NO. 6 MILE MARKER—Attractive landscaping elements, including an old gas lamp, provide a beautiful setting for this stone. Located near the entrance of the Henry Gilpin Company at 901 Southern Avenue, it is in excellent condition and exhibits perhaps the best remaining example of the beautiful carving on all of the original markers. It is visible from Southern Avenue.

SOUTHEAST NO. 7 MILE MARKER—All that remains of this stone is a small grass covered nub. The enclosure has been damaged by cars and vandals and is cluttered with trash. Only about 10 feet from the heavily traveled highway the stone rests near the South Capital Street Bridge just south of Southern Avenue.



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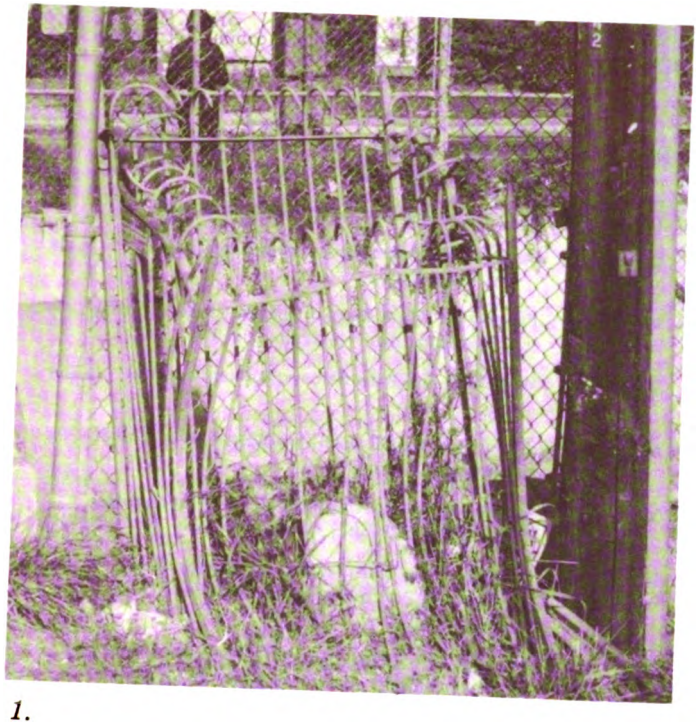


SOUTHEAST NO. 8 MILE MARKER—The site for this stone is now a large landfill operation at D.C. Village. The stone itself has apparently been placed in storage and will be reset after the landfill is completed.

SOUTHEAST NO. 9 MILE MARKER—The last stone in Maryland, this has been known in the past as the Fox Ferry Milestone - probably because of its location in the Potomac riverbed at Fox's Ferry. It has been submerged in the river several times since the original survey and was moved to higher ground and reset in 1969. However, it has not been determined if the new site marks the actual District-Maryland boundary.

Examples of Neglect. 1. Southeast No. 7 Mile Marker; 2. Southwest No. 3 Mile Marker; 3. Southeast No. 4 Mile Marker; 4. Southeast No. 1 Mile Marker

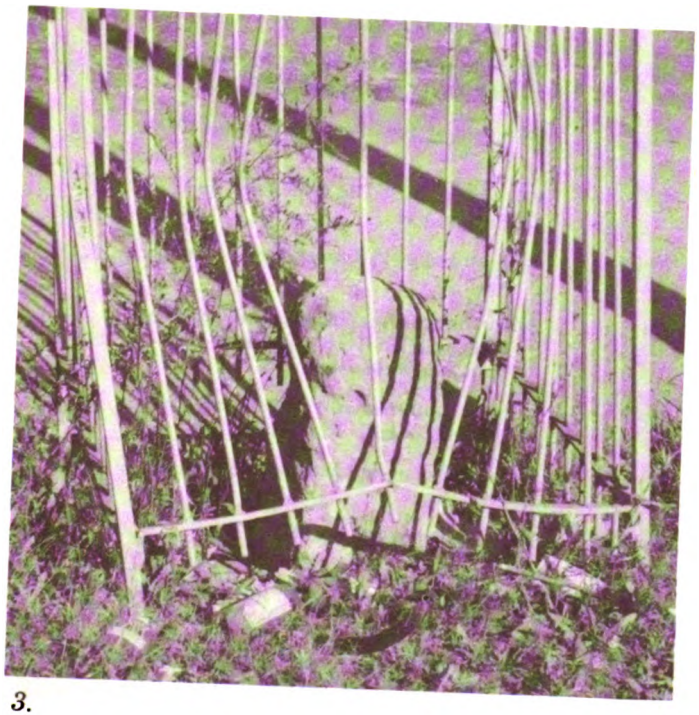
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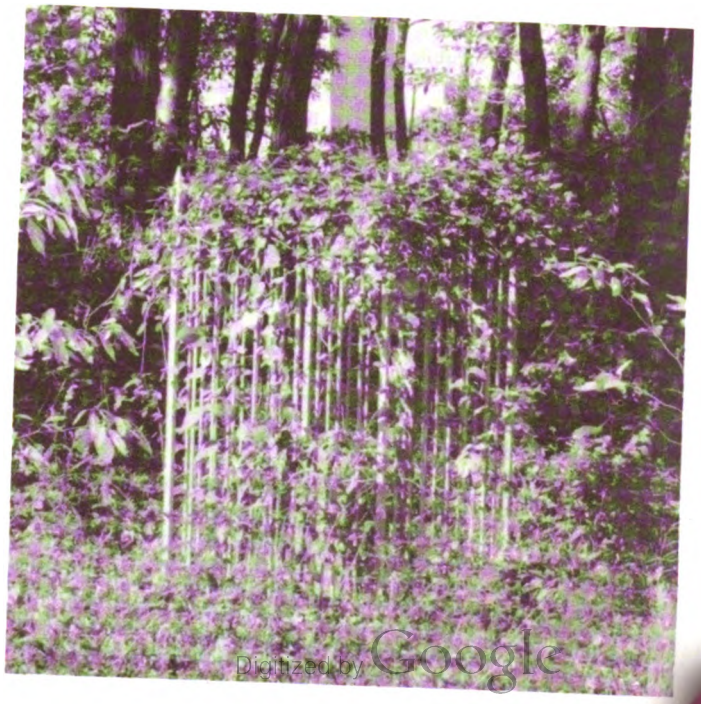
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SUMMARY OF BOUNDARY STONE LOCATIONS, OWNERSHIP AND CONDITION

