

Union Elevated Railroad:  
Randolf Street Station  
Wells and Randolf Sts.  
Chicago  
Cook County  
Illinois

HAER No. IL-1F

HAER  
ILL,  
16-CHIG,  
108F-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

IL-1F

UNION ELEVATED R.R.

RANDOLF ST. STATION (ON WELLS)

Date: 1897

Location: Randolf St. on Wells St. Chicago, Cook Co. IL

Owned By: Originally: Union Elevated Railroad  
Presently: Chicago Transit Authority

Significance: One of the stations along the Union Loop. The Loop is part of one of the oldest elevated rail systems still operating in the United States. This station served an integral part in its operation.

Transmitted by: Dan Clement, 1983. With historical data drawn from the National Register of Historic Places Determination of Eligibility file.

For additional photographs and data on the Union Elevated R. R., see: IL-1  
Union Elevated R.R.  
The Union Loop

Union Elevated Railroad, Randolph/Wells Street Station      HAER No. IL-15F  
(Union Elevated Railroad: Randolph Street Station)  
(Union Elevated Railroad, Lake Street/Fifth Avenue Station)  
Randolph and Wells Streets  
City of Chicago, Cook County, Illinois

HAER  
ILL  
16-CHIG,  
108F-

ADDENDUM TO:  
Union Elevated Railroad: Randolph Street Station  
Wells Street and Randolph Street  
City of Chicago, Cook County, Illinois

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

UNION ELEVATED RAILROAD, RANDOLPH/WELLS STREET STATION  
(Union Elevated Railroad: Randolph Street Station)  
(Union Elevated Railroad, Lake Street/Fifth Avenue Station)

HAER  
ILL  
16-CHIG,  
108F-

ADDENDUM TO:  
Union Elevated Railroad: Randolph Street Station

HAER No. IL-1F  
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This report is an addendum to a 1 page report previously transmitted to Library of Congress in 1983, under the name Union Elevated Railroad: Randolph Street Station.

Location: Randolph and Wells Streets, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois

Present Owner: Chicago Transit Authority

Present Use: Rapid Transportation

Significance: Significant in the history of American industrial archaeology, the Union Loop Elevated is also important for its association with financier and traction magnate, Charles T. Yerkes and for its role in defining and shaping Chicago's downtown. According to Theodore Anton Sande, author of *Industrial Archeology: A New Look at the American Heritage*, to "the industrial archeologist, the Chicago Loop provides an ideal case study" (1976, 113). Having made its first run in 1897, the Union Loop Elevated is one of only a few extant examples of transit systems that have remained in continuous operation for nearly a century. A "massive web of riveted steel girders and shining tracks," the Loop Elevated was designed by John Alexander Low Waddell, a Canadian-born engineer who played an important role in the history of American bridge design.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: 1897

2. Architect: The designer of the Loop Elevated and the Randolph/ Wells St. Station (originally known as Lake St. and Fifth Ave. Station) was John Alexander Low Waddell (1854-1938), Consulting Engineer of Kansas City, Missouri. For more information on Waddell, see HAER No. IL-1.
3. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown
4. Original plans and construction: John Alexander Low Waddell began developing plans for the Union Loop, under the auspices of the Lake Street Elevated Extension in 1894. The following year, Waddell's plans included a station considered the Lake St. and Fifth Ave. Station located on what is now Wells St. halfway between Lake St. and Randolph St. This station was likely considered the Lake St. Station due to Yerkes' initial method of implying that he was merely extending the Lake St. line rather than developing a whole new downtown elevated system. (In 1913, a major addition included a platform extension and station houses located at Randolph St. and Wells St. From that time on, this became known as the Randolph/Wells Station.)

Waddell developed a full set of original plans for what was considered the Lake St. and Fifth Ave. Station between 1895 and 1896. The client's name is listed on these drawings as Northwestern and Union Elevated Railroad, Chicago, Illinois. The drawings are on microfilm in the archives of the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA Archives, Engineering Dept. reviewed by J. Sniderman July 1, 1994).

