

CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, 871  
500 Plainfield Avenue  
Edison Township  
Middlesex County  
New Jersey

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

PHOTOGRAPHS

Prepared to the Standards of the  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
For submission to the  
New Jersey Historic Preservation Office  
5 Station Plaza  
501 East State Street  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, 871

Location:	Camp Kilmer Buildings 801, 806 and 871 are located in the Edison Job Corps Center, 500 Plainfield Avenue, Edison Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey.
Date of Construction:	1942
Designer:	U.S. Army Office of the Quartermaster, Construction Division (building plans); Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond (site engineering and building modifications)
Builder:	John A. Johnson Contracting; Andrew Christensen & Son
Present Owner:	United States Department of Labor
Present Use:	Vacant
Significance:	<p>Buildings 801, 806 and 871 are contributing resources to the Camp Kilmer Military Reservation Historic District, which received an Opinion of Eligibility from the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on August 11, 1987. According to the SHPO Opinion, the district is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with military history in the United States, specifically, its role as a staging area for troops embarking for and returning from Europe during and after World War II. The district is also significant under Criterion C as it represents the distinctive characteristics of World War II-era temporary Army construction. The subject buildings include a Bachelor Officers' Barracks (Building 801), Recreation Center (Building 806), and Service Club (Building 871).</p> <p>Research conducted for the current project indicates that Camp Kilmer also has significance under Criterion A for its associations with the resettlement of Hungarian refugees in the United States in 1956-1957. From November 1956 until May 1957, the Joyce Kilmer Reception Center, as Camp Kilmer was then known, served as a processing center for almost 32,000 Hungarian refugees fleeing Soviet oppression in their homeland. It was the first and largest refugee camp established by the United States government on American soil.</p>
Historian:	Jennifer B. Leynes, RGA, Inc., April 2016

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## **II. PROJECT INFORMATION**

This HABS Level III documentation of Camp Kilmer Buildings 801, 806 and 871 (Figures 1-2) has been completed in accordance with Stipulation I of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) entered into between the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (HPO) and United States Department of Labor (DOL) as mitigation prior to the demolition of the subject buildings.

Consultation between the DOL and the HPO has determined that the three buildings to be demolished are contributing resources of the National Register-eligible Camp Kilmer Military Reservation Historic District. Because the three buildings were constructed at the same time by the United States Army as part of the development of Camp Kilmer, they have been documented together in this report. In accordance with the MOA, photographic documentation includes four (4) exterior views of each building, one (1) general interior view from each building, and one (1) typical façade detail from each building (to include fenestration).

The Camp Kilmer Military Reservation Historic District is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its association with military history in the United States, specifically, its role as a staging area for troops embarking for Europe during World War II. It also has significance for its role as a reception center during the Hungarian refugee crisis of 1956-1957. The district is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, as it represents the distinctive characteristics of World War II-era temporary Army construction.



### III. HISTORIC INFORMATION

During the 1930s, most Americans were too consumed by the daily hardships of the Great Depression and too scarred by the memories of World War I bloodshed to have any interest in the gathering European storm or the threat posed by the militarization of Japan. Amid the prevailing isolationist sentiment, American military advisors carefully monitored global acts of aggression, including Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931, and began planning for the potential eruption of another world war. Germany's invasion of Poland in September 1939, and the subsequent declarations of war in Great Britain and France, created a renewed sense of urgency among military planners.

In October 1940, the United States Congress narrowly passed the Selective Service and Training Act, America's first peacetime conscription to prepare soldiers for combat. With thousands of new draftees in need of housing and training facilities, the Army began a comprehensive construction program to build camps and cantonments across the nation (Glass 1998:206). The bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and the subsequent declaration of war by Congress only heightened the need for facilities to accommodate draftees.

The wartime construction program was immense. Before war mobilization began in 1940, army facilities housed approximately 200,000 men; by 1944, that number reached 6 million in the United States alone. The overwhelming majority of these soldiers lived in temporary barracks constructed specifically for the war effort (Wasch and Bush 1988:3). Camps were constructed across the United States, both at existing military installations and on new sites. By war's end, "10.4 million had served in the Army, the majority of whom were trained in the 25 new cantonments and 25 camps upgraded between 1940 and 1942" (Garner 1993:65). In New Jersey, both Fort Dix and Fort Monmouth were expanded with temporary construction during the World War II period (Snyder 1988).

#### Designing Camp Kilmer

Based on the experiences of mobilization during World War I, military leaders were convinced of a need for staging areas from which to prepare troops for deployment overseas. The staging areas served a dual purpose. First, they ensured that troop transport ships – high in demand, but small in number – did not waste time in port awaiting the arrival of troops from distant camps. Second, they also provided the Army an opportunity to attend to any troop needs prior to embarkation. Those needs might include bringing units up to full strength by replacing sick or injured soldiers. They also included "correcting deficiencies relating to the physical condition, the personal equipment, and the training status of the individual soldiers" (Fine and Remington 1972:109). The staging areas assumed an additional role as troops returned from overseas service.

#### *Site Selection*

The New York Port of Embarkation (NYPE), the Army command with responsibility for transporting supplies and troops overseas, began searching for an appropriate site to build a staging area in 1941. The search was guided by a number of requirements. First and foremost, the site had to be within 50 miles of the NYPE headquarters in Brooklyn, in a location that facilitated transportation of troops from training facilities to the staging area with minimal "cross and counter traffic" (Mann 1942:8). Good railroad facilities and road networks were needed, and water transportation was also desirable. Finally, it was necessary to find an available location with sufficient acreage to build a camp capable of serving thousands of transient troops (Mann 1942:8).

After investigating 22 possible locations, the NYPE recommended a 1,500-acre site (see Figure 3) straddling the line between Piscataway and Raritan townships in Middlesex County, New Jersey (Raritan Township was renamed Edison in 1956). The site benefited from excellent railroad access: it was adjacent to the Pennsylvania Railroad main line and approximately two miles south of two other major lines, the Lehigh Valley and the Reading (Mann 1942:1). As such, both troops and supplies could easily be shipped to the staging area from anywhere in the country, and from the staging area to the NYPE quickly and efficiently. The site was also accessible via an established highway, Plainfield Road. The only feature it lacked was water transportation.

The site was approved by the Army's Construction Division and initially designated as the Stelton Staging Area, in reference to the nearest farming community. Development activities were delayed, however, pending appropriation of funds for construction. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the declarations of war on Japan and Germany in the days that followed, moved the project to the forefront for American military planners, and funding for the project was provided in the First War Powers Act of 1941 (Mann 1942:9).

The NYPE site recommendation of August 30, 1941, included a preliminary layout for the staging area (National Archives and Records Administration 2016). The plan required acquisition of 792 tracts of land from 47 owners, with an appraised value of \$485,432 (Mann 1942:9-10). Although the Army had already developed standardized plans for virtually every type of building required for temporary military installations, they required the assistance of private engineers and architects to develop the project site (Fine and Remington 1972:99). The Army hired New York architecture and engineering firm Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond to design the Stelton Staging Area, subsequently named Camp Kilmer.

#### *Site Design*

Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond was a joint venture formed in 1941 specifically to design and build projects related to the war effort. Its principals were all well-established and accomplished professionals in their fields: Arthur S. Tuttle (d.1949) and Elwyn E. Seelye (d.1959) were civil engineers; Clyde R. Place (d.1946), a mechanical and electrical engineer; and Antonin Raymond (d.1976), an architect (American Institute of Consulting Engineers 1947:36). In addition to Camp Kilmer, the firm designed a second staging area for the NYPE, in Rockland County, New York, known as Camp Shanks. Other military commissions included new facilities at Fort Dix, Pearl Harbor, and a number of Naval Training Stations (New York Times [NYT] 12 September 1942:23, 30 September 1942:16, 20 May 1949:27).

The staff of Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond included prominent landscape architect James Rose, who was recruited to the position by architect Antonin Raymond. Although only 29 years old at the time of his employment, Rose (1913-1991) had already made a name for himself publishing a series of influential articles about landscape design in the late 1930s, following his expulsion from Harvard for "refusing to design landscapes in a Beaux-Arts manner" (Cardasis 2013). Rose rejected the formality of the Beaux Arts landscape and its focus on fixed points of reference, arguing it was "incompatible with a changing view of the landscape and the environment generally" (Snow 1967:25). He applied this theory to the design of Camp Kilmer.

Rose, writing under the pseudonym Marc Snow, described the design requirements for Camp Kilmer in his 1967 book *Modern American Gardens – Designed by James Rose*:



[T]he first demand of the government was for the erection of a Staging Area... to house thirty thousand men in ten anti-aircraft regiments. The demand was further complicated in that a Staging Area houses troops in rotation with new troops coming in as old ones leave the port of embarkation at intervals of ten days or a week...

No aesthetics are required for anti-aircraft regiments, just fool-proof schematic organization that works like a machine and will not break down under the stress and pressure of speed, incompetence, personal ambitions, lack of know-how, and all the other weaknesses that hastily organized large-scale projects are heir to (Snow 1967:89-90).

According to Rose, he worked "two days and two nights in a row without stopping" on the layout of Camp Kilmer (Snow 1967:90). The resulting design utilized a rectilinear layout within each of the 10 Regimental Areas (RAs), but the larger plan employed curving roadways to provide visual interest within the camp (see Figure 4). This utilization of curves, and the resulting irregular placement of the RAs around the camp, contrasted sharply with the typical layouts of World War II-era cantonments, which typically utilized a rectangular or triangular layout (Garner 1993:65). Rose's design also contrasted with the staging area built simultaneously near San Francisco, known as Camp Stoneman (see Figure 5), and even with Camp Shanks, which was designed by Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond soon after Camp Kilmer was completed.

For planning purposes, Rose and his colleagues at Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond divided the camp into three sections. The largest area was the so-called Original Tract, which contained 1,182 acres west of Plainfield Avenue. The second area, known as the Camp Kilmer Extension, was located on a 51.35-acre tract on the east side of Plainfield Avenue. The third area included nearly 311 acres acquired to build connections to the three rail lines (Mann 1942:14).

Within this overall framework, 21 distinct areas were laid out to support the camp's functions as a staging area (see Figures 6, 7). Nearly half of these were the RAs, numbered 1 through 10. The RAs were nearly identical, each containing between 61 and 65 buildings. They essentially functioned as self-contained camps, with their own barracks, mess hall, administration building, and other support structures. RA 8, where the subject buildings were all located, included a total of 46 housing units (Figure 8). Two were Bachelor Officers' Quarters (BOQs), which held 44 men each. The rest were barracks designed to house either 74 or 63 enlisted men. RA 8 had 41 of the larger, 74-man barracks and 3 of the 63-man barracks. The mess hall seated 1,432 soldiers and could feed 3,000 men an hour. An administration building, with a cross-shaped footprint, was located near the center of the RA. A post exchange sold necessities to soldiers, and two recreation buildings were equipped for stage performances or the viewing of films. One of the camp's three Service Clubs was located on the outskirts of RA 8. A number of storage buildings and other support structures completed the RA. Among the buildings documented for the current project, Building 801 was a BOQ; Building 806 was a recreation building; and Building 871 was the Service Club (Mann 1942:39-40, 48).

RA 8 was laid out roughly parallel to Plainfield Avenue and, along with RA9, was the nearest to this major roadway. The main entrance to the camp, Gate 1, was located south of RA 9, between the Original Tract and the multiple rail spurs bringing men and supplies from the Pennsylvania Railroad

(Figure 9). The Warehouse Area (Area 16) was located adjacent to the rail spurs. The Administration Area (Area 13), Corps Area Service Command housing (Area 14), and BOQs (Area 15) were located in the central area of the camp. These areas were less densely developed than the RAs and thus contributed to the available open space. Additional open space was also provided between the RAs, in order to provide room for troop assembly (Mitman 1955:11-12). The fields also served as a fire break (Landreth 1988:1).

The impetus for Camp Kilmer's unusual layout came not only from Rose's disdain for formal design elements, but also in the Army's desire to mask the function of the facility when viewed from the air. The camp's curving roads and clusters of buildings separated by barren fields were intended "to resemble a country village from the air" (Mann 1942:18). To further the masquerade, the ivory and light gray paint scheme typically used on Army cantonments was abandoned, replaced with a combination of colors intended to act as camouflage for the facility. Buildings were painted in vertical belts of varying widths, with the roofing similarly striped, to give the appearance of compact rows of small buildings rather than large individual structures (Garner 1993:33; Mitman 1955:15). The *New York Times* reported on the camp's camouflage appearance:

Its barracks are the regulation two-story dormitory-type wooden structures that now dot the face of America, but they have no uniform color scheme; each is painted in two or three different shades. The colors run the gamut of the rainbow from black to white, with creams, grays, mauves, mustard yellows, pale pinks, light greens, dull browns and pastel shades predominating (NYT 9 July 1942:16).

The above quote was published in July 1942, after the press was invited to visit the staging area as construction neared completion. Prior to that date, the only newspaper articles about the project located during the course of research were published in February 1942, when the government announced that the staging area would be named "Camp Kilmer" in honor of New Jersey poet Joyce Kilmer, who was killed in action during World War I (Trenton Evening Times [TET] 25 February 1942). A monument to Kilmer was erected at the camp a few months later (Figure 10) (Mann 1942:141). The lack of publicity about the project attested to the government's desire to maintain secrecy about the site location.

### *Building Design*

The barracks, mess halls, and other buildings constructed at Camp Kilmer were temporary structures built according to standardized army plans. These plans had originated during the mobilization effort for World War I and were modified and expanded in the years that followed. The earliest camps of the World War II era, constructed prior to the declaration of war, utilized the "700 Series" drawings, which included plans for more than 300 different structures. By May 1941, new camps were being built according to plans from the newer "800 Series." Because the 800 Series plans did not include every necessary building type, the camps also contained a small number of 700 Series buildings. By February 1942, lumber shortages led to the direction that all new camps be constructed using modified theater-of-operations (T.O.) plans, which were the most temporary of army facilities (Wasch and Bush 1988:4, 12,44-45).

Construction of Camp Kilmer began in January 1942 and employed the 800 Series plans for most of its barracks and support structures. The 800 Series barracks for enlisted men (Plan 800-1129; see



Figure 11) could accommodate 63 or 74 men. The two-story, gabled structures had a central entry containing paired doors on the front façade and, at the rear, two single doors on both the first and second floors (see Figure 12). The latter were provided with a balcony and ladders to permit egress in the event of emergency. The side elevations of these barracks featured 8/8 double-hung windows. The buildings had shiplap wood or cement-asbestos shingle siding, and foundations were of concrete block or masonry footings except under the bathrooms and mechanical rooms, where concrete slab was poured. Modern amenities included central heating and indoor plumbing, neither of which had been provided to enlisted men in World War I camps (Garner 1993:35; Wasch and Bush 1988:53-58).

The majority of buildings constructed at Camp Kilmer were enlisted men's barracks, but numerous other types of barracks were also built to support camp activities. Historically, the Army had set off officers' housing from that of enlisted men, with separate quarters for officers with families and those who were unmarried or whose families were not living in the area (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [USACE] 1997:227). Because Camp Kilmer was a temporary stopover for troops headed overseas, families were not expected to be among its residents; therefore, its officer housing was almost entirely comprised of BOQs. Secondary sources describe the BOQs, which were based on Plan 800-321, as having a housing capacity of 44 men, each with a separate bedroom containing bed and clothes closet. The two-story buildings also had a dayroom for shared use and indoor bathroom facilities (Glass 1988:320-325; Lampl 1993:23; Mann 1942:24). Plans located during the course of research (see Attachment B) illustrate an alternate interior layout featuring two-room suites containing a living room and bedroom, which would have been shared by two officers. At Camp Kilmer, each RA had two BOQs, with additional housing for officers located in Area 15. Building 801 is the only remaining BOQ at Camp Kilmer; physical evidence suggests this building had a dayroom and single-occupancy barracks rooms.

Although the number of BOQs provided at Camp Kilmer was typical for Army cantonments, the camp's special function as a staging area rendered the number of available rooms for officers inadequate. The problem was particularly acute when Army Air Forces units, which had a greater number of officers due to the rank of the pilots, passed through the camp. As a result, many of these officers were forced to lodge in enlisted men's barracks (Mann 1942:92).

Special accommodations also had to be constructed for African-American troops, women, and prisoners-of-war. Black troops served from the outset at Camp Kilmer, many forming part of the camp's permanent staff (Clark 1942:5). In the era of segregation, these troops were likely housed together in one or more RAs, separate from those housing White soldiers (Wasch and Bush 1988:22). Planning for expansion of the staging area to accommodate 1,600 additional Black troops in the Camp Kilmer Extension, east of Plainfield Avenue, began in June 1942 (Mann 1942:24). By this date, the Army had ordered that all new camps utilize the standardized plans for T.O. facilities, rather than the 800 Series used during the construction of the existing Camp Kilmer buildings. Thus, the barracks constructed in Areas 20 and 21 were smaller, one-story buildings with wood or concrete floors; bathrooms were located in separate buildings (Wasch and Bush 1988:47-48). The T.O. barracks were intended as "construction... of the cheapest, temporary character" (Wasch and Bush 1988:48).

