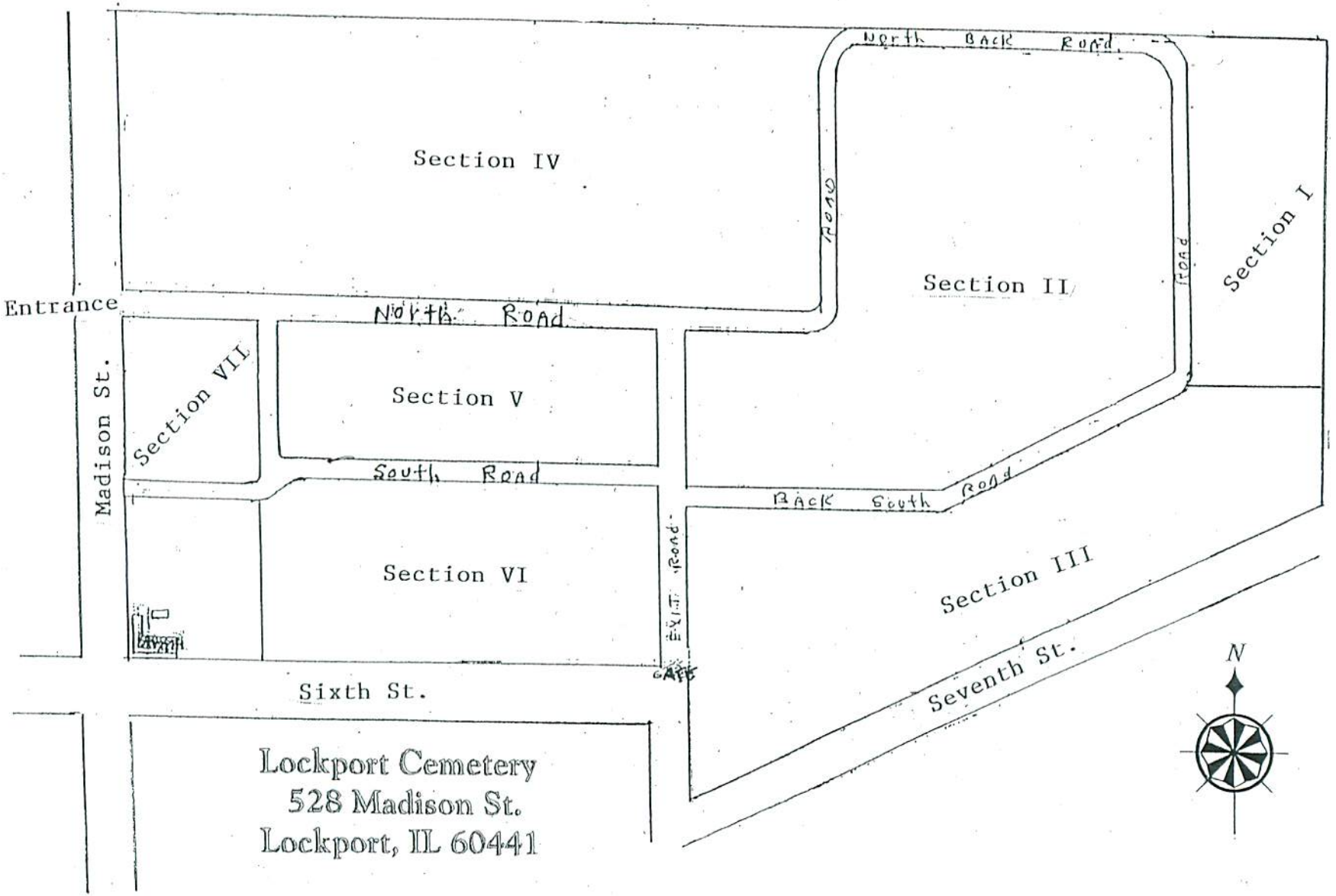