There is a smaller set of drawings for the Lake St. and Fifth Ave. station dated 1897, that bear the name of A.M. Hedley, Consulting Architect of Chicago. On these drawings, the client's name is listed as Union Elevated Railroad. Depicting a somewhat modified, less ornate version of the building shown in the original plans, Hedley's drawings seem to have been used to modify and simplify Waddell's work, prior to the construction of the station in 1897 (CTA Archives, Engineering Dept. reviewed by J. Sniderman July 1, 1994).

It is likely that the modifications were made to the plans because the Union Elevated Railroad Company was re-thinking circulation and ticketing methods prior to the construction of stations. In 1897, Hedley served as consulting architect to make those changes. Hedley's drawings place the ticket booth in the upper level and provide an open-air lower level cross-over, while Waddell's drawings show an enclosed lower level area with ticket and cross-over functions. Hedley's drawings also show a simplified version of the classical ornamentation shown on Waddell's

drawings (CTA Archives, Engineering Dept. reviewed by J. Sniderman July 1, 1994).

Little is known about Alfred M. Hedley, however, he may have been a relative of Frank Hedley, who was the Lake Street General Manager at the time (Cudahy 1982, 27). Alfred M. Hedley's name appears in the Lakeside City Directory of 1897, but does not reappear in subsequent years (Lakeside City Directory 1897).

5. Alterations and additions: The Randolph/Wells Station has had numerous changes and alterations over the years, however, the original station houses located between Lake St. and Randolph St. are extant. Below is a chronological list of the more extensive alterations to the station:

1903 Platform extension were added to the station (City of Chicago Sept. 1981, II-4).

1912-13 A number of changes were made to the Union Loop Elevated to allow for through-routing and unified service with free transfer between lines. This included a major platform extension running south of the original Lake St. and Wells St. station platform, the construction of arched canopies over the platforms, the construction of new station houses and stairways to street level at Randolph St. and Wells St., the erection of a transfer bridge (City of Chicago Sept. 1981, II-4; CTA Archives, Engineering Dept. reviewed by J. Sniderman July 1, 1994).

1922 The platform was extended to the south (CTA Archives, Engineering Dept. reviewed by J. Sniderman July 1, 1994)

1925-27 Addition platform extensions were made, along Wells St. where the extension created a continuous platform (City of Chicago Sept. 1981, II-4; Chicago Rapid Transit Company, 1924, 1926, 1928).

c. 1960 Continuous platform running along Wells St. was removed (City of Chicago Sept. 1981, II-4).

1967 System-wide modernization program included replacing multi-paned glass with corrugated fiberglass windbreaks. Changes to the original west station house were likely also

made at this time. These included the construction of a fixed metal awning on the west side and apparent removal of some original windows. The station houses at Randolph St. and Wells St. was remodeled with fiberglass windows and windbreaks. All original lighting was replaced with florescent. Aluminum and fiberglass sheds were added to the northeast platform near Lake St. (City of Chicago Sept. 1981, II-4, II-11).

- c. 1970      Some of the original railings and grills were removed and new turnstiles and fences were added.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Information

1. Engineering Character: The Randolph/Wells Station is of engineering merit based on four criteria. First, the station is of merit in the history of American industrial archaeology. Second, it is of merit for its association with financier and traction magnate, Charles T. Yerkes. Third, it is of merit for its role in defining and shaping Chicago's downtown. Fourth, the Randolph/Wells Station is of merit as one of only a few extant examples of transit systems that have remained in operation for nearly a century.

2. Condition of Fabric: Poor (to be demolished).

3. Summary Description: The Randolph/Wells Station is a single level station that is elevated over the street by steel buttressing girders. The elevated is divided into tow portions, the substructure and superstructure. The substructure consists of a foundation, tress elevations, transverse sections, and a structural system. The superstructure consists of one level. This level serves as a combination ticket booth and train platform level. Additionally, the platform level consists of two mirrored platforms separated by elevated tracks. One platform serviced the Randolph/Wells Station to the west, the mirror platform serviced the Randolph/Wells Station to the east.