Rumors of the Army constructing substandard facilities for African-American troops quickly spread into the community, and in August 1942, Camp Kilmer hosted a tour for the Black press in an effort to deflect criticism. The new T.O. barracks were not yet occupied, and reporters were told that they

would accommodate both Black and White troops.<sup>1</sup> William E. Clark reported favorably on the facilities in *The New York Age*:

This writer saw white and colored soldiers eating lunch in the same mess hall, and the lunch compared favorable both in quality and quantity with the best obtained in civilian life...

An inspection of the barracks revealed that the Negro soldiers were housed in the same type of buildings as are the white soldiers – large frame buildings with electricity, hot and cold running water and modern toilet facilities, including shower baths in each building (Clark 1942:5).

At the same time the Army authorized development of RAs 20 and 21, construction of eight barracks for nurses was authorized. The Nurse Corps of the Army was its only all-female unit until 1943, when the Women's Army Corps (WACs) was formed. The nurses' barracks were constructed in Area 11 of the Hospital Area. These "HNQ-40" buildings were erected according to Plan 800-321 and were identical in appearance to the BOQs (Lampl 1993:23-24; Mann 1942:51). Barracks and other facilities for the WACs were completed in February 1943 near the post headquarters (*Kilmer Eagle* [KE] 26 February 1943:1).

The final type of barracks erected at Camp Kilmer was for prisoners-of-war (POWs). The POW barracks were located in Area 18, at the north end of the camp. This area included five barracks for prisoners, built according to Plan 800-350. These buildings accommodated 81 men in an open living space with separate latrine buildings. The POW camp also included three, 63-man barracks for the prison guards, a mess, and other support structures. The camp was surrounded by a fence with four sentry boxes (Mann 1942:58; Wasch and Bush 1988:22).

Beyond the housing, numerous buildings were necessary to support the operations of the staging area and to provide recreational opportunities for the soldiers during their stay. Two buildings in the latter category survive in RA 8: the Recreation Building (806) and the Service Club (871). The Recreation Building (Plan 700-310; see Attachment B) was a one-story building containing an auditorium, primarily used as a theater. The building could seat 340. Dressing areas were provided behind the stage, and a projection room was located above the entry vestibule. The camp's recreation buildings hosted vaudeville and shows featuring local talent, as well as movies. The auditorium stage was also outfitted with an altar at the rear, enabling the building to function as a chapel when needed. This function was significant in the early years of the camp's operation, when the two original chapels were found to be inadequate to accommodate demand. In response, the Army constructed four additional chapels in camp by January 1944 (KE 7 August 1942:6; KE 22 January 1944:2).

Three Service Clubs were erected at Camp Kilmer, including one on the outskirts of RA 8, near Plainfield Avenue. Building 871 was Service Club Type SC-3, which featured a T-plan (see Figure

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1 It is unclear whether the Camp Kilmer staff's claim that both Black and White troops would occupy RAs 20-21 was true. The 1942 Army history of Camp Kilmer refers to the area both as the "Colored Troops Area" and the "Theater of Operation Area." In the early years, at least, the area reported housed "Negro troops principally" (Mann 1942:25, 60-61).



13). The Service Club contained a café, library, and dance hall (Plan 800-517; see Attachment B). The café, located in the one-story north wing, served three meals daily and sold sodas, candy, and cigarettes. The two-story library could accommodate 6,000 books. The large, open dance hall in the rear wing was large enough to hold more than 500 couples. Orchestras were brought in to provide music for the dancers (KE 7 August 1942:6). Service Club No. 1, located in RA 8, officially opened on August 1, 1942, with a gala dance. Some 500 female hostesses were “danced about by more than 1,000 enthusiastic service men” (KE 7 August 1942:5). Like the Recreation Buildings, the Service Clubs also showed movies and hosted vaudeville shows and other acts (KE 4 September 1942:3, 12).

### Constructing Camp Kilmer

Construction of the hundreds of barracks, recreational facilities, warehouses, and other structures comprising Camp Kilmer was conducted in relative secrecy. In February 1942, the Army announced its intent to name the camp in honor of poet Joyce Kilmer but did not provide any details about plans for its construction or use. In fact, construction had begun a month earlier, on January 19, 1942, less than two weeks after Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond began work on the project. The design process continued until April 16, even as construction progressed on the site. The Army hired two contractors, John A. Johnson Contracting of Brooklyn, New York, and Andrew Christensen & Son of Elizabeth, New Jersey, to build the complex. Several other professionals were employed to plan the rail access to the site (Mann 1942:15-17).

Although the Army may not have publicized its efforts, construction of the camp could hardly have been a secret in the local area, as some 11,400 union workers were employed during the height of construction (Mann 1942:19). Camp histories frequently report that construction was completed in four months; however, it might more accurately be stated that the first military staff arrived to occupy the camp in four months. Construction in fact continued until August 1942 and beyond, as the camp's expansion was authorized even before the initial work was completed.

The use of standardized plans was crucial to the success and speed of the enterprise, as were the techniques developed to erect the structures. At Camp Edwards in Maryland, an assembly line methodology was applied to the construction, with crews divided into specialized teams to tackle a single task. Thus, one crew would work on the first floor framing, while another did the second, a third erected the walls, and so on, each moving on to the next building as they completed the work. It is unknown whether this approach was followed by the contractors at Camp Kilmer, but it suggests at least one methodology employed to erect buildings quickly to meet the wartime demand (Wasch and Bush 1988:30-31).

Camp construction extended well beyond the buildings to include infrastructure capable of supporting a population of roughly 28,000 enlisted men and officers in transit to Europe, plus the soldiers stationed at Kilmer (known as the station complement), and POWs. The gross capacity of the camp was rated at 37,550 (Fine and Remington 1972:113). Its population was larger than that of the nearest city, New Brunswick, which numbered 33,180 residents in 1940 (New Jersey State Data Center 2001:40). The entire road network had to be built on former agricultural fields, as did an extensive rail system comprised of 25.7 miles of track (Mann 1943:n.p.). To accommodate the intensive use of the site, water and sewer facilities had to be constructed simultaneously with the buildings. The Elizabethtown Water Company, the Raritan Township Water Department, and the City of New Brunswick Water

Department combined to provide water service to Camp Kilmer, and two, 500,000-gallon water tanks were erected (Figure 14). A sewage disposal plant was constructed in Area 19, far from the residential areas of camp (Mann 1942:28).

The first military personnel arrived to staff the site in late May 1942. The Commanding Officer, Colonel C.W. Baird, took over command of the facility from the contractors on June 14, though the construction effort would continue for many months. Despite the ongoing construction, the first troops for staging arrived on July 20. The construction effort continued for at least a year thereafter, due to government orders to build additional barracks to accommodate African-American troops, nurses, and WAC troops. With the exception of the WAC housing, which was not authorized until October, most of the construction was completed by August 1942. In November, the camp reportedly contained 1,007 buildings; the total number increased to 1,047 by February 1943 (KE 14 June 1943:1; Mann 1942:15, 19, 24, 86; Mann 1943:n.p.).

### World War II at Camp Kilmer

Between 1942 and 1949, more than 4 million men and women passed through Camp Kilmer en route to or from service in Europe (NYT 27 March 1951). The Army's Transportation Corps, formed in 1942, was responsible for operations in staging areas. Early in the war, units often lingered at Camp Kilmer for many weeks awaiting transit, but by 1944 most were resident for no more than two weeks (Fine and Remington 1972:111, 113). By mid-June 1945, a month after Germany's surrender, Camp Kilmer had processed 1,320,481 troops headed to Europe, roughly half the total that had embarked from the NYPE (Mitman 1955:32).

Camp Kilmer was in a constant state of motion: trains brought new troops in from camps across the country, where they were vetted before being shipped on to the NYPE. As the war progressed, troops returning from Europe made the same trip in reverse. Accommodating the needs of both outgoing and incoming soldiers quickly and efficiently required carefully orchestrated procedures for embarkation and debarkation. The camp's Operations Division was responsible for coordinating all staging activities (Mann 1943:n.p.).

### *Embarkation*

The embarkation process began with notification from the NYPE to the Operations Division of the impending arrival of a unit, usually two weeks beforehand. Planning commenced immediately upon receipt of notification. The Post Billeting Officer determined where the troops would be housed in the camp. When a train carrying the new troops arrived, the soldiers were met by the billeting and inspection officers assigned to their RA. They were also met by a medical officer, who transported any soldiers requiring immediate medical assistance to the hospital (Mann 1943:n.p.). After being acquainted with their new living quarters (Figure 15), soldiers were escorted to the camp theaters, where they watched a series of films entitled "Why We Fight" (NYPE Special Service 1943).

One of the major functions of the staging area was to inspect equipment to ensure that troops were properly outfitted before being shipped overseas. Any equipment found to be in need of repair or replacement, or to be obsolete, was requisitioned from the Quartermaster's warehouses. Although troops were supposed to be outfitted by their training camps prior to departing for the staging area, Camp Kilmer's inspectors frequently found in fact that troops were missing essential equipment (Mann 1943:n.p.).



Another crucial function of the staging area was to ensure that soldiers were medically cleared to travel. This included providing required inoculations and dental treatments, as needed. Soldiers who wore eyeglasses were issued special glasses for use with gas masks. Those who were ill or suffering from underlying conditions were treated, as appropriate. A War Department directive required a physical examination of all troops 48 hours before embarkation. Any soldiers hospitalized at the staging area were assigned to the Task Force Replacement Pool if they did not recover before their unit departed the camp. The replacement pool, which also included soldiers who were absent without leave (AWOL), was used to replenish troop numbers as units passed through camp. It enabled the staging area to keep all units leaving for Europe at full force (Mann 1943:n.p.).

The Operations Division was also responsible for preparing passenger lists and the corresponding Service Records for troop transport, as well as other necessary paperwork related to travel. Once the processing was complete, the unit awaited notification from the NYPE of their departure date. Bags were sent ahead to the piers in Brooklyn by trucks or by train 48 hours in advance. Even the boarding of trains for the NYPE was carefully planned and calculated by the Operations Division in order to avoid delays; the system developed for Camp Kilmer reportedly resulted in the departure of as many as 15,000 troops in one day without delays, and the loading of a 22-car train in only 4 minutes (Mann 1943:n.p.).

Unlike the cantonments built elsewhere during World War II, the staging areas were not intended to serve a training function. Officials at Camp Kilmer soon discovered that men were arriving without appropriate training, however. Arthur D. Mann, the post historian during World War II, noted that, "It became evident that many organizations sent to Camp Kilmer had never fired a gun" (Mann 1942:109). Because the camp design had not anticipated these functions, troops were sometimes sent to other locations to complete training exercises. Camp Edison in Sea Girt was a frequent destination (Mann 1942:109; Camp Kilmer 1944b). In 1944, a dummy rifle range (Figure 16) was constructed near Gate No. 2, in the southwest section of the camp near the rail loop (KE 29 April 1944:3). The camp also had three "landships" (Figure 17) on which soldiers practiced abandon ship drills (KE 20 January 1945:4-5).

#### *Debarcation*

By July 1943, Camp Kilmer was not only sending troops to Europe but also receiving debarkees from their tour of service. These included soldiers enjoying furlough; troops being reassigned to the Pacific Theater or to military installations in the United States; and individuals separating or retiring from service (Mitman 1955:31-32). Soldiers injured in battle were also processed through Camp Kilmer before being sent to hospitals throughout the country (KE 17 February 1945).

After hostilities ended in Europe in May 1945, the flow of traffic through Camp Kilmer reversed dramatically. Of the more than 1.3 million troops processed in the camp in 1945, almost 86 percent were debarkees. Over half arrived in the last three months of the year (KE 4 January 1946:1). Camp Kilmer marked the return of its one millionth soldier on December 14, 1945 (Mitman 1955:33).

Initially, the debarkees were stationed wherever housing was available, but by the end of 1944 RA 1 had been set aside for these soldiers. Upon arrival in camp, soldiers attended an orientation meeting and were instructed regarding the debarkation process. They reportedly received a homecoming meal

that included steak, fresh milk, and ice cream within 15 minutes of their arrival. The post band greeted the debarkees in camp with “lively swing, college and march tunes” (Camp Kilmer 1944c:2-3).

The number of debarkees arriving in camp at one time was staggering. In June 1945, the 86th Black Hawk Division, comprised of some 15,000 soldiers, came through Camp Kilmer en route to redeployment in the Pacific Theater, remaining in camp only 24 hours. An even larger contingent of 21,500 debarkees passed through on July 20-21, 1945 (KE 21 July 1945:1, 7). This group represented the 44th Infantry Division, which was comprised primarily of New Jersey and New York residents. The *Trenton Evening Times* reported on their homecoming:

As soon as it was possible they were taken to Camp Kilmer for processing. First they were given a complete Summer uniform, the first khaki any of them had worn since heading overseas nearly a year ago. Then they raced for telephones to let their folks know they were home. After that came malted milks and hot dogs, choice morsels to ease the appetite of months of longing.

Kilmer officials said every man would be en route home sometime today after processing through Fort Dix. In the meantime the largest recreation program in the history of Camp Kilmer has been set up for the 44th men. In addition to the usual parties and dances, five USO troupes put on nearly seven hours of continuous shows in Kilmer Bowl. Post theaters opened for special matinees (TET 22 July 1945:2).

As indicated by the experiences of the 86th and 44th Divisions, most debarkees did not remain in camp for more than 24 hours (Camp Kilmer 1944c:3). The vast majority were shipped out by rail. From August 1945 to March 1946, however, the Transportation Corps also operated flights to the west coast from the Newark Army Air Base in order to ease the burden of military traffic on the nation's rail and bus systems. More than 83,000 soldiers and authorized civilians flew cross-country via this program (KE 15 March 1946).

Despite the turnover, camp population remained high for several years. Camp histories report that 52,000 troops were stationed at Camp Kilmer on May 24, 1946, when Colonel Harold R. Duffie took command of the post. Some 43,000 of that number were temporary residents, in transit to or from Europe; more than 1,100 were POWs (Mitman 1955:27-29).

### *Evolution of Camp Facilities*

The realities of operating a staging area for soldiers going to and returning from war led to modifications to the original camp design. The most noticeable of these was an expansion of the camp's recreational facilities, which were quickly deemed inadequate by camp administrators. Soldiers were often isolated from outside contact during their stay in order to maintain secrecy about troop movements, resulting in a need for activities in camp to maintain morale. In September 1943, a request was made for additional recreational facilities ranging from an amphitheater to swimming pools, basketball courts, baseball diamonds, and portable bleachers (NYPE Special Services 1943). The request was soon granted, and in 1944 the central part of the complex, which had initially functioned as open space, was developed with athletic fields and the Kilmer Bowl, a 5,000-seat amphitheater with a 30-foot by 60-foot stage (Figure 18). The seasonal facility was enlarged to seat 8,000 prior to its summer 1945 opening (KE



13 May 1944:1; KE 8 July 1944; KE 9 June 1945:1). Additional facilities were added later in the year, including three outdoor gymnasias and a boxing and wrestling arena with seating for 5,000 (Camp Kilmer 1944c:54).

The United Service Organizations (USO), as well as the YMCA, YWCA, and Jewish Community Centers in neighboring towns, also provided recreational opportunities for servicemen outside the camp (KE 7 August 1942:7-8). In July 1943, the USO opened three clubs at Camp Kilmer. The buildings were constructed by the Federal Works Agency and located just outside of the camp's gates (Chappine 2015:114-116; KE 14 June 1943:1; KE 17 July 1943:2). Popular with embarkees, who remained in camp for several weeks, the clubs were closed in mid-July 1945 due to Camp Kilmer's transformation from an embarkation to debarkation point. With returning soldiers spending only 24 hours in camp, off-site recreational facilities were only needed by the station complement, which had access to clubs in New Brunswick, Plainfield, and elsewhere (KE 7 July 1945:1).

The transition to peacetime service resulted in other changes at Camp Kilmer. As the first stop in the United States for returning soldiers, Camp Kilmer's telephone facilities were frequently tested by the men trying to call home with news of their arrival, often placing 10,000 or more calls in a 24-hour period. The New Jersey Bell Telephone Company established telephone centers throughout the camp to supplement the existing pay phones (TET 6 July 1945:15).

