

# THE YELLOW RIVER STUDY PLYMOUTH, IND.

*1st - 3rd times*

A 5<sup>TH</sup> YEAR, L.A. THESIS PROJECT

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CHIEF CRITIC: STAN GEDA

*Date* → 1978

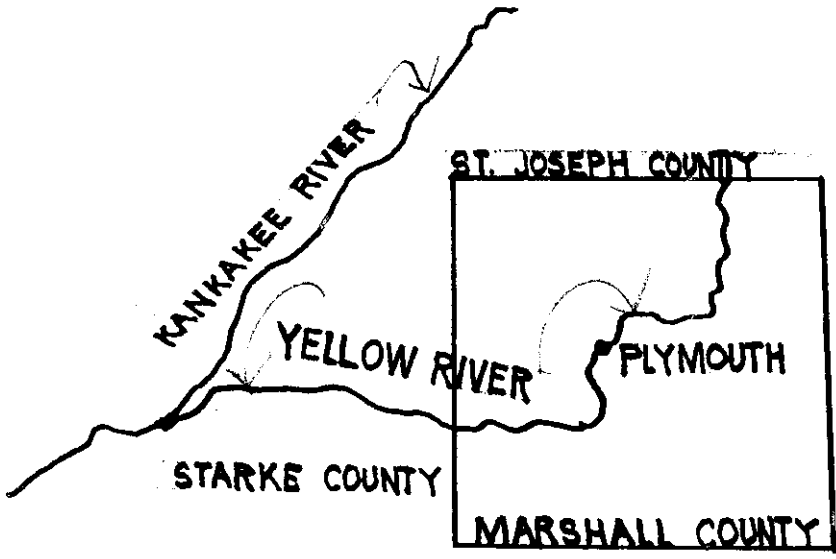
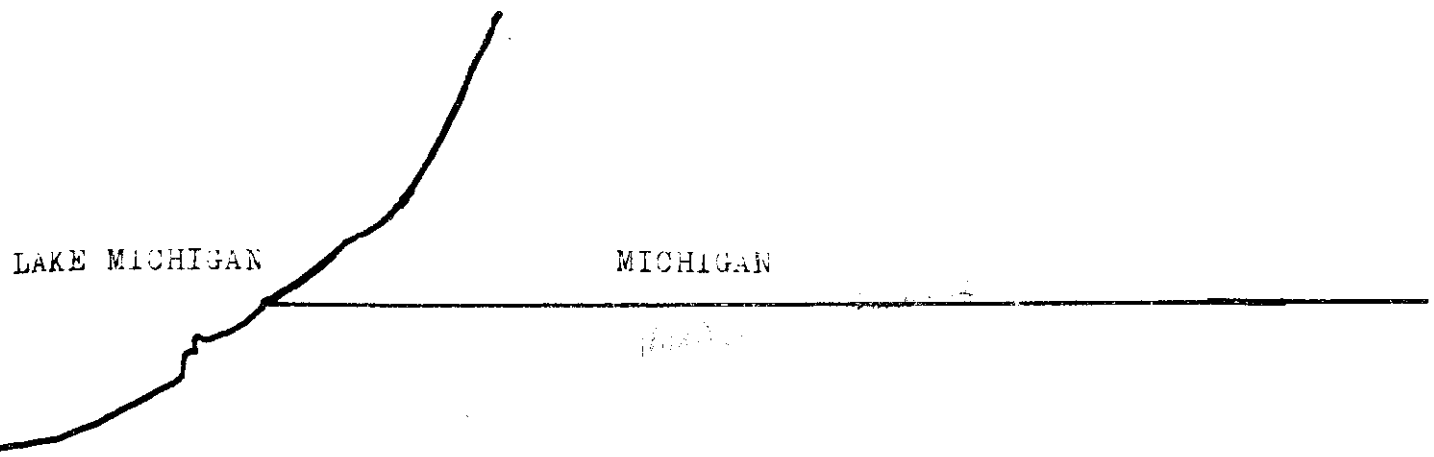
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## INTRODUCTION

