

# Killeen Citywide Historic Resources Windshield Survey



September 2013  
Prepared for the City of Killeen by:



ENVIRONMENTAL  
ARCHEOLOGICAL  
AND PLANNING  
CONSULTANTS

DRAFT

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September 2013

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Killeen Certified Local Government  
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from the Texas Historical Commission

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## INTRODUCTION

In February of 2013 the City of Killeen, Texas, contracted with Hicks & Company, an Austin-based planning consultant, to conduct a windshield survey of the historic-age neighborhoods of Killeen. The purpose of the survey is to identify and document potential historic districts in the city. The historic context and physical documentation contained in this report will aid in setting preservation priorities, enable the city to spread its efforts across its diverse communities and resource types, and allow for the possibility of pursuing a National Register of Historic Place (NRHP) district designation for high priority neighborhoods.

This survey was funded through a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant from the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to the City of Killeen CLG. Hicks & Company historians conducted field visits and archival research to compile a broad overview of the city's historic resource areas. Tasks completed during the survey processes included background research and mapping, delineation of the survey area (to encompass development to the early 1970s), two field visits, archival research, developing a historic context, applying the National Register of Historic Places evaluation criteria to identified neighborhoods, and report writing.

Of the five neighborhoods identified for additional survey and research, all are residential neighborhoods dating to the post World War II (WWII) period in Killeen. While a few of the neighborhoods appear to meet the minimum criteria for NRHP listing, the strongest potential district is Marlboro Heights.

## METHODOLOGY

City of Killeen encompasses over 55 square miles of incorporated area on both sides of US Highway 190 (Central Texas Expressway), bordered by Fort Hood on the west and the City of Harker Heights on the east. The purpose of this survey is to identify potentially eligible NRHP districts. Historians first determined a survey area that would encompass the historic-age development in Killeen, excluding the previously-surveyed downtown area. For the purposes of the NRHP, “historic-age” is generally defined as 50 years or older. In this case, project historians began with a historic age date of 1973, or 40 years prior to 2013, to extend the relevancy of survey results. The extent of historic-age development was identified through consultation with City staff, visual observation during site visits, and historic maps.

An Annexation History Map, provided by the City, shows city limits by decade from 1964 onward (see **Map 1**), and topographic maps from the mid- to late-1970s show the extension of urban areas (see **Map 2**). By the end of the 1973, the city limits had been extended roughly to Roy Reynolds Drive on the east and Elms Road to the south, and slightly east of Old FM 440 on the west. Topographic maps and field survey, however, indicate that actual development was limited to a smaller area. The area of urbanized development by 1973 was determined to be US 190 to the south, the present-day city limits to the north and west and approximately 38<sup>th</sup> Street to the east. The survey area excludes Killeen’s Historic Downtown District, an approximately 12 block area which was surveyed in 2008 by Preservation Central and which resulted in the listing of Killeen’s first NRHP Historic District in 2013.

On March 19, 2013, Project Historian Hannah Vaughan met with city staff including: Jill Ferenc, Senior Planner/Heritage Preservation Officer; Leslie Hinkle, Community Development Director; Dawn Harris, Assistant Director of Libraries; Ramon Alvarez, Environmental Specialist; and Tony McIlwain, City Planner. Ms. Vaughan collected input from city staff about neighborhoods, known historic resources, periods of development and marked areas of potential interest on a map. Following the meeting, Ms. Vaughan drove the survey area with Ms. Ferenc to become familiar with specific areas of the city and identify general characteristics, periods of development, and levels of integrity.

Additional archival research and oral history interviews were conducted to prepare for a second survey focusing on specific neighborhoods. Ms. Harris was helpful in locating and providing archival information from the Killeen City Library. Ms. Ferenc provided neighborhood plat maps and helped identify interview subjects. Five neighborhoods were identified as possible district candidates: Fairway Park, Castle Heights, Killeen Heights, Marlboro Heights and Oak Hill Drive. Two neighborhoods were removed from consideration following the first survey: Simmonsville, due to lack of integrity, and Jasper Heights, due to age (see **Map 3**).

A second survey was conducted on June 5, 2013. Ms. Vaughan and Ms. Ferenc drove each street in the identified neighborhoods, photographing representative properties, stand-out or anchor properties, and streetscapes. Ms. Vaughan noted typical alterations and infill and assessed overall integrity and boundaries of each neighborhood.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

### THE RAILROAD AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Killeen is located in western Bell County, Texas, approximately 60 miles north of Austin in Central Texas. Bell County was created in 1850, carved out of land formerly part of Milam County. Belton (then known as Nolan Springs) was selected as the county seat. The town of Killeen was established in 1882, when the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway Company platted a 360-acre parcel of land in advance of extending a rail line through the area (see **Figure 1**). The town was named for the railroad company's assistant general manager Frank P. Killeen. By the time that rail service began, the town had approximately 40 residents (Leffler [no date]). Modest farming and ranching enterprises in the surrounding area dominated the economy. Killeen officially incorporated in 1893 and the town continued to grow around the rail stop, which connected Killeen to Belton and ultimately Galveston. By 1900, Census data indicates that Killeen had a population of 780, several stores, three cotton gins, a school and saloon (Leffler [no date]). The first years of the twentieth century also brought a power plant, electricity and a public water system (Leffler [no date]). The town's population grew to about 1,200 people in 1910, where it hovered for the next 30 years. During the Great Depression, Killeen received the benefits of New Deal funding, which paid for graveling and surfacing some city streets. US Highway 190 (now Business 190/ Veterans Memorial Boulevard) was also extended through Killeen in the 1930s, providing 12 miles of new highway that soon became a heavily traveled corridor.

#### Resources associated with this context

Resources associated with this context are mostly located in Killeen's historic core, or the "Original Town" plat (roughly bound by Rancier Avenue to the north, Business 190 to the south, Root Avenue to the west and 10<sup>th</sup> Street to the east) (see **Figure 1**). Much of this area was surveyed in 2008 and is therefore excluded from this survey. Prior to WWII, Killeen was a small community centered around the railroad tracks. It included several streets of commercial development surrounded by residences, which became more dispersed further from downtown. Much of the area outside of the Original Town would have been farmland with scattered farmhouses and associated agricultural outbuildings prior to WWII.

Some of these farm houses may still be present in Killeen's neighborhoods surrounded by later development.

Hiram Reynolds, who began working as a carpenter in Killeen in the 1950s, describes the types of homes built during the depression as "tarpaper shacks," built cheaply and quickly of reused materials. Typically these were small structures with a few rooms covered in a layer of tar paper under board-and-batten siding. According to Reynolds, there was no lumber yard in Killeen until after WWII, so new materials had to be brought in from elsewhere. Wood for new structures was often reused from old barns, packing crates, or box cars. This type of construction continued into the WWII period due to scarcity of materials and rationing. As Killeen grew after the war, these quickly-built structures were cleared for new construction. None were identified during the survey.

