

Edward Otho Cresap Ord

Soldier and Surveyor

By J. GREGG LAYNE

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To those familiar with the city's history, the name Ord is almost synonymous with Los Angeles. Most students of California history are cognizant of the Ord Survey of the little Pueblo in 1849, but few of these have any knowledge of the man Ord, other than the fact that he was an army officer who made the first survey and the first map of the city of Los Angeles.

For ten years before the American occupation of California, the *Ayuntamiento* of the Ciudad de Los Angeles had talked of properly laying out the streets of the town—but in true mañana fashion nothing had been done toward the project. So when, in 1849, the American Governor Bennett Riley sent a request to the *Ayuntamiento* for a city map and information as to titles and methods of granting city lots, he was informed by the *Alcalde* that there was no city map in existence and never had been one, and furthermore, there was no surveyor in the town to make one.

We find, therefore, in the old Los Angeles Archives, under the date of June 9, 1849, the following resolution by the "Honorable Town Council" in regard to a survey:

*"Resolved: That this honorable body desiring to have this done, requests the Territorial Government to send down a surveyor to do this work, for which he will receive pay out of the municipal funds, and should they not suffice by reason of other demands having to be met, then he can be paid with unappropriated lands, should the government give its consent."*

In response to this request, Governor Riley sent to Los Angeles Lieutenant E. O. C. Ord, of Company F, the Third Artillery, who had come to California with his fellow lieutenant, William Tecumseh Sherman, on the U.S. Ship *Lexington*, landing at Monterey in January, 1847. Lieutenant Ord, a graduate of West Point, had just finished

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a survey of Sacramento at this time, and was therefore well fitted for the work.

Upon his arrival in Los Angeles, after a conference with the Council, we find the following entry in the old archives:

*"Your committee charged by your Honorable body with the duty of conferring with Lieutenant Ord, the surveyor who is to get out a map of this city, has had a conference with that gentleman and he offers to make a map of the city, demarking thereon in a clear and exact manner, the boundary lines and points of the municipal lands, for which work he demands a compensation of fifteen hundred dollars in coin, ten lots selected from among those demarked in the map and vacant lands to the extent of one thousand varas, in sections of two hundred varas each, and wheresoever he may choose to select the same, or in case this proposition is refused, then he wants to be paid the sum of three thousand dollars in cash. Your committee finds the first proposition very disadvantageous to the city, because conceding to the surveyor the right to select not only the said ten lots, but also the thousand varas of vacant land, the city would deprive itself of the most desirable lands and lots which some future day may bring more than three thousand dollars. The City funds cannot now defray this expense, but should your Honorable body deem it indispensable a loan of that amount may be negotiated, pledging the credit of the City Council and paying an interest of one per cent a month; this loan could be repaid with the proceeds of the sale of the first lots disposed of."*

Lieutenant Ord refused to accept anything but cash, feeling that Los Angeles real estate could never amount to much, and the Council immediately negotiated the loan and a sale of lots was ordered to repay the amount borrowed. And the archives tell us that on the 19th day of September, 1849, Don Juan Temple, the syndic of the "Honorable Body," submitted to its members the finished "City Map," as well as a receipt showing he had paid the surveyor three thousand dollars, the amount having been a loan made by him to the city, to enable it to pay its bill.

Ord called his map the "Plan de la ciudad de Los Angeles," and we are fortunate in being able to reproduce it in this number of the

## Edward Otho Cresap Ord

*Quarterly* of the Historical Society of Southern California directly from what is apparently the original map, now the property of the City of Los Angeles. Another early copy containing slightly more outlying property information (possibly added at a later date) is in the possession of the Title Insurance and Trust Company, of Los Angeles. This fitting reproduction of this important work of Lieutenant Ord, who in 1849 was but thirty years of age, merits a sketch of his life, which was a brilliant one, and of his intensely interesting background.

Edward Otho Cresap Ord was born October 18, 1818, in Cumberland, Maryland, third son of James Ord, a former officer in the United States Navy, and later a lieutenant in the army during the War of 1812. His mother was a daughter of Colonel Daniel Cresap, who served under Washington. Through his father royal blood flowed in his veins, for the father, James Ord, was the son of George IV of England by a morganatic marriage with the beautiful Mrs. Fitzherbert, while George was Prince of Wales.

In 1819 the Ords moved to Washington, D.C., where Edward received his early education, which was chiefly from his father, who was a profound scholar. At sixteen he entered the United States Military Academy, and was graduated in 1839, the seventeenth in his class. On July 1st, the same year, he was appointed Second Lieutenant, and assigned to the Third Artillery. His first service was in the Florida Everglades against the Seminole Indians, where for gallant service he was appointed First Lieutenant.

In 1847 he was sent with his regiment to California, and was there associated with both Sherman and Halleck. In the same company was his brother, Dr. James Ord, not a military man, but attached to the Third Artillery as Surgeon, under contract. Dr. Ord remained in California permanently and married the daughter of Don José Antonio de la Guerra of Santa Barbara, the widow of Manuel Jimeno, one of the most prominent of the Spanish Californians.

After completing his survey of Los Angeles, Lieutenant Ord saw considerable military service in California, and on September 7, 1850, received his captaincy. He was married at San Francisco on October 14, 1854, to Mary Mercer Thompson, and from this union there were

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two sons and a daughter. During 1856, and again in 1858, he campaigned against the Indians in Oregon, between which tours of duty he was in charge of old Fort Miller in the San Joaquin Valley, near the present town of Fresno, where he had associated with him as surgeon Dr. Wm. F. Edgar, one of the founders, and a past president of the Historical Society of Southern California.

In 1859 we find Captain Ord in the expedition that suppressed the John Brown Raid on Harper's Ferry. Back again in California, he was stationed at the Presidio in San Francisco, and there, at the outbreak of the Civil War, was appointed Brigadier General. Ordered east, his rise was rapid. He saw much service in the thick of the fray, and served through the war, reaching the rank of Major General. He was a member of General Grant's staff at Vicksburg. Never was anything but praise given him for his fearless action at all times.