STONE	OWNERSHIP	CONDITION	ORIGINAL STONE	MOVED	LOCATION
SOUTH STONE *	Public	Fair/Poor	Yes	No	Encased in Seawall before front door of Jones' Point Lighthouse, Alexandria, Va.
SW-1	Public	Fair	Yes	Yes	S. Payne and Wilkes Sts., Alexandria, Va.
SW-2	Public	Poor	No	Yes	East side of Russell Road near King Street, Alexandria, Va.
SW-3	Private	Good	Yes	No	Parking lot, First Baptist Church of Alexandria, 2932 King Street, Alexandria, Va.
SW-4 *	Public	Broken off to the Ground	Yes	No	Wakefield and King Streets, Alexandria, Va.
SW-5 *	Public	Broken off near the Ground	Yes	No	100 feet east of Route 7 on Walter Reed Drive, Arlington, Va.
SW-6	Public	Fair	Yes	Yes	On median of Jefferson Street, 300 feet south of Columbia Pike, Arlington, Va.
SW-7	Public	Poor	Yes	No	30 feet east of path leading to athletic field from Carlyn Spring Road and Olds Street, Arlington, Va.
SW-8	Private	Fair/Poor	Yes	Yes	On edge of parking area, 100 feet from water tower behind apartment building at John Marshall and Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Va.
SW-9	Public	Good	Yes	No	In park at 18th and Van Buren Streets Falls Church, Va.
WEST STONE	Public	Poor	Yes	No	West side of Meridian Street, 200 feet south of West Street, Falls Church, Va.
NW-1	Private	Badly Chipped	Yes	No	Back yard of 3607 Powaton Street, Fairfax Co., Va.
NW-2	Private	Fair/Poor	Yes	No	Side yard of 5298 Old Dominion Drive, Fairfax, Va.
NW-3	Private	Good/Fair	Yes	No(?)	Back yard of 4013 Tazwell Street, Fairfax, Va.
NW-4	Public	Good/Fair	Yes	No	Behind director's residences, 100 feet from B&O Railroad Georgetown spur in Dalecarlia Reservation, D.C.
NW-5	Public	Fair	Yes	No	1/4 mile southwest of Westmoreland Circle within Dalecarlia Reservation, D.C.
NW-6	Private?	Very Poor	Yes	No	Western Avenue and Fessenden Street, N.W., D.C.
NW-7	Private ?	Very Good (Raised in 1964)	Yes	No (?)	5600 Western Avenue, D.C.
NW-8	Private	Good/Fair (No Fence)	Yes	No	6400 Western Avenue, D.C.
NW-9	Public	Excellent/Good	Yes	No	50 yards into Rock Creek Park, down path from Western and Oregon Avenues, D.C.

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SUMMARY OF BOUNDARY STONE LOCATIONS, OWNERSHIP AND CONDITION –Continued