Other facilities added in 1944 and 1945 included several "specially decorated unit party halls" (Camp Kilmer 1944c:55). Established in the existing recreation buildings in RAs 1, 3, 5, and 9, the facilities each had a unique theme carried throughout the building. The hall known as "The Circus" was described in a report by the Special Services Division:

"The Circus" contains many novelties unique in GI recreation halls. "Gargantua," a mechanized gorilla, waves his paws in a cage near the entrance. Above the entrance is another cage with a mechanical leopard...The circus motif is elaborately carried out on the stage, with a cyclorama depicting the interior of a "big top" and a circus canopy, supported by two poles, ballooning over the front of the stage (Camp Kilmer 1944c:56).

To complete the experience, bartenders donned clown costumes inside the hall (Figure 19). The other beer halls – the Gay 90s, the Barn, and the Pirate's Den – were equally festive (Mitman 1955:137).

Although most of the post facilities were maintained throughout this period, the Theater of Operations section (Areas 20 and 21) was surplused in 1946, after Colonel Duffie assumed command of Camp Kilmer. The T.O. buildings were quickly removed from camps across the country when they were no longer needed due to their cheap construction. The last T.O. building at Camp Kilmer was sold in 1949, although a historic aerial view of the camp from 1947 indicates that most buildings in Areas 20 and 21 were gone by this date (Mitman 1955:18-19; Nationwide Environmental Title Research [NETR] 1947; Wasch and Bush 1988:4).

#### *Postwar Activity and Closure*

As wartime activity slowed, the Army offered educational opportunities to the station complement in preparation for discharge and return to civilian life. Kilmer College was reportedly the "first army

school to be established...for soldiers not eligible for immediate discharge” (TET 11 September 1945). Operated jointly by the Army and Rutgers University, the school offered high school, college, and vocational courses, many taught by Rutgers professors. Classes were held in Building 1542. Some 383 soldiers enrolled in the program, which began in September 1945 (KE 1 September 1945:2; TET 11 September 1945).

In another cooperative arrangement with Rutgers, Camp Kilmer offered barracks in RA 1 for use as student housing. Following the war, colleges across the nation were flooded with war veterans attending under the G.I. Bill. This influx of new students taxed existing resources, particularly student housing. At Camp Kilmer, Buildings 112-119 were rehabilitated into double bunk rooms, and bus service was established between the Army installation and the college campus. Students were not permitted to utilize other camp facilities, including the theaters, beer halls, and service clubs (KE 15 February 1946:1).

The transformation of the post continued in the postwar period with the assignment of Camp Kilmer as the Army's only Overseas Replacement Depot (ORD) on the east coast. This new responsibility once again made Camp Kilmer a point of embarkation for Army Ground Forces and Army Service Forces headed to the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Europe. The Camp Kilmer ORD was designed to process 12,000 troops at one time and occupied RAs 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the camp. Some 3,600 additional enlisted men and officers were added to the station complement to handle the installation's new responsibilities, which included an enhanced role in training troops for service (KE 29 March 1946:1). Conversion of 15 barracks buildings into 60 apartments for military families was authorized in December 1946, reflecting the more permanent nature of the postwar installation (NYT 10 December 1946). Plans for additional housing to be located at the former site of Areas 20 and 21, were announced in 1949 but never realized (Mitman 1955:19).

With the changes in use, camp facilities received a makeover, most noticeably with the painting of the buildings a uniform white and planting of shrubbery and trees around the buildings. The post newspaper reported that in RA 8:

A hedge has been planted between each pair of barracks, shrubs set in out in front of the buildings, walks lined with white-painted stones, and the outside of Service Club 1 beautified...Each company headquarters has been put on the second floor of a barracks building with supply, headquarters and mail rooms. A day room for enlisted men is in Building 810, and one for the officers in Building 801 (KE 13 December 1946:1).

In September 1948, the *New York Times* announced that Camp Kilmer was to be converted into a permanent Army installation, part of a “coordinated group” of bases including Fort Dix. The Jersey City planning firm of Churchill-Fulmer Associates was hired to develop the master plan, which was to involve the total reconstruction of the facility (NYT 30 September 1948). It is unclear to what extent these plans were advanced; however, in November 1949, Defense Secretary Louis A. Johnson ordered the closure of many of the camps and cantonments constructed during World War II, including Camp Kilmer. The last embarkee left camp on December 3, 1949, and the civilian personnel center and other camp departments were moved to Fort Dix by mid-December. A civilian crew of 100, plus



four officers and one enlisted man, were retained to keep Camp Kilmer in standby condition (Weaver 1949; NYT 4 December 1949; TET 11 November 1949:25).

### Korean War

The closure proved to be temporary. In September 1950, the Army announced plans to reopen Camp Kilmer, with 4,000 troops of the Army's Transportation Corps to be housed on site (NYT 27 March 1951; TET 24 September 1950:28). The reactivation was due in large part to American involvement in the Korean War (Mitman 1955:24). Hostilities had begun in June 1950 with the invasion of South Korea by Soviet-backed forces in North Korea. Within a month, American troops were sent to support South Korea and prevent the extension of Communism in the region. Camp Kilmer's support for the Korean War effort was not direct, however. While camps on the west coast shipped troops to Korea, Camp Kilmer resumed its role of preparing troops for embarkation to Europe, where American ground troops remained during the Cold War.

In April 1951, the camp took on additional responsibilities with the relocation of the reception center at Fort Dix to Camp Kilmer. The center's role was to receive new Army inductees, as well as soldiers returning from Korea. Rehabilitation of the site, at a cost of \$2,800,000, was authorized to accommodate the new use. A year later, the facilities proved inadequate to meet demand, and construction of a new Reception Center was authorized at a cost of \$5.5 million. Located on the former site of the Theater of Operations section (Areas 20-21), the Reception Center was comprised of 76 buildings, about 50 of which were barracks and the rest, support structures. Designed to accommodate 4,000 troops, the Reception Center was completed in early 1953 (Mitman 1955:20; NYT 27 March 1951; NYT 8 April 1952; TET 2 February 1951:5; TET 9 April 1952:31).

The conclusion of hostilities in Korea in July 1953 resulted in the closure of the new reception center, with its functions transferred back to Fort Dix and to Fort Meade, Maryland. The post remained open temporarily for the transfer of military personnel overseas, but in March 1955 the Army announced the closure of Camp Kilmer. Camp officials proceeded to mothball the standing buildings (Mitman 1955:57, 61; NYT 19 September 1953).

### Operation Mercy

Once again, Camp Kilmer's closure proved to be premature, this time due to the Hungarian revolt against Communist rule in 1956. In October of that year, Hungarian revolutionaries began protesting against Soviet control, setting up more than 10,000 revolutionary committees to take control of their local communities. Statues and other symbols of Stalinism were destroyed across the country. Ultimately, Premier Imre Nagy withdrew Hungary from the Warsaw Pact and requested protection from the United Nations. These acts of defiance were unacceptable to Soviet leaders, and on November 4, 1956, the Soviet military took action to crush the rebellion in Budapest. By mid-November, Soviet forces had regained control of the country. Although contemporary accounts estimated that some 20,000 Hungarians died in the conflict, more recent research has determined that the number of dead was roughly 2,700, with another 20,000 Hungarians injured. The incident created a refugee crisis of unprecedented magnitude, sending some 200,000 Hungarian citizens out of the country, seeking asylum in neighboring Austria (Bon Tempo 2008:60-63).

The American government, unwilling to provide military support to their Hungarian allies due to the risk of war with the Soviet Union, acted instead to offer asylum to some of these political refugees.

On November 9, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued an Executive Order granting entry to Hungarian refugees under the provisions of the Refugee Relief Act. This act, passed in 1953, had authorized visas for 205,000 refugees, primarily from Communist countries. All but 6,500 of these visas had been issued by the time of the Hungarian crisis. Eisenhower's Executive Order directed that the remaining 6,500 visas be dedicated for use by Hungarian refugees (Forty-First Military Government Company [41st Company] 1957:1; Immigration to North America 2015b).

Recognizing that the crisis demanded a greater response from the United States, Eisenhower's administration also invoked the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, which permitted the admittance of refugees without visas during times of emergency. These refugees were admitted as parolees, meaning that they had no legal immigration status. Further legislative action was thus required in order to create a path to citizenship. This would be accomplished in 1958, when Congress passed a law granting permanent residency to Hungarian refugees after two years (Bon Tempo 2008; Immigration to North America 2015a). Ultimately, some 38,000 Hungarian refugees were admitted to the United States as a result of these immigration measures (Markowitz 1973:57).

The United States had never undertaken a refugee program of the size and scale promised by Eisenhower's administration. In fact, America had closed its doors during the refugee crisis of the 1930s and 1940s, when thousands attempted to flee Adolph Hitler's Nazi regime (Bon Tempo 2008:1). Lacking precedent, the administration was forced to devise a plan quickly for the reception of incoming refugees. The Army was determined to be the agency best equipped to handle the task. To support and manage the operation, the President appointed the Committee for Hungarian Relief in December 1956, with Tracy Voorhees as its chair. The Committee worked in conjunction with the Army and an assortment of government and voluntary agencies to transport, receive, and resettle the refugees. The refugee program was named "Operation Mercy," and the Committee actively sought to create positive publicity for the project.

The Army selected Camp Kilmer as the central location to receive the refugees. Having recently closed as an Army base, Camp Kilmer's buildings were both available for use and in relatively good condition. Its site was near the original designated point of entry for the refugees, at McGuire Air Force Base in Burlington County, New Jersey. It was also proximate to New York City, where many of the voluntary agencies assisting in the resettlement process were headquartered. Notably, the large Hungarian-American population in neighboring New Brunswick was not a factor in the site selection, although it proved to be an asset to camp operations (41st Company 1957:3; Bon Tempo 2016; Niessen 2016).

At the time that Camp Kilmer was chosen as the refugee reception center on November 13, 1956, its buildings had been "completely mothballed except for a Caretaking Detachment of 3 Officers, 6 EM [enlisted men] and 20 Civilian Police" (President's Committee for Hungarian Refugee Relief [PCHRR] 1957:C-3). In addition to this small contingent, Camp Kilmer was also home to the 483rd AAA Battalion Headquarters, two Batteries, and 167 military personnel and their families who lived in converted barracks on site (PCHRR 1957:C-3).

Site preparations commenced almost immediately after the announcement. By November 15, some 800 soldiers were at work in camp. Charged with housing and feeding the refugees, the Army had to repair and furnish the buildings, as well as restore electricity, water, and heating to the facilities. The



grounds had to be cleared of overgrown vegetation. Priority was given to preparing the barracks, mess halls, and administration buildings, with libraries, theaters, and other supporting facilities of secondary importance. Initial efforts focused on the Reception Center (Areas 20-21), which had been constructed during the Korean War (NYT 16 November 1956; PCHRR 1957:C-3).

Only eight days after being commissioned as a refugee center, on November 21, 1956, Camp Kilmer received its first 60 refugees (Salisbury 1956). They celebrated their first Thanksgiving in camp the following day (PCHRR 1957:C-4). Sixty-eight buildings were ready for occupation at the time of their arrival (Niessen 2016).

### *Housing the Refugees*

The former Reception Center (Areas 20-21) at Camp Kilmer had enough beds to accommodate about 3,000 refugees. Initially, this capacity was adequate to accommodate the number of refugees arriving on the twice-daily flights from Europe. That changed in mid-December, when the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) took over transportation. MATS, which had earned a reputation for humanitarian relief in the Berlin Airlift of 1948-1949, operated as many as 20 flights a day for "Operation Safe Haven." In a 22-day period beginning December 9, 1956, MATS transported 9,700 men, women and children on 155 flights (41st Company 1957:5-6; Ulanoff 1964).

In addition to these flights, Hungarian refugees also began arriving by Navy transport ships in 1957, via the Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS). The first ship, the *USNS General LeRoy Eltinge*, arrived on January 1, bringing 1,746 men, women, and children. Their arrival brought the total number of Hungarian refugees received at Camp Kilmer to 17,168 in just six weeks (NYT 3 January 1957). Four more ships followed, the largest arriving on February 16 with 2,000 refugees (NYT 16 February 1957). Flights also continued throughout this period (Niessen 2016). On January 12, the 20,000th refugee arrived in camp; just over a month later, the number had reached 25,000 (NYT 13 January 1957; NYT 16 February 1957).

The rapid increase in the number of refugees arriving daily necessitated changes to the camp administration. The Reception Center continued to function as the "Initial Receiving Area," where new arrivals were brought for processing after arriving on American soil (Figure 20). Once processing was complete, they were then moved to the main camp on the west side of Plainfield Avenue, which was referred to as the "Holding Village" (see Figure 21). Housing blocks were opened as needed, beginning with Area (or Block) 6, followed by Blocks 7, 10, and 9. For housing purposes, the single men were separated from the families and single women. Curtains were hung in the barracks rooms to provide some privacy for family units. Mess halls were opened in Blocks 6, 9, and 10. The refugees were given meal tickets daily (PCHRR 1957:C-5-C-6).

Some areas of the camp were reserved for administrative purposes. Area 7 had a row of barracks assigned to the federal agencies and voluntary organizations working in the camp. Area 8 was reserved for soldiers assigned to Camp Kilmer. The Refugee Center Headquarters were located in Area 15, and the President's Committee had offices in Building 1306. Some medical services were offered in the Hospital Area. It is unclear whether plans to open Areas 3 and 4 for refugee housing were enacted (PCHRR 1957:C-5-C-6).

*Processing the Refugees*

Processing began in the refugee camps in Austria. Refugees seeking asylum in the United States first met with the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), then with one of the sponsoring agencies that would assume responsibility for the resettlement process once the refugee arrived in America. These included the World Council of Churches, the International Rescue Committee, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society, and the Lutheran World Federation. Refugees were also subjected to health screenings and a security check before being approved for relocation to the United States (Bon Tempo 2008:68).

Upon arrival on American soil, the refugees were immediately transported by civilian bus to Camp Kilmer. (The complex was officially renamed the Joyce Kilmer Reception Center to reflect its new role and to avoid potential negative connotations with the term “camp”; however, the media continued to refer to the site as Camp Kilmer throughout this period.) Unless they arrived late in the evening, new arrivals were immediately subjected to medical exams before being served their first meal in the Reception Center mess hall. They were then transported by Army bus to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s inspection area, where all plants and fruit were confiscated in order to avoid potential hazards. The U.S. Customs Department also inspected the new arrivals to ensure that no firearms, narcotics, or other contraband entered the country (PCHRR 1957:H-5).

Processing continued with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which completed paperwork related to the refugees. Data collected included height, weight, age, and occupational history. This information was recorded on IBM punch cards and used to match the refugees’ skills to potential jobs in the United States. The Army then issued identification cards to the refugees, as well as vouchers for use in the post exchange. The American Red Cross issued clothing to the refugees prior to their assignment to the barracks (PCHRR 1957:H-5).

The American Red Cross played a vital role in the Hungarian refugee crisis, providing aid in the refugee camps in Austria, offering assistance during the transport of groups overseas, and welcoming new arrivals to Camp Kilmer. Many of the refugees arrived in the United States with little more than the clothes that they were wearing. The Red Cross thus supplied toiletries, undergarments, hosiery, and pajamas to the refugees. They assisted the Army in sorting and distributing clothing donated and sent to the camp. Red Cross staff and volunteers also offered assistance to refugees wishing to contact relatives and friends living in other areas of the United States. Other roles assumed by the Red Cross included providing recreation and entertainment in camp and offering transportation to refugees from camp to the train, bus, or airport en route to their final destination (American Red Cross 1956-1957).

The Red Cross had 22 staff members and roughly 250 volunteers stationed at Camp Kilmer in early December 1956. When the government announced plans in December 1956 to increase the number of refugees entering the country by 16,500, the Red Cross proposed doubling its staff and maintaining 250-300 volunteers daily, providing round-the-clock support to Operation Mercy (American Red Cross 1956-1957).

Both the Red Cross and the Army provided interpreters to assist the refugees in the transition to their new homes. This function was critical, as only 12 percent of the refugees spoke English (Niessen 2016). The military alone employed some 51 military and 31 civilian interpreters at Camp Kilmer during the peak reception period (41st Company 1957:24).



*Resettling the Refugees*

As noted previously, the responsibility for resettlement fell to voluntary organizations, most of which were affiliated with religious organizations. With offices in the Holding Village, these organizations interviewed new arrivals and assisted them in locating permanent situations. In some cases, the refugees' family or friends in the United States served as sponsors, and the refugees were provided transportation to their new homes. For others, the voluntary organizations attempted to match the refugees' education and experience with the available sponsorship offers. The latter came not only through the connections of the sponsoring agencies but also from the generosity of the American people, many of whom supported the Hungarian revolution and embraced its refugees. The President's Committee for Hungarian Refugee Relief reported that by mid-January 1957, some 2,366 "letters concerning job offers, gifts, and sponsorship" had been received at Camp Kilmer (PCHRR 1957:C-7, H-7).