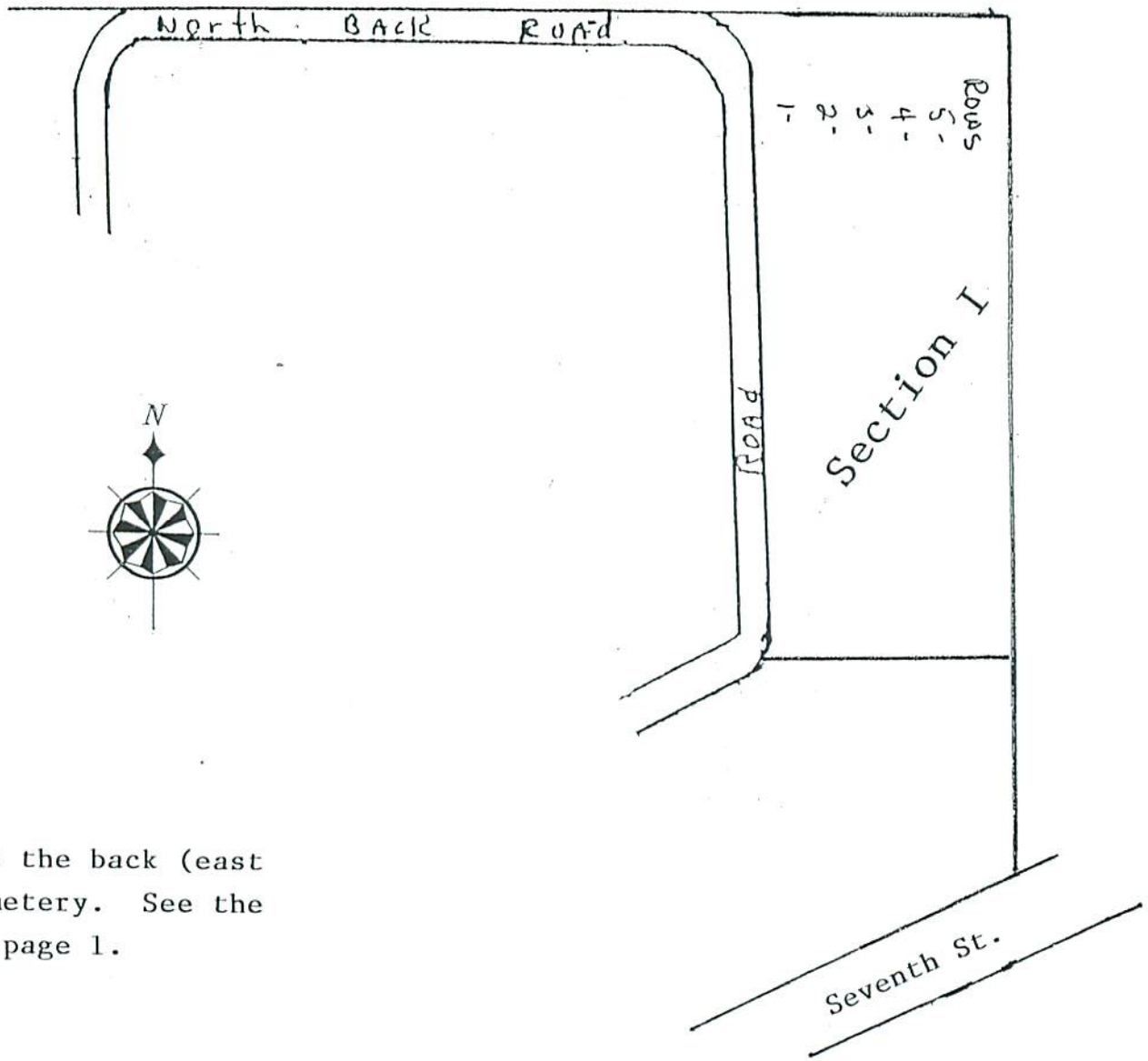