STONE	OWNERSHIP	CONDITION	ORIGINAL STONE	MOVED	LOCATION
NORTH STONE	Public	Fair/Poor	Yes	No	20 feet south of East-West Highway, 1/10 mile west of 16th Street, N.W., D.C.
NE-1	-	-	Missing	-	Brass plaque in sidewalk, 7847 Eastern Ave. Silver Spring, Md.
NE-2	Private	Good/Fair	Yes	No	100 feet north of Carroll Avenue on west side of Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Md.
NE-3 *	Public	Fair	Yes	No	Eastern Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue, Prince Georges County, Md.
NE-4 *	Public	Good (Buried)	Yes	No	Eastern Avenue and Sargent Road, Prince Georges County, Md.
NE-5	Private	Good	Yes	No	4609 Eastern Avenue, N.E., D.C.
NE-6	Private	Very Good	Yes	No	3601 Eastern Avenue & 34th Street, N.E., D.C.
NE-7 *	In Cemetery	Split but Legible	Yes	No	Along fence between Ft. Lincoln Cemetery and Ft. Lincoln New Town, 100 feet south of equipment storage building, Prince Georges County, Md.
NE-8 *	Public (?)	Good	Yes	No	200 yards northwest of intersection of Eastern Avenue and Kenilworth Avenue, Prince Georges County, Md.
NE-9 *	Private	Fair	Yes	No (?)	919 Eastern Avenue, Prince Georges County, Md.
EAST STONE *	Public	Good	Yes	No	50 Yards southeast of intersection of Eastern Avenue and Southern Avenue, D.C.
SE-1 *	Public	Very Good	Yes	No	East end of D Street. 100 feet beyond 54th Street, S.E., D.C.
SE-2	Private	Very Good	Yes	No	4345 Southern Avenue, D.C.
SE-3	Private	Fair/Poor	Yes	No (?)	3908 Southern Avenue, D.C.
SE-4 *	Public	Extremely Poor	Yes	No	Naylor Road and District Line, D.C.
SE-5	Public (?)	Fair	Yes	No	400 yards southwest into woods across Oxon Hill Run from Mississippi Avenue and Southern Avenue,D.C.
SE-6	Private	Excellent	Yes	No	901 Southern Avenue, D.C.
SE-7	Public	Extremely Poor	Yes	No	South Capitol St. and Southern Avenue, D.C.
SE-8 *	Public	-	-	Yes	To be relocated in vicinity of lower end of D.C. Village, presumed to be in storage, D.C.
SE-9 *	Public	-	-	Yes	The stones and fence were reset in 1969.

* Indicates special need for immediate attention.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1 **All boundary stones should be in the ownership of the U.S. Government.** There appears to be some confusion as to the ownership of the boundary markers. Some are now on privately owned land. In Virginia the problem is further compounded by the Retrocession Act of 1846. Therefore, Congress should adopt legislation that provides for acquisition of the land and easements required to provide for the protection and maintenance of these historic markers. The amount of land required would have to be determined on an individual basis for each of the stones. Also the siting and location of each stone requires an individual assessment as to the lands needed to properly protect them and easements required to assure access for maintenance and public viewing. The amount of land acquired at each of the corner stones should be such as to create "Cornerstone Parks."

2 **The boundary stones should be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.** Currently the boundary markers are designated as Category II Landmarks by the Joint Committee on Landmarks of the National Capital. Because the markers are located in three different jurisdictions, a nomination form should be prepared jointly by the State Historic Preservation Offices in Md., Va., and D.C. and forwarded to the Department of Interior.

3 **The National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of Interior, should be given specific responsibility for the preservation and maintenance of the boundary stones and fences.** Within the Park Service an

Northwest No. 3 Mile Marker

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"Office of the Keeper of the Boundary Stones" should be created. Initially this office would be responsible for determining the amount of land needed as suggested in the first recommendation and would prepare the landscape plans for these lands. The importance of creating this office is to provide a control point in the Park Service regarding the boundary stones. Maintenance now occurs on a "catch as catch can" basis, and specific responsibility for the condition of these historic markers is difficult to identify.

4 **A "Cornerstone Park" should be created at each of the four cornerstone markers.** The corner stones should be on larger land plots than the mile stones. Land set aside in these locations should be sufficient to create a "Cornerstone Park" similar to the West Stone Park. It may be desirable to place at the site of the South Cornerstone, as Maj. L'Enfant suggested to President Washington, "a majestic column or a grand pyramid . . . (to) produce the happiest effect and completely finish the landscape."



West Corner Stone Park, Falls Church, Va.

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Jones' Point Lighthouse, Alexandria, Va., 1975

5 **Create a "Boundary Stone Museum."** The lighthouse at Jones' Point could be converted into such a museum, because this is the site of the South Cornerstone which was the first stone put in place during the survey. Secondly, this lighthouse is one of few remaining on the Potomac, and its restoration for museum purposes would preserve an important building type that might not otherwise survive.

6 **For historical integrity all boundary markers that have been moved should be placed in their original location.** If this is not possible, a plaque should be placed at the stone site stating its original location i.e., "This stone has been relocated 150 yards southeast of its original site."