In general, the integrity of the Randolph/Wells Station remains intact despite general maintenance deterioration and numerous minor alterations (see alterations and additions section for discussion). However, the general maintenance deterioration does not impair the continued usage of the station for passengers.

### B. Description of Substructure:

Union Elevated Railroad,  
Randolph/Wells Station  
HAER No. IL-1F  
Page 10

Prepared by:

Archaeological Research, Inc.  
900 West Jackson, Suite 6E  
Chicago, Illinois 60607

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION:

This project was undertaken by the City of Chicago as it fulfilled Section 106 compliance requirements for a project that will affect the Randolph/Wells Station. The station is slated for demolition. The City of Chicago contracted Archaeological Research, Inc. for the HAER documentation. Key project personnel included Julia Sniderman, historical researcher, Dr. John Vogel, historical consultant, Tom Yanul, photographer, Nancy Phillips and Karen Poulson, staff researchers and David Keene, principal investigator.



1. Overall Dimensions: Not applicable. The Randolph/Wells Station's substructure is an integral part of the overall Union Loop elevated substructure. Therefore, the individual Randolph/Wells Station's overall dimensions are not applicable.

2. Foundation: The structural system is rooted in the street below the Union Loop elevated system and is surrounded by asphalt.

3. Structural system: The station is supported by a steel buttressing girder system. This buttressing girder system in part consists of vertical I-sections that are rooted into the street below and surrounded by asphalt. These vertical I-sections measure 1'3" x 1'4 1/2". The vertical I-sections directly support closely spaced flat I-beams. These closely spaced flat I-beams in turn form part of the inverted truss elevation. Specifically, the elevated tracks are superimposed on the truss elevations which in turn is supported by the vertical I-sections. Additionally, the train booth and platform level are supported and extended out from the buttressing system.

C. Description of Superstructure:

1. Ticket booth and platform level: The station is in poor condition. The ticket booth and platform level is accessed via stairways which originate from the street level. There is one stairway on each corner of the Randolph/Wells intersection. There are four staircases with twenty three steps leading from the street to a landing leading to a second flight of stairs. The second flight of stairs contains twenty two steps. These steps measure 4' x 11" x 7". Two turnstiles, that serve as exits from the platform, exist near the top of the stairs. These two turnstiles are located just on the other side of a large turnstile.

On each platform there is a ticket booth. The ticket booths are metal and painted white. The booths are pentagonal and each side contains a window. The ticket booth windows measure 3'9" x 3'3".

At the north end of the platform there is a pedestrian passenger bridge that connects the west bound train platform to the east bound train platform. This pedestrian platform bridge allows passengers to switch train direction without paying an additional transfer fee.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General Setting and Orientation: The Randolph/Wells Station is located in the heart of the downtown Chicago and contributes to the definition of the loop area.

The station is specifically located above the Randolph/Wells street intersection. The station is surrounded by office buildings, restaurants, parking facilities, and commercial establishments.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### A. Architectural Drawings and Photographs:

Chicago Transit Authority Archives, Engineering Dept., drawings on microfilm made available by CTA staff member Clifford Hayes, reviewed by J. Sniderman July 1, 1994.

Chicago Transit Authority Library, photographs and reports made available by CTA staff member Violette Brown, reviewed by J. Sniderman July 1, 1994.

Commission on Chicago Landmarks, photographs and photo-reproduction of drawing entitled "Elevation of Bridge Connecting Premises of Schlesinger and Mayer at 141 Van Buren with Union Loop R.R." in the files of CCL staff member, Tim Samuelson reviewed by Sniderman June 29, 1994.