The resettlement process proceeded with remarkable speed. By January 22, 1957, Camp Kilmer had received 22,258 refugees. Of these, only 4,122 remained resident on that date, the rest having been resettled to their permanent homes (PCHRR 1957:C-7). Some groups received special assistance from professional organizations in their fields. The American Medical Association, for example, assisted refugees with medical degrees to find professional placements. The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences provided similar assistance to scientists, placing more than 500 scientists in universities and private industry (PCHRR 1957:N-3; Ward 2016). College students also received special assistance in finding schools and scholarships to continue their studies (PCHRR 1957:N-3). Rutgers University offered an eight-week English language immersion program to established scholars, graduate students, and their dependents; Bard College in New York offered a similar program for undergraduates (Ward 2016). English instruction was also offered to refugees during their stay at Camp Kilmer (PCHRR 1957:D-17).

As these placement strategies suggest, many of the refugees arriving in America were well educated. A statistical report issued in mid-January 1957 indicated that some 5,721 employable adults, age 16 and older, had arrived at the Joyce Kilmer Reception Center between December 25, 1956, and January 17, 1957. They represented about two-thirds of the total number of refugees received during that period, the remainder being children and housewives. Of the employable adults, 766 had completed a college degree or higher; another 1,666 had completed a four-year technical course of study. An additional 1,175 had completed an eight-year gymnasium course, which was a college preparatory program. Roughly one-third of these refugees had previously been employed in skilled occupations, and another 17.6 percent were employed in professional and managerial occupations. Less than one-tenth were classified as unskilled. The same statistical analysis indicates that the Hungarian refugees in America were typically young, with more than 61 percent under the age of 30 and 85 percent under the age of 40. Over half were unmarried, including 2,565 single men (PCHRR 1957:H-9-H-10). Camp Kilmer was reportedly the site of 149 weddings during the refugee crisis (Niessen 2016).

The flood of refugees into and out of Camp Kilmer continued into the spring of 1957, albeit at a slower pace (Figure 22). On February 28, Tracy Voorhees resigned from the President's Committee for Hungarian Refugee Relief, noting that the "emergency phase" of the project had ended and the processing of new arrivals had "become routine" (NYT 1 March 1957). In mid-April, Eisenhower announced a reduction in the number of new arrivals as the situation in the Austrian refugee camps

improved (Markowitz 1973:56). The last group of refugees arrived at Camp Kilmer on April 30, 1957; all arrivals after that date were processed at the St. George Hotel in Brooklyn (NYT 1 May 1957). The Joyce Kilmer Reception Center officially closed on May 9, 1957. In less than six months, Camp Kilmer had served as a temporary home for almost 32,000 Hungarian refugees (NYT 10 May 1957).

### The Cold War at Camp Kilmer

Although the Army announced the closure of Camp Kilmer in 1955, an Army Reserve base was established at the site in 1959. The 78th Division was headquartered at the Sgt. Joyce Kilmer U.S. Army Reserve Center (Fanning, Phillips & Molnar 1995:51). In addition to the Reserve functions, the base was also utilized by active Army units associated with Nike missile installations. The Nike missile program was developed at the end of World War II as a guided surface-to-air missile system intended to defend the United States against air attack. The first successful testing of a Nike missile, the Ajax, occurred in 1951, and bases were established around major metropolitan areas by 1954. New Jersey was home to 14 Nike missile batteries, plus a number of supporting facilities. The sites were located in two distinct groupings, around New York and Philadelphia (Bender 1999, 2004).

In 1959, an Ordnance Field Maintenance Shop (Building 1072) associated with the Nike missile program was constructed at Camp Kilmer. Designed by Antonin Raymond and L.L. Rado from “definitive” drawings by the USACE, the building contained sections for repair of vehicles and artillery, maintenance of Signal Corps equipment, and accommodation of several types of Nike missiles. It was notable for being constructed almost entirely of metal-framed glass panels and was featured in several contemporary architectural publications, including *Progressive Architecture* (Alle King Rosen & Fleming, Inc. 1998; *Progressive Architecture* 1960:153-157; USACE 1998:6). After decommissioning of the Nike missile system in the early 1970s, Building 1072 remained in use as a maintenance facility for a number of years. By 1998, the facility was no longer being used by the Army; it was later surplused and is presently owned by Edison Township (USACE 1998:6-10).

### Decommissioning and Sale of Property

In 1962, the majority of land associated with Camp Kilmer – more than 1,400 acres – was excessed by the Army (USACE 1998:4). This included RA 8, where the subject Buildings 801, 806, and 871 are located. A 53-acre tract was retained for Army Reserve and Ordnance Field Maintenance Shop activities. Three decades later, in 1995, these remaining Army facilities also were recommended for closure by the Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC 95), reserving a 25-acre tract for use by an Army Reserve unit (USACE 1998:1).

At the time of its decommissioning in 1962, the camp’s function was described as “furnish[ing] administrative and logistical support to the Headquarters of the Second Army, which commands all Army Reserve and R.O.T.C. activities throughout New York and New Jersey” (New Jersey Division of State and Regional Planning [NJDSRP] 1962:2). Historic aerial photographs indicate that the built environment of Camp Kilmer was virtually intact at the time of the closure (NETR 1963).

The General Services Administration (GSA) assumed responsibility for the excessed property (USACE 1998:4). Federal procedures for disposing of the land required that potential use by federal agencies must be considered first, followed by state, county and local governments. If no governmental use was identified, then the property could be sold at auction to private interests (NJDSRP 1962:3-4).



An analysis of the site prepared by the State of New Jersey in 1962 identified 1,108 administrative, housing, storage and miscellaneous structures on the site (NJDSRP 1962:8).

In the years that followed, the GSA disposed of the property for a variety of uses. The largest portion, 540 acres, was provided to Rutgers University in 1964. This tract encompassed the western half of Camp Kilmer, including Areas 1-4, 11-13, 15, and part of 16 (see Figure 23). Demolition of the existing buildings began in 1966, including the entire Hospital Area (Areas 11-12). Many of the warehouses were retained for use by the university's motor pool, as were the Headquarters Building and several others in Area 13. Construction of the central academic block commenced in Area 2 in 1967 (Mirra n.d.:8-9, 13; NETR 1963, 1969).

Four additional parcels, totaling more than 352 acres, were sold by the GSA in 1966 to Broadway Associates of Freehold, New Jersey (NYT 10 May 1966). All were located west of Plainfield Avenue, the tracts separated by land to be retained by the government (NYT 31 March 1966). In the decade that followed, Broadway Associates subdivided and sold several parcels for industrial development. In 1968, Sutton Construction Company of Union, New Jersey, purchased 90 acres fronting Plainfield Avenue, south of Kilmer Road (NYT 26 August 1968). Another 140-acre tract was sold to Piscataway Partners in 1974 (Ross 1974). Industrial parks were built on these tracts, encompassing Areas 9 and 10, between 1966 and 1979, with the parcels nearest to the railroad developed first. By the mid-1980s, industrial development had also occurred in the northern part of Camp Kilmer, including Areas 5, 6 and 18 (NETR 1987). The GSA also sold a 49-acre tract near the center of the former camp site, including part of Area 7, to Kilmer Estates, Inc., in 1979 (Hirsch 1982). An apartment complex was built in this area nearly two decades later (NETR 1995, 2002).

#### *Edison Job Corps Center*

RA 8 and a small part of RA 7 were retained by the federal government for the creation of a Job Corps Center. The Job Corps was created by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society program. Using the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s as a model, the Job Corps program was intended to provide residential training programs to disadvantaged youths. Many of the early Job Corps centers were located on former military bases. On February 11, 1965, the Job Corps Center opened at Camp Kilmer, primarily occupying Area 8 (Blackett 2002:42, 248). The students, who ranged in age from 16 to 21, received remedial assistance in reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as vocational training in areas as diverse as cooking, plumbing, auto mechanics, and service station operation (TET 18 July 1965:23).

With a federal investment of more than \$11.5 million, the Job Corps Center at Camp Kilmer was the largest in the nation, with a planned enrollment of 2,500 (TET 17 December 1964:4). RA 7 was razed around 1965, along with several buildings in RA 8, but most of the existing barracks and support buildings were rehabilitated for program use (NETR 1963, 1969). Modernization of the facilities in the years that followed included the replacement of original windows and application of low-maintenance siding over the original shiplap exteriors. The interior spaces of many buildings were altered to accommodate the new uses, and dropped ceilings were installed throughout.

In the early 1980s, Job Corps students were involved in the rehabilitation of a small number of the remaining military buildings on campus. At the time, the center reportedly occupied 23 of

the 60 buildings; 20 of the unused buildings were reportedly slated for demolition (Serrill 1983). These demolitions took place between 1987 and 1995 (NETR 1987, 1995). The former Regimental Administration Building also was replaced during the 1980s. A substantial construction program on the site during the 1990s and early 2000s eliminated the need for the former Camp Kilmer buildings, and most were razed by 2006 (NETR 1995, 2002, 2006). Photographic documentation of Buildings 845, 847, 848, 849, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, and 858, all of which were 74-man barracks, was completed in 1996 and is on file at the HPO.

As shown on Figure 24, 11 buildings dating to the Army occupation of Camp Kilmer presently remain at their original locations on the Edison Job Corps site: the Chapel (800), BOQ (801), Infirmary (804), Recreation Building (806), Shop (822), Service Club (871), and five Storage and Administrative Buildings (811, 818, 838, 851, and 859). Two other buildings on the site employ the Army numbering system (819, 870); however, neither appears to date to the World War II era. Historic aerial photographs indicate that Building 819 was either constructed or moved to its current location west of Building 818 around 2005 (NETR 2002, 2006). Building 870, the Gate House, replaced an earlier structure circa 1980 (NETR 1979, 1987).

Building 801 was utilized by the Job Corps Center as a medical facility for a number of years before being vacated in 1998. Building 806 also was vacated in that year. Building 871 served a variety of uses until its abandonment in 2005, when the new Administration Building was completed (Olga Bogdan, personal communication, March 2016). All three buildings are in a deteriorated condition and are slated for demolition.



#### IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

##### Building 801: Bachelor Officers' Quarters

Building 801 was constructed in 1942 as a Bachelor Officers' Quarters (BOQ). The BOQ appears to have been constructed to Plan Number 800-321,<sup>2</sup> Bachelor Officers Quarters (Without Mess), Type BOQ-44 (see Attachment B). As the name implies, the two-story building (Photos 1-6) housed 44 officers. Floor plans and framing plans were located for this building type, but not elevation drawings. These plans indicate that, as constructed, the building had a rectangular footprint and concrete pier foundation except at the mechanical room, where the foundation was concrete slab. An interior chimney with brick stack and metal vent was located on the west elevation, at the mechanical room. Four metal vents pierced the gable roof ridge at regular intervals. Physical evidence indicates that Building 801 was constructed with shiplap siding and 8/8 double-hung wood sash windows.

The gable ends were three bays wide. The north end, fronting the roadway, contained only windows (Photo 1), but the south end had central doors on both floors (Photo 3). On the second floor, the door accessed a balcony and ladder attached to the exterior wall, providing emergency egress. Stairs led from the first floor level to the ground. Both the east and west elevations were 13 bays long, with the entrance on the building's east elevation (Photos 2-4). Although not indicated on the standardized plans, Building 801 was constructed with a storm entrance shelter, a projecting two-story entry bay constructed of concrete block (Photo 5).

The interior of the BOQ featured a double-loaded corridor with barracks rooms opening off the hallways (Photo 6). The main entry opened into a stairwell, accessing both the first and second floors. Bathrooms were located adjacent to the stairwell on the south. The mechanical room was located at ground level on the west elevation and was accessible only from the exterior; the room was constructed of concrete block.

The standardized plans illustrate the living quarters as comprised of a series of two-room suites, each containing a bedroom and living room. This arrangement suggests that nearly all of the officers bunked two per room, in order to achieve the intended 44-man capacity. Secondary sources indicate that an alternate interior plan was also used for BOQs, providing individual bedrooms for the officers and a dayroom for shared use (Lampl 1993:23; Mann 1942:24). Building 801 appears to have been constructed to this alternate plan. The south end of the building has a large open space, presumably the dayroom, on both the first and second floors, and there is no evidence of interior doors connecting the barracks rooms into a suite configuration.

Building 801 has been substantially altered since its construction. The exterior has been covered with aluminum siding, and most windows have been replaced with 1/1 vinyl sash. Plywood boards and

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<sup>2</sup> Because Camp Kilmer ceased to function as an Army base in 1962, there are no records related to building construction preserved at the site. The Camp Kilmer records consulted at the National Archives and Records Administration in New York did not contain building plans. Thus, building types and plans were identified utilizing the HABS context study for World War II temporary buildings (Kriv 1988) and digitized HABS collection records available on the Library of Congress website (HABS 1993; Lampl 1993). Plan Number 800-321 is referenced in secondary sources as the standard plan for BOQs (Lampl 1993), but it was not located during the course of research.

other materials screen the foundation from view. The balcony, ladder, and exterior stair on the south end have been replaced by a modern metal fire escape. The main entry contains replacement metal doors.

On the interior, the double-loaded corridor and dayroom layout remains on both floors, but few original materials survive. Most of the original door openings off the corridor have been retained, but some interior walls have been removed to create larger rooms. On the first floor, the upper walls and ceilings have been stripped to the studs in most places. Some original, horizontal board wainscot materials survive. The stairwell has its original pipe railing. The second floor has a modernized interior with dropped acoustic tile ceilings and fluorescent lighting.

#### Building 806: Recreation Building

Building 806 was constructed in 1942 as a Recreation Building. Available evidence suggests that it utilized Plan Number 700-310, for Type RB-1 (see Attachment B). These plans indicate that the one-and-one-half-story building (Photos 7-12) had a rectangular footprint, clapboard siding, and a low-pitched, front gable roof pierced by six metal ventilators. The building was supported on concrete piers. Windows were fitted with 6/6 double-hung wood sash fixtures. The front (east) elevation had a central entrance containing paired wood panel doors flanked by single windows; a window was also centered above the door in the gable end (Photos 7, 11).

Physical evidence indicates that the plans were reversed on Building 806, with the mechanical room located on the building's north side and the store room or office on the south. The mechanical room was accessible only from the exterior ground level of the north elevation, via paired, 4-light wood panel doors. The heating system was serviced by a brick chimney (no longer extant) on the exterior, west of the mechanical room entry. Two single windows, then alternating paired and single windows, punctured the west elevation wall between the chimney and a secondary entrance near the rear of the building (Photos 7, 9). Opening into the auditorium near the stage, this secondary entry featured paired wood panel doors. The rear, service area of the building contained two windows on the side elevation, placed nearer to the top of the wall than the auditorium windows. The south side elevation was nearly identical to the north, except that the heater room entrance and chimney were absent. Instead, alternating single and paired windows extended from the front to the paired doors near the auditorium stage (Photo 10). The rear (west) elevation had a single central door, accessed by a tall flight of stairs and flanked by windows (Photos 9, 10).

The interior of the building featured a lobby at the east end, flanked by the heater room on the north and a store room or office on the south. A stair in the store room accessed the projection room above. The plans also illustrate men's and women's restrooms on either side of the lobby; however, physical evidence suggests that only one restroom was built in Building 806, on the south side of the lobby. The primary space in the building was the auditorium (Photo 12), which had a stage at its west end. The stage was flanked by coat rooms, and dressing rooms were located at the rear of the building. The rear entry led to a small vestibule.

Numerous alterations have occurred to Building 806 since its construction. The exterior of the building has been covered with aluminum siding, and all doors are modern replacements. Most windows are replacement 1/1 vinyl sash covered with plywood on the exterior. A small one-story, one-bay addition



with a shed roof was added to the building's southeast corner circa 1965, following the Job Corps's acquisition of site (NETR 1963, 1969). A gabled porch was added to the front elevation and the doorway extensively modified, with the paired doors removed and the opening partially enclosed with brick. A porch-like structure comprised of wood posts and a gable roof also was added to the front elevation; its function is unknown, as it does not shelter a door or window opening. A wooden, handicap-accessible ramp was added at the auditorium entrance on the building's north side.

On the interior, the auditorium has been retained as a single open space, although the stage has been enclosed and the space subdivided. Access to the former stage area is via a doorway on the north side of the auditorium and a short flight of steps. The interior stair to the projection room, formerly located in the store room or office at the front of the building, is no longer extant. Dropped ceilings and fluorescent lighting have been added throughout the building. Few original materials remain.

#### Building 871: Service Club

Building 871 was constructed as a Service Club. Available evidence indicates that its construction utilized Plan Number 800-517, Type SC-3 (see Attachment B). According to these plans, the building had a T-plan with a cross-gable roof (Photos 13-19). The central, gable front section (referred to herein as the Dance Hall) was five bays, while the flanking wings each contained seven bays. Both the central and south (Library) wings were two stories in height, while the north wing (Café) was only one story tall. A one-story, shed roof wing (kitchen) on the north end had an attached, gable-front mechanical room at the rear. The foundation was comprised of concrete piers. Physical evidence indicates that the building was clad in shiplap siding.