General Ord was retired December 6, 1880, and died of yellow fever at Havana on July 22, 1883. His remains were taken to the National Cemetery at Arlington and were there interred with full military honors. But although Edward Otho Cresap Ord's military career was a brilliant one, no act of his will place his name in the minds of men for all time more forcibly than his survey of the "Ciudad de Los Angeles" in 1849.<sup>1</sup>

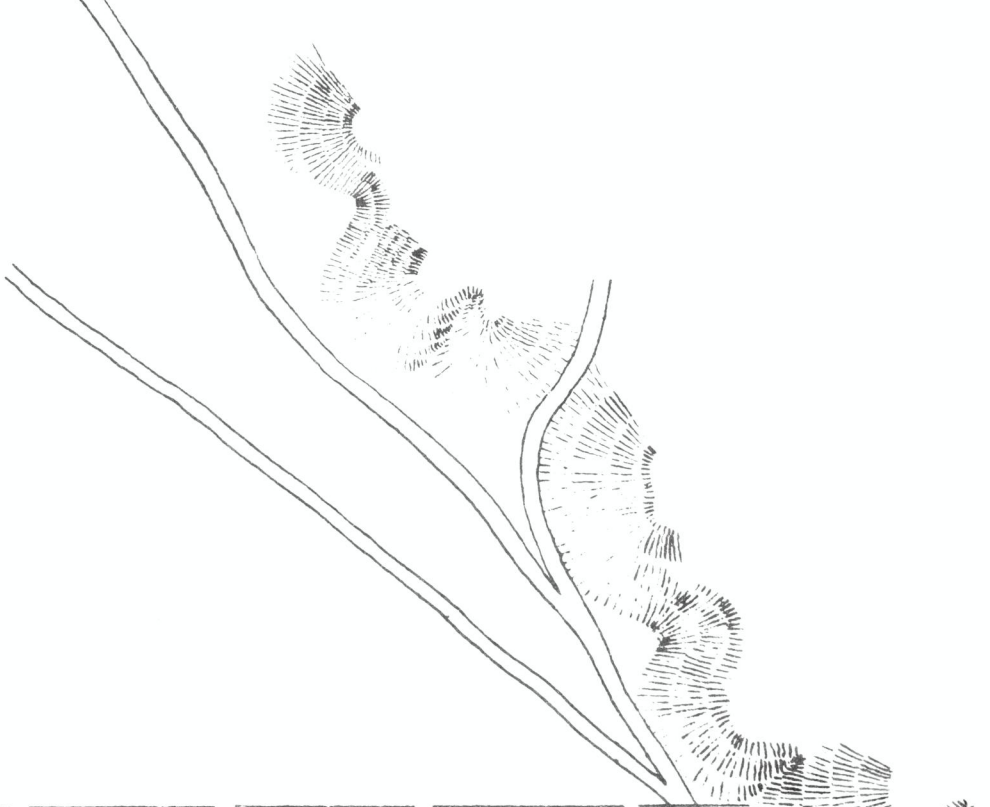
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<sup>1</sup>The notation "City Clerk," etc., in the lower right-hand corner of the map refers to the recording of the document in the official records of Los Angeles County. It appears that a recordation fee of \$148.70 was charged for this service.

Los Angeles  
No. 11

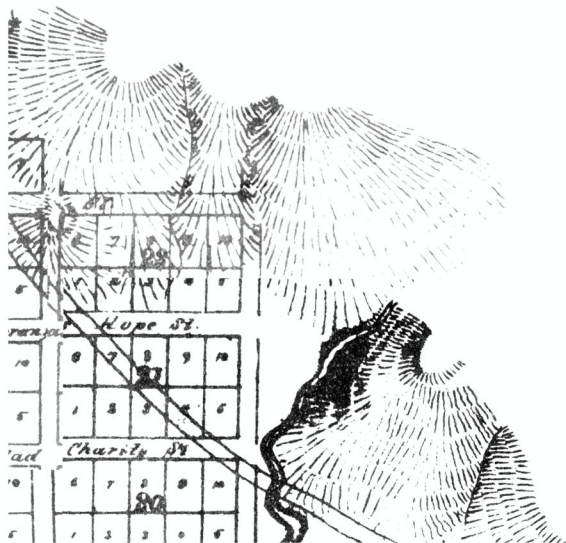
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# Geles City Map No. 1



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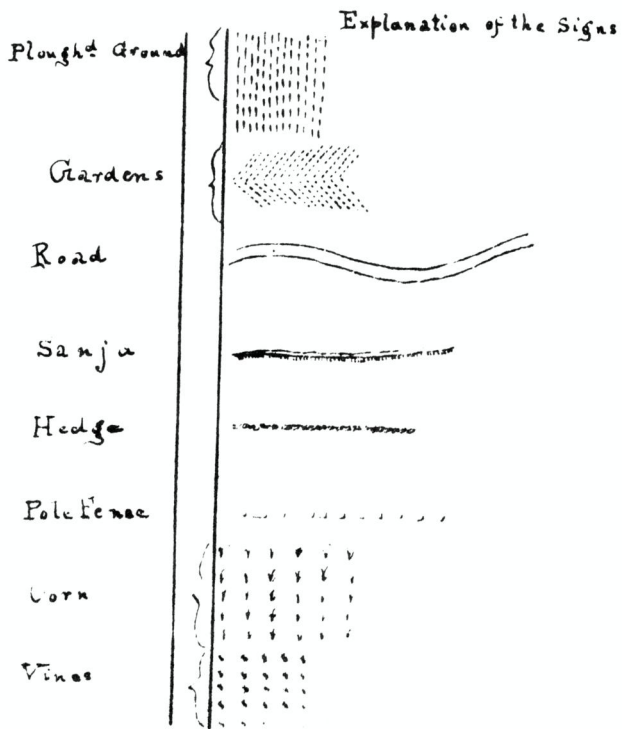
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**PLAN**  
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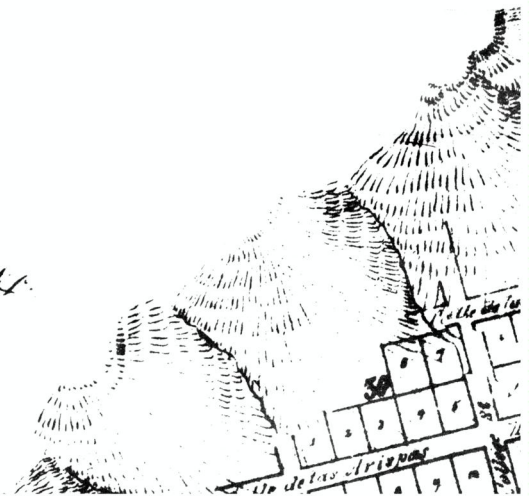
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*E. C. C. 1<sup>o</sup>rd.*  
*H<sup>m</sup> B. Hutton*  
*August 29<sup>th</sup>*