#### B. Bibliography

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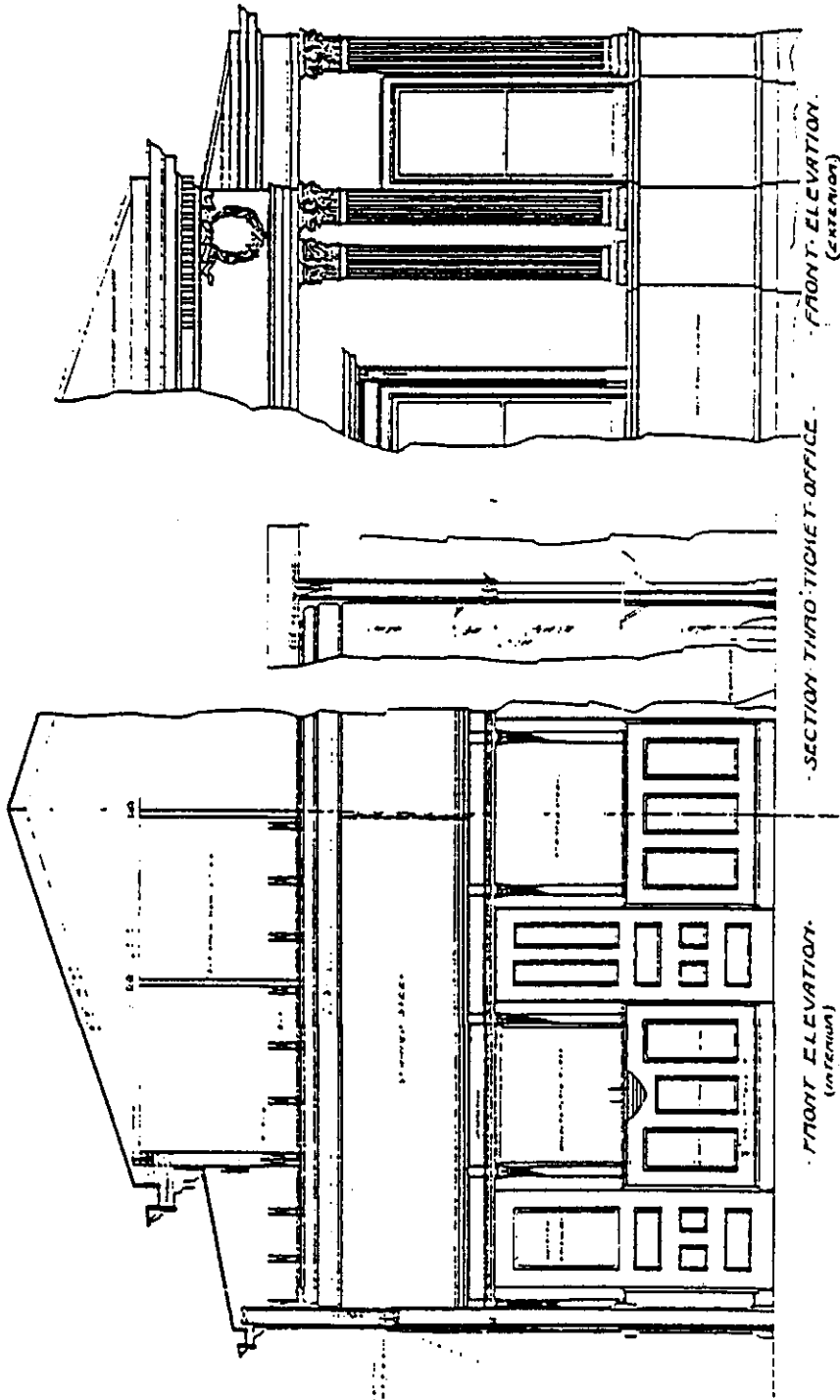
Weese, Harry. "Chicago Loop Elevated," National Register of Historic Places nomination form. National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1978.

# Union Elevated Railroad.

PLANS OF TICKET OFFICE AND STATION ON FIFTH AVENUE

APPROVED

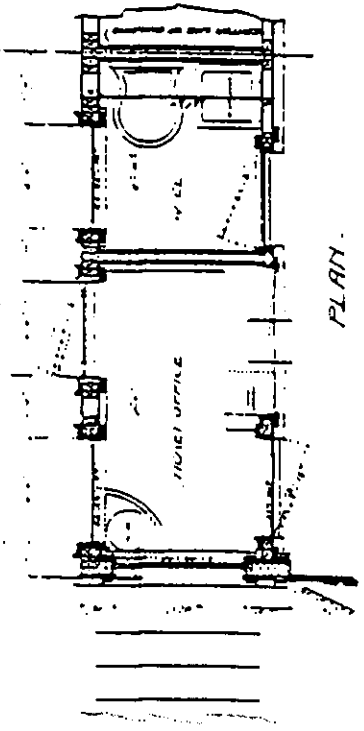
APPROVED



FRONT ELEVATION (EXTERIOR)