The front (west) façade had a one-story, screened porch extending across the gable-front section and a single adjoining bay on either side. Three entrances were located under this porch: at center, two sets of paired doors into the Dance Hall entry vestibule; on the south, paired doors into the Library; and on the north, paired doors into the Café. Physical evidence and historic photographs suggest that the windows were fitted with 8/8 double-hung wood sash fixtures throughout the building.

The first floor façade of the Dance Hall had two windows on either side of the entry and five windows on the second floor, with a louvered vent in the gable end. The rear section of the Dance Hall extended beyond the wings with a depth of five bays. The north elevation had a screened porch accessed by two sets of double doors. The south elevation had a single exit door near the center of the first floor. The rear gable end had a central, exterior shouldered brick chimney flanked by two windows on either side.

The Library wing was four bays deep. The only first floor entry was beneath the front porch, but egress from the second floor was provided by a fire escape at the rear, near the north end of the wing. The Café wing had paired doors accessing the rear screened porch. A secondary entrance to the Kitchen was located on the north elevation, and the Mechanical Room had a separate exterior entrance at the rear.

The primary interior space in the Service Club was the Dance Hall, a large, open room measuring approximately 60 feet wide and 75 feet long. A balcony extended around the Dance Hall on all sides, and a fireplace was located at the rear (east end). An entry vestibule on the west end of the Dance Hall

contained coat racks. Passing into the Dance Hall, two sets of wide wooden stairs flanked the entry, providing access to the balcony and other upstairs rooms, including restrooms and a game room. The entry vestibule was flanked on the first floor by restrooms on the north and a storage room and librarian's office on the south. The restrooms and storage room were accessed via the Dance Hall, but the office was only accessible from the Library.

The first floor of the Library featured a large open space with book stacks. A stairway near the center of the room provided access to the second floor. Two offices were located within the Library wing but accessed from the Dance Hall, including that of the hostess.

The Café wing had an open eating area at its south end, near the Dance Hall, and a lunch counter at its north end. The kitchen was located behind the counter and had a separate storage room on its east end. The mechanical room was adjacent on the east but accessible only from the exterior. The lower walls of the mechanical room were constructed of concrete block. A tall, detached brick chimney stack was located on the east side of the Mechanical Room.



## **V. SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

### **General Sources**

Camp Kilmer was built by the United States Army as a staging area during World War II. Most records related to its construction and operation, both during the war and in the years that followed, are preserved by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). NARA also holds records related to the decommissioning and sale of the property by the General Services Administration (GSA). Most records related to Camp Kilmer are housed at the National Archives in New York City. The Records of the Office of the Chief of Transportation (Record Group 336) contain quarterly historical reports for Camp Kilmer. These reports detail the movement of troops through the staging area and the activities of the various units responsible for camp operations. In some cases, these reports are accompanied by 8" x 10" photographs and other illustrations. The GSA records include real estate appraisals from the 1960s, some of which are accompanied by photographs.

Other branches of NARA also contain records related to the development and use of Camp Kilmer. The Cartographic Section in College Park, Maryland, retains a set of maps from 1941 related to the selection of the subject site for a staging area. This branch also retains records related to the reception of Hungarian refugees at Camp Kilmer in the Records of the United States Army (Record Groups 549, 338). Additional records generated by the President's Committee for Hungarian Refugee Relief are held at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas. Portions of this collection are also available in the Tracy S. Voorhees Papers at the Rutgers University Special Collections and University Archives.

Both Rutgers University and the Piscataway Public Library hold copies of important U.S. Army histories of the camp: the 1942 history by Arthur D. Mann, and the 1955 history by Thomas R. Mitman. These unpublished manuscripts are invaluable, providing detailed information about the construction and use of Camp Kilmer through the World War II and Korean War eras. Several local repositories also preserve histories, newspaper clippings, photographs, and historic maps of Camp Kilmer. These include the Piscataway Public Library and the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, which is headquartered in the Metuchen Public Library. The Edison Public Library has an extensive collection of environmental reports related to the 1995 base closure.

Newspapers consulted through online databases, including the New York Times and Trenton Evening Times, provided virtually no coverage of the construction of the camp during the first half of 1942, indicating the secrecy with which the project commenced. Coverage increased after the site was opened for a press tour in July 1942, and many later articles provide valuable glimpses into the movement of troops through, and the soldier's life in, Camp Kilmer. The camp Public Relations Office published a newspaper, the Kilmer Eagle, beginning in August 1942. This publication provides a wealth of information about camp operations, improvements, and recreational activities during World War II. The Princeton University Library's collection of the Kilmer Eagle, which spans the period 1942-1947, was consulted during the course of research.

The American Hungarian Foundation in New Brunswick, New Jersey, has a rich collection of historic photographs and other materials related to the Hungarian Revolution and the refugee reception center at Camp Kilmer. In December 1956, Look magazine sent photographers to Camp Kilmer to

document the Hungarian refugee experience. These photographs are preserved in the Look Magazine Photograph Collection at the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

The primary repositories likely to contain additional information that were not consulted during the course of research are the NARA collections in Maryland and at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Kansas, and the Prints and Photographs Division at the Library of Congress. Secondary sources suggest that the U.S. Army Center of Military History at Fort McNair, D.C., may retain 800-Series temporary building plans. Additional information about the use of Camp Kilmer during the Hungarian refugee crisis may be available in the records of the voluntary agencies that sponsored refugees in their resettlement or provided supporting services to the government. The records of the American Red Cross, which played a supporting role in camp operations, are preserved at NARA in College Park, Maryland. The agency that resettled the largest number of Hungarian refugees, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, has archival records at the Center for Migration Studies of New York. Other organizations that may have collections related to the Hungarian refugee experience at Camp Kilmer include, but are not limited to, the Church World Service, United HIAS Service, International Rescue Committee, and Lutheran Refugee Service.

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 1951 Dix Center Moves to Camp Kilmer. 2 February 1951:5. Trenton, New Jersey.  
 1952 Multi-Million Annex for Troops at Kilmer. 9 April:31. Trenton, New Jersey.  
 1964 Job Corps Training Planned. 17 December:4. Trenton, New Jersey.  
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## Weaver, Warren, Jr.

- 1949 Camp Kilmer Ends 7-Year Service as Army Staging Area for Millions. *New York Times* 11 November. New York.

**VI. ATTACHMENTS**



**ATTACHMENT A: FIGURES**

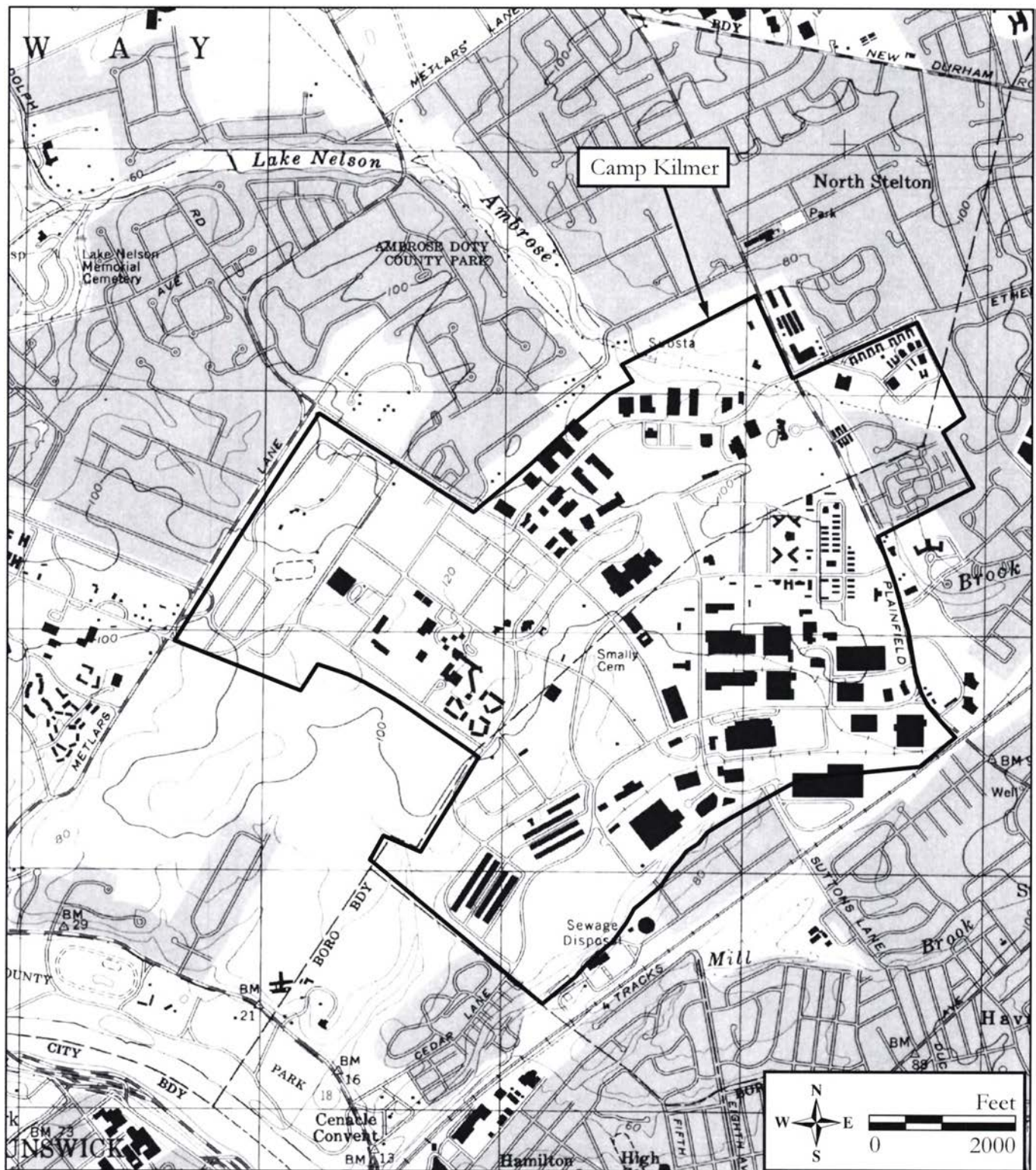


Figure 1: Location Map (1997 U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle: Plainfield, NJ).



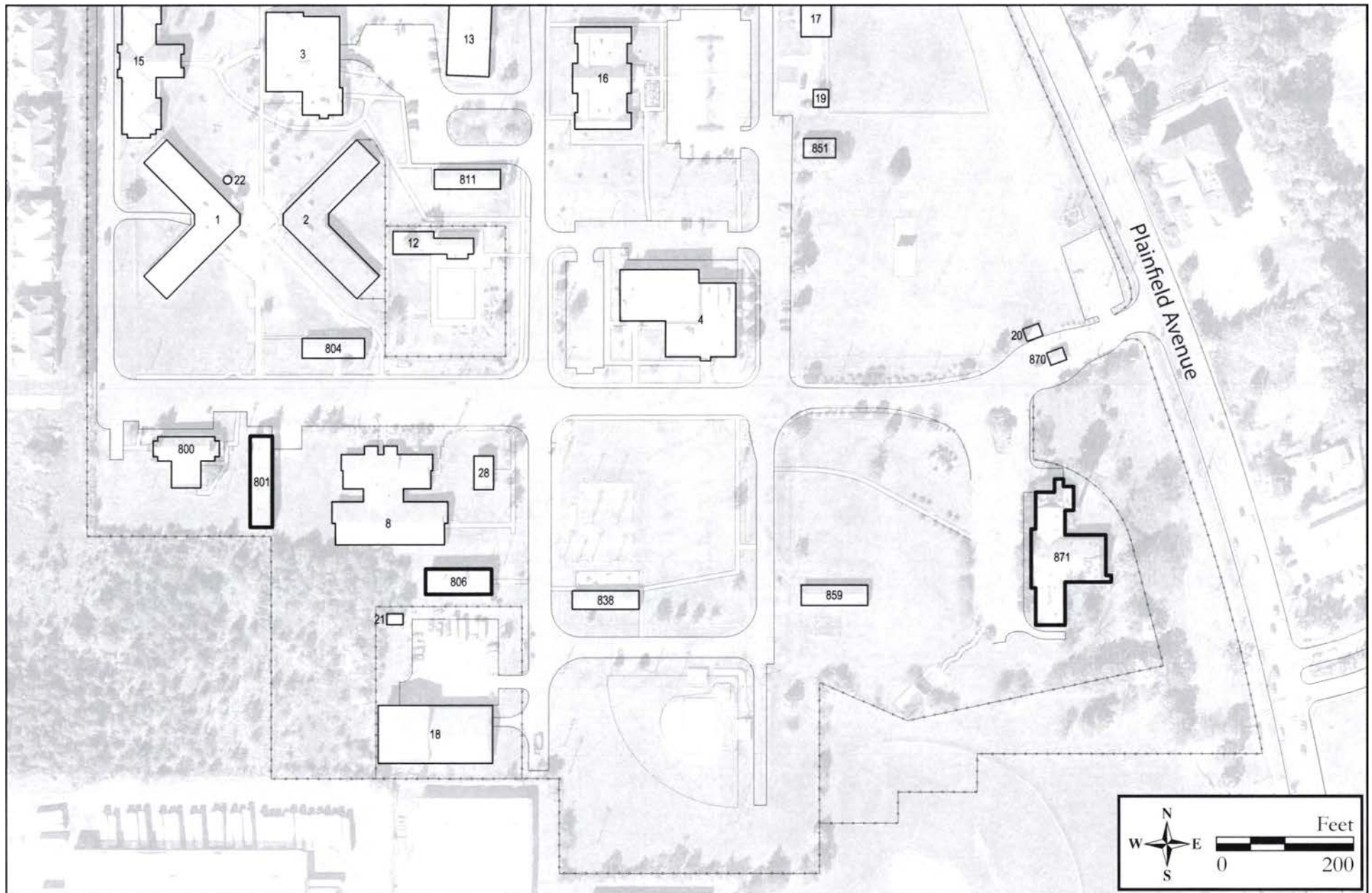


Figure 2: Site Plan, showing locations of Buildings 801, 806, and 871 at the Edison Job Corps Center (DCM Architecture and Engineering 2016).





Figure 3: 1930 Aerial photograph, showing the future site of Camp Kilmer (from New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection 1930). Note the location of the Pennsylvania Railroad line along the southern boundary of the site. The Lehigh Valley and Reading lines were located several miles north.



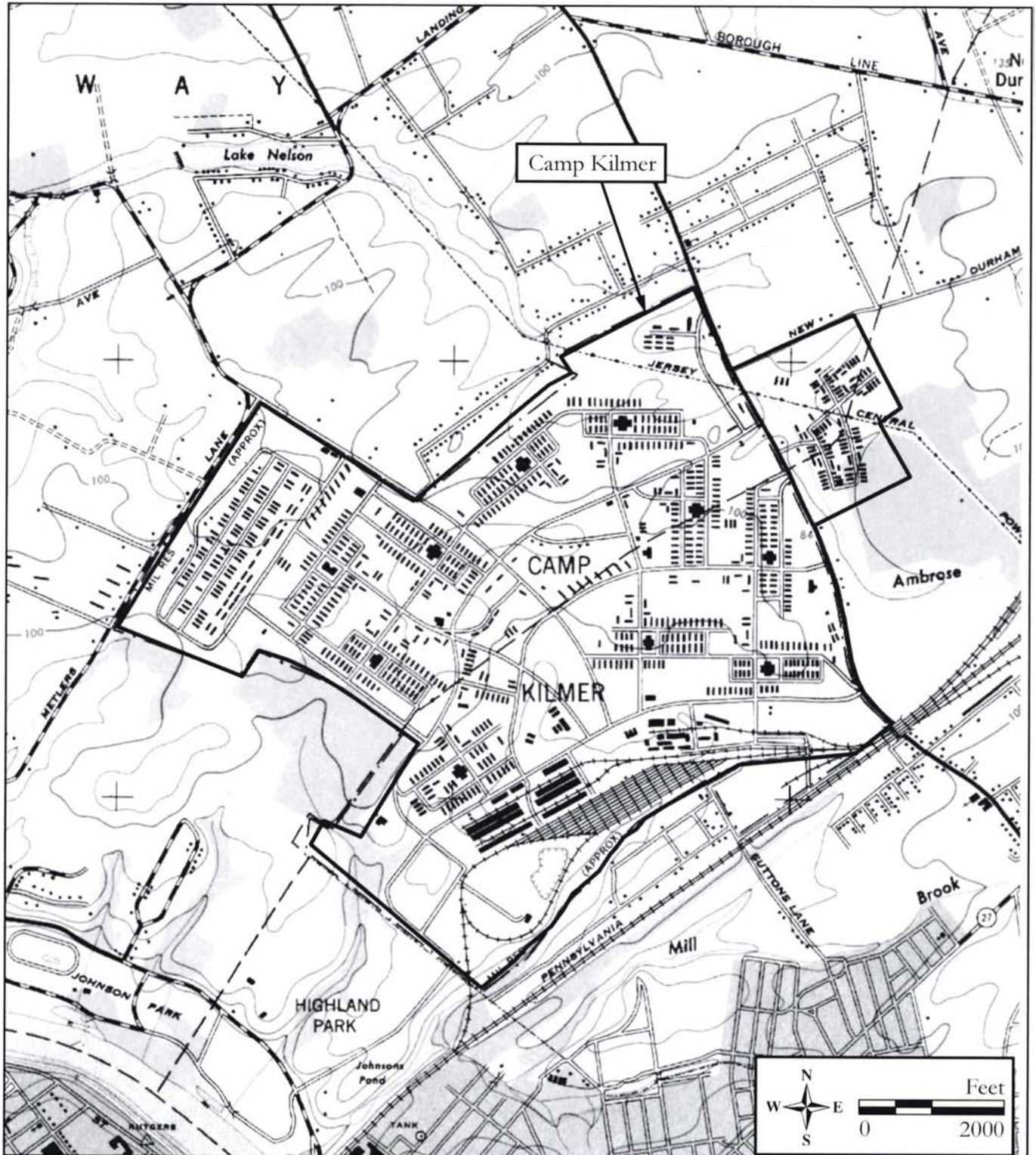


Figure 4: 1947 U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle: Plainfield, NJ.