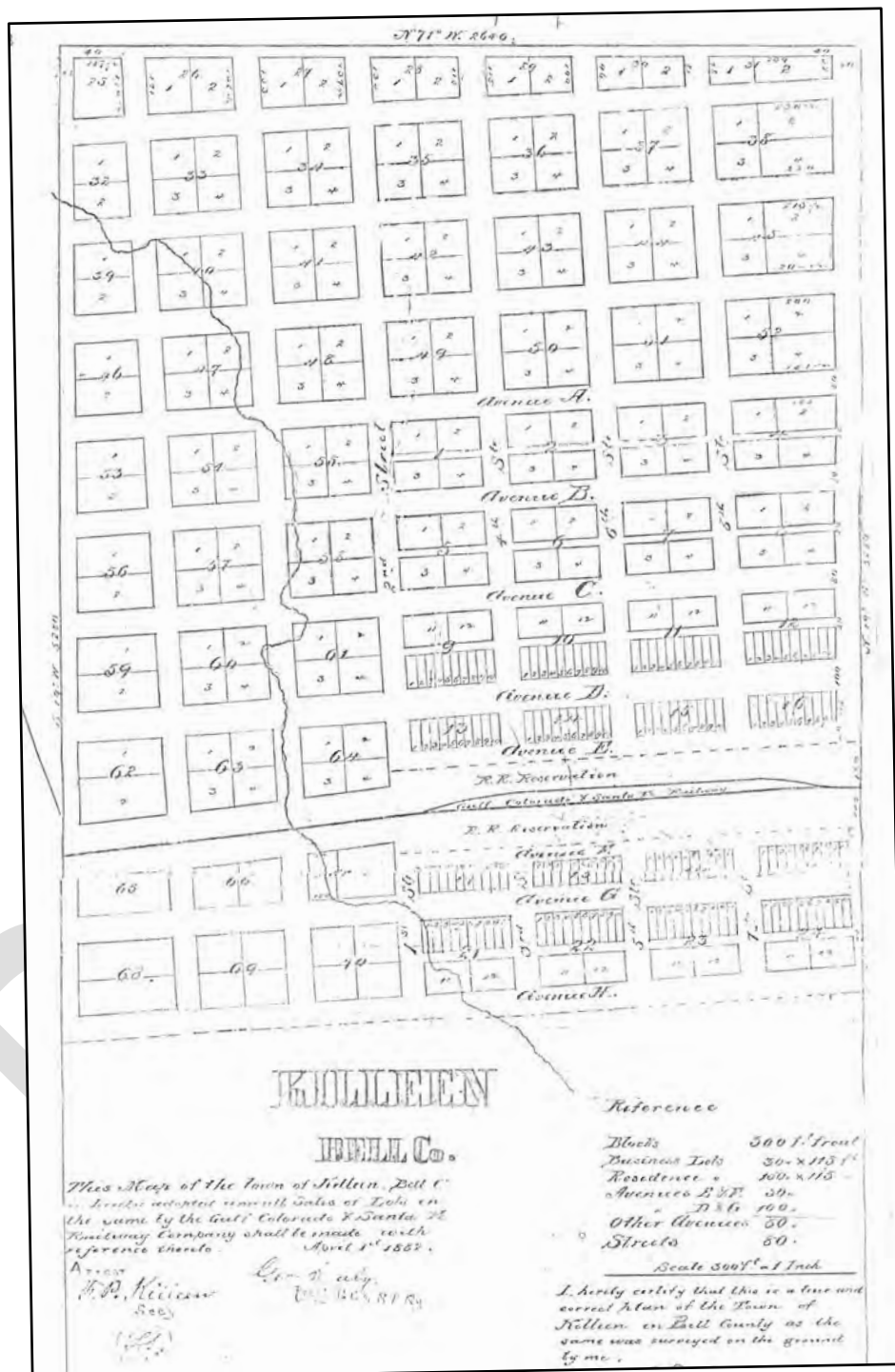


Figure 1 Original Plat of Killeen filed 1883

## WWII AND CAMP HOOD

Prior to WWII, Killeen was a typical Central Texas railroad town serving as a business and trade center for area farmers. In January 1942, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the US Army announced that a new tank destroyer center would be located in Bell and Coryell Counties, near Killeen.

Once the location was selected, the federal government began acquiring land from area farms and ranches. Approximately 300 families were forced to sell their land at a price determined by the government (Skidmore 2010) and families were often left waiting for payments so that they could relocate. In some cases they were allowed to move their homes to a new site, while other structures were incorporated into the camp. The federal government acquired a total of 109,000 acres of land surrounding Killeen, effectively wiping out its agricultural trade area (Skidmore 2010).

With area farms and ranches lost to the base, Killeen underwent a sudden and permanent shift from a farming to a military-based economy. Cotton gins and farm supply businesses closed down, while opportunities in construction, civic employment and commercial services were created. The pre-war population of Killeen was approximately 1,300, while Camp Hood would be home to 130,000 trainees and employees at its WWII peak (Skidmore 2010).

Construction on Camp Hood began in February 1942 and the camp officially opened in September of that same year (although the first units had arrived in April). During construction Killeen became overwhelmed by the 50,000 tradesmen and laborers working at the camp. The community had no means to house the massive influx of people. Residents of Killeen rented rooms or set up cots anywhere and everywhere, including porches, barns, sheds, and even chicken coops. A tent city of approximately 1,000 people sprang up along Nolan Creek, while others workers drove from as far away as Austin or Waco every day (Skidmore 2010).

In addition to the flood of people with nowhere to stay, the constant dust stirred up by the increased traffic, particularly the large construction and military vehicles, also featured prominently in residents' recollections of the early days of Camp Hood. Alice Gormley, interviewed in 1977, describes the upheaval of the construction activity:

People just drove up on your land, yard, and [would] park and spend the night there. You'd find them camping out in your front and back yard, because they didn't have any place to go...it was a mess. And all these huge trucks, and see there was no paved streets, they had all-weather streets, gravel and things like that, and see these huge old army trucks just tore them all to pieces; but there was nothing they could do about it, so they tried to be nice and tried to be as friendly as they could to everyone who came there....but people just didn't have any place to live.

Camp Hood, named after Confederate General John Bell Hood, officially opened on September 18, 1942. Construction crews were replaced by of soldiers, staff and military families. Initially designated as a tank destroyer tactical and firing center, Camp Hood's mission was expanded almost immediately to include replacement and basic training (Briuer [no date]). Killeen struggled to grow fast enough throughout the war to accommodate the constantly expanding population associated with Camp Hood.

Although there was housing available on base for most soldiers, housing in Killeen remained scarce throughout the war. The city also lacked sufficient civic and commercial services. There were no hotels in Killeen, for example. Families who came to visit soldiers stationed at Camp Hood rented rooms from area residents (Gormley 1977).

New banks, grocery stores, restaurants, schools, and churches sprang up to accommodate the new population. From the beginning of construction until the end of the war, Killeen was in a constant state of growth, trying to meet the demands of the sudden and massive shift in the population and economy.

### **Resources associated with this context**

Identifying resources associated with this time period is difficult as it was a very short period of intensive building activity. Only three and half years passed between the beginning of construction in February of 1942 and the end of the war in the fall of 1945. Building material was scarce due to rationing and the demand for materials at the camp. As during the depression years, buildings tended to be constructed quickly and with recycled materials. Many of these structures were likely torn down or incorporated in more permanent structures in the years following the War. In addition, the city generally lacked the civic infrastructure to regulate development. Following the war the Temple Daily reported on recent improvements to Killeen's city planning:

There have also recently been many constructive changes in the municipal government in Killeen. Until this year the city was totally lacking in any zoning and building ordinances. Now they have both patterned after other leading cities in the state. As a result many of the "shacks" and substandard housing constructed during the boom war years are disappearing (Elkins 1949, 4).

Because of this lack of urban planning infrastructure, understandable considering the overwhelming rate of growth, new homes in this period do not appear to have been in newly established subdivisions. Rather, new development filled in areas in and near the Original Town plat.

### **POST-WWII AND FORT HOOD**

In 1945, as WWII drew to a close, the fate of the base which had thoroughly transformed the small town was uncertain. The North Cantonment of Camp Hood closed, and the base population dropped (Briuer [no date]). By the end of 1947 Killeen's population had declined to 4,175 and the base population to 3,394 (Skidmore 2010). In January of 1949 the military announced the expansion of the 2nd Armored Division at Camp Hood (Elkins 1949), indicating that the base would most likely not be closed down entirely. The City of Killeen took the opportunity to formalize its transition from a rural agricultural center to a modern city. Between 1949 and 1951 the town officially incorporated, adopted a home rule charter, implemented zoning and building ordinances, hired a city manager, and established a Chamber of Commerce (Elkins 1949, KCC 1953).

On April 13, 1950 the army announced that Camp Hood would be made a permanent installation, to be renamed Fort Hood. The base population rebounded quickly as training activities for the Korean Conflict

ramped up. By the end of 1950, Killeen's population reached 7,045, and five years later it exceeded 21,000 (Leffler [no date]). In 1952 more than 1,000 units in "modernized duplexes" were built in Killeen. That year saw a total of four million dollars in housing construction in Killeen and in 1953 that number more than doubled (KCC 1953).