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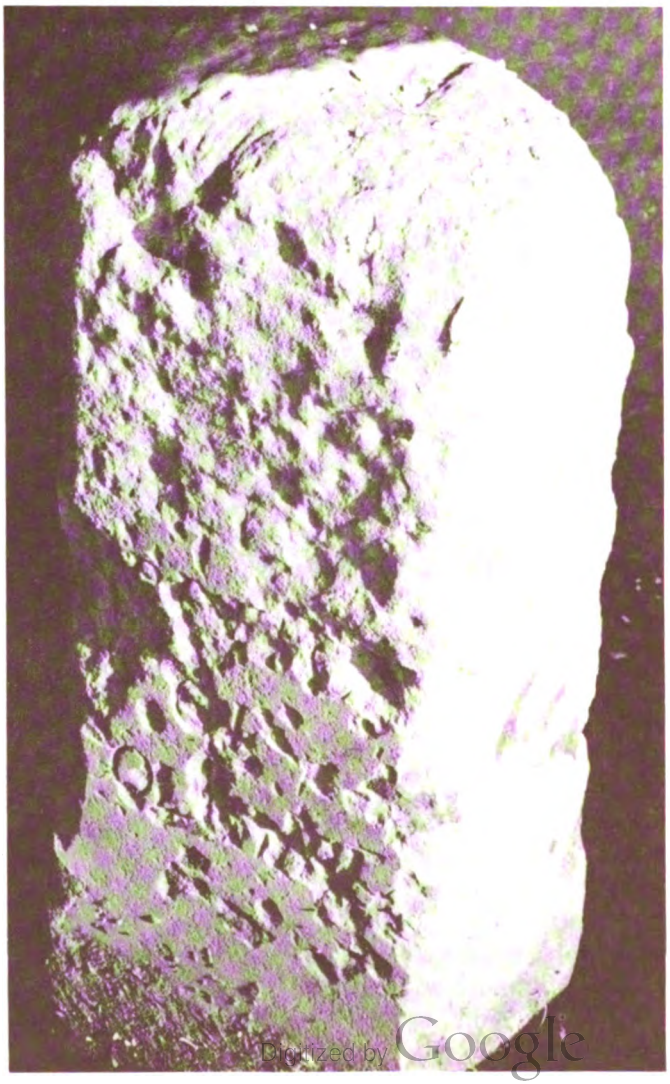
7 **One of the mile markers should be acquired by the Smithsonian Institution for permanent preservation.** Because of deterioration of the mile stones due to weathering (the sandstone used does not weather well in the Washington climate), it is suggested that the best of the remaining mile markers, probably Southeast No. 6, should be given to the Smithsonian Institution for permanent preservation and display. This is a relucant recommendation. However, unless at least one stone is permanently preserved future generations may never see an "original" boundary marker. This stone would be replaced in the manner suggested in the following recommendation.

8 **Each of the missing, badly decayed stones or broken stumps should be replaced.** A number of the mile markers are either missing or have been badly mutilated by weather, vandalism, etc. It is recommended that these stones be replaced by duplicates with appropriate inscriptions. Sandstone used in the original markers came from a quarry in Aquia, Va. The DAR fences should be restored and missing DAR plaques replaced. Any of the stone fragments removed should be carefully catalogued and placed in the Boundary Stone Museum as suggested in recommendation five.

9 **All of the stones should be treated with a protective coating.** All of the existing or replaced boundary stones should be treated with a protective coating that does not change the color or character of the stone. A number of chemical finishes exist that can be applied to stone to make it virtually weatherproof. However, some experimentation will probably be necessary to determine the proper product, method of application and protective nature of the material.

10 **The DAR's role in the stewardship of these monuments should be continued.** Each of the DAR Chapters responsible for one or more of the boundary markers should continue in its stewardship function. Each Chapter should inspect the stone site annually and prepare a report thereon which would be transmitted to the "Keeper of the Stones" for his files and to inform him of conditions that require attention.

South Cornerstone (See Recommendation No. 8)



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Northwest No. 7 Mile Marker (See Recommendation No. 9)

Southwest No. 8
Mile Marker (See Recommendation No. 10)



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DAUGHTERS of the AMERICAN REVOLUTION *

On December 3, 1914 the DAR Committee on Preservation of Historic Spots and Records for the District of Columbia held a meeting in the auditorium of the Woodward and Lothrop Store where Mr. Fred F. Woodward (brother of the co-founder of this store) explained the condition of the D.C. Boundary Markers and the need for their preservation.

The Committee selected as its project for the year the reclaiming of these stones. On April 7, 1915 the Committee passed a resolution which Mrs. George P. Conway, Chairman, presented at State Conference - "That the D.C. DAR take up for part of their patriotic work for the year the preservation and protection of the old boundary stones on which are recorded the oldest records of the District, by placing an iron fence around each stone, to be done by Chapter or individually." The recommendation was endorsed by the State Regent and adopted by the State. DAR records state:

This was no small project. It necessitated meeting with the District Commissioners, surveyors, civil engineers, assessors, real estate men, and Superintendent of Public Grounds and Buildings. Chapters had to be visited to arouse interest for sponsorship. Each milestone had to be visited and a program of work started to get them in condition before placing the fences.

*Note: The Bicentennial Project of the District of Columbia DAR, adopted at the annual State Conference during March 1972, was to seek help in the "Restoration of the Boundary Stones surrounding the Federal City and to make publication of their history possible." Mrs. Arthur E. Brown, D.C. DAR State Chairman of the United States of America Bicentennial Committee and Mrs. Eloise T. Jenkins a Vice Chairman have been most helpful in furnishing much of the historical material for this portion of the report and the early photographs of the markers.