The Yellow River is a small river in northern Indiana. The river begins in southern St. Joseph county and flows in a north to south direction into Marshall county where it turns sharply, first, east to west, then north to south, and finally east to northwest into Starke county. In Starke county the river turns almost true west until it dips quickly to the southwest and flows into the larger Kankakee River. The Yellow River is approximately 50.4 miles in length and drains an area of approximately 294 square miles (roughly 2.9 miles on both sides of the river). The Yellow River Drainage Basin is incorporated into the larger Kankakee River Drainage Basin. There are flood plain maps available for some 37 rivers in Indiana. The Yellow River is not one of them. In fact the only information available on the river is the topography on the U.S.G.S. map and data gathered (and graphed) from gages located on the river. The information from the gages has been accumulated since 1949.

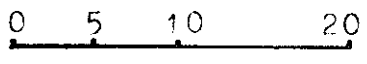
Plymouth, Indiana, a small, rural community of approximately 8500 human beings, is located in Marshall county, northern Indiana and is the site of one of the Yellow River gaging stations. Plymouth is cut at a diagonal by the Yellow River and is located almost entirely within the Yellow River Drainage Basin. The river runs through Plymouth for approximately 3.4 miles, a section starting from U.S. 31 (approximately 14.56 miles from the river's start) and ending at the southwest city limit of Plymouth.

It is the above mentioned section of the Yellow River as it runs through Plymouth, Indiana which will be the focus of this study.