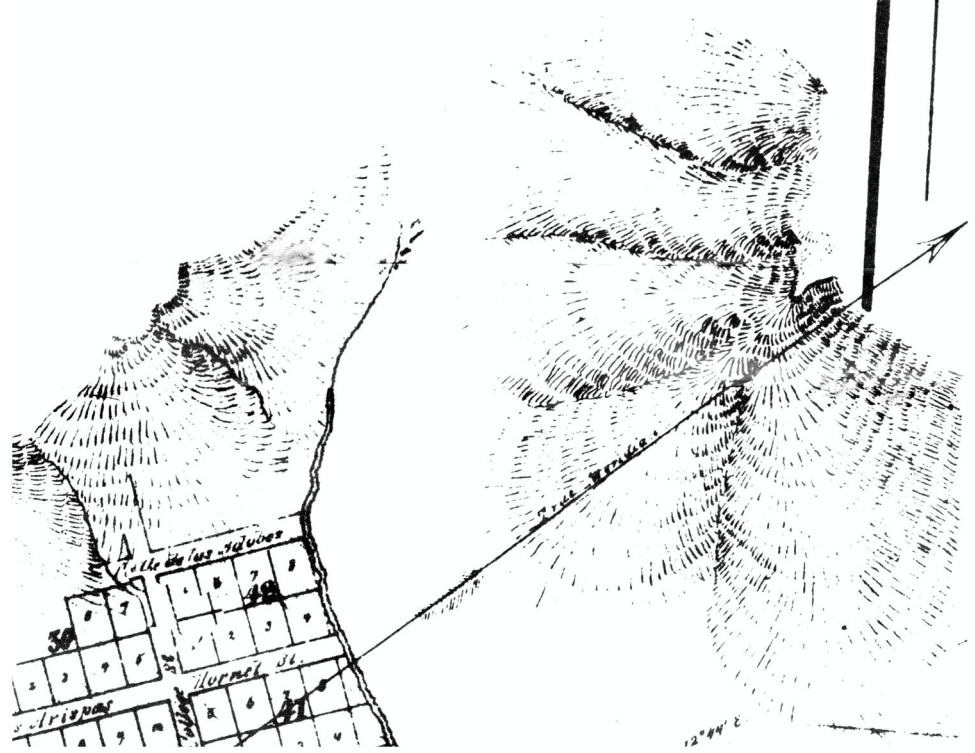


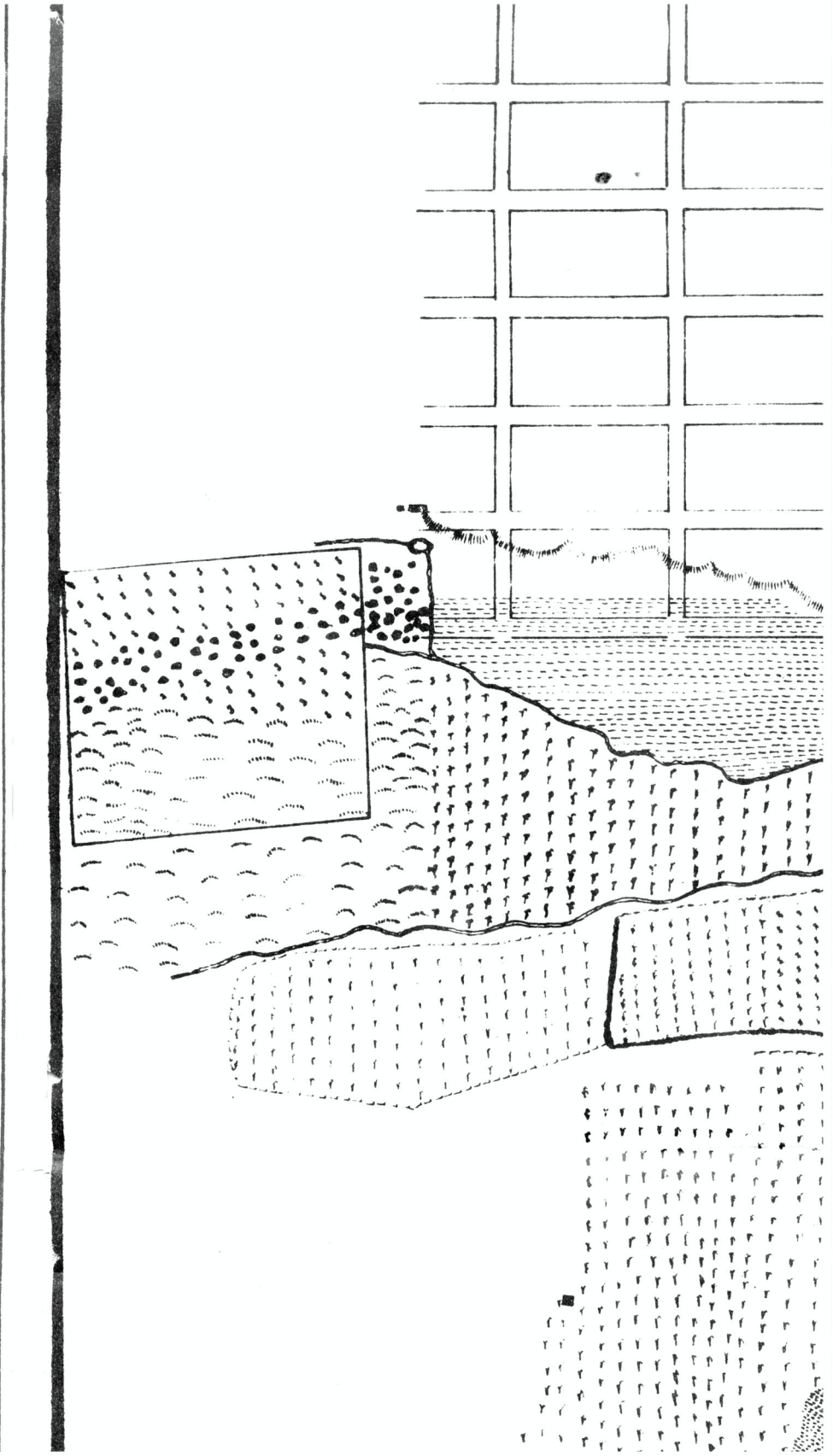


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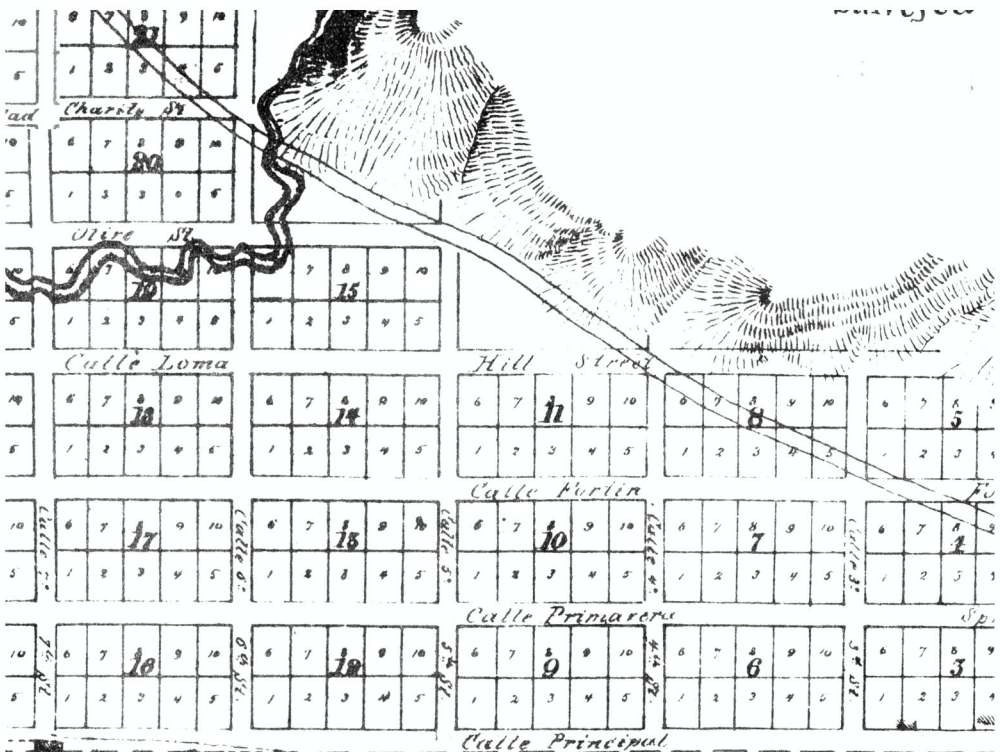
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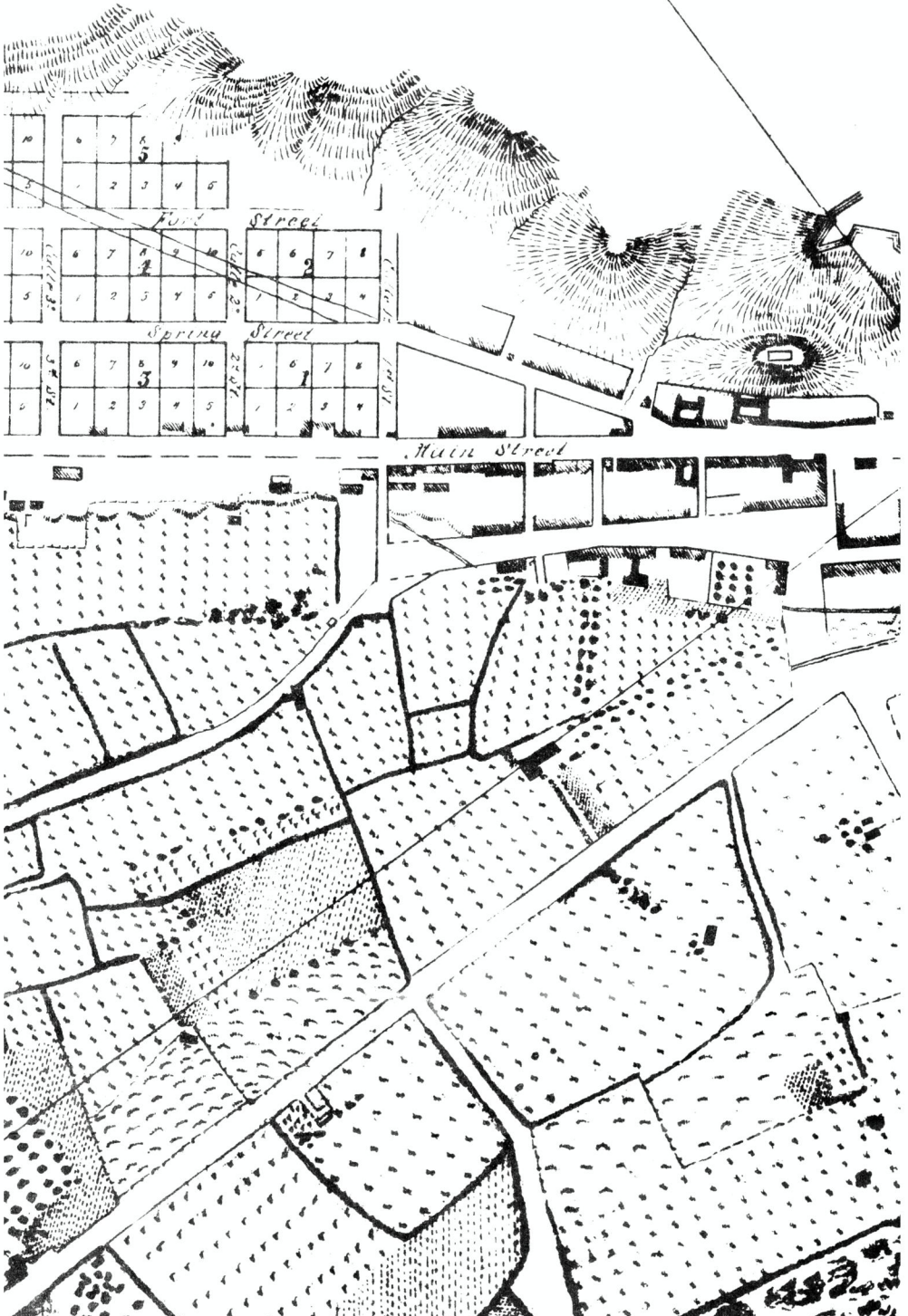
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| 6 | 7 | 8  | 9                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 10 |   |   |   |    |  |  |    |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |                                                                                                                                                                                 |   |   |   |   |  |  |    |  |   |   |   |   |
|   |   | 23 |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |    |   |   |   |    |  |  |    |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |                                                                                                                                                                                 |   |   |   |   |  |  |    |  |   |   |   |   |
| 1 | 2 | 3  | 4                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 5  |   |   |   |    |  |  |    |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |                                                                                                                                                                                 |   |   |   |   |  |  |    |  |   |   |   |   |
| 6 | 7 | 8  | 9                                                                                                                                                                                                             |    |   |   |   |    |  |  |    |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |                                                                                                                                                                                 |   |   |   |   |  |  |    |  |   |   |   |   |
|   |   | 10 |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |    |   |   |   |    |  |  |    |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |                                                                                                                                                                                 |   |   |   |   |  |  |    |  |   |   |   |   |
| 1 | 2 | 3  | 4                                                                                                                                                                                                             |    |   |   |   |    |  |  |    |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |                                                                                                                                                                                 |   |   |   |   |  |  |    |  |   |   |   |   |