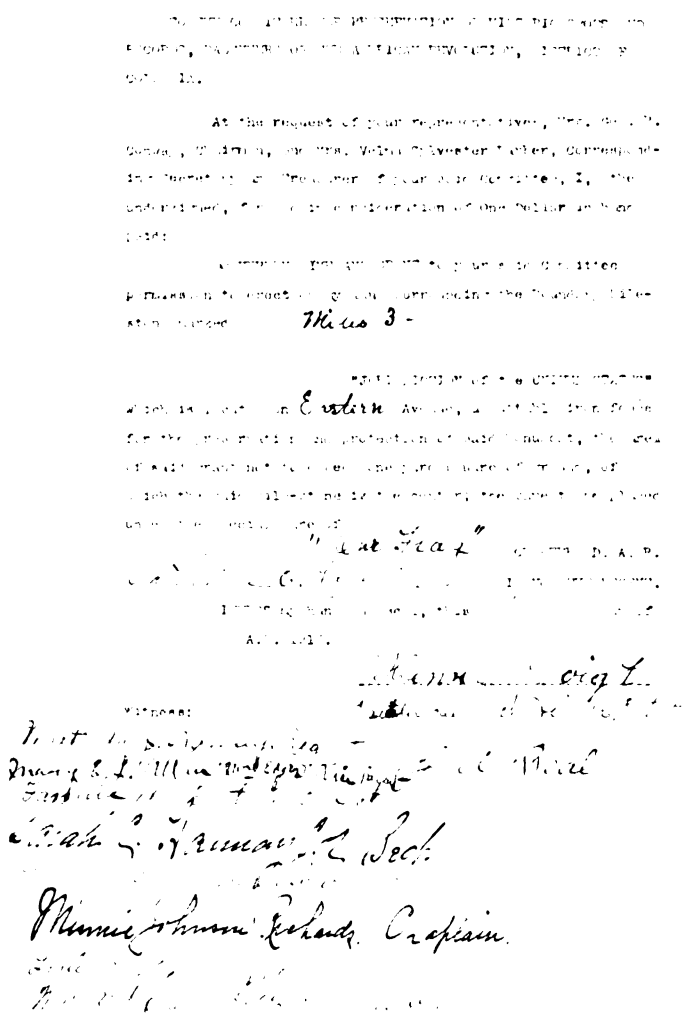
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DAR Dedication Ceremony of the Fencing of

Grants for the use of land were made with the sponsoring Chapter paying the sum of $1 for permission to erect the fences around the milestone.

All of the "deeds" are on file in the D.C. DAR Chapter House Headquarters.

Arrangements were made with the Gichener Iron Works to install the iron fences measuring about 3' by 3' and 5' high, with the corner posts to be set in cement, at a cost of $18 each. The four cornerstone fences were much larger (5' in diameter) the cost of each of these was $43. The Daughters completed the project by placing a bronze DAR Marker on each fence with the name of the Chapter which paid for the fence and accepted responsibility for care of the stone.



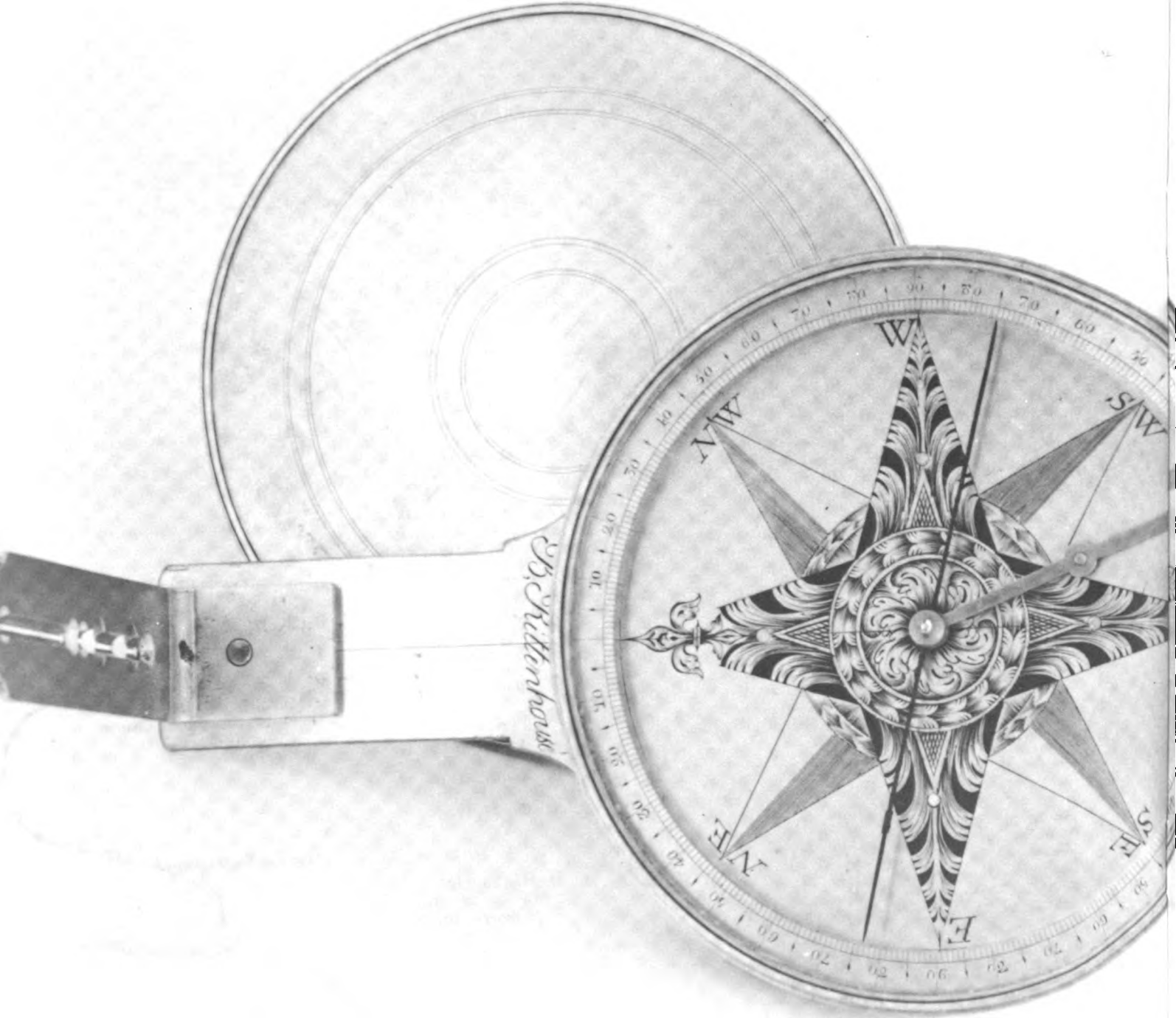
DAR "Deed" for Permission to Place Fence Around Northeast No. 3 Mile Marker, 1916.

