St. Matthews Fire Protection District

8802 Map Book, Map 1
History and pictures of Map Book

This is one of many sections that contain information, documents, letters, newspaper articles, pictures, etc. of the St. Matthews Fire Protection District. They have been collected and arranged in chronological order. These items were collected, organized and entered into a computerized database by Al Ring with the help of the St. Matthews Fire Department Alumni Association, Inc. The Association's members are Rick Albers, A. E. "Bill" Andriot, III, E. Gar Davis, Clarke Fenimore, Jack Monohan, Mike Noon, Russ Rakestraw and Al Ring.

The purpose of this "collection" was to create the background and research for the book *St. Matthews Firefighters, 84 Years of Firefighting in St. Matthews, Kentucky*, written by and published by Al Ring in 2004. The collection is continuing today, so if you should have old or new information on the St. Matthews Fire Department, please contact Al Ring.

All graphics have been improved to make the resolution as good as possible, but the reader should remember that many came from copies of old newspaper articles. This also applies to other items such as documents, letters, etc. Credit to the source of the documents, photos, etc. is provided whenever it was available. We realize that many items are not identified and regret that we weren't able to provide this information. As far as the newspaper articles that are not identified, 99% of them would have to be from one of three possible sources. *The Courier-Journal, The Louisville Times* or one of the *Voice* publications.

Please use this information as a reference tool only. If the reader uses any of the information for any purpose other than a reference tool, they must get permission from the source.

The Association would like to thank the St. Matthews Fire Protection District and various newspapers including *The Courier-Journal, The Louisville Times, and The Voice-Tribune*. Our appreciation is also extended to the various citizens and firefighters who contributed to the gathering of this information.