*Yellow River*

RIVER LOCATION MAP



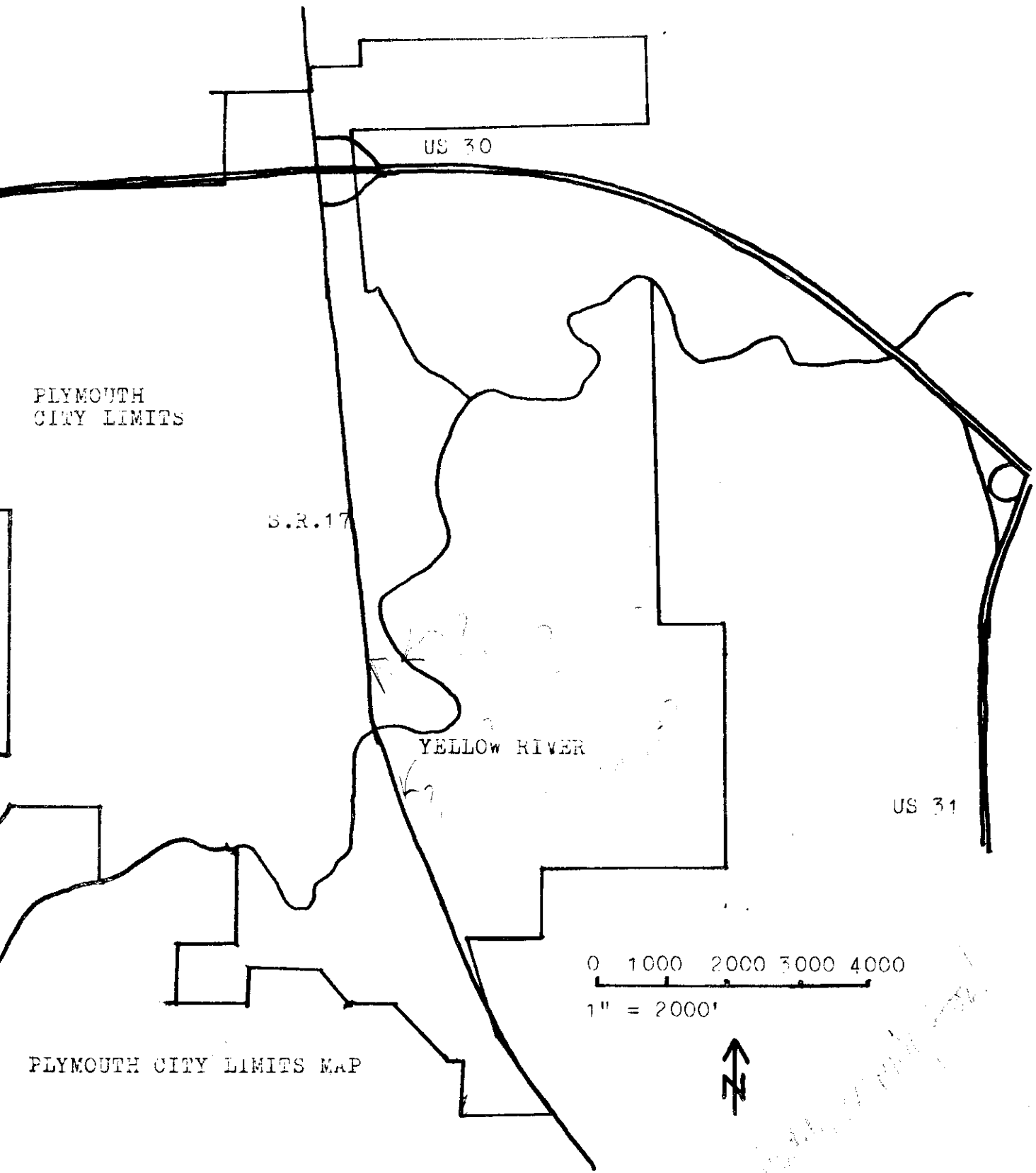
1" = app. 11.2 miles

## WHY PLYMOUTH, INDIANA?

Plymouth, Indiana was chosen for this study for several reasons. The reasons

are;

1. The author of this document spent 6 years growing up and living in Plymouth. This has given the author an insite on the community, both psychological and physical. It has also bred a familiarity with the Yellow River and spawned a desire to make the river a more valuable and respected part of the community of Plymouth.
2. As previously mentioned, there is a gaging station located in Plymouth. This gives at least a partial information base to work with. The flood stage data, stream flow data, etc. is critical to the study of the Yellow River. The topograpy can be interpolated from the topograpy on the U.S.G.S. map. This gives another partial information base to work with, and another critical one at that. By combining the two partial bases a fairly strong overall base is created. When other available pieces of information concerning the community and river are added to this base of physical data, an even more diverse and stable analysis base is made available for study. The data base available for the Yellow River as it passes through Plymouth, Indiana makes it a sound area of the river to study.
3. When looking at Plymouth, as it appears on the USGS, map, it seems obvious that the river is a major geophysical element in the community of Plymouth. Indeed, the Yellow River is a major geophysical element. Unfortunately, as with countless other geophysical features of greater magnitude than the Yellow River, man has managed to relegate it to the position of something that is acknowledged as existing but unworthy of consideration. The people of Plymouth have managed to ignore the fact that the Yellow River flows past a great majority of of the existing community facilities. Most of these facilities are within two blocks of the river. The Yellow River is being unjustly ignored. By analyzing the river and community, possible links, along the river, connecting various community facilities may become appareant. These links along the river could then be used to move people and noperully, to change peoples' attitudes toward the river, thereby gaining it at least a modicum of respect.
4. The Yellow River, small as it may, be, has got a great deal of character. For long stretches the river is covered by a dome formed by the mature vegetation on the river banks. The river flows in a very quiet, sedate manner. Walking along the river can make a person feel very comfortable and protected and alive. The river is an incredible place to escape to to recharge your mental batteries. The battery charger should be made available to more people.



US 30

PLYMOUTH  
CITY LIMITS

S.R. 17

YELLOW RIVER

US 31

0 1000 2000 3000 4000  
1" = 2000'

PLYMOUTH CITY LIMITS MAP



*[Faint, illegible stamp]*

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## THE YELLOW RIVER STUDY, PLYMOUTH, INDIANA

The Yellow River Study will be a three part or phase study. Each part will involve a different scale and a different perspective or way of looking at the river and the community.

Phase One will be a study at a large scale. This will include first, a regional look at Plymouth. An analysis will be made of the region surrounding Plymouth to note Plymouth's standing in the region and what influences other communities in the region may have on Plymouth. Second, an analysis will be made of the community of Plymouth at a scale of  $1'' = 400'$ . This analysis will include both physical and psychological data. The purpose of the analysis is to help determine just what the community needs and how it may function with any changes which may be made.