In April of 1953, the Killeen Chamber of Commerce held a highly publicized "Open House" to attract residents to the city (see **Figure 2**). A 20-page advertising supplement in the *Temple Armored Sentinel* promoted the city with articles on civic infrastructure, city history, local businesses, neighborhoods, and churches. Visitors to the open house were invited to register to win six months free rent in a furnished two-bedroom apartment and other goods and services from over 60 local businesses. Six such prizes were awarded in the hopes of enticing some of the visitors to make Killeen their permanent home. Each of the six apartments was located in a different apartment complex or neighborhood; African American visitors were invited to enter a separate lottery for an apartment in Marlboro Heights, Killeen's recently completed neighborhood for African American residents.

While Killeen's population was growing steadily due to Fort Hood, the open house appears to be an attempt by the city to diversify and stabilize the population by attracting families not tied to Fort Hood and to shed its reputation as a military boom town. The event also indicates that housing supply had finally met the existing demand. The promotion bills Killeen as the "steadiest growing family town in Texas," and invites visitors to see a "full grown city in complete recovery from 'growing pains.'"

The housing shortage is a thing of the past. Builders and contractors and businessmen with faith in the future of Killeen and Central Texas went to work a few years ago. Big results weren't forthcoming until the past year because as fast as the houses were built they would be filled. However, in 1952, the construction caught up with the big demand for housing and now there's plenty of housing for everyone (Open House 1953, 21).

The event drew between five to ten thousand visitors, with 1,000 people registering for the lottery, indicating their interest in relocating to Killeen (Open House was a Grand Success 1953).



Figure 2 Newspaper supplement advertising the Killeen Open House, April 1953

Fort Hood continued to expand through the Korean Conflict and Cold War. Housing shortage was an intermittent problem during periods of growth throughout the 1960s and 1970s. In 1964 Fort Hood estimated that on-base housing could only accommodate 24 percent of the base population, leaving the remaining three-quarters of their personnel to find housing independently in the surrounding communities. The wait for on-base housing for a lieutenant colonel or a major was from five to eight months (Webster 2007).

The population of Killeen steadily increased by approximately ten thousand people per decade through the 1970s (Skidmore 2010). New residential subdivisions replaced cotton fields on the edge of town in response to growth. In 1969 the US 190 bypass (US 190/Central Texas Expressway) was constructed south of downtown, drawing new development further south and re-designating the original road as Business 190.

Fort Hood transformed Killeen's economy and infrastructure, but also drastically changed the social fabric of the city in terms of diversity. In 1943 an African American battalion was stationed at Fort Hood, the first of many African Americans and other non-whites who would be assigned to Fort Hood. In addition, economic opportunities in the growing city drew more diversity to Killeen.

Prior to WWII Killeen had no recorded African American population and therefore no historically (pre-war) African American neighborhoods or areas of town, as there would be in other segregated southern cities of the time. As African Americans arrived, there was simply no place they were allowed to live. The community of Simmonsville was settled on donated land west of town in 1949; in 1951 the area was annexed to Killeen and the following year the City platted its first subdivision exclusively for African Americans (see Additional Context for Marlboro Heights in Survey Results).

### **Resources associated with this context**

Following WWII, residential neighborhoods began to be platted as separate subdivisions, with the earliest ones located adjacent to the historic core, north of Rancier Avenue and south of Business 190 and west of Young Drive. These neighborhoods were established on undeveloped farmland, usually purchased by a developer who laid out streets, subdivided lots, and built the homes, which were then sold to buyers (Reynolds 2013). Housing styles in these developments tended to be uniform, with a few design variations repeated throughout the subdivision. No specific information on designers or architects was identified; however, builders of post-war subdivisions would typically use plans from catalogues or books rather than an architect (Pettis 2012).

Neighborhoods built in the 1950s in Killeen, include Castle Heights, Fairway Park, Killeen Heights and Marlboro Heights (see Survey Results section). These neighborhoods are characterized by Minimal Traditional, Transitional or early Ranch single-family homes or duplexes, often with an attached carport or single car garage (see Resource Types). Homes built during this period are almost exclusively clad in horizontal wood siding. These subdivisions began to diverge from the established city grid using curvilinear street patterns to define the neighborhood and distinguish it from surrounding development.

Moving out from Killeen's historic core to the east and south are neighborhoods constructed in the 1960s and 1970s with predominantly Ranch style homes (see Resource Types). These homes were built in similar housing subdivisions with curvilinear streets and uniform housing stock, although house and garage sizes tend to be larger, and the designs more varied, including the use of wood, stone, and brick combinations. These neighborhoods include Jasper Heights and Oak Hill Drive.

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION CRITERIA

To be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) a resource must possess both *significance* and *integrity*. Significance describes the aspect of history, architecture or culture of an area that a property represents, and integrity is the ability of a property to physically convey its significance.

### SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of a property can only be accurately evaluated within its historic context, which defines the “theme(s), geographical limits and chronological period that provide a perspective from which to evaluate the property’s significance” (NPS 1990: 7). When evaluated within its historic context, a property must be shown to be significant for one or more of the four Criteria for Evaluation (NPS 1990):

- Criterion A: property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history
- Criterion B: property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Criterion C: property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values
- Criterion D: property has yielded or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history (generally used for archeological sites).

In addition to the four criteria listed above there are sub-categories to further refine the area of significance, such as Community Planning and Development, Ethnic Heritage, Military, or Commerce.

### INTEGRITY

In addition to being significant under one or more of the criteria listed above, a property must also retain historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance. The National Register guidelines define seven aspects of integrity by which potential candidates for the NRHP must be measured (NPS 1990):

- Location: the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- Design: the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- Setting: the physical environment of a historic property.
- Materials: the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
- Workmanship: the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture of people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- Feeling: a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period.

Association: the direct link between an important historic event, person, or period and a historic property.

## **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

A district is a group of individual resources which are linked historically or aesthetically either by plan or by physical development. Districts are evaluated with the same criteria for significance and integrity as individual properties discussed above. Districts require an additional analysis of how the individual elements contribute to the significance and integrity of the whole, and the delineation of specific boundaries.

### **Significance**

Districts are most commonly nominated to the National Register for significance under Criterion A and/or C. Neighborhoods often tell the story of how a community developed in response to social or economic changes, such as desegregation, immigration, or local industry, and therefore are potentially significant under Criterion A (association with an event or broad pattern in history). Neighborhoods also tend to reflect particular architectural styles and planning trends, and therefore are also frequently nominated under Criterion C for design.

### **Period of Significance**

The *period of significance* must be identified for all properties, individual and districts, listed in the NRHP. The period of significance is the span of time in which the property was associated with its criteria for significance. In the case of historic districts, this usually begins with the first construction in the neighborhood and ends when construction of resources associated with its significance ceased. If construction has continued with no logical break, a cut-off date of 50 years ago is used.

### **Integrity**

For a historic district to retain integrity, the majority of resources should meet eligibility criteria or be considered contributing. *Contributing* resources are properties which were constructed during the established period of significance and retain integrity for that period. Resources built outside the period of significance (usually after the period of significance), or heavily altered historic-age resources are considered *non-contributing*. Resources which may not be eligible for listing in the NRHP individually can still contribute to a historic district. In fact, an entire neighborhood of buildings that individually lack distinction may possess significance when evaluated as a whole. Contributing elements can also include landscaping, signage and other unique neighborhood features which contribute to the overall aspects of integrity.

Listing in the NRHP requires a property-by-property survey of the neighborhood in which each structure is assigned a status of contributing or non-contributing. There is no official guideline for the percent of resources which must contribute to a district; however, it is generally accepted that the majority of properties must be contributing.

## **Boundaries**

The boundaries of a historic district should encompass the resources that contribute to the district's significance. While the final boundaries of a listed historic district may have management, policy and political implications that should be considered, district boundaries must have a logical justification.

Boundaries are typically barriers (highways, rivers, natural features, etc.), changes in character (residential to commercial, period of construction, or level of integrity, etc.), or legal boundaries (historic boundaries, neighborhood plats, etc.). Districts may include non-contributing resources, such as altered buildings or buildings constructed after the period of significance, but the majority of buildings must be contributing.

The process of defining and listing a NRHP district includes developing a historic context, establishing a period of significance, a property-by-property inventory assigning a status of contributing or non-contributing to each resource, mapping of survey results and finalizing boundaries to ensure the district contains more contributing than non-contributing resources.

An NRHP nomination includes a nomination form, detailed historic context, physical description, and other supporting documentation. The Texas Historical Commission presents the nomination to the Texas State Board for Review, which recommends forwarding to the National Park Service for listing.