Aerial view of Camp Stoneman, with city of Pittsburg at right

Figure 5: Aerial view of Camp Stoneman, Pittsburg, California, circa 1946 (from Hamilton and Bolce 1946). Note the linear grid layout, in contrast to the curving roads and central open space in the Camp Kilmer design.





Figure 6: 1947 Aerial photograph of Camp Kilmer, showing the locations of Areas 1-21 (NETR 1947).



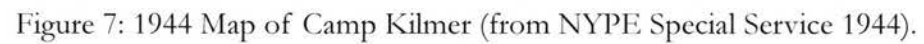
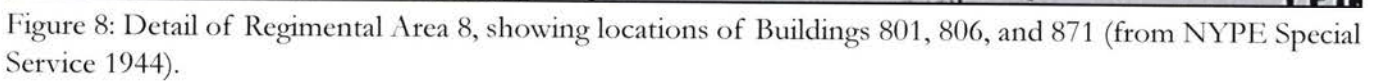


Figure 7: 1944 Map of Camp Kilmer (from NYPE Special Service 1944).







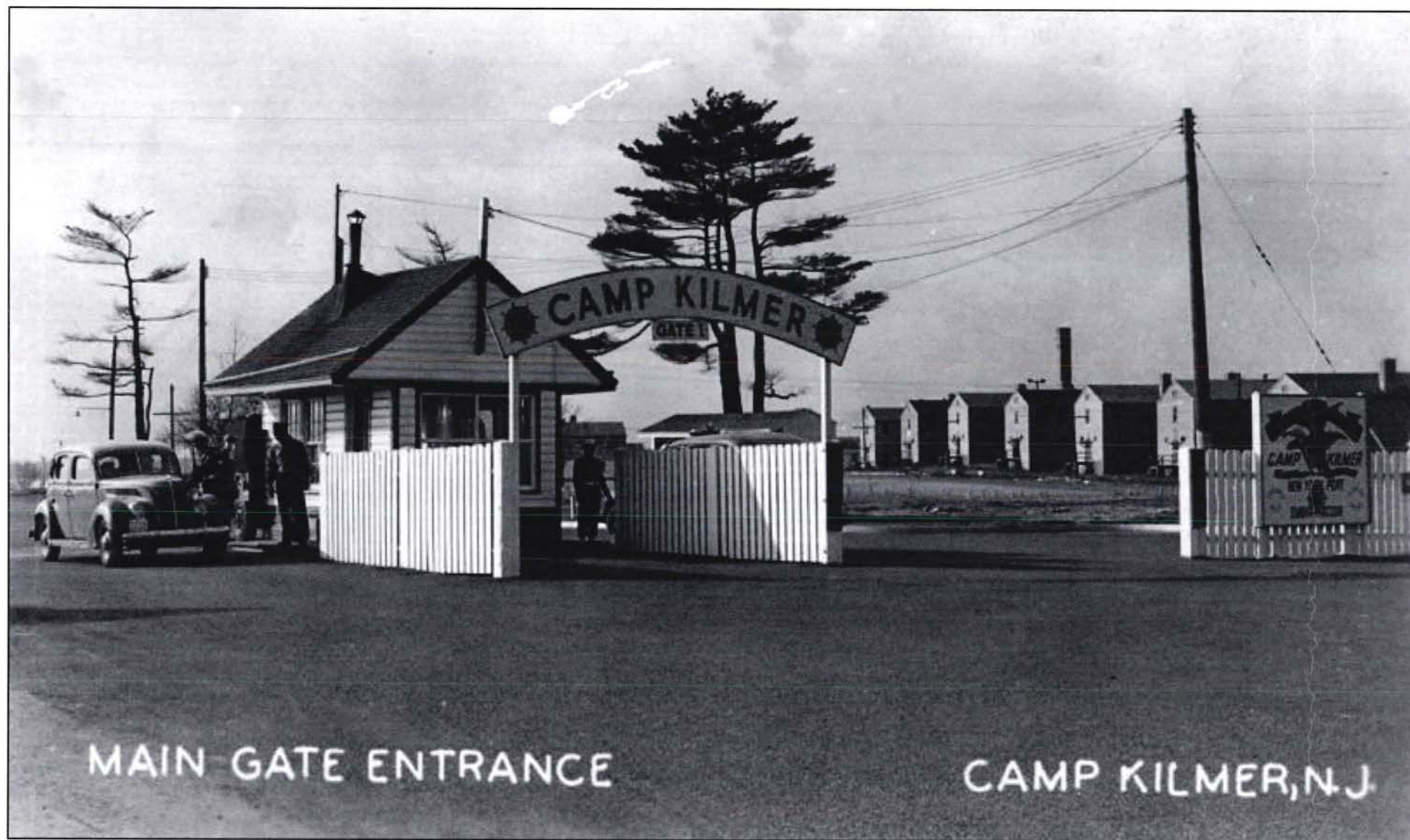


Figure 9: Main gate, undated (from Collection of Kenneth Lew).





Figure 10: Joyce Kilmer Memorial, undated (from Collection of Kenneth Lew). The exact location of the memorial within the camp is not mentioned in contemporary sources, but it most likely was located near the flagpole in the Administration Area (Area 13).

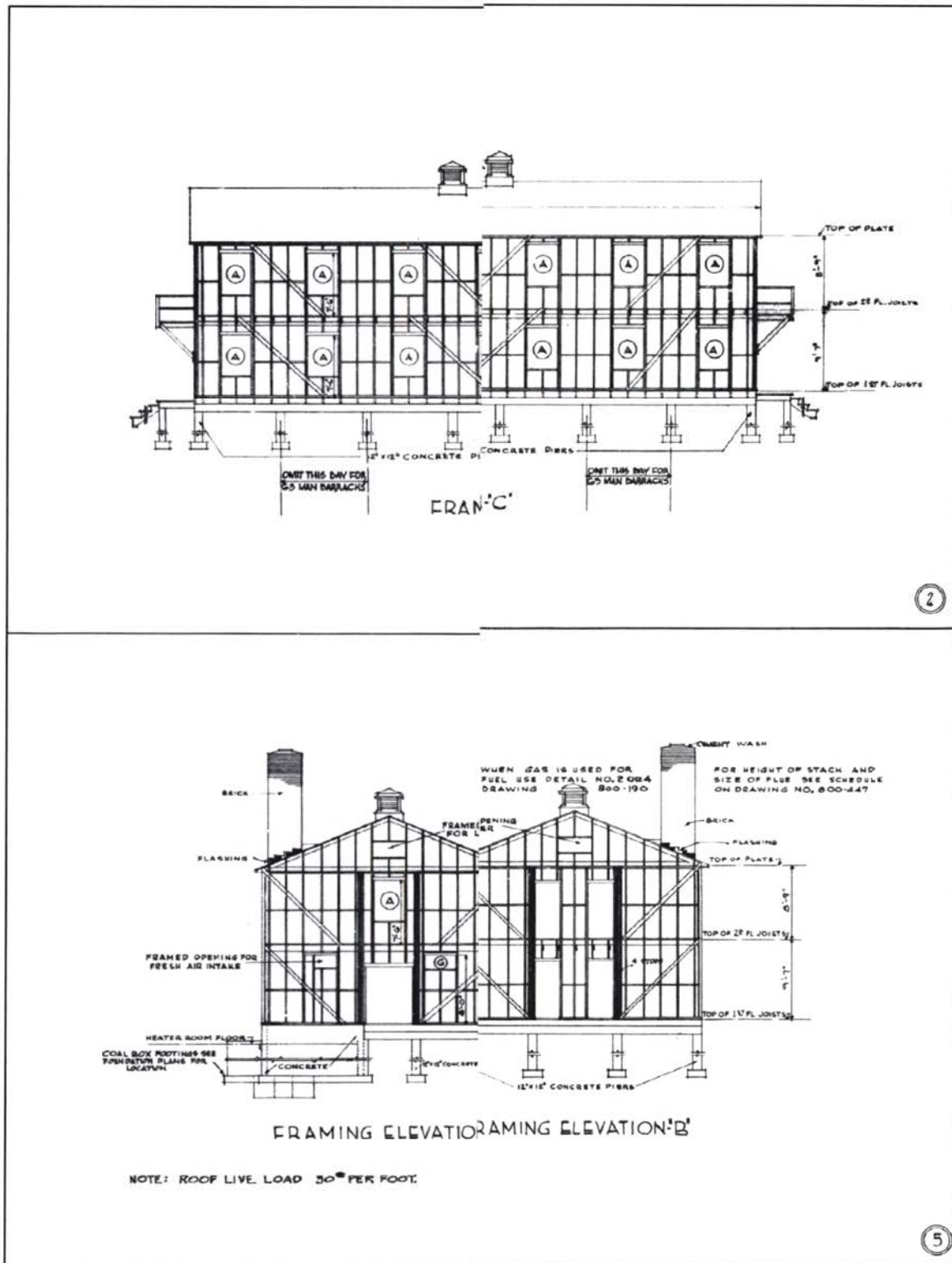


Figure 11: 1942 Office of the Quartermaster C



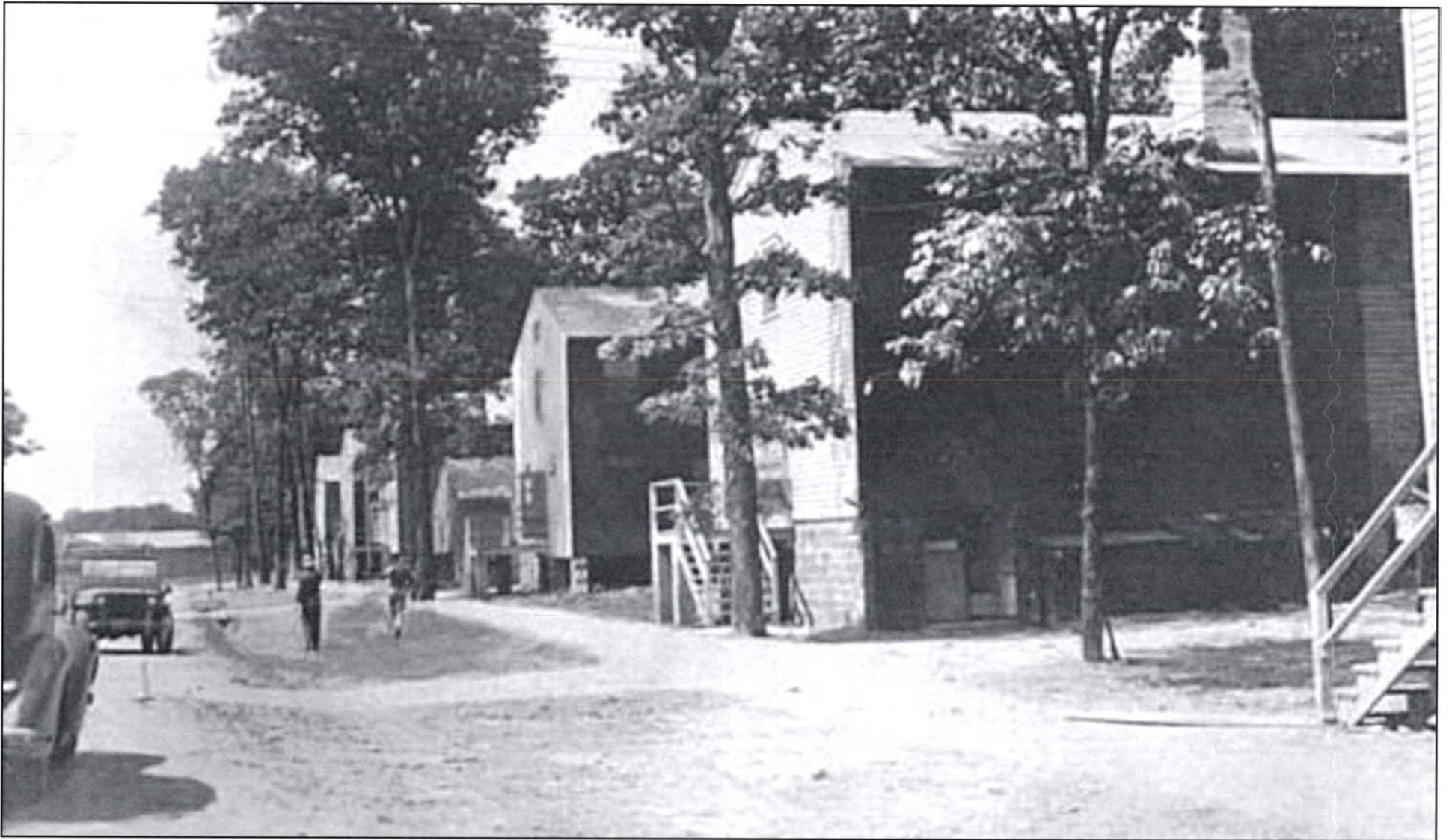


Figure 12: Barracks at Camp Kilmer, undated (from Collection of Jim Halpin). Note the paint scheme, which utilized vertical bands of color to camouflage the camp from the air.

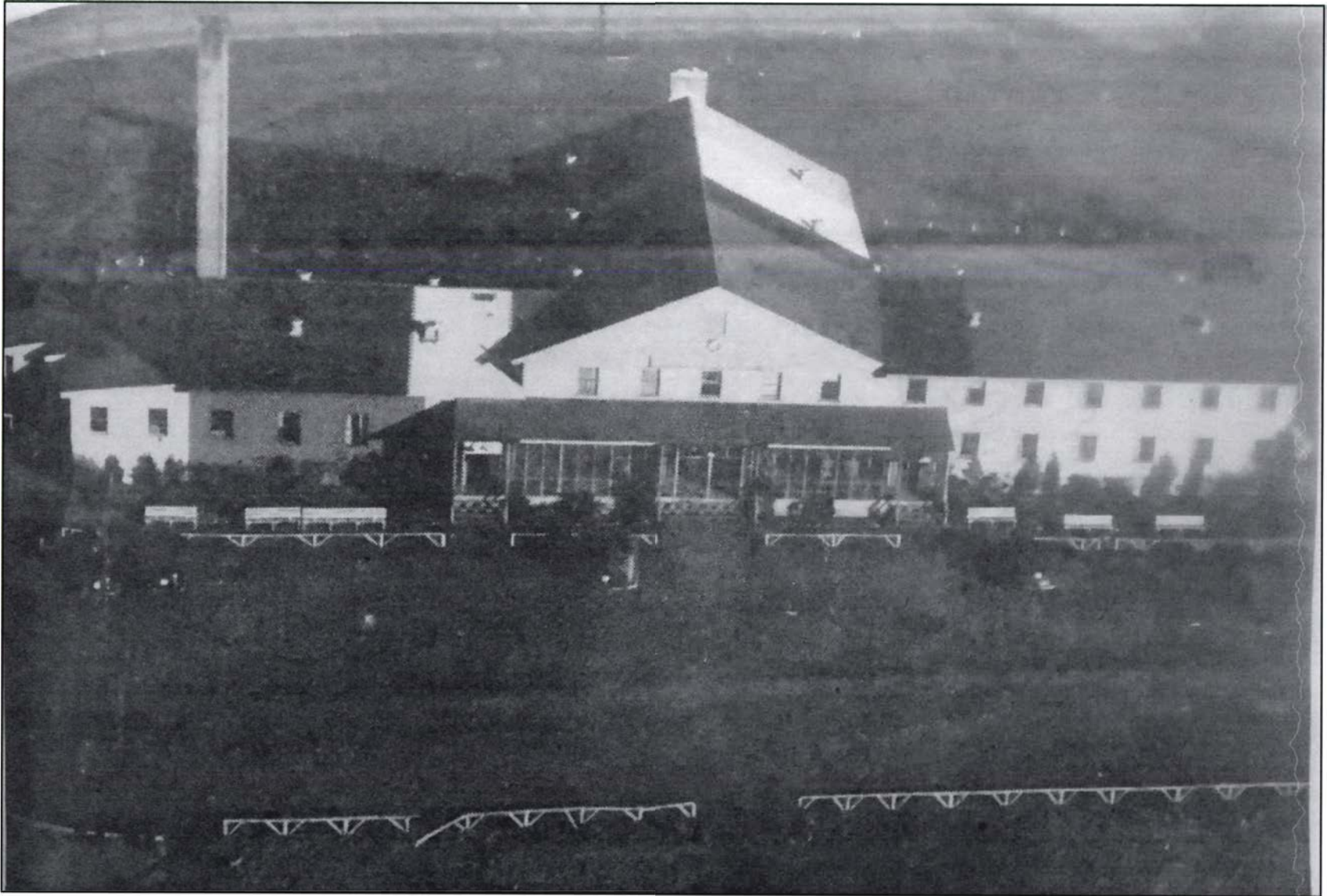


Figure 13: Service Club, 1946 (from Kilmer Eagle 15 March 1946).