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CURRENT D A R STEWARDSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

Stone No.	Original Responsibility	Date of Dedication of Fences	Changes in Responsibility
South Corner	D.C. DAR	April 30, 1926	Mt. Vernon Chapter
Southwest No. 1	Mt. Vernon Chapter		
Southwest No. 2	Mt. Vernon Chapter		
Southwest No. 3	American Liberty Chapter	June 23, 1917	
Southwest No. 4	Continental Chapter		
Southwest No. 5	Keystone Chapter	November 6, 1921	
Southwest No. 6	Fairfax Co., Va. Chapter	June 15, 1916	
Southwest No. 7	Fairfax Co., Va. Chapter		
Southwest No. 8	Unmarked		Dr. Elisha Dick Chap., Va.
Southwest No. 9	Falls Church Chapter	May 19, 1916	
West Corner	Virginia DAR		
Northwest No. 1	Richard Arnold Chapter	November 1, 1916	
Northwest No. 2	Old Dominion, Va. Chapter		Thomas Nelson Chapter, Va.
Northwest No. 3	Sarah St. Clair, Va. Chapter		Arlington House Chapter, Va.
Northwest No. 4	Columbia Chapter	July 12, 1915	The FIRST DEDICATION
Northwest No. 5	John Hall Chapter	October 1, 1916	Dolley Madison Chapter
Northwest No. 6	Independence Bell Chapter	June 1917	
Northwest No. 7	Parriot's Memorial Chapter	October 14, 1915	Eugenia Washington Chapter
Northwest No. 8	Col. John Donelson Chapter	November 4, 1916	
Northwest No. 9	Margaret Whetten Chapter		
North Corner	State of Maryland DAR	April 14, 1916	
Northeast No. 1	Mary Washington Chapter		
Northeast No. 2	Major L'Enfant Chapter		Descendants of '76 Chapter
Northeast No. 3	Our Flag Chapter	October 16, 1916	
Northeast No. 4	Elizabeth Jackson Chapter	November 18, 1916	
Northeast No. 5	Constitution Chapter	October 20, 1917	
Northeast No. 6	Livingstone Manor Chapter	June 2, 1916	
Northeast No. 7	National Training School		Katherine Montgomery Chapter
Northeast No. 8	Little John Boyden Chapter	June 30, 1926	
Northeast No. 9	Capt. Molly Pitcher Chapter	May 6, 1918	Manor House Chapter
East Corner	District of Columbia DAR	April 15, 1916	
Southeast No. 1	Sarah Franklin Chapter		
Southeast No. 2	Marcia Burns Chapter	May 17, 1916	
Southeast No. 3	Ruth Brewster Chapter		
Southeast No. 4	John Lindsay Chapter	May, 1916	American Eagle Chapter
Southeast No. 5	Louisa Adams Chapter		
Southeast No. 6	Martha Washington Chapter	June 26, 1926	
Southeast No. 7	Lucy Holcombe Chapter	October 28, 1916	
Southeast No. 8	Monticello Chapter	October 4, 1916	
Southeast No. 9	Potomac Chapter		