## RESOURCE TYPES

### NATIONAL POST-WAR HOUSING CONTEXT

The post-WWII “Baby Boom” translated into a housing boom in the US during which demand far outstripped the existing supply, as millions of soldiers returned from the war and started a family. With help from the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act or “G.I. Bill,” military families were in a position to buy a house. Home construction, however, had been at a near standstill for over a decade during the depression and war years. Approximately 3.5 million families nationwide could not find housing immediately after the War (Pettis 2012).

Prior to the 1930s home ownership was out of reach for most Americans. Homes were purchased outright or financed through private, short-term loans requiring a large down payment (Ames 2002). The stock market crash of 1929 followed by the Great Depression exposed problems in the existing housing construction and finance system. Beginning in the early 1930s the federal government began exploring ways to encourage home ownership and construction by making housing a safe investment both for builders and homebuyers.

The first major legislation was the National Housing Act of 1934, which created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The FHA provided federal insurance for privately-financed home mortgages, thus protecting lenders from default. It also established more favorable terms for buyers including longer repayment periods and smaller down payments (Pettis 2012). The FHA only offered federally-backed mortgages to investments it deemed economically sound. To that end, the FHA developed housing standards, processes for real estate appraisals, and reviews of housing and subdivision designs (Ames 2002). In 1936 the FHA published *Principles of Planning Small Houses*, which set forth guidelines for both housing and subdivision design. Because conformity to FHA principles increased the builder’s likelihood of obtaining federal mortgage insurance, they became the standard for new housing nationwide.

The FHA house guidelines stressed economy and functionality. House plans were generally rectangular or square, to eliminate extra corners and wasted hall space, and generally less than 1,000 square feet in size. The exterior was generally wood siding, although other materials were used, and a single material and single color was recommended to make the small homes appear larger. Porches and eave overhangs were very small or non-existent to save materials. The guide recommended the reuse of a single house plan within a subdivision for the sake of economy, with slight variations in plan or orientation to break up monotony. It also recommended curving streets and varied setbacks in subdivision planning (FHA 1946).

The federal policies instituted during the years of slow housing growth created the framework and heavily influenced development in the national Post-War housing boom. Beginning in 1944, the G.I. Bill provided loan guarantees for home mortgages for WWII veterans, and allowed them to use the program benefits instead of cash for the down payment, making homeownership within reach for millions of returning in soldiers.

During the decade of the 1950s, over 15 million new homes were constructed in the US, compared with fewer than three million in the 1930s, and the trend continued into the 1960s and 70s (Pettis 2012). This three decade-long national housing boom shaped the physical fabric of American cities and suburbs. Stylistic trends and demographic changes, as well as the expansion of automobile ownership and road networks, all shaped the post-war housing developments prevalent throughout the country.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN KILLEEN**

Killeen, like the rest of the nation, experienced the post-war housing boom. Killeen's housing boom differs somewhat from the national trend in that it began during the war, and the market faced additional pressure from the ever-expanding Fort Hood population following the war. Nonetheless, the same popular national housing styles and subdivision trends that spread across the country are evident in Killeen.

Prior to WWII Killeen was comprised of a small commercial downtown, grouped around to the railroad tracks with several blocks of residential development in each direction. Resources associated with this time period are primarily located within the downtown commercial district. There are no residential neighborhoods dating primarily to the pre-war period. Pre-War residential resources tend to be most concentrated close to downtown, but are also scattered throughout the city, where they are surrounded by later development. Because the scope of this survey was to identify eligible districts rather than individual properties, historians did not seek out these types of isolated properties.

The opening of Camp Hood in 1942 sparked a period of intense building activity though the end of the war in 1945. Although demand for housing was high and many new homes were built, no neighborhoods platted or constructed primarily during this period were identified during the survey. Like pre-war neighborhoods and individual properties, resources associated with the brief WWII period are also located closest to downtown, which is a mix of historic and non-historic residential, and multifamily and commercial resources.

When Fort Hood was given permanent status in 1950, new residential subdivisions sprang up on what was then the outskirts of town; development continued to expand to the east and south through the 1960s and 1970s. Most of the areas included in the first windshield survey are residential subdivisions constructed between the early 1950s and the mid 1970s, coinciding with the post war housing boom. The majority of these neighborhoods do not retain unique features or physical boundaries which distinguish them from surrounding neighborhoods of the same period. With the exception of Marlboro Heights, none of the surveyed neighborhoods are currently known by its historic name or thought of as a distinct neighborhood by residents. Therefore, the boundaries used for neighborhoods visited during the second survey were the original plats (i.e., Castle Heights, Fairway Park).

## **HOUSING STYLES IN POST-WAR KILLEEN**

Homes constructed in Killeen followed national housing trends during the post-war period, during which Minimal Traditional, Transitional, and Ranch were the predominant housing styles nationwide.

### **Minimal Traditional**

Minimal Traditional describes a style popular for modest housing constructed from the 1930s to the early 1950s. The style was developed in the 1930s, relying heavily on the FHA's housing guides. The economical style was popular during the Depression through the early post-WWII period when building materials remained scarce. Usually one story with a compact floor plan, Minimal Traditional homes are characterized by a medium-pitch roof, minimal eave overhang, and a small inset front porch or covered stoop. Minimal Traditional homes generally have very little, if any, applied ornamentation.

The Minimal Traditional style was most popular in the 1930s and 1940s. Although Killeen did experience a building boom during the war, many structures built during the period are described as "shacks" of reused materials, which may not have even met the minimum FHA standards. There are some Minimal Traditional homes in Killeen, but it is not a predominant style. Minimal Traditional houses were found in the area south of Hillcrest Drive in the Fairway Park subdivision and in the area west of Castle Heights.



**Figure 3** Minimal Traditional house with small attached garage in Fairway Park

### **Transitional Ranch**

The Ranch style replaced the Minimal Traditional as the dominant American housing style beginning in the 1950s. Elements of the two styles, however, began to blend together in the early 1950s during a period of transition. In locations like Killeen, with heavy building activity in the 1950s, this style is often useful to describe homes which do not fit squarely into the Minimal Traditional or Ranch stylistic categories. These homes generally retain the economy and simplicity of the Minimal Traditional Style while incorporating elongated footprints, lower roof pitches and wider eave overhangs of the Ranch style. These houses may also have an attached carport or garage.

Because several of the neighborhoods surveyed were constructed during the early 1950s, many examples of the Transitional form were found.



**Figure 4** Common in Marlboro Heights, this very simplified Transitional type has all the elements of the Minimal Traditional style but the elongated footprint and low pitch roof are elements for the Ranch style.

## Ranch

The Ranch style became the most popular American housing style in the 1950s, and continued its popularity into the 1960s and 1970s. The Ranch house is characterized by a horizontal emphasis, elongated footprints, very low-pitch roof, wide eave overhangs, asymmetry, and a mixture of exterior materials. Detailing is often loosely based on Spanish or English Colonial styles. The defining characteristics of the Ranch become more exaggerated in later examples. Homes may have multiple wings or “rambling” layouts, roof pitches become progressively lower, and eaves become wider and garages larger in the examples from the 1970s. Ranch homes in Killeen follow the national trend of becoming larger and more elaborate in later decades.



**Figure 5** Ranch style house in Marlboro Heights featuring low pitch roof, wide overhangs and mix of siding materials



**Figure 6** Ranch house on Oak Hill Drive with rambling footprint, attached garage and Colonial Revival detailing.

## Duplexes

Killeen has a large number of very similar duplexes built in the early 1950s in multiple neighborhoods. Although duplexes are not considered a style category, their ubiquity in Killeen and common features merit a discussion under the Ranch category. Duplexes constructed around 1952 were found in Castle Heights, Fairway Park, and Marlboro Heights. There appear to be two general layouts: a linear or L-plan with multiple sub-variations of each. Most duplexes are clad in horizontal wood siding, feature exposed, rounded rafter tails, and Dutch gable roofs (a gable end extending above a hipped roof).