Phase Two will be a study of the immediate area of the river (roughly 2 blocks on both sides of the river). This part of the study will deal with physical information in a more specific manner and will be done at a scale of  $1'' = 100'$ . An analysis of specific areas chosen after the analysis of Phase One will be carried out and design concepts put forth.

Phase Three will be a completion of final design concepts and accompanying rationale for those design decisions.

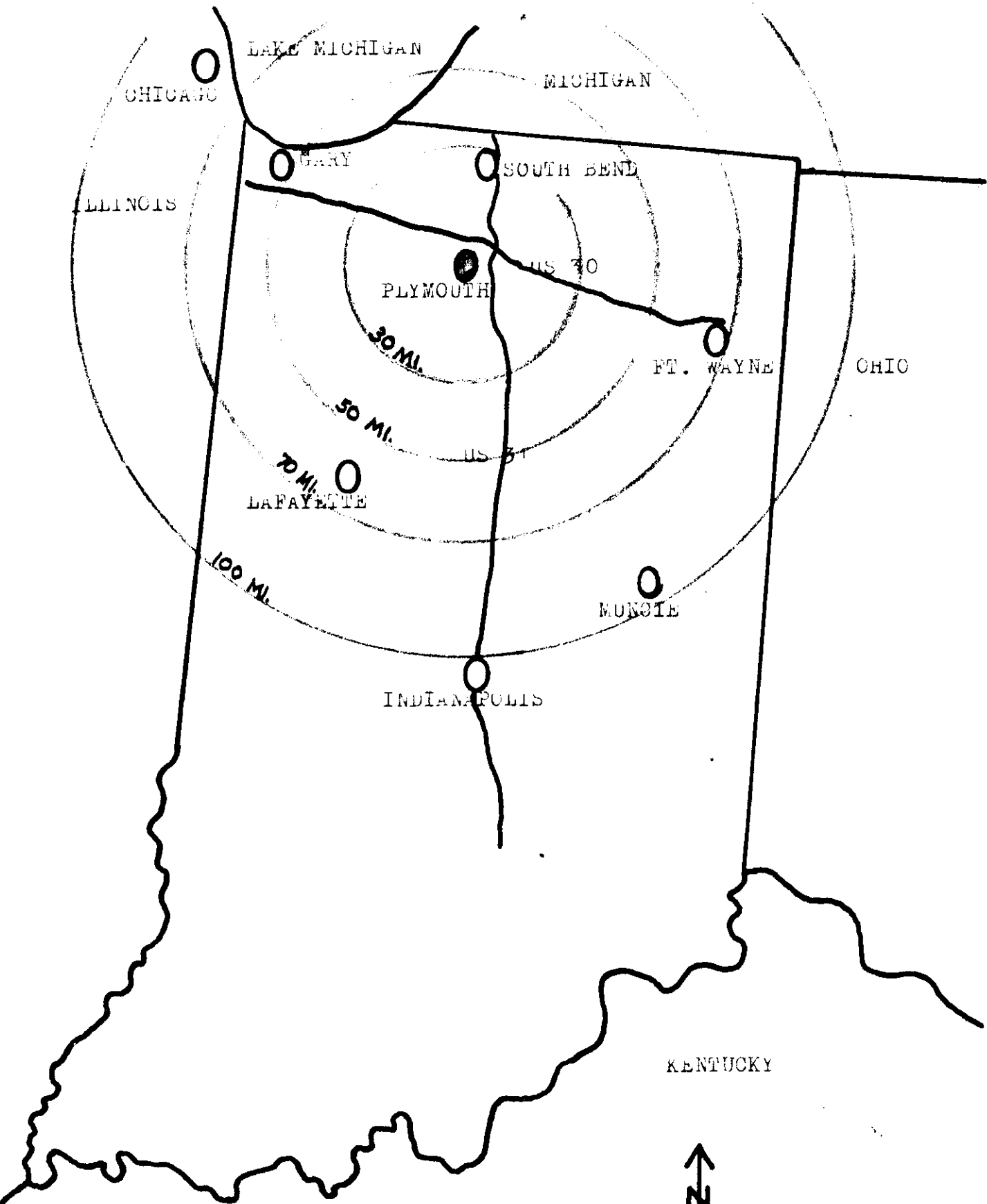
THE YELLOW RIVER STUDY, PLYMOUTH, INDIANA  
PHASE ONE

VERBAL ANALYSIS

Regional Context- Plymouth is located at the junction of U.S. 30 and U.S. 31. This gives Plymouth easy accessability to all surrounding communities and puts it within easy reach of Chicago, Indianapolis, Ft. Wayne, South Bend and Valparaso. This accessability also allows a great deal of money to flow from Plymouth to these communities because they can and do offer larger and more diverse shopping areas and entertainment facilities. These communities also tend to treat Plymouth as a small "hick" town.