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APPENDIX

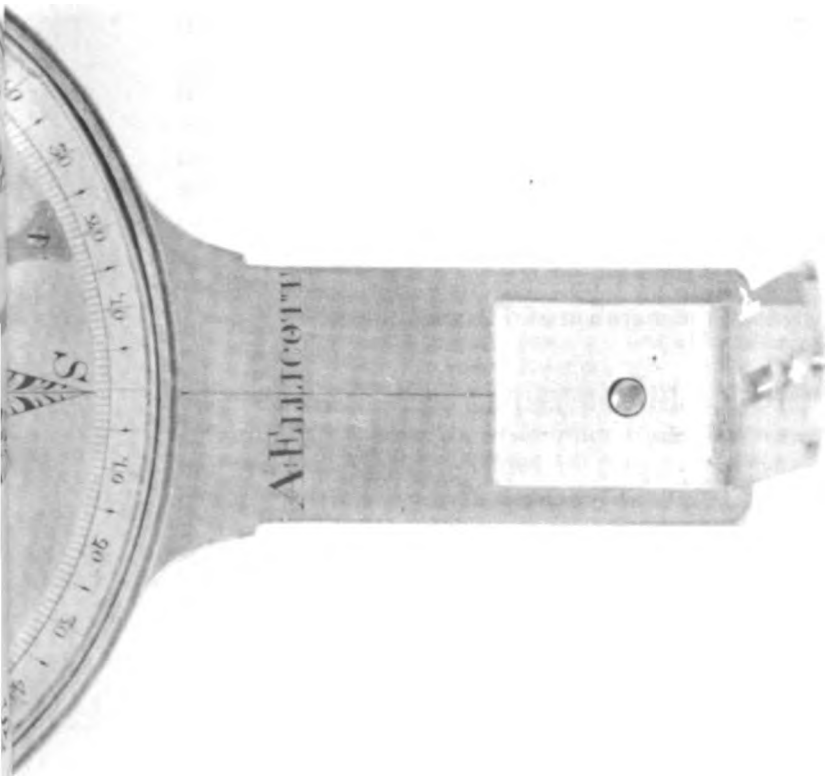
Andrew Ellicott's surveying instruments were among the finest in America during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He built some of them himself; some were custom made for Ellicott by his close friends, the Rittenhouse brothers of Philadelphia; and others were purchased from London's most famous makers of optical instruments.

His small instruments included such standard items as a small circumferentor, brass sextants for taking lunar distances, stop watches, sets of drafting instruments, and two 2-pole (33 feet) surveying chains. In addition, Ellicott had two copper lanterns of his own design which he used in tracing meridians and lines determined by celestial observations made at night.

Many of the instruments Ellicott used in his survey of the Federal Territory are extant and included in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of History and Technology in Washington, D.C.

Unfortunately, the tall-case *astronomical clock* built by Ellicott in 1784, is not among them. Such clocks were essential to surveyors in establishing the time of true noon and other astronomical events. Astronomical clocks were extremely sensitive and easily "deranged" by ground vibrations and changes in temperature and humidity. During the survey of Washington Banneker's "most important responsibility was the maintenance of the astronomical clock."* Ellicott found that he could minimize some of the adverse influences on the clock by mounting it on a tree stump and then erecting the observatory tent over it.

*Silvio A. Bedini, *The Life of Benjamin Banneker*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons (1972), p. 115.



Plain Survey Compass

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The *portable quadrant* was used by early surveyors for determining the angular elevations of heavenly bodies; the elevations enabled a surveyor to pinpoint his location while in the field. Made by Andrew Ellicott ca. 1790, this brass instrument stands 17 inches high and has a radius of 12 inches. Ellicott used this quadrant in his work on the Florida boundary and probably during his survey of the District of Columbia.

The *plain surveying compass or circumferentor* was particularly useful for taking bearings between survey stations in areas of dense underbrush. This brass compass is 13½ inches long over-all and has a 6½-inch diameter face. It was made for Andrew Ellicott by Benjamin Rittenhouse of Philadelphia.

Ellicott customarily had three brass *telescopes* with him in the field. The largest was manufactured by Dollond of London and equipped with an acromatic lens, a terrestial eyepiece, and three eyepieces of different magnifications for celestial observations. The two smaller telescopes, made in England by William and Samuel Jones, were used for taking signals and for observing Jupiter's moons; it was possible to determine the longitude of the survey site by comparing the time at which one of these moons appeared or was eclipsed at the site with the time the same event had been recorded as occurring at the National Observatory in Greenwich, England. Once the latitude and longitude of a given number of base points had been determined by a zenith sector and a telescope, the surveyor could run straight lines between these base points with a transit and equal altitude instrument.

The *transit and equal altitude instrument* was used in fixing meridians, running straight lines and adjusting time pieces in the field. Consisting of a movable telescope on a horizontal axis mounted on a portable tripod, this instrument was built by Andrew Ellicott in 1789. He used it in running the western boundary of New York State and in the survey of the District of Columbia.

Ellicott also used the more portable *small zenith sector* for observing the aberration of the stars and the mutation of the earth's axis along a line of survey. This sector was made by David Rittenhouse, but because it had a focal length of only nineteen inches, it was far less accurate than the large sector.

The *large zenith sector* was one of Andrew Ellicott's most important instruments. In the field it was suspended from the framework of an observatory tent by crude trunnions in such a way that the objective projected through an opening in the tent; observations were made through the eyepiece at the bottom of the instrument by an observer lying on the ground on his back. The zenith sector made it possible for a surveyor to determine the parallels of latitude by observing . . . "a number of fixed stars near the zenith as they crossed the meridian at differing hours."*

Ellicott discovered *that when the stars were very near the zenith they were affected by the varying refractive powers of the atmosphere derived from the differing degrees of density. Ellicott learned that he could reduce the error of the visual axis by taking zenith distances of the stars with the plane, or face, of the sector alternately facing east and west. He averaged the figures derived in this manner, made corrections for refraction, aberration, and mutation, and then compared the results with data from published star catalogues. From this comparison, based on each of the stars observed, he was able to establish the latitude.**

Equipped with a lens by Navine of London, it had a focal length of 63.7 inches. One expert has described this sector as "the most accurate and