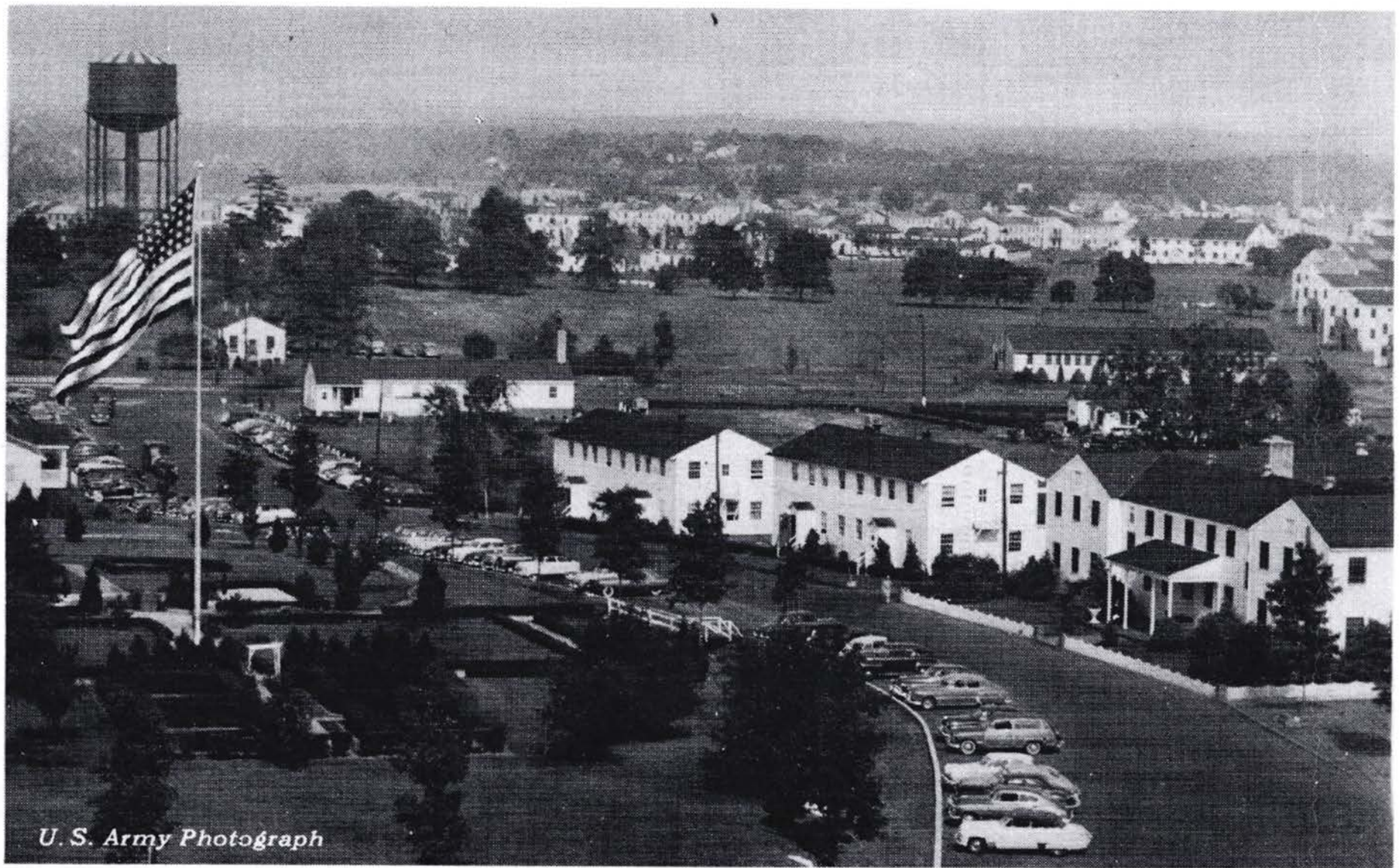


Figure 14: Undated aerial view of Camp Kilmer, looking east (from Collection of Metuchen-Edison Historical Society). The Administration Area (Area 13) is in the foreground, with the camp headquarters building at far right. The water tank was a major landmark within the camp.





Figure 15: New arrivals at the barracks, undated postcard.





Figure 16: Rifle range, 1944 (from Camp Kilmer 1944b).

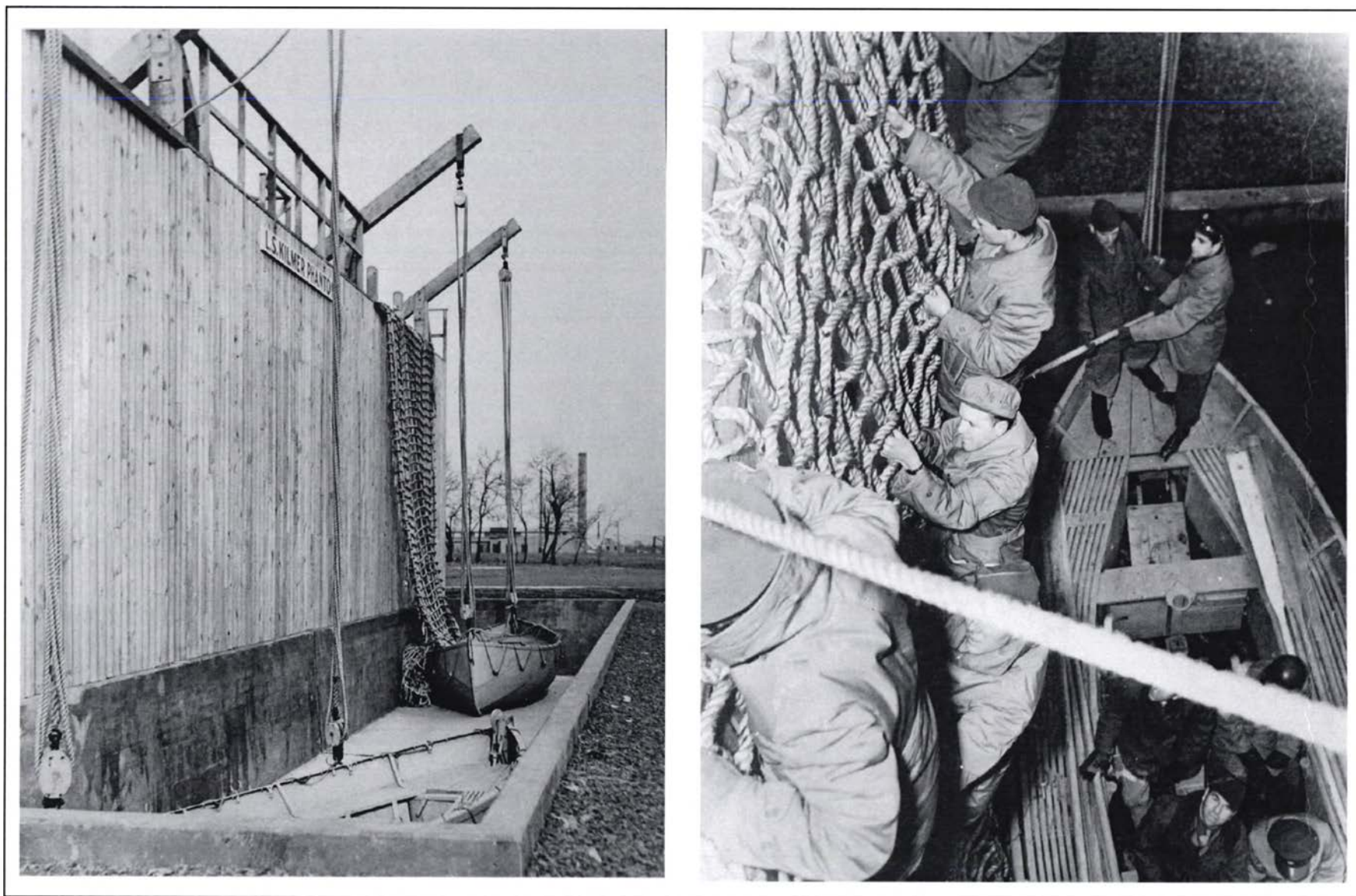


Figure 17: The “Landship (L.S.) Kilmer Phantom” was constructed in the camp to practice abandon ship exercises (from Camp Kilmer 1944a).



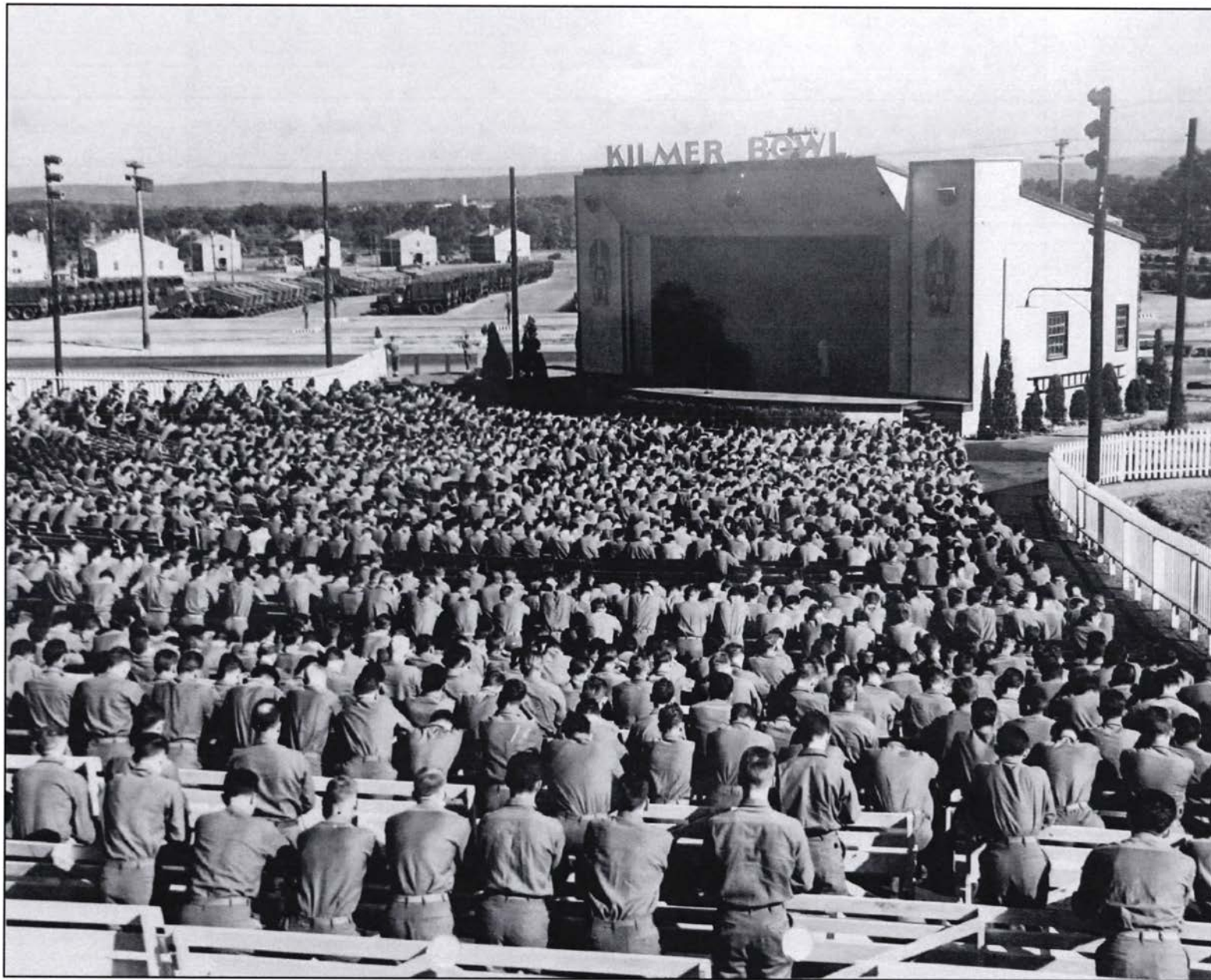


Figure 18: Kilmer Bowl, 1944 (from Camp Kilmer 1944c).



Figure 19: The Circus, 1944 (from Camp Kilmer 1944c). The camp had four beer halls, each with its own unique theme.





Figure 20: Hungarian refugee family in Receiving Area, 1956 (from Collection of American Hungarian Foundation).

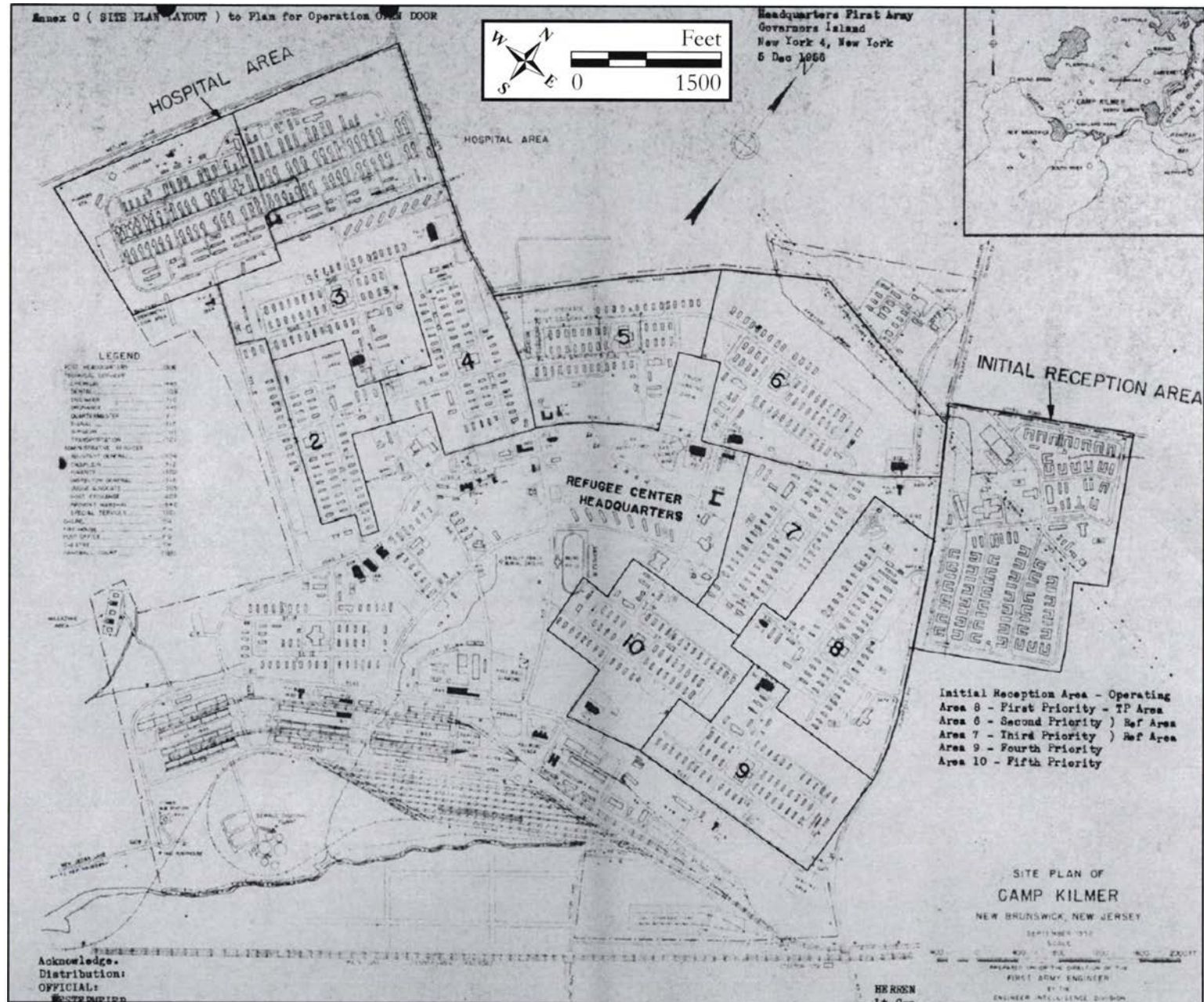


Figure 21: 1956 Site Plan of Camp Kilmer (from President's Committee for Hungarian Refugee Relief 1957).