**Figure 7** L-plan duplexes in Castle Heights



**Figure 8** Linear plan duplex with later carport addition in Fairway Park



**Figure 9** L-plan duplex in Marlboro Heights

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

During the first survey the historian drove the limits of historic-age development in Killeen to identify areas of unique features or high levels of integrity for further evaluation. Following additional archival research, historians selected five neighborhoods for additional research and/ or survey. The majority of pre-WWII development in Killeen is included in the Original Town plat, most of which was surveyed in 2008, and the remainder of which did not appear to retain significant integrity to be eligible as a district. Therefore, all neighborhoods surveyed are associated with the post-WWII period in Killeen. Castle Heights, Fairway Park, Killeen Heights, and Marlboro Heights date to the early 1950s and the immediate post-war period; Oak Hill Drive includes a variety of periods (see **Map 3**).

Two neighborhoods that were visited based on initial research and suggestions made at the city staff meeting were removed from consideration and not revisited during the second survey. Jasper Heights, located just north of US Highway 190, was identified by city staff as an upper-middle class neighborhood with older homes. It was also one of the few neighborhoods which is identified by residents as being a distinct neighborhood. Jasper Heights contains a good intact representation of late 1960s and 1970s Ranch Style homes. The neighborhood appears to have been built for upper-middle-class homeowners, as reflected in the quality of materials and home sizes. Upon further research it was determined that the neighborhood is comprised of ten separate plats filed between 1964 and 1972. Therefore, even the oldest homes will not reach historic age until 2014, and at least half of the additions will not reach historic age for close to ten years. Properties less than 50 years old can be listed on the NRHP, but they must possess exceptional significance. Jasper Heights does not meet the standard for exceptional significance. Once more of the properties have reached historic age, however, the neighborhood may merit reevaluation (see **Map 3**).

Simmons ville is a community that was established outside the city limits in 1949 for African Americans who had no place to live inside the city. Now incorporated into the city limits, the neighborhood was visited because of its potential for historic significance. During the first survey, however, it was determined that the neighborhood does not retain sufficient integrity for listing in the NRHP. There is a substantial number of new construction homes, and most resources which appeared to be more than 50 years old were heavily altered (see more on Simmons ville in the Additional Context for Marlboro Heights).

## **EVALUATED NEIGHBORHOODS**

### **Castle Heights**

Castle Heights is located northeast of downtown, is bounded by Duncan Street on the south, Fort Hood on the north, 18th Street on the west and Massey Drive on the east. Stewart Street runs north to south and divides the original plat and an extension.

The plat for Castle Heights was filed in 1951 by Hood Construction Company, Inc. The original plat is west of Stewart Street and is laid out along the contours of a creek. Housing styles are a mix of Minimal

Traditional and Transitional. The larger Castle Heights Extension east of Stewart Street is almost exclusively duplexes. Streets in the extension are laid out in two elongated ovals with Poage and Alamo Streets forming an interior circle and White and Duncan Streets forming an outer circle. The Castle Heights extension east of Stewart has minimal infill, and the best overall integrity of the surveyed neighborhoods of the same time period.

### **Fairway Park**

Fairway Park is located in the northwest corner of Killeen, surrounded by Fort Hood on two sides. Streets are laid out in two U shaped arcs, with Fairview Drive and Williamson Avenue forming the outer arc and Kern Road and Dean Avenue forming an inner arc. Hillcrest and Walton Walker Drives run southwest/northeast and bisect the two streets. In the middle of Walton Walker Drive is a small half-circle island, which is currently open green space with a modern play structure. The neighborhood also includes a historic-age school and church west of Williamson Avenue, which are outside the original plat, but appear to be historically associated with the neighborhood.

Fairway Park was platted in 1951 and contains duplexes similar to those found in Castle Heights, although overall integrity is lower with more modifications such as new siding, windows and doors, porch modifications, and small additions.

### **Killeen Heights**

Killeen Heights is located south of Business 190 and borders Conder Park to the west and south. Topography is varied and the streets are curvilinear. The neighborhood is comprised of several additions. The North Unit is bound by Conder Street, and Sutton and Terrace Drives. The South Unit is located south of Terrace Drive and is bound by Alta Mira Drive on the south and Tremmier Road on the west. These plats were all filed in the early 1950s. Killeen Heights contains a mix of modest Transitional and Ranch single-family homes and duplexes with a moderate level of integrity.

### **Marlboro Heights**

Marlboro Heights is located south of Business 190, between Stetson and Jeffries Avenues. The terrain is slightly hilly and streets are curvilinear. The neighborhood was established for African Americans in a period when other neighborhoods would have carried deed restrictions excluding non-white residents. In 1953 land was set aside for a park and an elementary school, both of which are intact today (although the elementary school has been converted to a professional development center). The neighborhood also includes two historic-age church buildings, Marlboro Missionary Baptist Church, constructed in 1955, and Anderson Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, built in 1964, with an associated parsonage. Housing in the neighborhood includes duplexes, similar to those found in Fairway Park and Castle Heights; many very small side-gable, rectangular-plan, homes of approximated 800 square feet (see **Figure 4**); and some later, larger-scale Ranch homes. Integrity in the neighborhood is mixed, but good overall.

### **Oak Hill Drive**

Oak Hill Drive is a single, curving street north of Killeen Heights between Trimmier Road and Veterans Memorial Boulevard. It contains an eclectic mix of late 1950s through early 1970s Ranch Style homes with generous setbacks and large front lawns. It is in the Oak Hill Heights subdivision; although some properties on the south side of the street are not included in the subdivision plat, they are visually part of the same neighborhood. Homes on Oak Hill Drive show a variety of Ranch forms and styles, which may indicate that homes were not built by a developer, but by individual homeowners. Homes are well maintained, but without a more intensive survey it is difficult to assess the integrity of individual properties, as some may contain non-historic age additions or alterations.

### **ANALYSIS OF NRHP ELIGIBILITY OF SURVEYED NEIGHBORHOODS**

Neighborhoods are shaped by their inhabitants, currently and historically. The physical fabric created by builders and residents can be an expression of taste, class, ethnicity, as well as nationwide trends and economic circumstances. These are the types of broad patterns or thematic contexts under which a property or district could be eligible under Criterion A.

All neighborhoods surveyed in Killeen date to the post-WWII period and were built in response to population growth associated with Fort Hood. While the impact of a large military base on a small community is an important thematic context, virtually all buildings in Killeen built after 1942 are, in some way, tied to the context of Fort Hood. Therefore, it is difficult to build a case for NRHP eligibility for any one neighborhood based solely on this context. In analyzing the neighborhoods surveyed, historians looked for additional areas of significance or a significantly higher level of integrity that might distinguish a particular neighborhood from similarly associated post-WWII development.

Another issue in establishing the eligibility of neighborhoods in Killeen is that the population associated with the military base tends to be transient, with higher homeowner turnover and more renters. The WWII and post-war influx of people included many who were temporarily assigned or trained at the base. Because of this, Killeen has fewer areas in which a specific community is identified with a specific locale. With the exception Marlboro Heights, none of the surveyed neighborhoods are currently known by their historic name or thought of as a distinct neighborhood.

### **Oak Hill Drive**

Oak Hill Drive represents the later phase of the housing boom and the trend toward sprawling ranch homes with irregular floor plans and incorporated garages in the 1960s and 70s. The homes in this neighborhood appear to have been built for upper-middle class homeowners and contain more high-style design features.

Oak Hill Drive contains a mix of periods and styles. Homes are well maintained, but may contain

additions using similar materials which can be difficult to detect; determining the level of integrity would require a more in-depth survey of each property.

### **Castle Heights, Fairway Park, Killeen Heights and Marlboro Park**

Castle Heights, Fairway Park, Killeen Heights and Marlboro Heights are subdivisions of similar in age and design. They were all constructed during the building boom after Fort Hood was given permanent status in 1950. All are planned residential subdivisions of modest post-war housing, including many examples of duplexes. Because of their uniformity of styles, these neighborhoods hold together as districts in that they are distinguishable from the surrounding development (albeit only slightly) by street layout and housing styles.

Among these three, Castle Heights retains the highest degree of architectural integrity, especially along Alamo Street; Fairway Park retains the lowest degree of integrity, with many non-historic age alterations, including new windows and siding, porch modifications and single family conversions of the duplexes. Marlboro Heights is a larger neighborhood that has a substantial level of integrity overall, with some pockets of very high integrity.