Although the larger communities of the region treat Plymouth as a small fry community, Plymouth doesn't necessarily share this view. Plymouth is the County Seat for Marshall County and may take this honor a bit too seriously. Plymouth is also the largest community in Marshall County. The previously mentioned facts add up to give Plymouth the status of "King of the Hill or Mound" or perhaps that of a heavy-lightweight frog in a small pond. Plymouth, however, is not necessarily well liked by neighboring communities because the community bears its status with a somewhat haughty demeanor. Plymouth is a conservative community. The people are unwilling to float bond issues or do anything else which may cause the taxes to be raised or the city to go into debt. Plymouth is on the verge of doing a little "growing-up". This means that they are beginning to grow out of some of their small town attitudes and into more sophisticated outlooks on their place in the region and possible means of improving their status. This is more a feeling than something which can be concretely pointed out.

Economic Base- Plymouth is a fairly well diversified community as far as its economic base is concerned. No one factory or business concern controls the



REGIONAL LOCATION MAP



1" = app. 33 miles



work force or economics of the community. Plymouth has attracted several new, smaller businesses which employ between 50 and 100 people. This group of industries is well diversified within itself so that even if the economy of a particular industry type (housing, food processing, etc.) goes bad it does not necessarily deal a death blow to Plymouth's economic base.

Social Structure- Plymouth's social structure is almost as diverse as its economic base. There are groups of rich people, poor people, middle class people, conservative people, radicle people, farmers, city people, migrant workers and a few crooks. Exact percentages of each social category are not available. However, these groups can be fairly well distinguished on a city map by the neighborhoods they occupy. It should also be noted that social statis is in many cases more o a psychological statis than a physical statis.

INVENTORY OF EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

PARKS

CENTENNIAL PARK- Centennial Park is the largest and by far the best park in Plymouth. The park was constructed by WPA workers in the late 1940's and for many years was a region-wide drawing card bringing people to Plymouth from as far away as Chicago and the neighboring states of Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois. The park was considered a major achievement of the WPA effort in the region. Indeed, the park was well done. The care taken with the layout of the park and the craftsmanship of the stonework in the park are evident even today in the park. Centennial Park has, over the years, lost a great deal of its luster. The exact reason for this decline is not really known. In all probability it is a combination of factors.

A cutback in maintenance expenditures and therefore maintenance ability, the construction of new recreation facilities in other parts of the region and the need people have to try to find something newer and nicer, all contributed to the decline of the park. The park is still a very nice place and with a little investment in maintenance programs it could once again be a super park.

Centennial Park is located on the north end of town, right off the main street of Plymouth. The park is approximately 20 square acres in size. The following is a list of the available facilities and equipment in Centennial Park.

- 1. an Olympic size swimming pool with a diving area(square) on one end and a small square wading pool for toddlers with a fountain in the middle on the other end, there is a one meter springboard and a 5 meter highdive in the diving area, there is a building for changing and a concession area
- 2. 6 asphalt tennis courts
- 3. 1 softball diamond
- 4. 20-30 wooden picnic tables, moveable
- 5. 1 covered picnic shelter
- 6. 1 horse barn, approximately 50' x 100', painted red and in good shape, used for exhibits and peddlers stall during the Blueberry Festival
- 7. new restroom facilities for both men and women, done in concrete and brick, style to be determined later
- 8. 1 caretaker's house, moved to the park recently, big, two story house, in excellent shape, painted yellow
- 9. conventional play equipment
  - a. 6 swings( safety seats for tots)
  - b. 6 teeter totters
  - c. 4 little critters on big springs
  - d. 1 corkscrew slide
  - e. 1 tall, double, straight slide
  - f. 1 toddler's slide
  - g. 1 small mercy-go-round
  - h. 1 set of monkey bars
  - i. 1 large, free-swinging circle
  - j. 1 small, wind-up circle
  - k. 6 swings for older kids
  - l. 1 set of climbing bars
  - m. 1 Little League ball diamond

The play equipment is used quite a bit, weather permitting, and the park is usually full on nice days.

