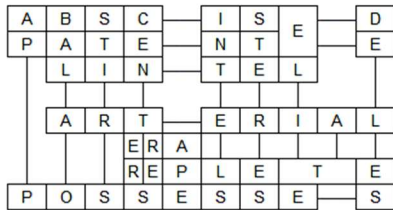


Pleading the Fifth
 Nick Mitchell
 Answer: **TRIPLE SEC**

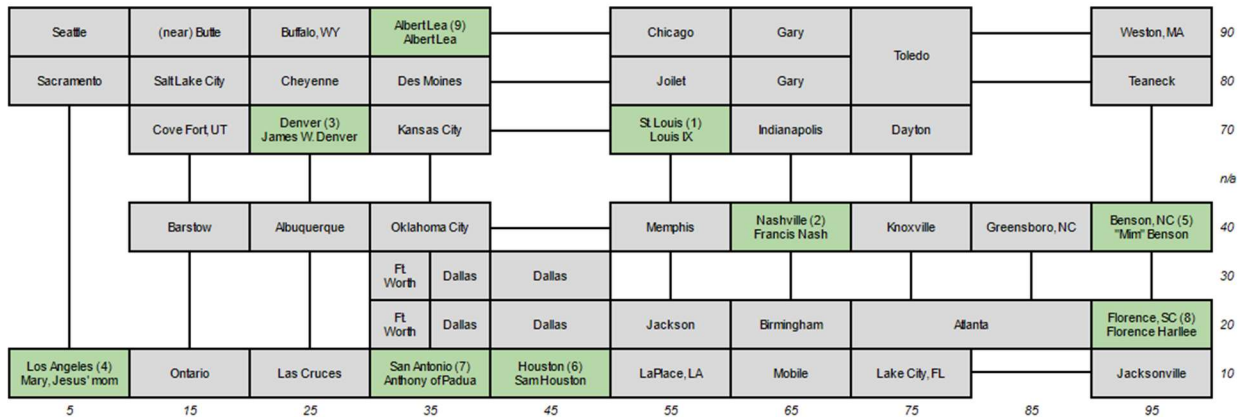
The first thing we are presented with is a strangely-shaped grid and some clues for rows and columns, so the first thing to do is complete the irregular-shaped crossword.



- | Rows | | Columns | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Shed in the garden | ABSCISED | Monke? | APE |
| From the heart | ARTERIAL | It could be a killer | APP |
| Pitchers try to keep it low | ERA | It separates bang and hash | AT |
| Doorway spanner | LINTEL | Submarine class | BALAO |
| Inventor, often | PATENTEE | Midatlantic middles? | CENT(ER/RE)S |
| Owens | POSSESSES | Proofing marks | DELES |
| Full up | REPLETE | Pica alternative | ELITE |
| | | Many processors | INTELS |
| | | Thousands of liters | STERES |
| | | Disobeys Bond | STIRS |

The more curious element is the grid itself and its unusual features; merged cells, split cells, odd spacing, a seemingly missing or unused row, etc. Some consideration of the hapless citizen's strangely-worded plea should lead to the United States Highway system, of which the grid is a model. Interstates running primarily east/west are numbered with multiples of ten, skipping 50 and 60 (which do not exist) and increasing going north. Interstates running north/south are numbered ending in "5" and numbered going east. Other interstates are not used in the graph.

With the locations considered, the years provided can be resolved as the lifespans of the namesakes of specific intersection cities.



Read these cities in the order given by the dates, then take the letter that appears at that location in the word version of the grid, to arrive at the final answer, **TRIPLE SEC**.

Author's Notes

Nick: My original inspiration for this puzzle was Cameron Booth's "Interstate Highways as a Subway Diagram," found at transitmap.net.