Castle Heights, Fairway Park, Killeen Heights, and Marlboro Heights were evaluated for significance under Criterion A (association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history) and under Criterion C (embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction) in the area of architecture. Under Criterion A these neighborhoods are significant in the areas of Military and Community Planning and Development for their association with the permanent establishment of Fort Hood and associated growth in Killeen. Marlboro Heights is additionally associated with the historic context of African American Heritage. Because of this it is the strongest candidate for listing in the NRHP. Additional context for Marlboro Heights is provided below.

### **ADDITIONAL HISTORIC CONTEXT FOR MARLBORO HEIGHTS**

Marlboro Heights appears to be the strongest candidate for listing in the NRHP because of its combination of integrity and association with both Community Planning and Development and African Americans in Killeen.

Before the establishment of Camp Hood, Killeen had no recognized African American population. Mrs. Winifred Bell, a Killeen resident interviewed for a 1972 oral history project, recalled seeing a sign prior to the war outside of town which warned, "Negroes, don't let the sun go down on you in Killeen" (1972).

The first African American battalion to be stationed at Camp Hood was the 761st Tank Battalion that arrived in 1943. Mrs. Bell recalled an incident during the war when African Americans from the base began appearing in town. A group of business owners joined hands, forming a human chain, and approached several African Americans who had stopped at a gas station and forced them out of town.

While African American soldiers could be housed on base, others who came to town, either family members, or those drawn by employment opportunities in the boomtown, had difficulty finding housing. When Melba Olean Davis arrived in Killeen to work as a maid in 1948 the only housing available to African Americans was a group of one-room shacks known as “The Gin” near the railroad tracks. The Gin had no running water or sanitary facilities (Fedak 1999). There were also no schools or churches for African Americans in Killeen.

In 1949 the City condemned The Gin, leaving the approximately ten families living there with no place to live. William “Bill” Simmons, a white Baptist minister, purchased several former army barracks from Camp Hood and moved them to land he owned east of town (near present-day 38<sup>th</sup> Business 190) and offered the displaced families a place to live. The community became known as Simmonsville, and other African American families, mostly military related, soon followed. Simmons also donated land in the community for a church. The church was called Lone Star Community Baptist Church (Lone Star was an early/alternative name for Simmonsville). The church was renamed Simmonsville Missionary Baptist in the mid 1950s and the first building was completed in 1951. By 1950 Simmonsville had a population of approximately 720. Simmonsville was annexed to the City of Killeen in 1959, at which point the community received water and sewer service (Fedak 1999; Skidmore 2010).



**Figure 10** Advertisement for Marlboro Heights from 1953 Open House

Shortly after Simonsville was annexed, the City Council approved the construction of a new neighborhood for African Americans called Marlboro Heights, south of Simonsville. Marlboro Heights featured small, modern homes, similar to what was being built in other Killeen neighborhoods at the time. In 1955 Marlboro Missionary Baptist Church was formed. The first pastor, Reverend Roscoe A. Abercrombie, served for 37 years. Following his death in 1992, Parkhill Drive was renamed Rev. R.A. Abercrombie Drive in his honor (Skidmore 2010). Marlboro Missionary recently moved to a new facility on Illinois Avenue south of Marlboro Heights but will continue to use the original church for some functions. Anderson Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) was founded in 1964. Services

were held in the Lone Star community's jailhouse until 1966 when a church at 1002 Jeffries Avenue was completed (Skidmore 2010).

Opened in 1954, Marlboro Elementary was the first school in Killeen for African Americans students. It only served students through the primary grades; secondary students continued to be bussed to Belton. Two years later Killeen began integrating schools, beginning with the high school. Killeen became the first school district in Central Texas, and possibly the state, to desegregate (Skidmore 2010). Two years after the 1954 Supreme Court decision ruled school segregation unconstitutional, most communities in the south were either dragging their feet on integrating or actively opposing the ruling. School integration in Killeen began in 1956 with the high school; all Killeen schools were integrated by the following school year.

Despite integration Marlboro Elementary school remained predominantly African American, as it was located in the exclusively African American Marlboro Heights. In 1970 the elementary school was declared "racially unbalanced" and closed; its students were bussed to other schools. Community members fought the decision and sought the assistance of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). They were successful in reopening the school with white students being bussed in to achieve balance. It also resulted in the establishment of a Killeen Branch of the NAACP (Skidmore 2010). Today the school has been repurposed as the Dock Jackson Professional Learning center, named for the school's first principal and the first African American Principal in Killeen (Skidmore 2010).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the nation's list of historic properties worthy of preservation. Listing of a property or district does not impose upon a property owner any restrictions on use or modification. Design guidelines and design reviews could be enacted as part of a local preservation ordinance. A NRHP district designation provides recognition and important research and documentation of communities that can convey a sense of history, pride and increased interest in an area.

Of the neighborhoods surveyed, Marlboro Heights, appears to be the strongest candidate for NRHP listing. The next step in the NRHP listing process would be to contact the National Register Coordinator at the Texas Historical Commission to obtain a determination of eligibility. In order to create a district in which the majority of properties are considered contributing, a smaller area within the surveyed boundaries would most likely be designated. The final boundaries of a historic district are usually drawn following a property-by-property survey to determine the most logical boundaries, which may not be the same as the neighborhood plat. A nomination of Marlboro Heights would also include a more in-depth historic context, including oral histories of residents, and would be important documentation of the African American community in Killeen.

Jasper Heights has good local examples of mid to late twentieth century Ranch homes and appears to retain a high degree of integrity. Jasper Heights was developed between 1964 and the mid 1970s and therefore even the oldest homes will not be fifty years old until next year. The designation of this neighborhood could be reevaluated in the future.

In addition, the city should continue to pursue the nomination of individual properties identified in the 2008 survey and for which it has obtained determinations of eligibility from the THC.