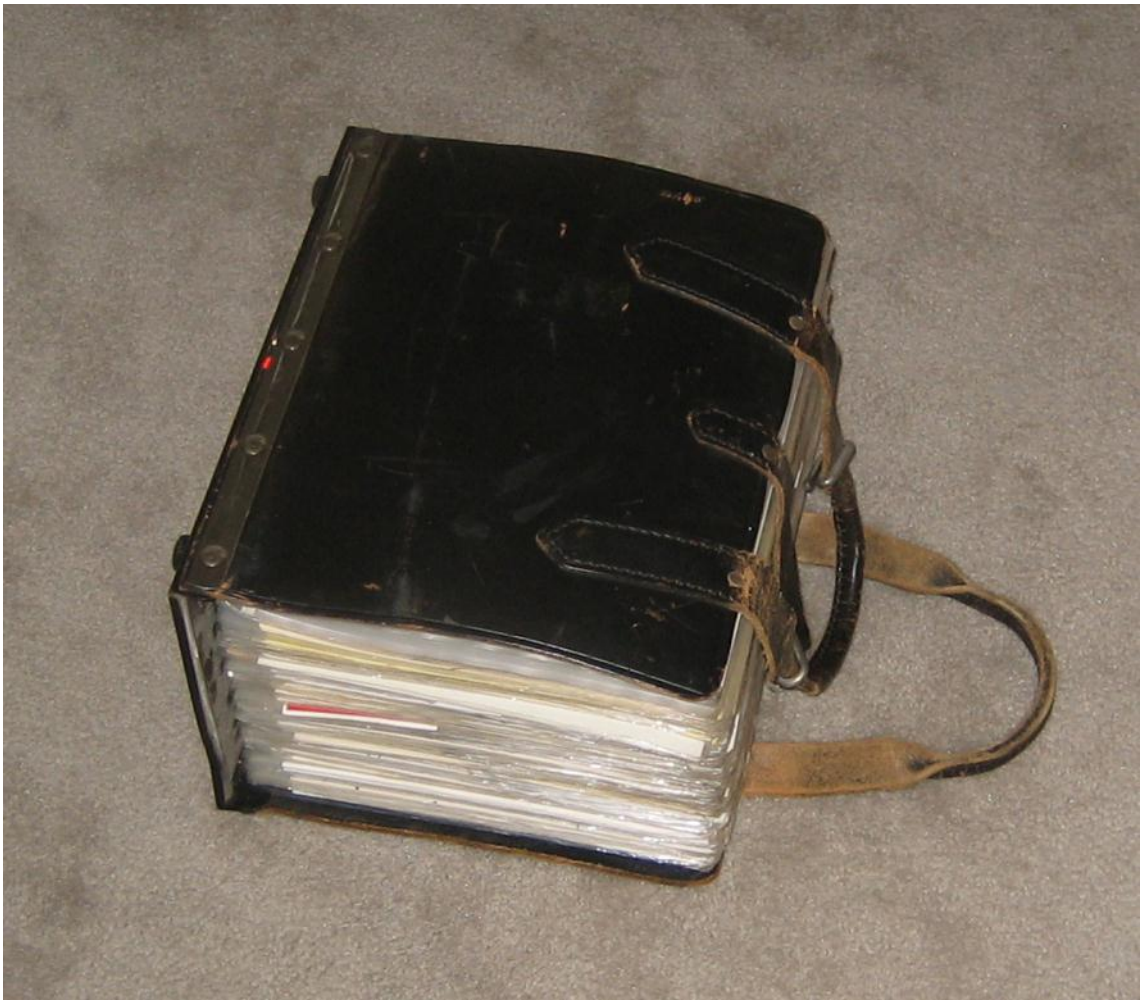
Note & Disclaimer

Please understand this is a "moment in time," mid 1980s to mid 1990s, of 8802's, Assistant Chief Jack Monohan's Map & PreFire Plan book carried in his car. Each apparatus and Chief officer carried one.

Do not under any circumstances assume that the buildings, roads, hydrants, pre-plans, etc. are accurate today or even exist today when you are viewing this.

This is for history to show what it was like at this "moment in time."

8802 Map book courtesy Jack Monohan, photos Al Ring:



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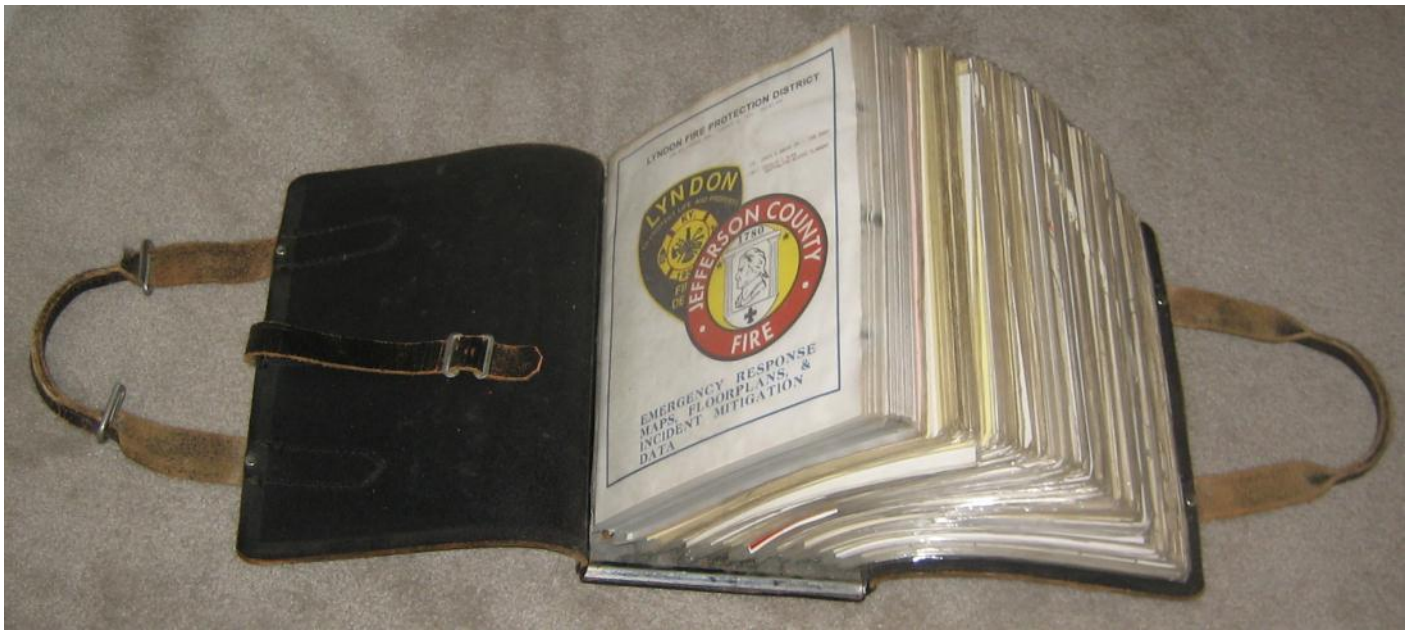