SECTION THROUGH TICKET OFFICE

FRONT ELEVATION (INTERIOR)



PLAN

Union Elevated Railroad,  
Randolph/Wells Station  
HAER No. IL-1F  
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SCALE: DETAILS  
OF  
TICKET OFFICE, ETC.

STA. 1216  
FILE 146

STATION

Union Elevated Railroad.

PLANE SECTION STATION ON FIFTH AVENUE

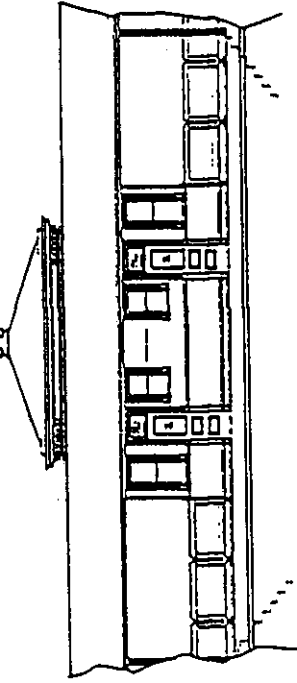
A. W. MERRILL  
 ARCHT.

APPROVED: 1911

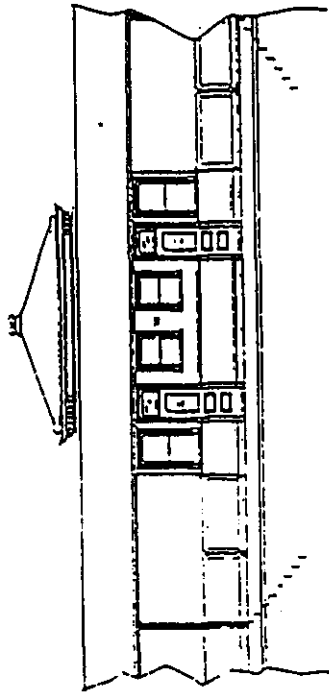
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

UNIT 215 - 11th Avenue to 12th St.