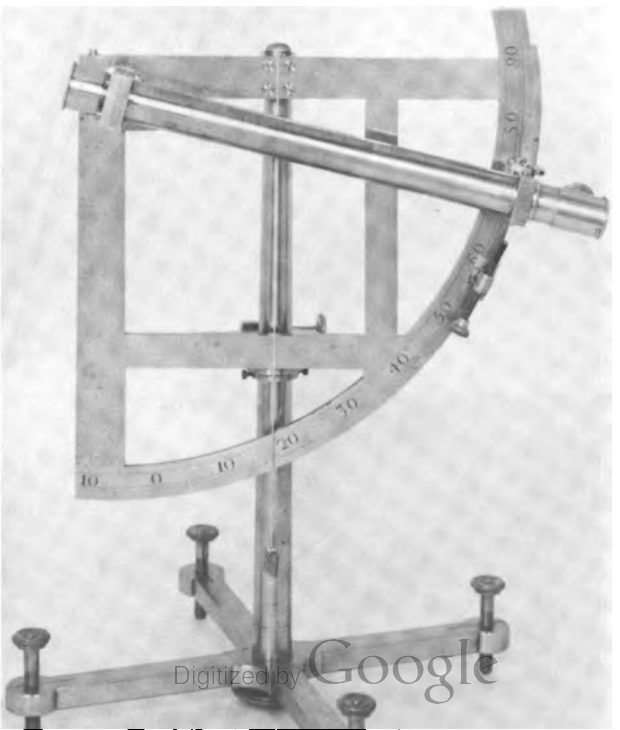
*Silvio A. Bedini, *Thinkers and Tinkers: Early American Men of Science*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons (1975), p. 488.

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Achromatic Telescope



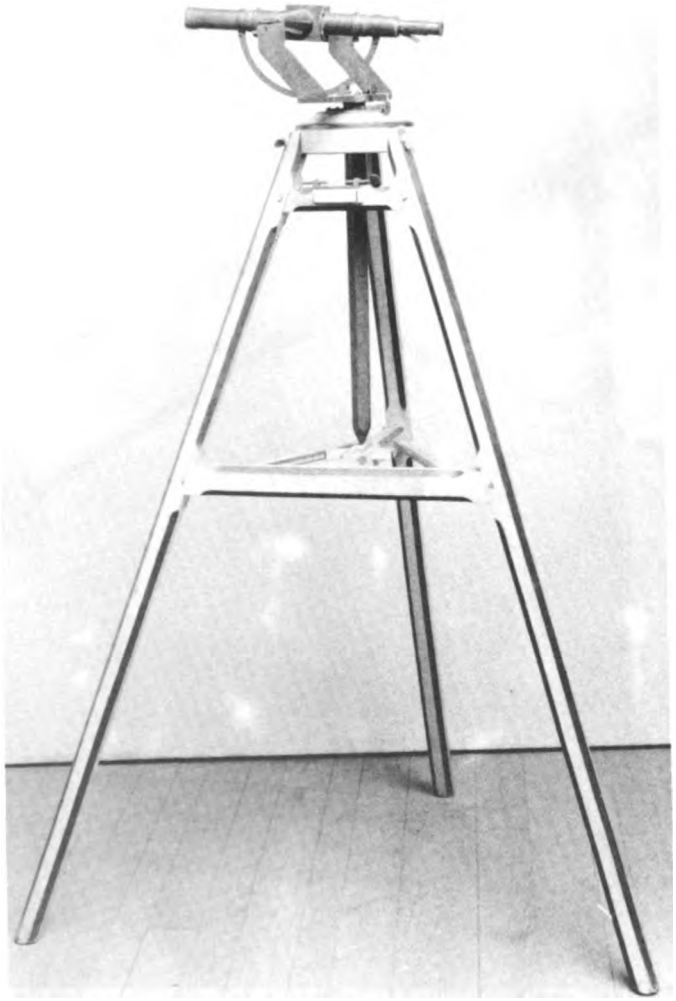
sophisticated scientific instrument on the North American continent in that period, and the only instrument then known having sufficient accuracy to tract a parallel of latitude."* Ellicott and David Rittenhouse began work on this zenith sector in 1786, but Rittenhouse is credited with its completion. Ellicott first used it in his survey of western New York/Pennsylvania and, after making several modifications, continued to use it in all of his major surveys.



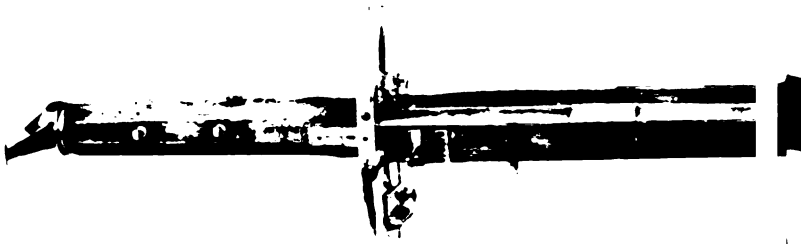
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*Ibid., p. 323-324.

Portable Quadrant



Transit and Equal Altitude Instrument



Large Zenith Sector

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Small Zenith Sector



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