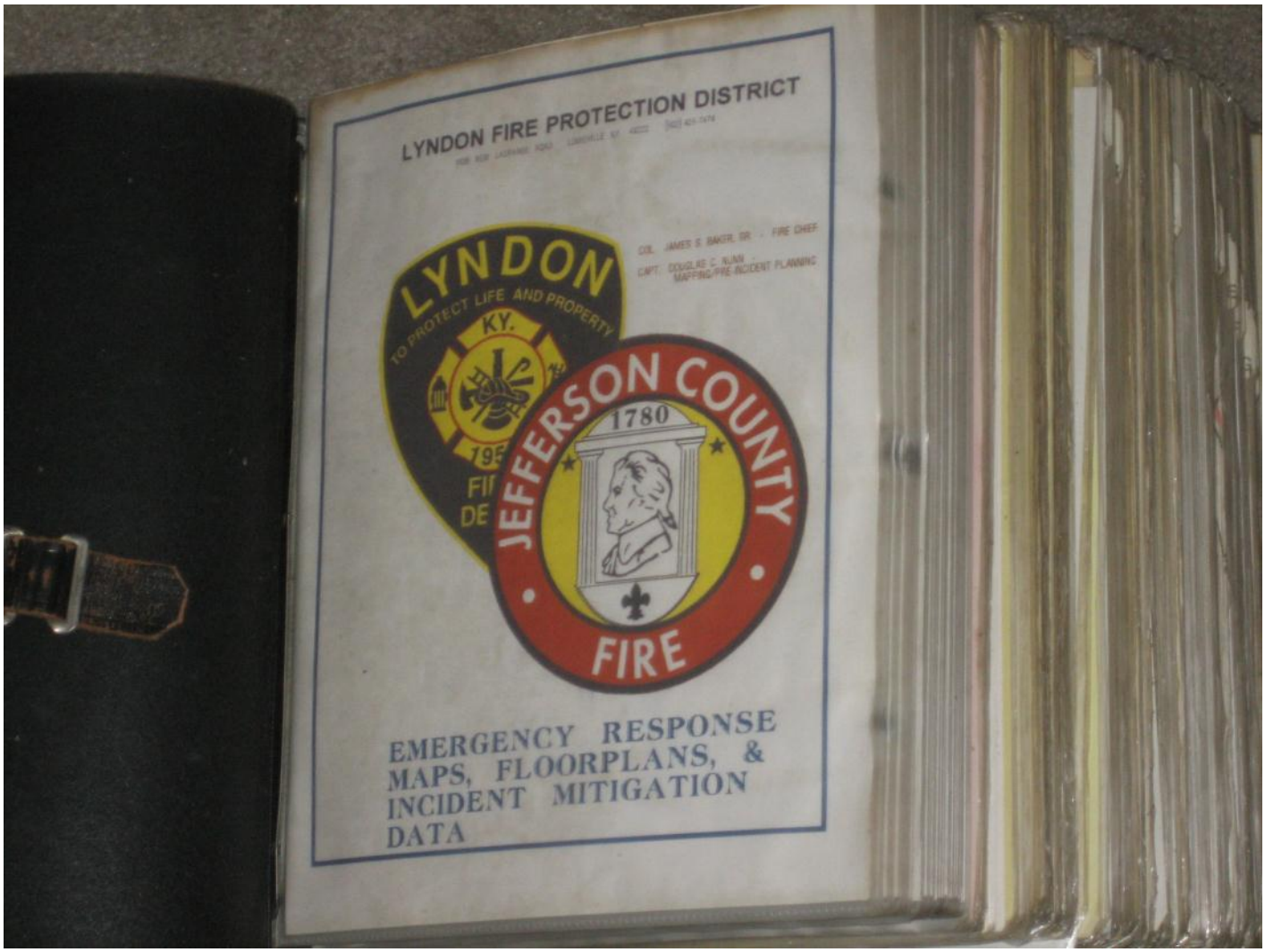

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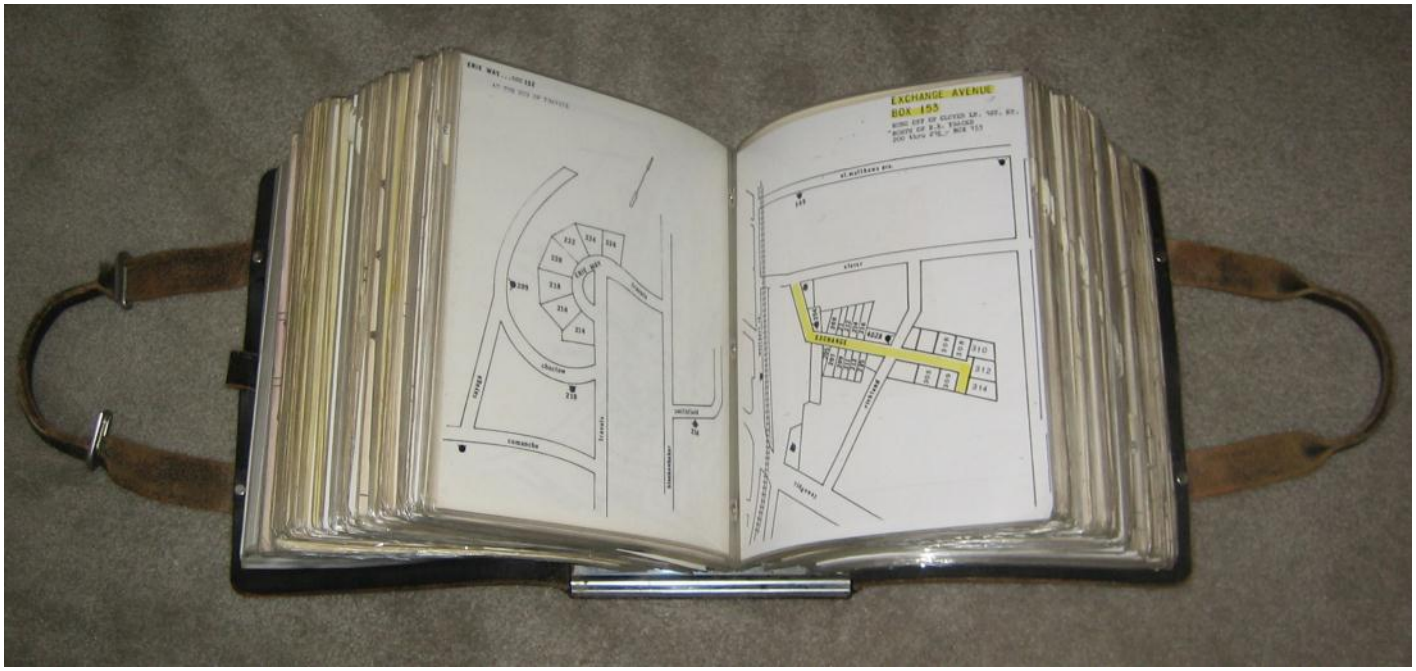


The Map Book – Rick Albers, October 2010

As far back as I can remember, we had a map book we referred to on most runs. The books have evolved quite a bit over the years, starting out as hand drawn maps and notebooks and reaching today's vehicle mounted mobile data computers. Regardless of the technology, the map book never took the place of good old knowledge and familiarity of the fire district. All too often the engineer and the officer did not make sure they knew where they were going before leaving the station. Thus, you made a "miss-run" which usually resulted in the heaping of a lot of well deserved abuse on those responsible.

You often had the officer blaming the engineer and the engineer blaming the officer but it mattered not. Regardless of who screwed up, it was ultimately the officer's responsibility. It's still that way today in most departments. Occasionally, a miss run resulted in further calamity at the scene of an incident, when the companies due did not show up and the fire got worse and the neighbors were bitching up a storm over what took so long!! The "fear" of making a miss run, and enduring all the crap you would get for doing so, helped make the map book a valuable and desired "tool" we relied on.

However, that tool was not always available. In the early days, everyone on the department lived in the community and everyone knew everyone else and where they lived. The siren would sound and the guys would call in and be told "It's at the Smith place on Hubbards Lane. Everyone knew where the Smith place was. There were few actual addresses and even when there was, everybody knew who's house it was.

As St. Matthews grew, with more and more streets, houses, businesses and subdivisions, the old method of "knowing where everyone lives" became less reliable. So, some sort of directions or a map was needed. The first maps consisted of pocket size note books carried by firefighters. In the 1950s a 3" x 5" metal card box, with 3" x 5" cards showing streets and hydrant locations was used. Then the cards were installed on a flat board so you could "fan the cards" and read the one you wanted.

Next came the first map book, consisting of a 3" binder with about 25 or 30 pages with a map of individual sections of the fire district on each page. It showed each street in that section or subdivision, a basic address range and indicated the location of the fire hydrants. There was a street index in the front of the book where you looked up the street and it gave you the map page it was on. Then you flipped to that page and there it was! There was a book placed in every apparatus. It was normally the officer's job to check the map book while enroute to a fire. That makes sense now doesn't it!! I know of some drivers who have tried to read the map while driving. Sort of like today's idiots that text while driving!!