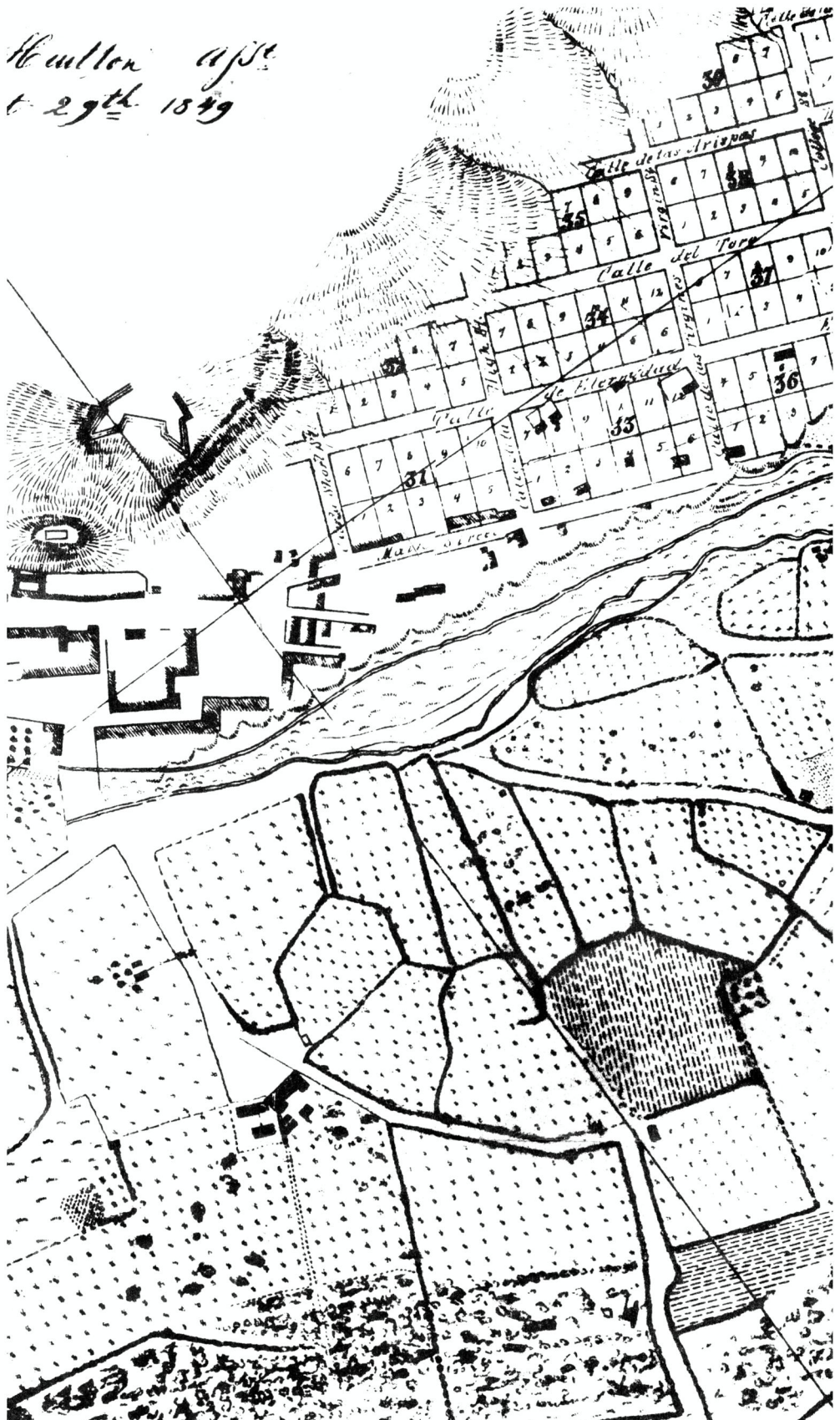


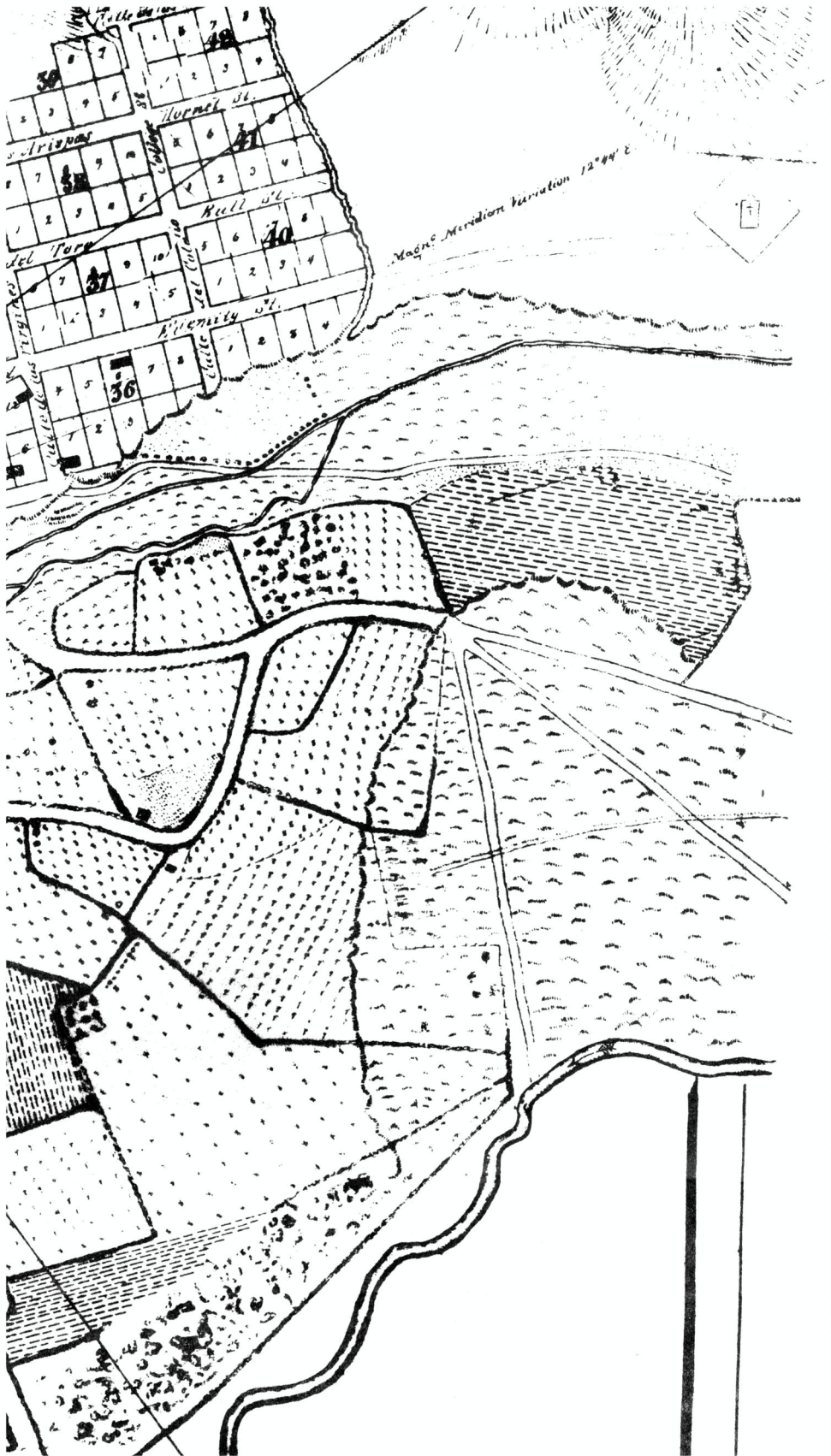
Survey of ...