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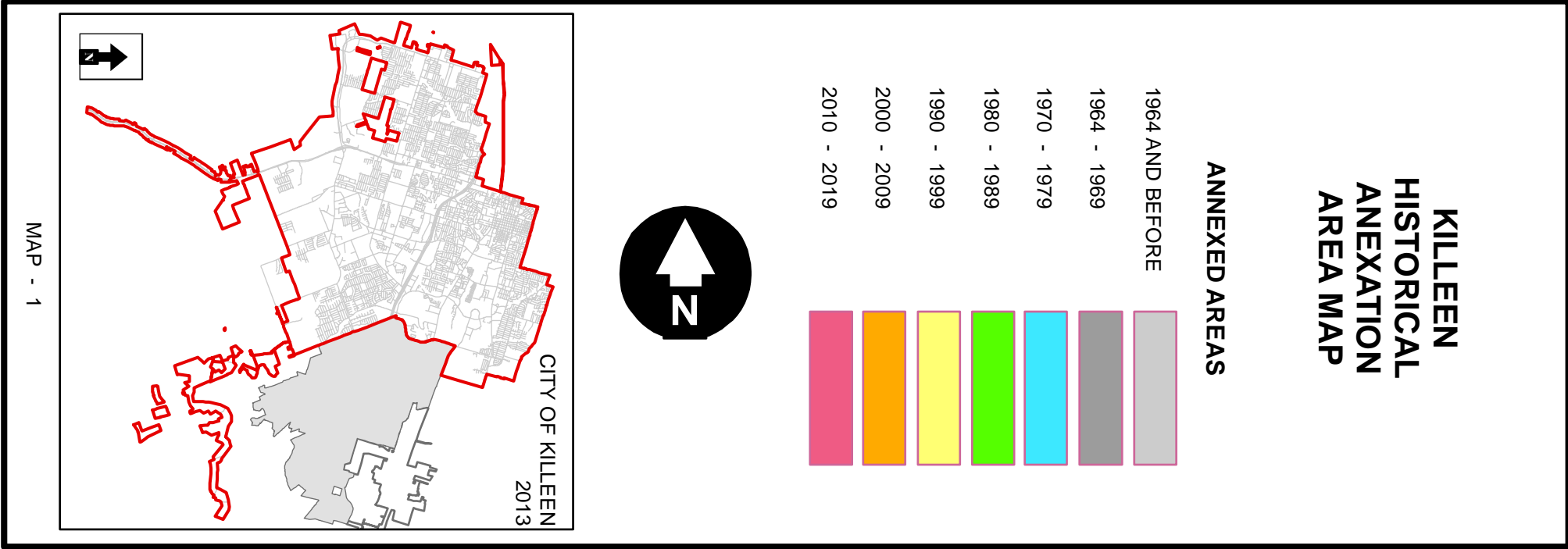
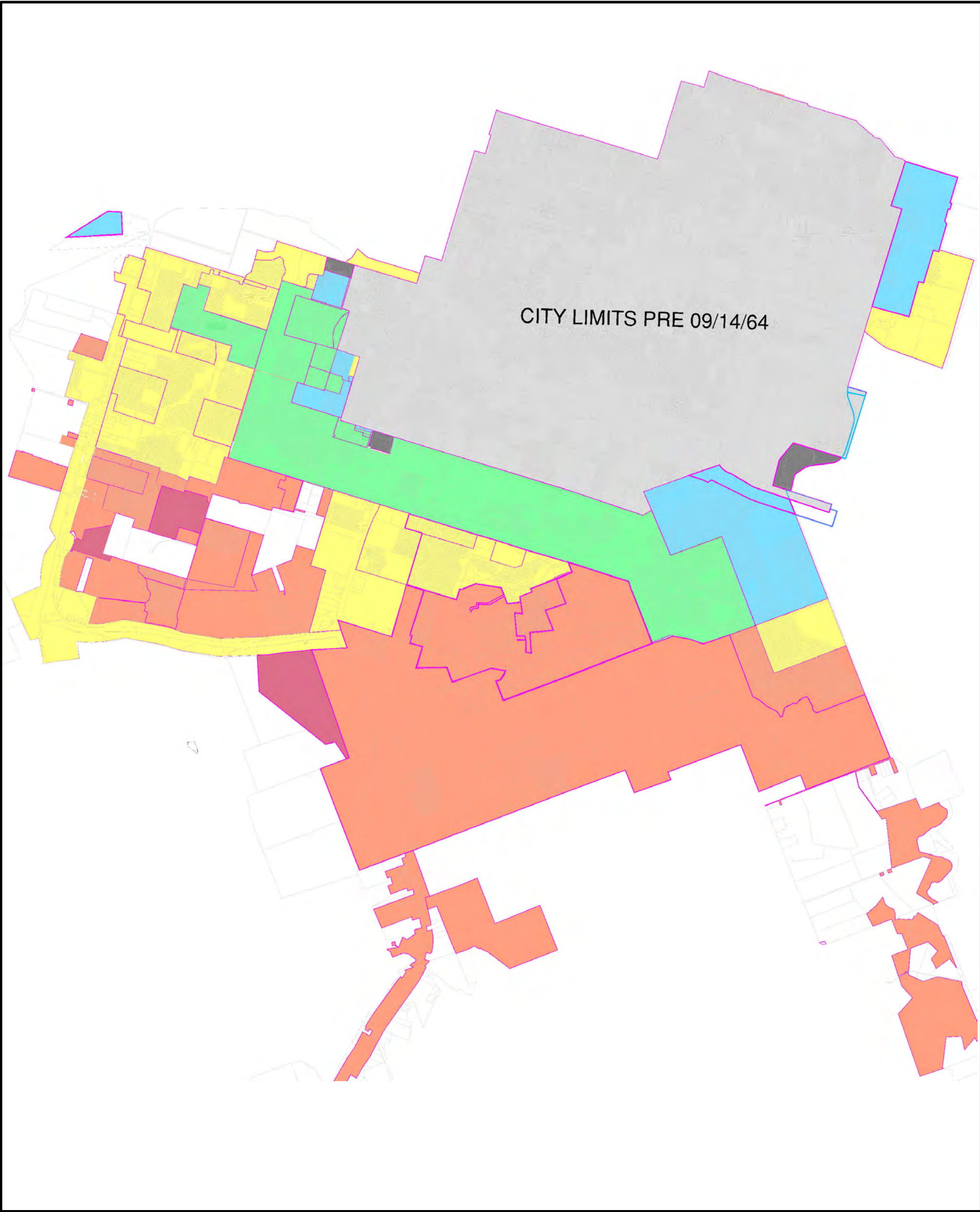
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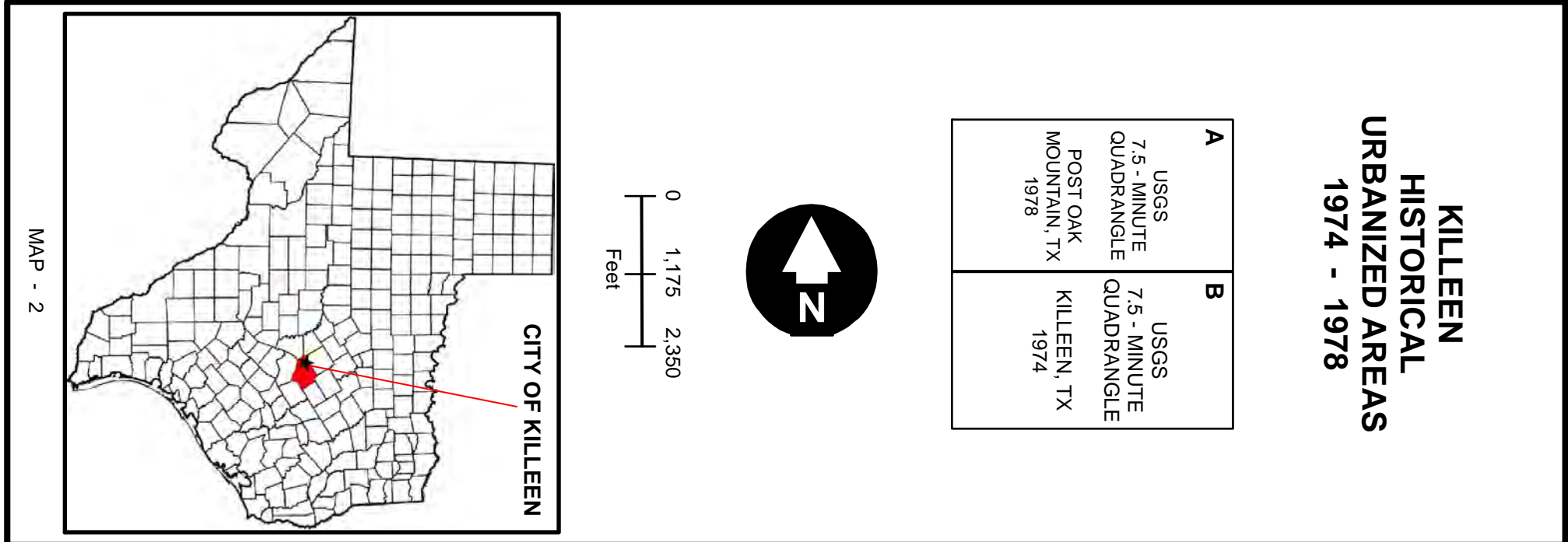
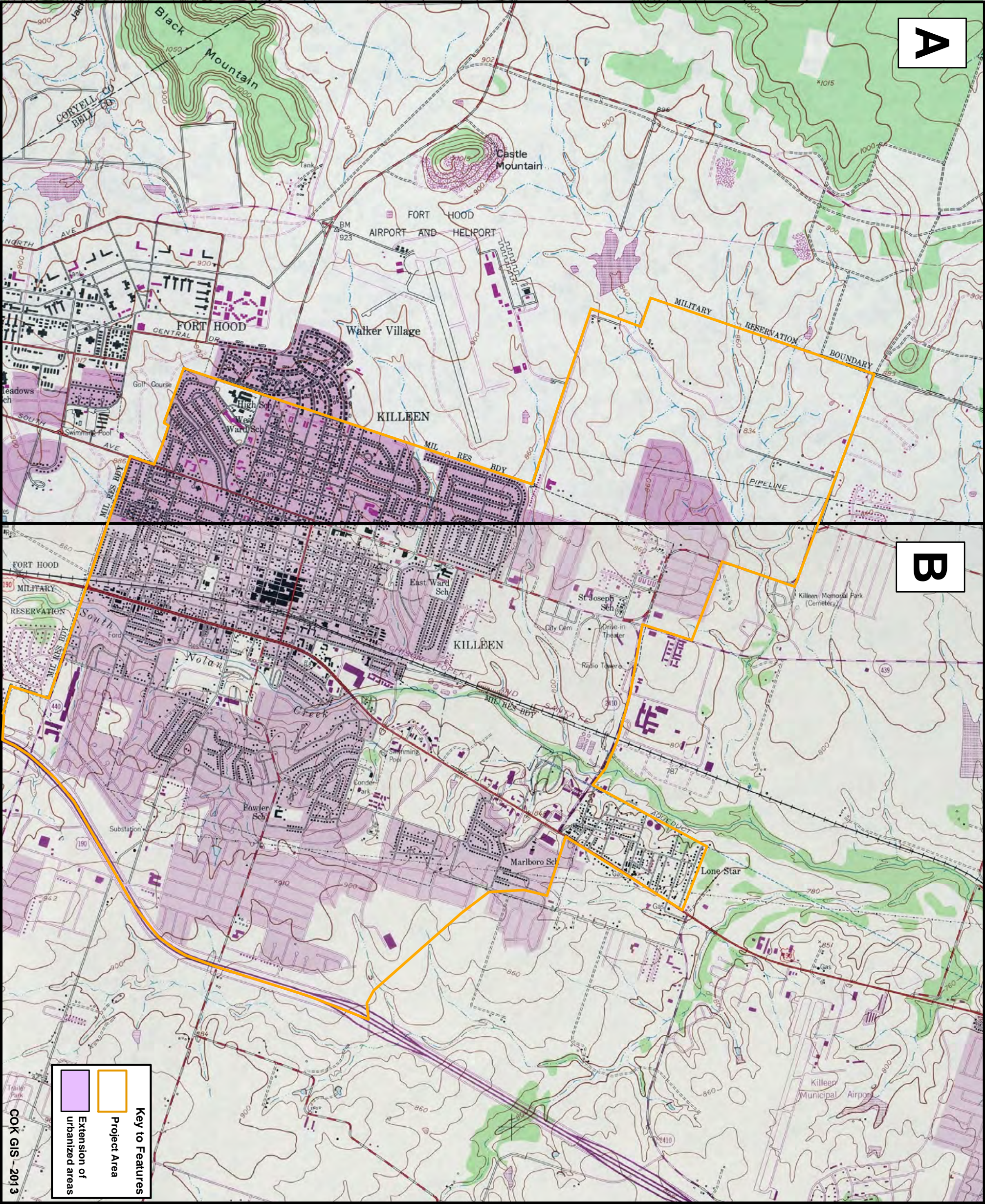
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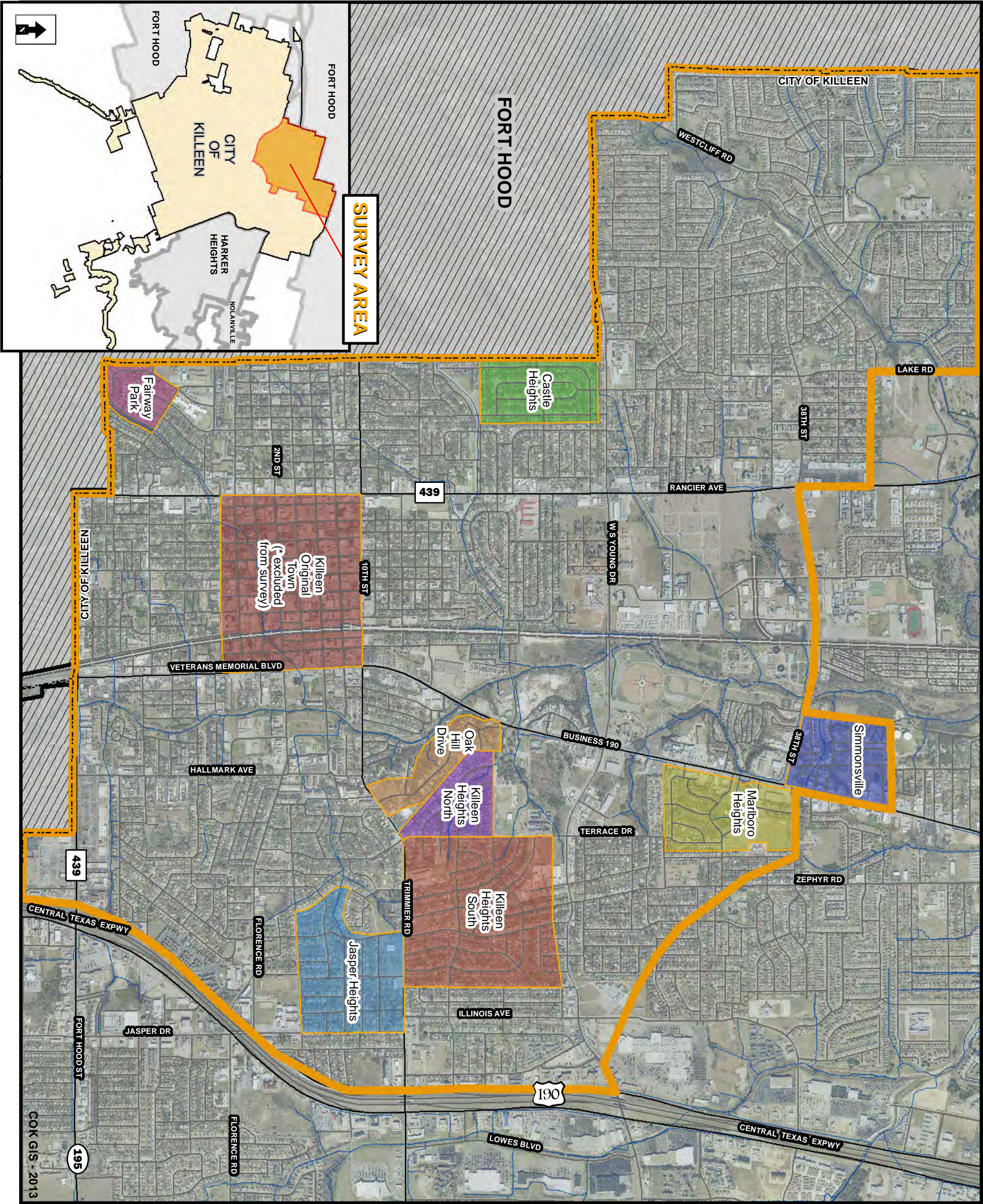
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**APPENDIX A**  
**MAPS**