Shortly after the department moved into the new firehouse on Lyndon Way in 1970, a huge map was hand painted on a board mounted to the wall by the "joker stand" (alarm desk). It was a map of the entire district, showing every street, parcel and hydrant. Quite a project!! There were also "blow-up" maps of Indian Hills, Almara Circle and several other places of obscurity or with complicated street layouts.

Al Ring got permission from the Chief for the map project. Mel Zehnder was instrumental in building the 8' x 16' board. Al used an opaque projector to project the picture of the map on the board and traced the map. Al and "Fireman Bill" Andriot then painted the lines and Bill lettered all the streets. Many others helped in this project.

This system worked well into the 70's. However as growth continued and runs increased, a better system was needed. By now the department was dispatched by County Alarm (Louisville Fire Department's Fire Alarm Office). Louisville Firefighters took the calls, referred to a street file called a flex-o-line to determine who to dispatch, then hit the tones and knocked out the run. For those of you who were on back then, you will recall the famous St. Matthews tone opening up your monitor (pagers were almost unheard of then), followed by "Attention St. Matthews firemen, you have a house fire at 312 Ring Road, your box 417." At the time, the box number meant little to us. However, several departments matched their box numbers to a page in the map book. Good idea!! (Actually it was Harrods Creek FD that came up with that idea).

The Map Book – Rick Albers, October 2010

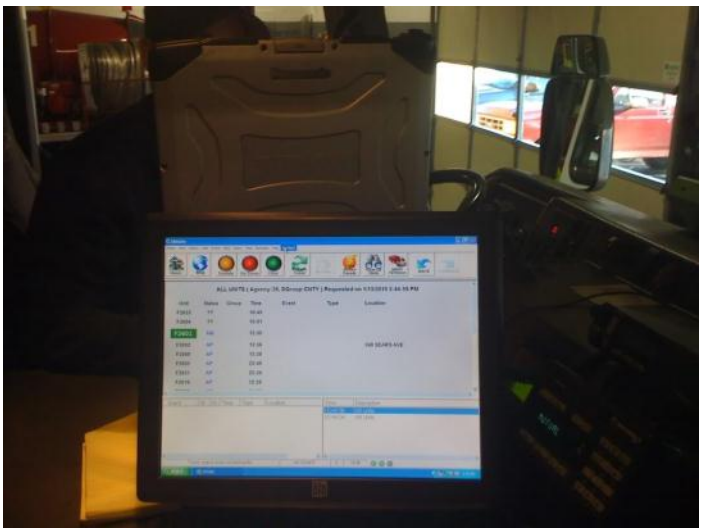
Our map pages and box numbers were not matched and the existing map book was becoming woefully outdated. Several new subdivisions were missing from it or hand drawn in with a pen (which often looked like chicken scratch). The decision was made to make a book version of the huge wall map, with much greater detail than the existing map book in a binder. "Fireman Bill" Andriot stepped up to the plate and tackled the project. He used zoning and parcel maps from county government and set out to draw the maps. The new map book would allow a page for each street and sometimes multiple pages for longer streets like Shelbyville Road or Breckinridge Lane.

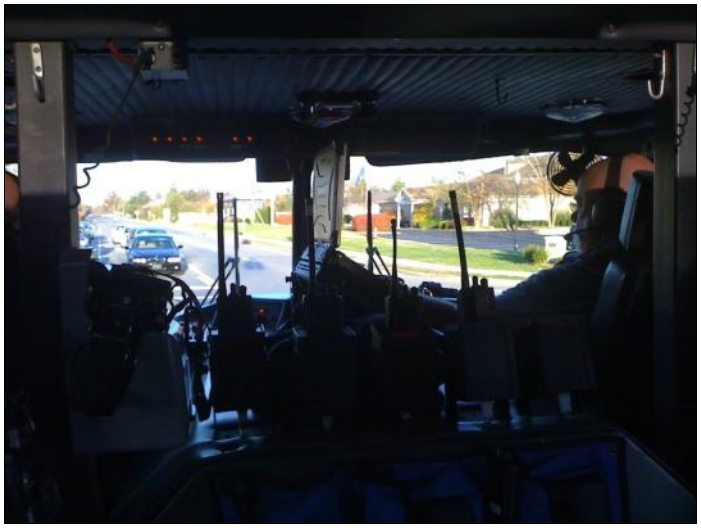
Each page would show all the parcels (houses, etc.) on the street, routes to the street and each fire hydrant in the area. Each page was hand traced from the master maps, copied, laminated in plastic and placed in either a "salesman's catalog" binder (approximately 8" thick) or a dash mounted auto parts catalog holder. Complete map sets were placed in every fire department apparatus and chief's vehicles. The streets were arranged alphabetically to minimize confusion. It was a huge book, but really pretty simple to use.