**CENTENNIAL PARK ADDITION-** Recently Centennial Park has been expanded. This expansion actually just takes the section of the original park which had been more

or less abandoned and gives it a new function and face lift and adds it to the maintenance program. The addition is across Schuh Ditch on the northern edge of the existing park. It can be reached by crossing the ditch on the newly erected covered bridge. This bridge is constructed of rough cut cedar and is a fairly attractive bridge. The bridge has two lanes for traffic and a lane for pedestrians. The addition is approximately 40 square acres in size. The following is a list of available facilities and equipment in the addition.

1. 3 softball diamonds
2. 1 covered picnic table, approximately 20 x 30 , concrete and wood
3. 10-20 picnic tables
4. 1 horse stable for 10-20 horses
5. 2 large, rolling meadows, approximately 10 acres each, not used for any specific purpose

**MAGNETIC PARK**- Maginetic Park is not a city owned park and is the only park in town where drinking is permitted. The park is located approximately 5 blocks south of Centennial Park. There is one large, two story stone meeting house with restroom facilities in the park. The only play equipment is a set of swings. The park is literally one huge meadow surrounded by trees. The meadow is approximately 10 acres in size and there is a pond( approximately 1/2 acre) located in the northeast corner of the meadow. This park is used mainly by groups who rent the park for picnics, reunions, etc. .

**A NOTE**- All three of the parks in Plymouth are located on the banks of the Yellow River. All of them are within easy walking distance of each other.

### SCHOOLS

**PLYMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL**- Plymouth High School is a large, red brick building with no architectural style. It sits in the southeast corner of an approximately 20 acre site. There is a new facility for bus maintenance and office space located

behind the high school in the southeast corner of the site. The parking lot separates the two buildings. The lot accomodates approximately 300 cars. The school presently accomodates 935 students.

The community of Plymouth recently voted to float a bond issue to allow for additions to be made to the high school. The addition includes a new football field and running track, a new baseball diamond, and an indoor facility. The indoor facility will house an indoor swimming pool, an auditorium, 2 basketball courts, 4 indoor tennis courts and a weight room. The addition is an architectural abomination. It in no way relates to the present building. It is precast white concrete and looks like it just came off the assembly line. The present parking facilities will be expanded to accomodate approximately 800 cars. The school is located about 3 blocks south of Centennial Park.

**LINCOLN JR. HIGH SCHOOL**-Lincoln Jr. High is part old, red brick and part new dark brick. It holds 787 students. Its facilities include a football field and running track, two outdoor tennis courts, four outdoor basketball goals, and one indoor gymnasium and basketball court which is on the verge of being condemned. The school is located about 4 blocks south of the high school.

**JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**- Jefferson school is located on the southeast edge of Centennial Park. It is a blonde brick structure and is fairly new. It has a large open play field and a few swings and basketball goals for play equipment. The school is on an approximately 4 acre site bordered by Centennial Park and the Yellow River.

**ST. MICHAEL'S (CATHOLIC)**- St. Michael's is located about one block from the

intersection of Michigan street and Jeiferson street in the middle of town. It is a large, square, red brick building, surrounded by an asphalt lot. The site occupies about 1/2 block. The school presently accomodates 327 students. There are 4 basketball goals in the asphalt yard for play equipment. The place looks like an exercise yard in a prison.

A NOTE- The schools previously mentioned are all within 3 block of the Yellow River. All of the schools are within easy walking distance of each other. The following schools are more than 5 blocks from the river.

**WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-** Washington school is located in southwestern Plymouth. It is a new school. It is a dark brick building which houses 473 students. It has a large open space surrounding it. The site for the building is approximately 10 acres. The play facilities include a concrete play sculptor, a slide, a swing set, and 2 basketball goals.

**WEBSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-** Webster school is an old, three story building made of red brick. The school is located in the southern part of Plymouth, approximately 5 blocks from the river. The school presently has 279 students enrolled. Play equipment includes 2 swing sets, a monkey bar, and 2 basketball goals. The school occupies about 1/2 block.

#### EXISTING HEAVY USE AREAS

There are areas in Plymouth, as in any town, which receive more use than other areas. It is important to note these areas or facilities because their location and popularity are strong determinates of traffic flow and density.

Major traffic arteries are as much a barrier to younger children as a brick wall is. It can be stated that all of the following places are located either on the major artery, Michigan St., or the secondary artery, Jefferson St., or within one block of either of them. It can also be stated that the two arteries do, in fact, divide the the city into quadrants.

A great many of these places are also within easy walking distance of the Yellow River. This fact is also worth noting because it lends more weight to the arguement for improving the Yellow River. The following lists are the major heavy use areas in Plymouth. The list on the right is within easy reach of the river and the list on the left is not within easy reach.

#### ADULTS

Pesch's Bar  
The Robinhood Bar  
VFW  
American Legion

Mayflower Bar  
Warrana Restaurant and Lounge  
Knights of Columbus  
Moose Lodge

#### "KIDS"

Penguin Point  
Burger Chef  
A&W  
Huddle Grill  
Tastee Freeze  
Clark Gas Station  
Centennial Park  
High School

Dairy Queen  
Big Wheel

#### EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community Facilities are those facilities which are shared by the young and old alike. The community in general uses them. Again, the following lists will name the facilities and their approximate location to the river with the list on the right being within easy reach of the river and the list on the left being not so close to the river.

Downtown CBD  
Parkview Hospital

17 churches of various denominations

County Courthouse  
 County Jail  
 U.S.G.S. Office  
 County Agricultural Extention  
 2 retirement homes

Plymouth Plaza  
 Northeast Plymouth Plaza

### COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The following list is a compilation of the major activities in Plymouth.

This is not a list of all the activities in Plymouth. It is only those activities which happen within easy walking distance of the River which will be mentioned.

Softball League  
 Little League Baseball and Football  
 Swimming Team  
 Swimming Classes  
 Tennis League  
 Tennis Classes  
 School Sports  
 Karate School

### SPECIAL EVENTS

**BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL-** The Blueberry Festival is held each Labor Day weedend, including Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The Festival includes a parade, a soft-ball tourney, a tennis tourney, a horse pull, kiddie games, concession stands and game stands in Centennial Park, and various sales in town. The festival is a fairly large event, drawing people from both surounding communities and states. As an event, The festival is not too bak. It gets people out and mixing and gives the town a real holiday atmosphere.

**4th OF JULY PARADE-** This is just what it says, a parade. However the parade is followed in the evening by a fireworks display. Neither the parade nor the fireworks are exceptional.

### SUMMARY

The Yellow River as it passes through Plymouth does indeed touch close to many of Plymouth's main facilities. The preceeding information seems to demand that the river be re-evaluated by the community and put to better use. Therefore, this study will gear itself towards that end. The river will be evalu-

ated for its potential as both a park and a traffic corridor for pedestrians and bicycles. This corridor could conceivably separate pedestrians from almost all vehicular traffic. A separate, safe pathway could help free parents from the concern of sending their children to the park, school or town through heavy traffic. It could also make just a pleasant place to walk for many people. With this as the focus of the study further, concrete analysis must be done.

### PHASE 1

#### GRAPHIC ANALYSIS(PROPOSED)

- Regional Analysis
- Drainage Basin, River Information(flood stages, flow, etc.)
- Topography-General with flood stages shown
- Vegetation-General
- Transportation Systems
- Community Land Use
- Social Neighborhoods
- Community Facilities
- Psychological Evaluation
- Apparent Links on the River

The above information will be accompanied by a slide show which will show much of the previously mentioned information and back-up the graphic analysis.

This analysis will then lead to the second phase of the study which will be a study at larger scale of the immediate vicinity of the river. This will be done during the second quarter of the school year.