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# KILLEEN HISTORICAL SURVEY AREA

## MAP KEY

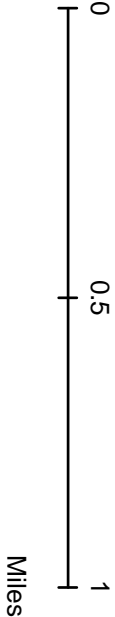
### Neighborhood

- Simmonsville
- Marlboro Heights
- Castle Heights
- Oak Hill Drive
- Killeen Heights North
- Killeen Heights South
- Jasper Heights
- Fairway Park
- Killeen Orig. Twn. \*

- City Limits
- Survey Boundary

- Map Streets
- Rail Road

\* Excluded from survey



**APPENDIX B**  
**SURVEY PHOTOS**

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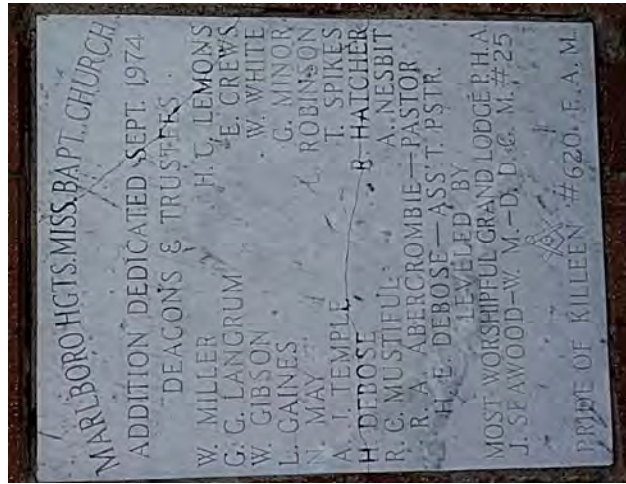
**Marlboro Heights**

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