At some point we decided to have our box numbers coincide with the map book pages. We also decided to show every individual address number on each street. This was a huge task and Fireman Bill again lent his talents to this project. At the time I was working for the Louisville Fire Department and was assigned to the Fire Alarm Office. As Bill got a page drawn, I would index it on LFD's flex-o-line and then it would be placed in the books. This process was all done by hand (no computers back then) and it took a long time to get it all completed, but once it was, it sped things up. When County Alarm knocked us out, you listened to the location AND the box number, opened the book to that box number and there was the map. Sure made life a lot easier and cut down on miss runs.

Bill and I worked for several years maintaining and updating the maps. The Department used the same map system with minor updates until just the last few years. Now they use computers in the apparatus which links to the dispatcher's computer aided dispatch system and GIS mapping system. It even uses GPS technology so you can see where you are on the map in relation to the location of the incident. This is great stuff BUT it's a computer which is subject to glitches. I've never seen a printed map book that had to be rebooted!!

STMFD photos of communication and mapping systems in use today, 2010:





The Map Book – Rick Albers, October 2010

STMFD photos of communication and mapping systems in use today, 2010: Photo Al Ring.

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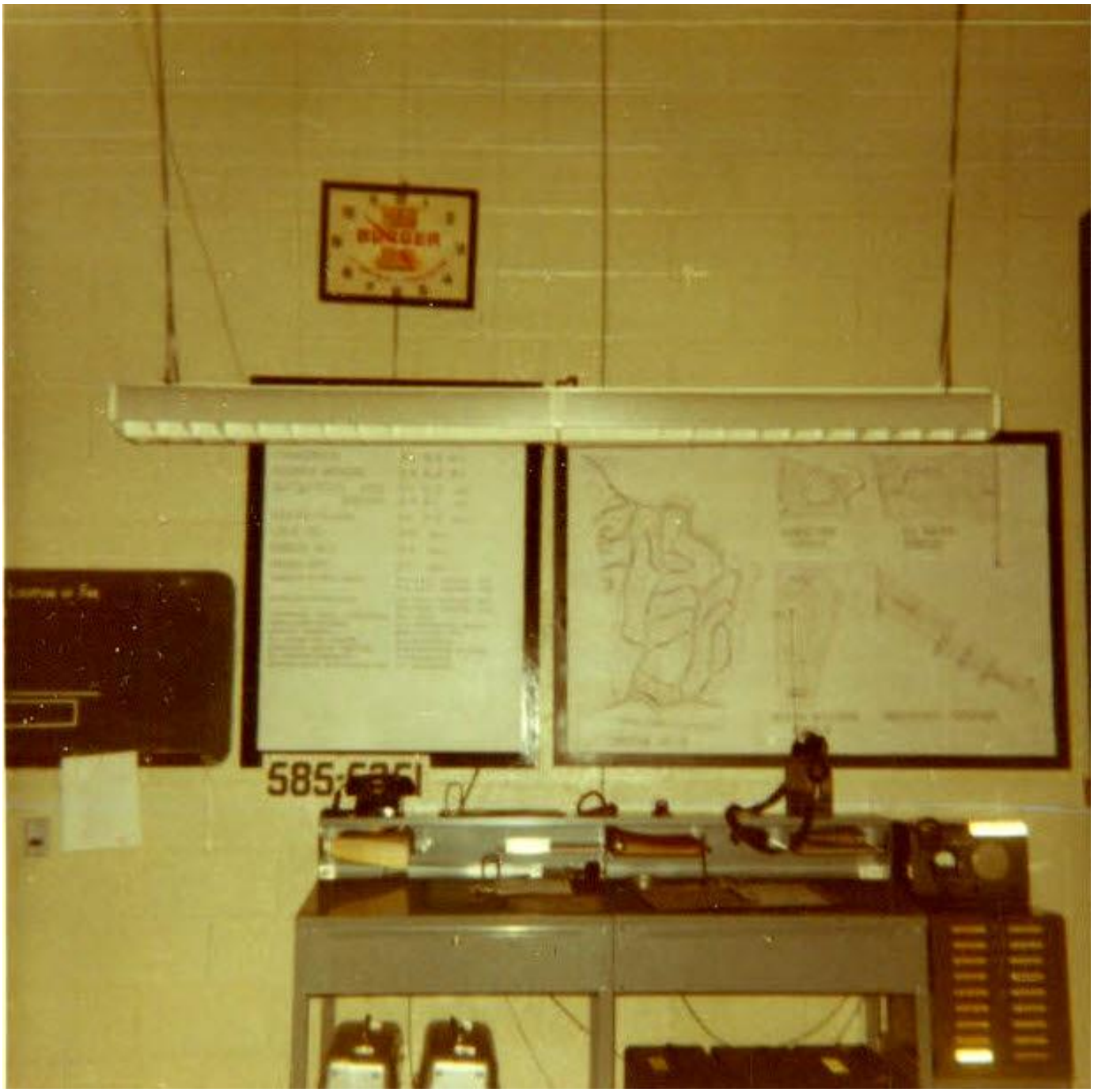