H<sup>m</sup> B. Hutton  
August 29<sup>th</sup>

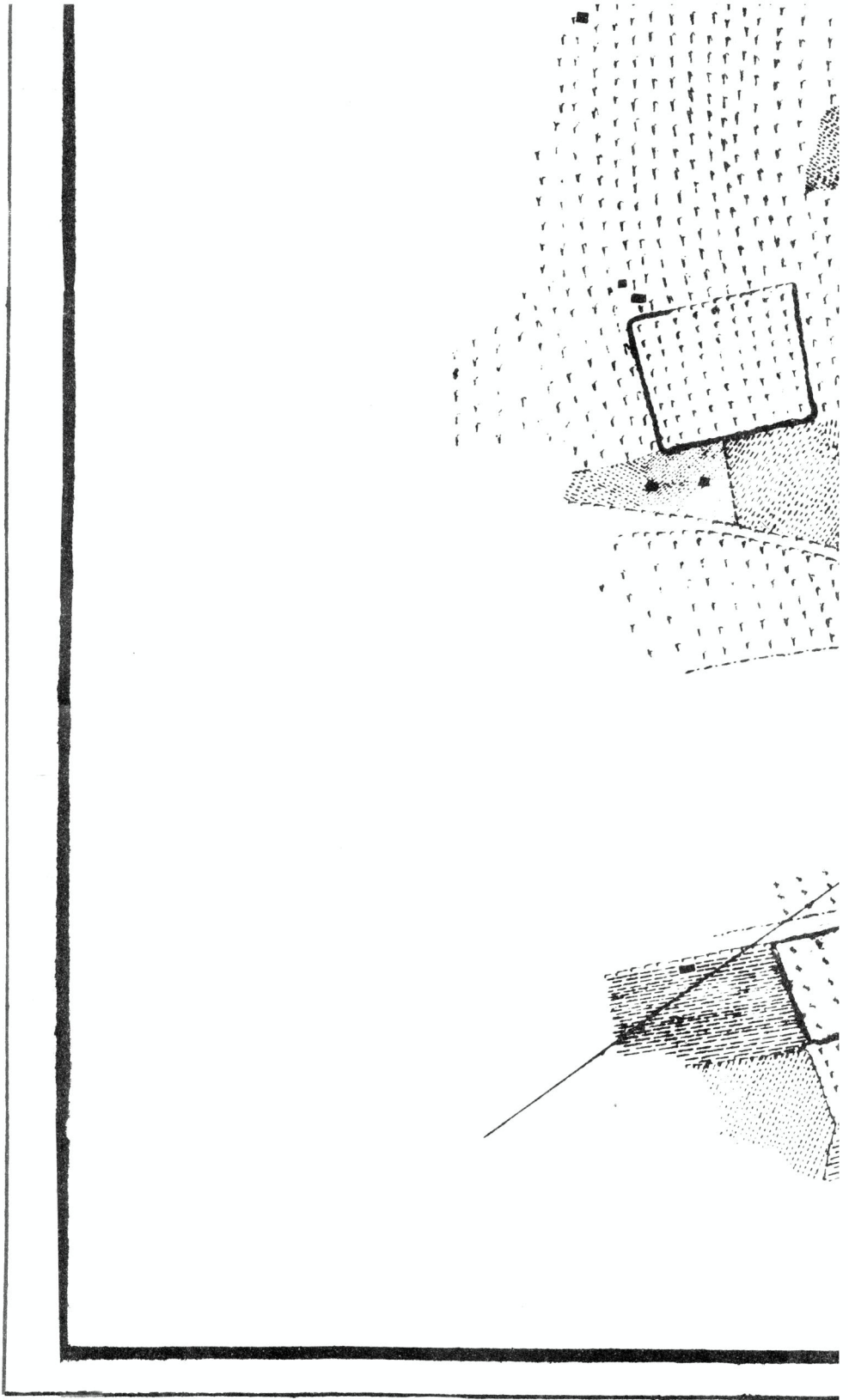


Hamilton 1849  
1-29th 1849

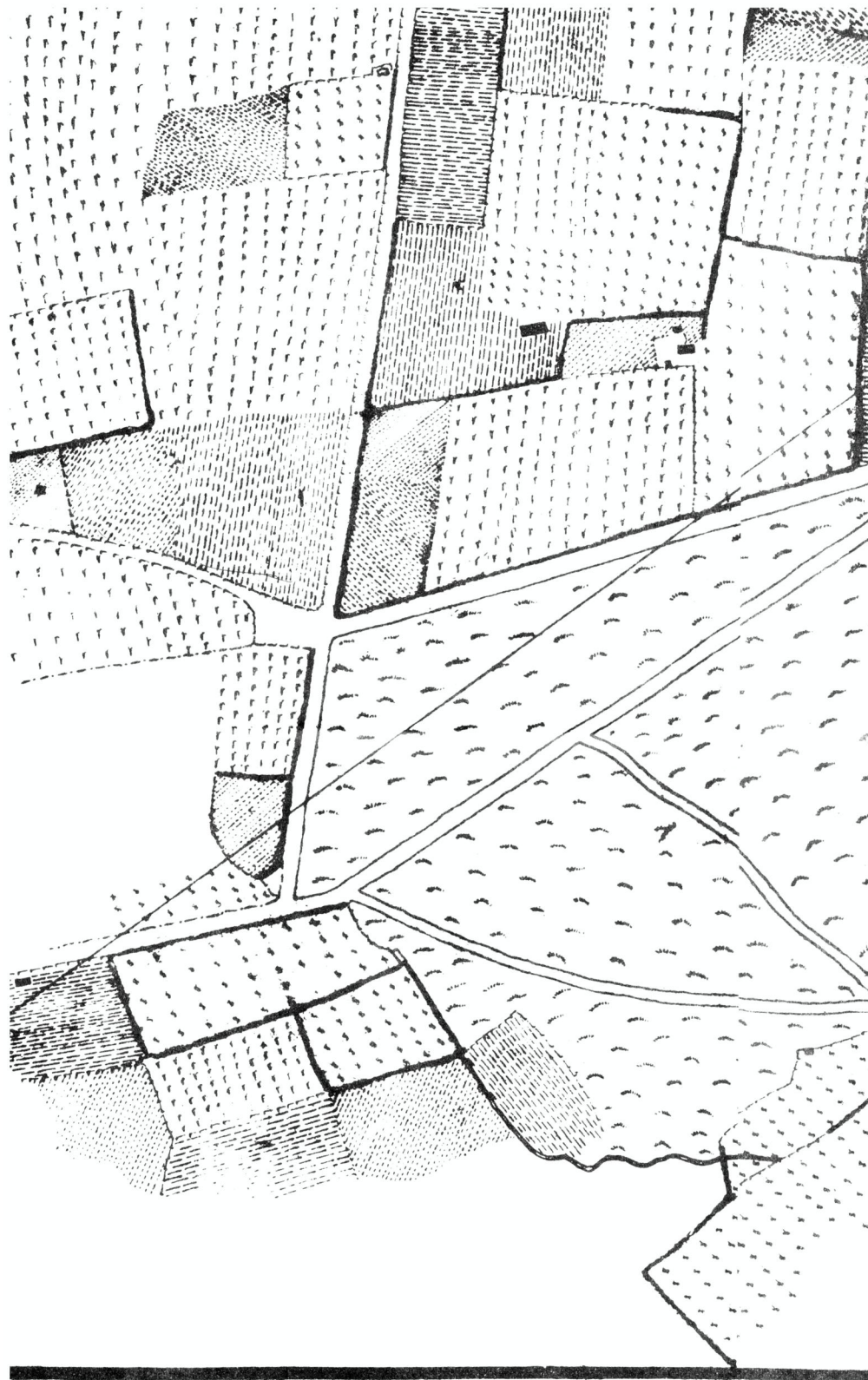




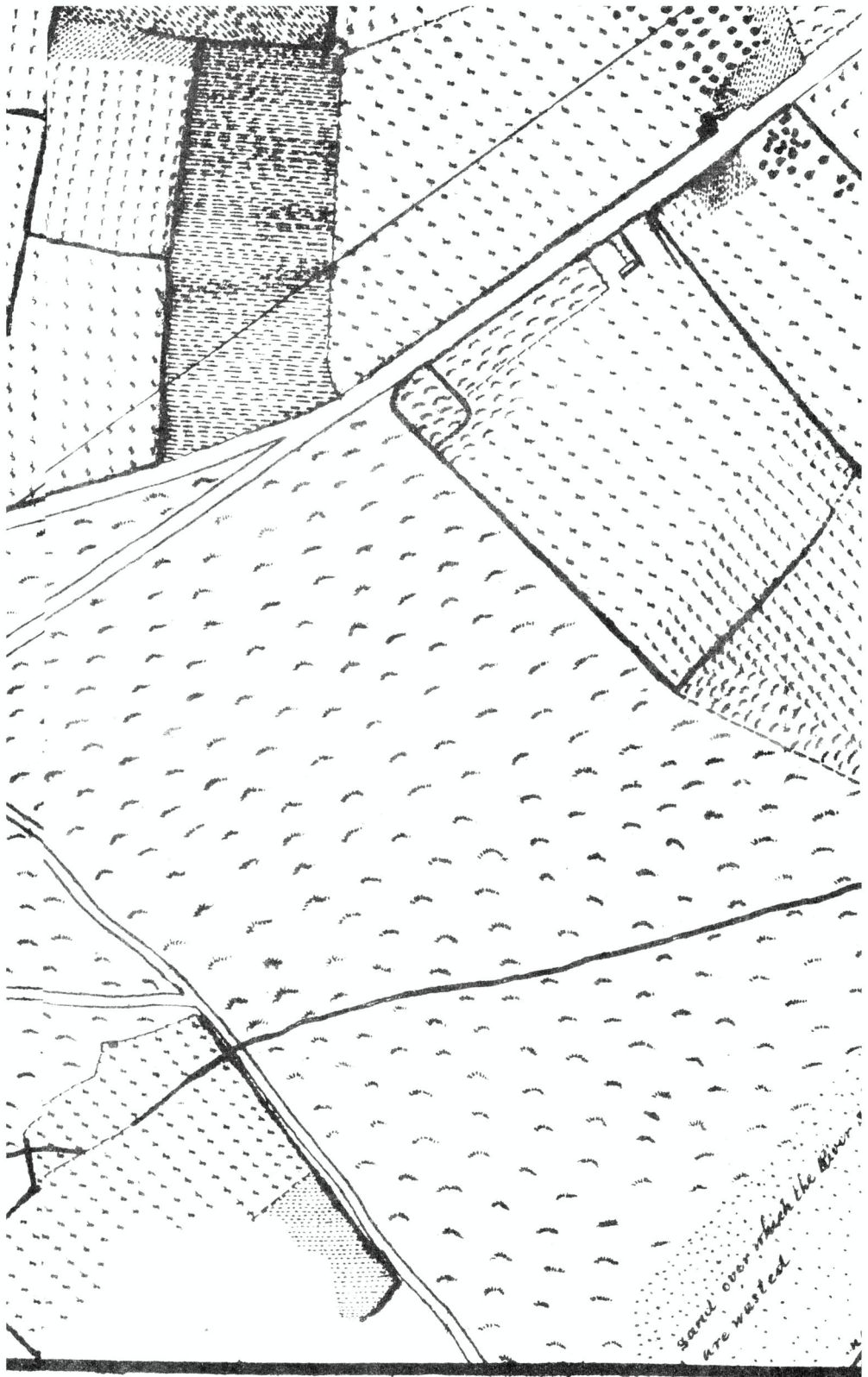




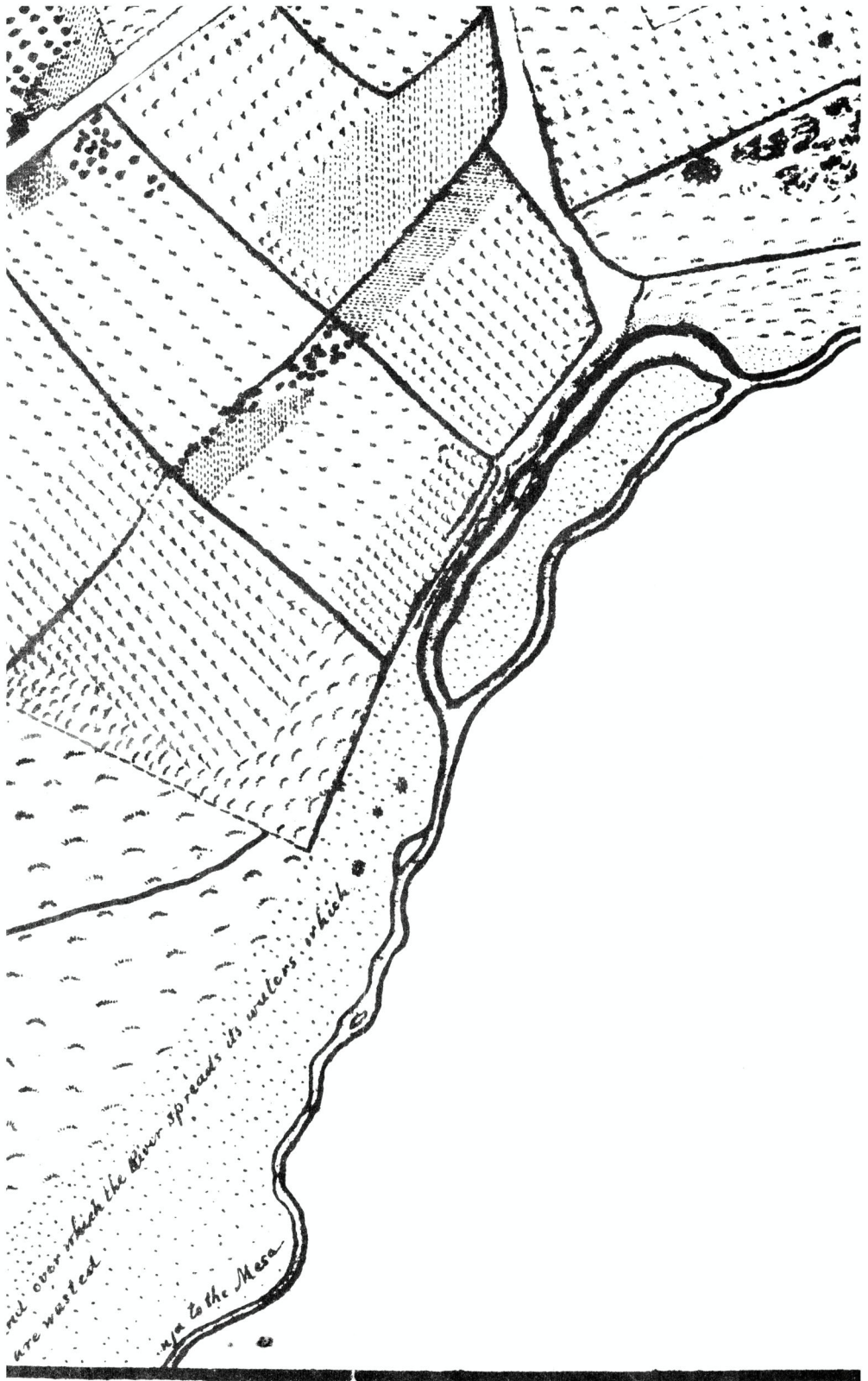
*Lieutenant E. O. C. Ord's 1849 S*



1. Ord's 1849 Survey of the "Ciudad de Los Angeles," reproduced by the F



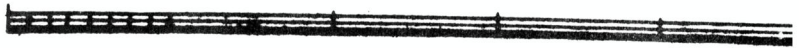
duced by the Historical Society of Southern California, from the original m



the original map, through the courtesy of Robert Dominguez, City Clerk of



Scale of 10 Inches to the Mile



Compass Course of Main Street from corner  
opposite Jose Ant<sup>o</sup> Barillos House S 24° 45' 11"  
Compass Course of Main S<sup>e</sup> North of the Church

Variation of the Needle 12° 44' E.  
City Clerk

15 18  
53 66 ex seq  
miscellaneous

Arthur Beau

148 70

09

TH



in corner

S 24° 45' 11"

to the Church N 9 1/2° E

66 x 50  
sq  
ft

*Boyer*

The size of the original is 28 1-2 x 30 1-2 inches

59

*E. Seebold*

the original is preserved.