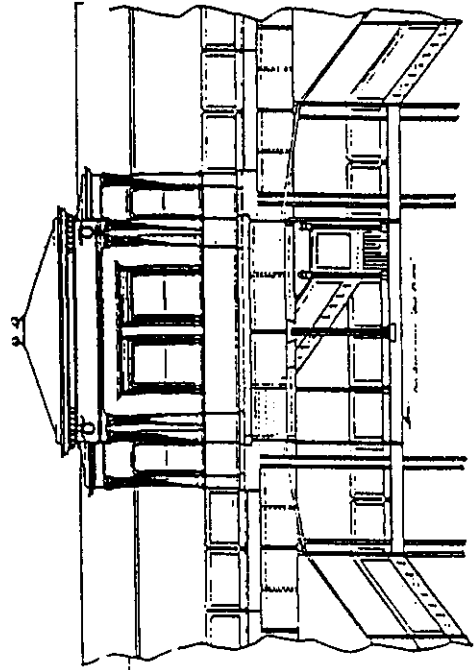
1911



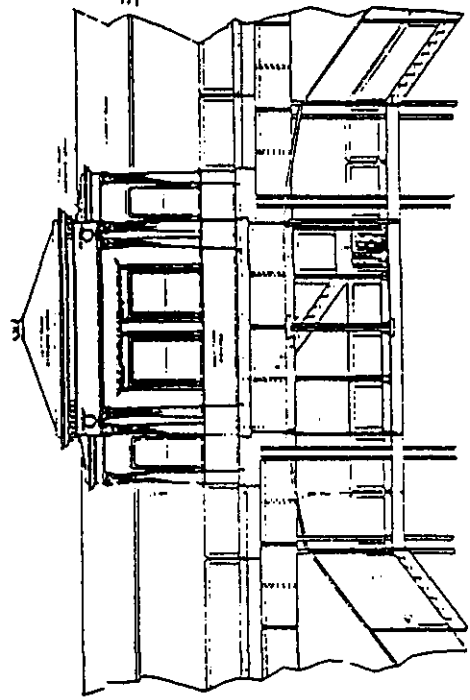
— EAST ELEVATION (EAST END) —



— WEST ELEVATION (WEST END) —



— EAST ELEVATION —



— WEST ELEVATION —

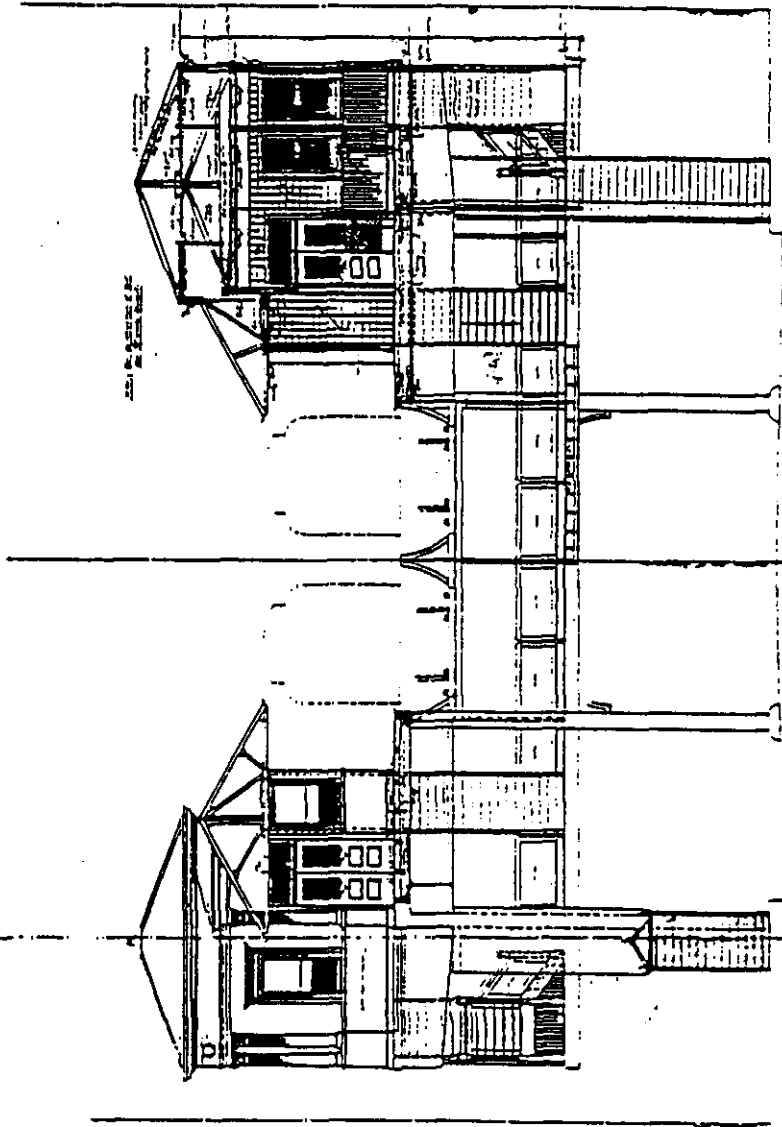
Union ~ Elevated ~ Railroad ~  
 Lake Street Station on Fifth Avenue

Section

Architect: George B. Messersmith  
 Chicago, Ill. March 25<sup>th</sup> 1907.

Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Approved



STA. 1215  
 FILE 146  
 DRAWING 106

— ODDS — SECTION —  
 MARK SQUARE  
 (only one)

— NUMERICAL ELEVATION —  
 LEVEL SQUARE