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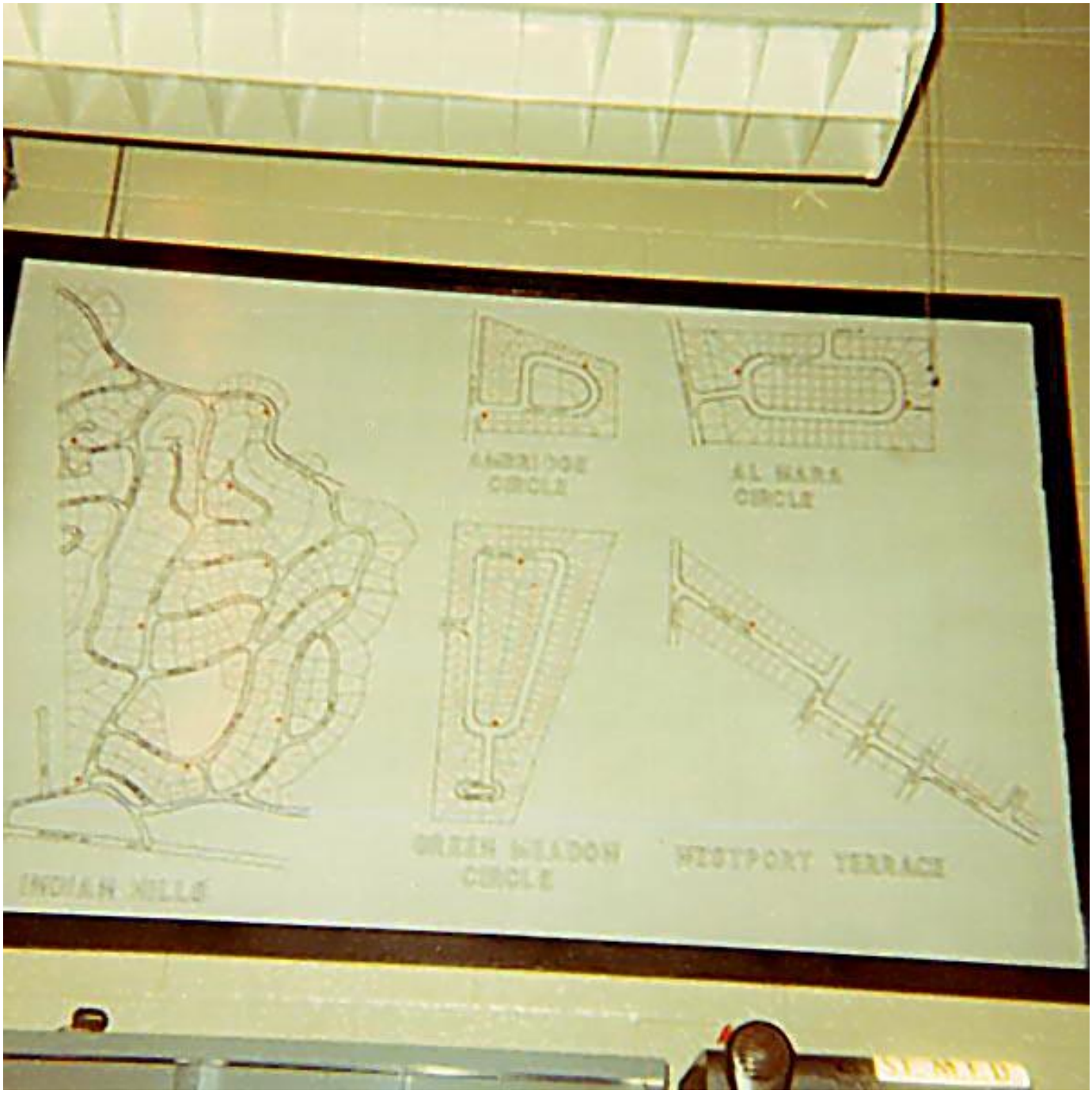