Section IV
North Back Road
Section II
Section I
Entrance
North Road
Madison St.
Section VII
Section V
South Road
Back South Road
Section VI
Exit Road
Section III
Seventh St.
Sixth St.
N
Lockport Cemetery
528 Madison St.
Lockport, IL 60441



Section I is at the back (east end) of the cemetery. See the overall map on page 1.

History of Lockport Cemetery



hen the Illinois & Michigan Canal Commissioners laid out the town of Lockport in 1836, block 148 on their plan was designated as a cemetery. It was not until May 20, 1854, that a deed was created which stated that the Commissioners had sold this block to the Lockport Cemetery Association for $200.00. The deed was recorded on May 25, 1856.

Block 148 is located on the hill east of the town. Today this location is bordered by Madison, Sixth and Seventh streets and consists of nine-and-one-half acres of gently sloping, carefully tended landscape, with trees, evergreens and shrubbery. It is in the midst of a settled neighborhood of houses, a school and a church. The original entrance was at the east end of the cemetery, but the present entrance is at the west end off Madison Street.

It is unfortunate that no names appear on the deed that would identify the founders of the cemetery. The Will County Clerk's office has no record or registration of the Lockport Cemetery Association. Any listing of the founders would have been lost in the fire of August 1895. The cemetery records were then kept in a trustee's office in the area where the fire destroyed part of Lockport's business district, and all of the cemetery's records prior to the fire are lost forever.

The earliest burial date found in this reading is 1839. Markers with dates of 1824 and 1829 for two children of Joel Manning are believed to be memorial markers (cenotaphs) for burials that occurred elsewhere, as they precede the 1836 date of the Canal Commissioners' plan and the Manning family's arrival in Lockport, also in 1836.

The cemetery was once known as "Lockport Protestant Cemetery." Originally it was the resting place for all denominations, as it was the only local cemetery. The nearest Catholic cemetery was St. James of the Sag in Lemont Township. In 1852 South Lockport/St. Dennis Cemetery was established, and Catholic burials then took place there. In later years Calvary Cemetery (1898) and Resurrection (1953) were opened, and Lockport Protestant Cemetery became the province of the non-Catholic population. Today there are no religious restrictions as to burials and "Protestant" has been dropped from the name. It is commonly called "Lockport City Cemetery," which is actually a misnomer, as the city of Lockport is neither the owner nor the proprietor of this cemetery. Private ownership is vested in the Lockport Cemetery Association, and all lot owners are members of the Association. The Association is governed by a board of trustees. At the time of this reading the president of the board is John (Jack) Buss and the secretary is Ed Daggett.

Over the years the cemetery management has kept up with the times. It purchased a backhoe in January 1967 to eliminate the heavy labor of grave-digging. In 1980 the large garage for cemetery equipment was added to the house within the grounds. In 1994 the cemetery records were computerized.

Lockport Cemetery presents a most pleasant impression to the visitor. The grounds are very well kept, and many graves are carefully tended by family members with plantings and decorations. The markers and monuments are varied in style and material, from the oldest simple native limestone slabs to elaborate granite sculptures. Several tall obelisks are here, along with lamb sculptures for children, a triumphant angel, and early cairn-type markers. There are military markers from all wars from 1812 to Viet Nam. There are two mausoleums, one known to be empty and the other with unknown contents. The most recently added monuments show modern touches-- portraits, etched designs of houses, vehicles, pets and symbols. The cemetery is a peaceful and attractive place to take a quiet stroll, to honor an ancestor, to contemplate life's mysteries, or to observe Lockport history etched in stone.

And Lockport's history is indeed here; the names on the stones are a roster of its founders, its developers, and its citizenry. Many names are familiar to the local historian: Hiram Norton, Lockport's first industrial leader; William Gooding, chief engineer of the I&M Canal; John Lane, maker of the first steel plow; George Gaylord, George B. Martin, S.W. Lull, and George Lynd, early merchant princes of the area; Holder Sisson, veteran of the War of 1812 and the Blackhawk Wars and first Will County Commissioner; Julius Scheibe, merchant and builder of many of Lockport's stone buildings; Allen G. Hawley, early newspaper editor; Charles Boyer, Canal contractor and Superintendent; Rev. Ichabod Codding, abolishionist and activist; Robert Nicholson, canal boat captain; Robert Milne, builder of canal locks; stonequarrymen Horace Singer, James Bruce and John Fiddyment. Doctors, lawyers, clergymen, and just plain folks-- they are all here.

Lockport Cemetery is a treasured respository of memories and tributes to those who have left their impression on their town, their families and their descendants. May it always remind us of our heritage.