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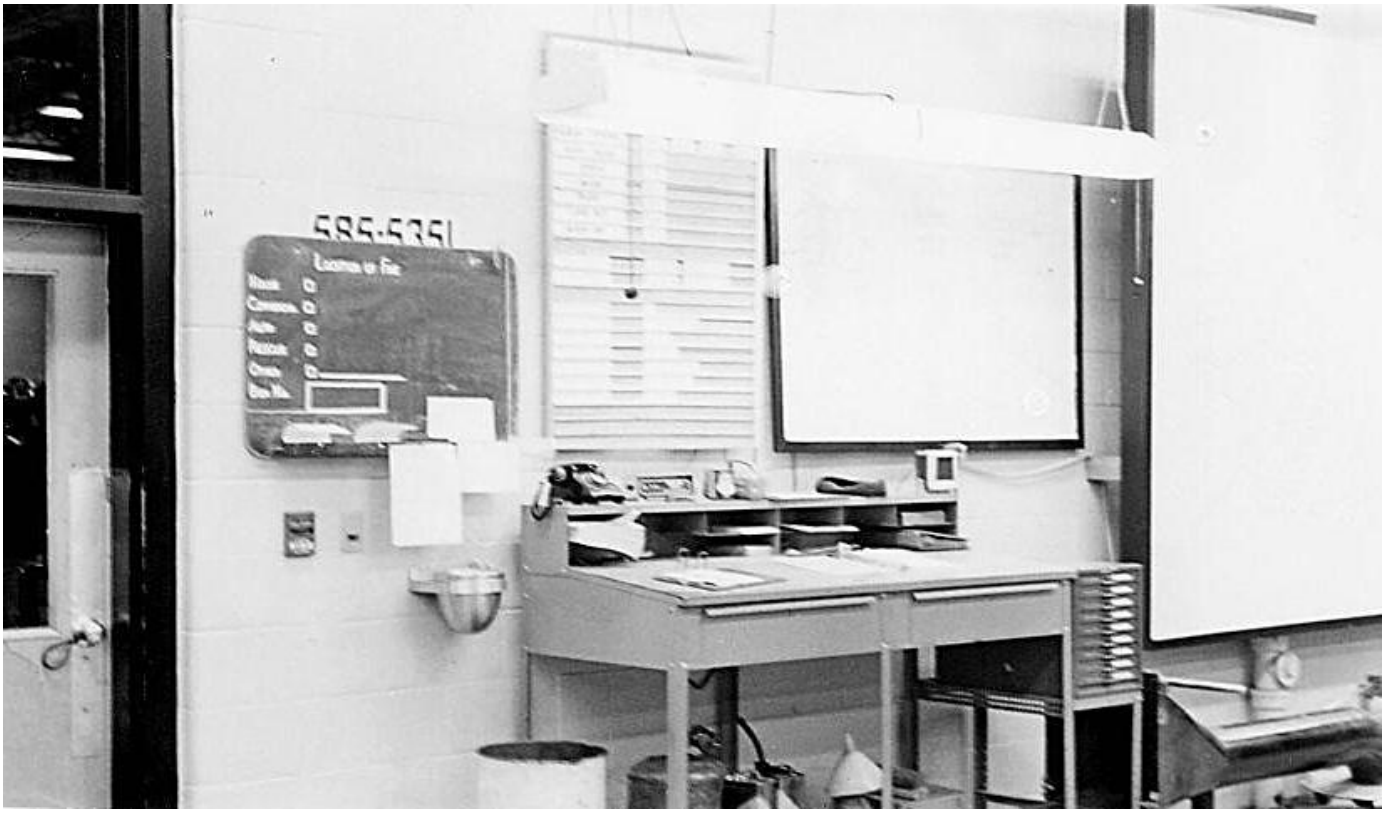
Alarm desk and wall maps from the 1970s.