Figure 22: Hungarian refugees preparing to leave Camp Kilmer, 1957 (from Collection of American Hungarian Foundation).

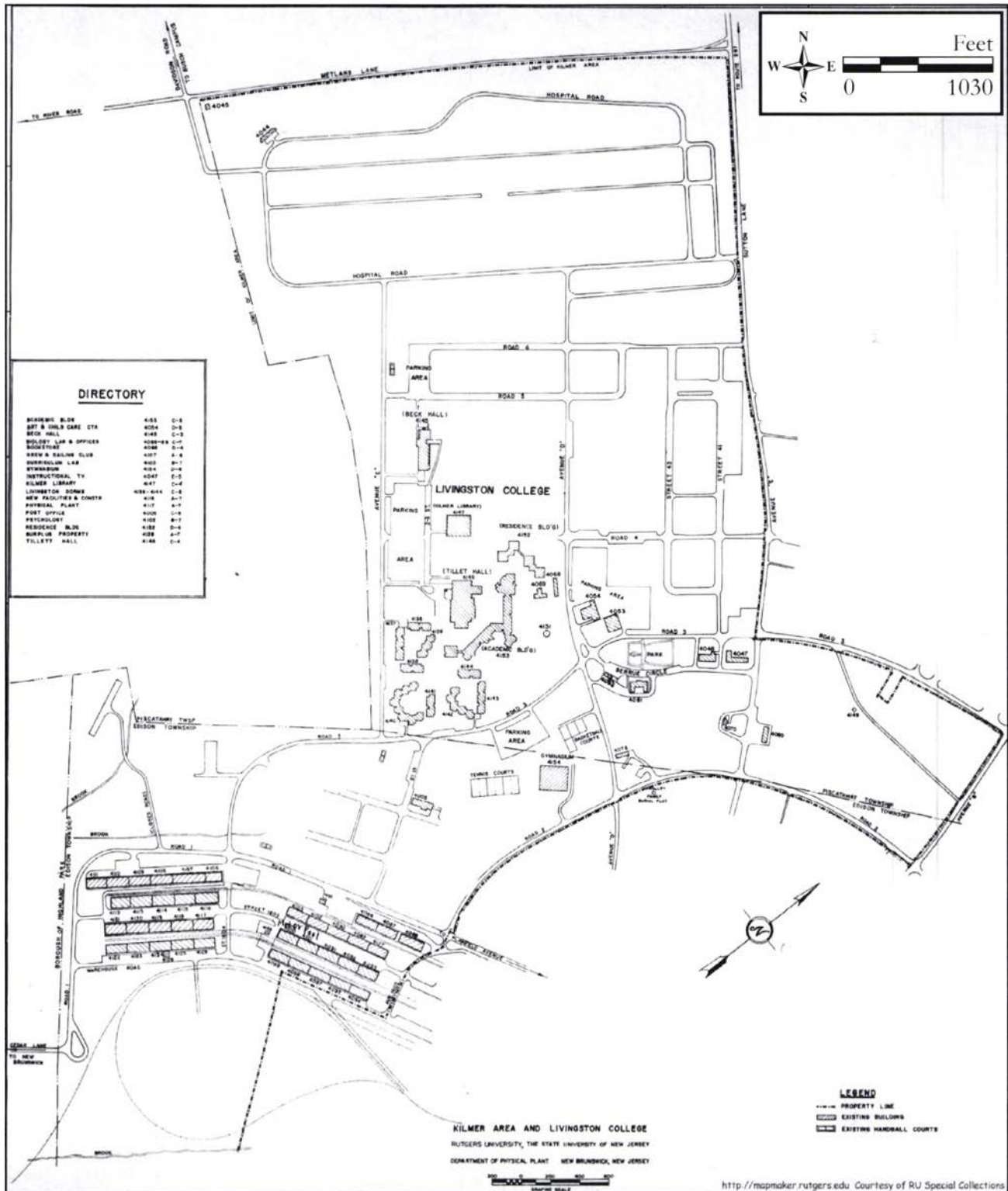


Figure 23: 1973 Rutgers University, Kilmer Area and Livingston College.



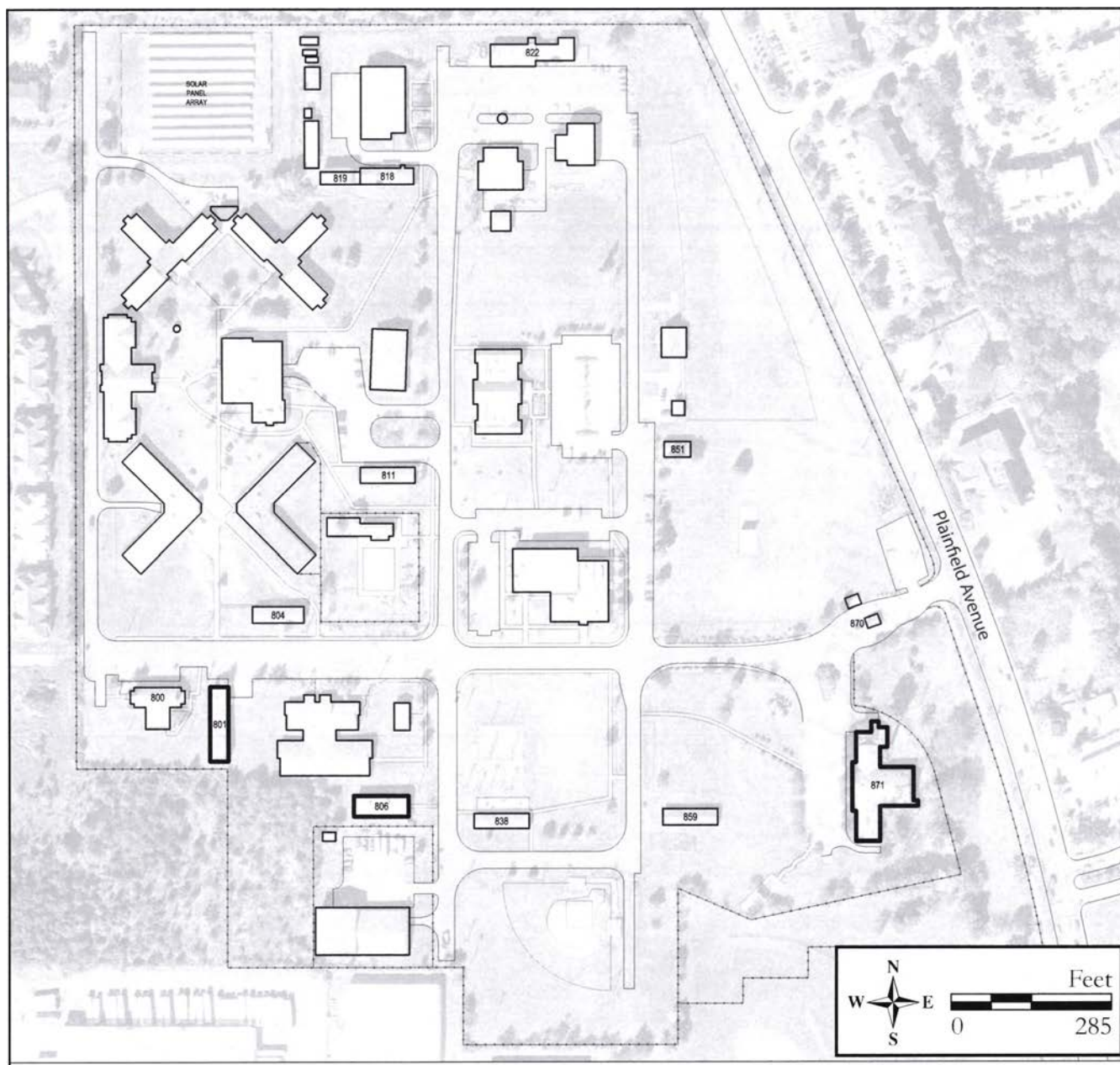


Figure 24: Edison Job Corps site plan, showing locations of World War II-era buildings.

**ATTACHMENT B: STANDARDIZED PLANS AND DRAWINGS****U.S. Army Office of the Quartermaster**

As-built plans for the subject buildings were not located during the course of research. The standardized plans included herein are reproduced from the 1988 context study for the World War II Army mobilization program (Kriv 1988) and HABS documentation prepared for buildings at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin (HABS 1993).

**Inventory of Plans:**

Bachelor Officers' Quarters, Plan 800-317

Bachelor Officers' Quarters, Plan 800-318

Recreation Building, Plan 700-310

Recreation Building, Plan 700-310.1

Recreation Building, Plan 700-310L

Recreation Building, Plan 700-310.II

Service Club, Plan 800-517

Service Club, Plan 800-518

Service Club, Plan 800-519

Service Club, Plan 800-520

Service Club, Plan 800-521

Service Club, Plan 800-522

Service Club, Plan 800-523

Service Club, Plan 800-524

Service Club, Plan 800-525

Service Club, Plan 800-526

Service Club, Plan 800-527

Service Club, Plan 800-527.1

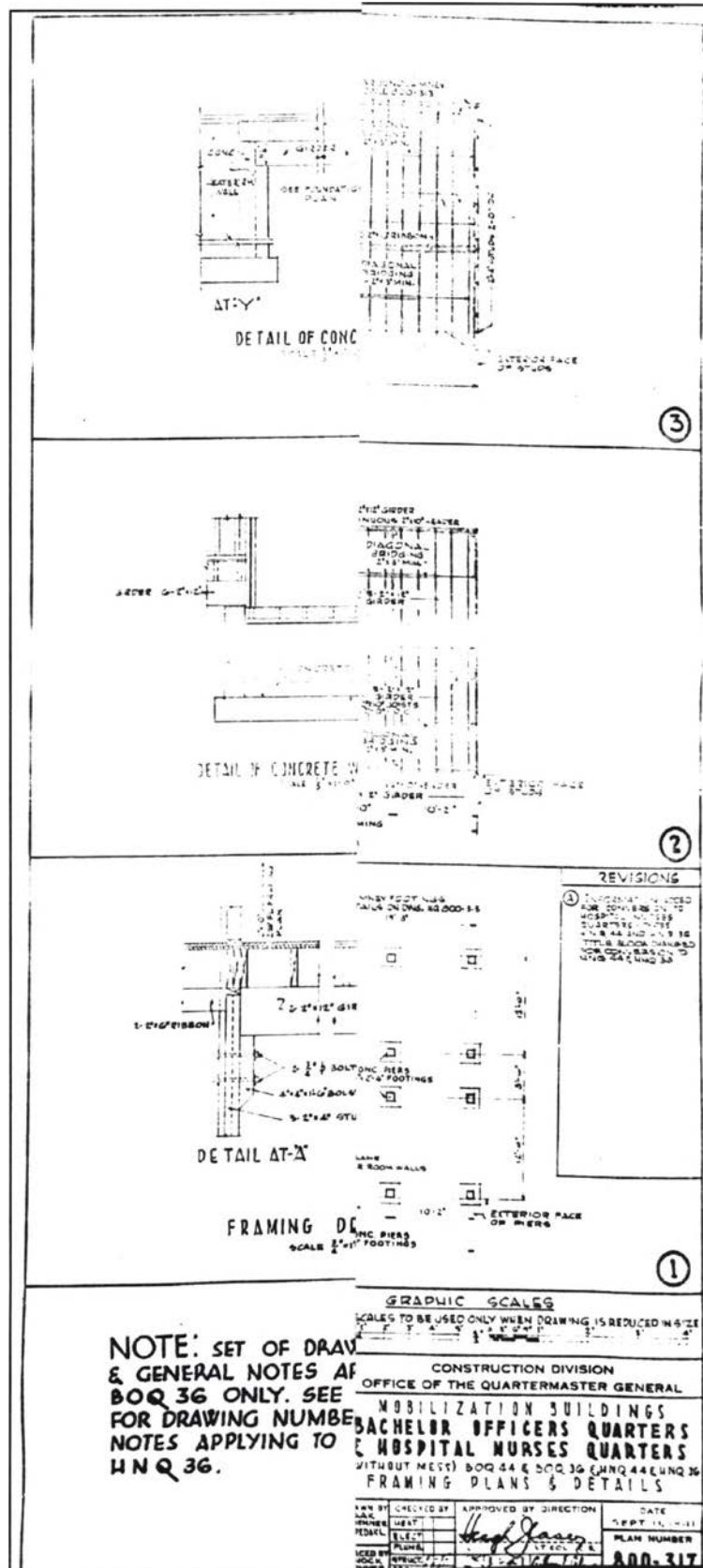
Service Club, Plan 800-528

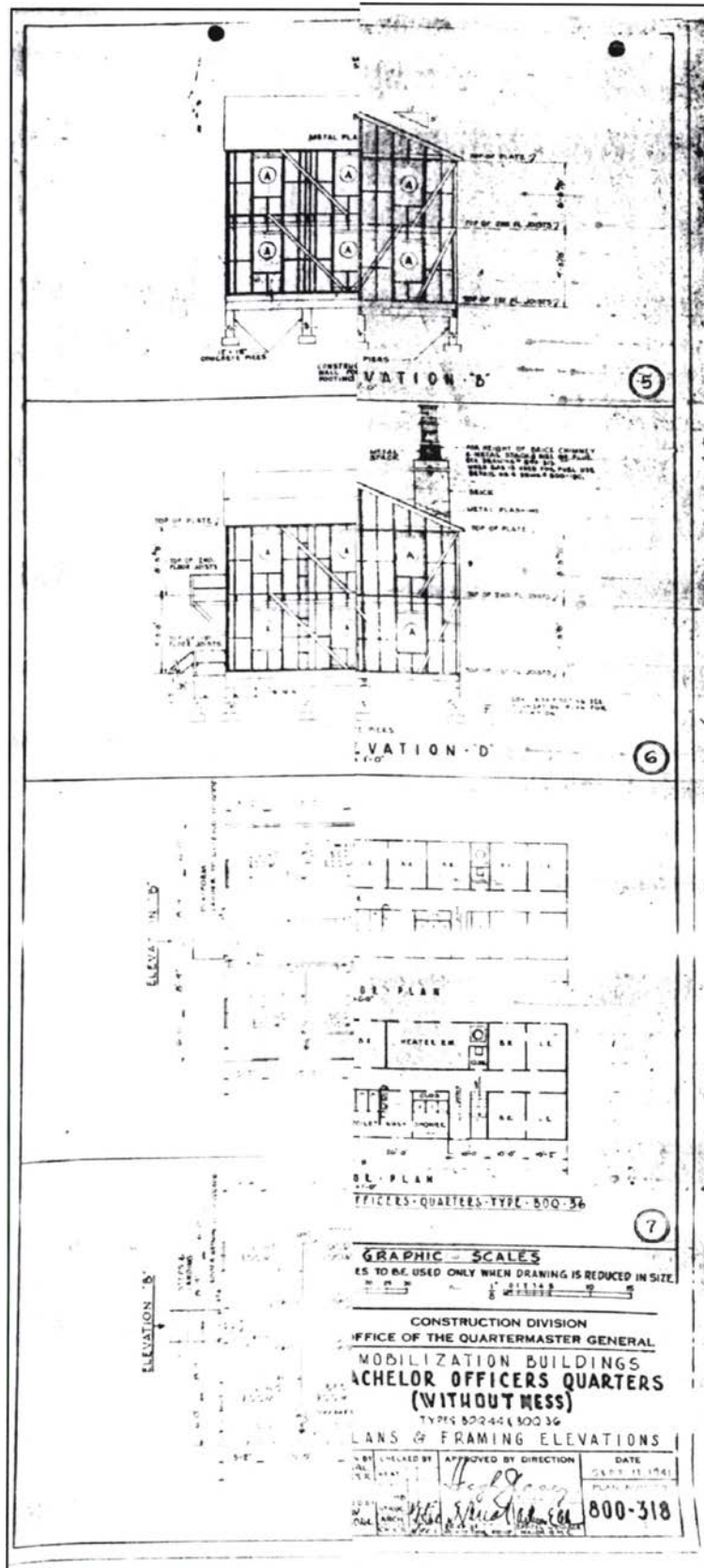
Service Club, Plan 800-528.1

Service Club, Plan 800-529

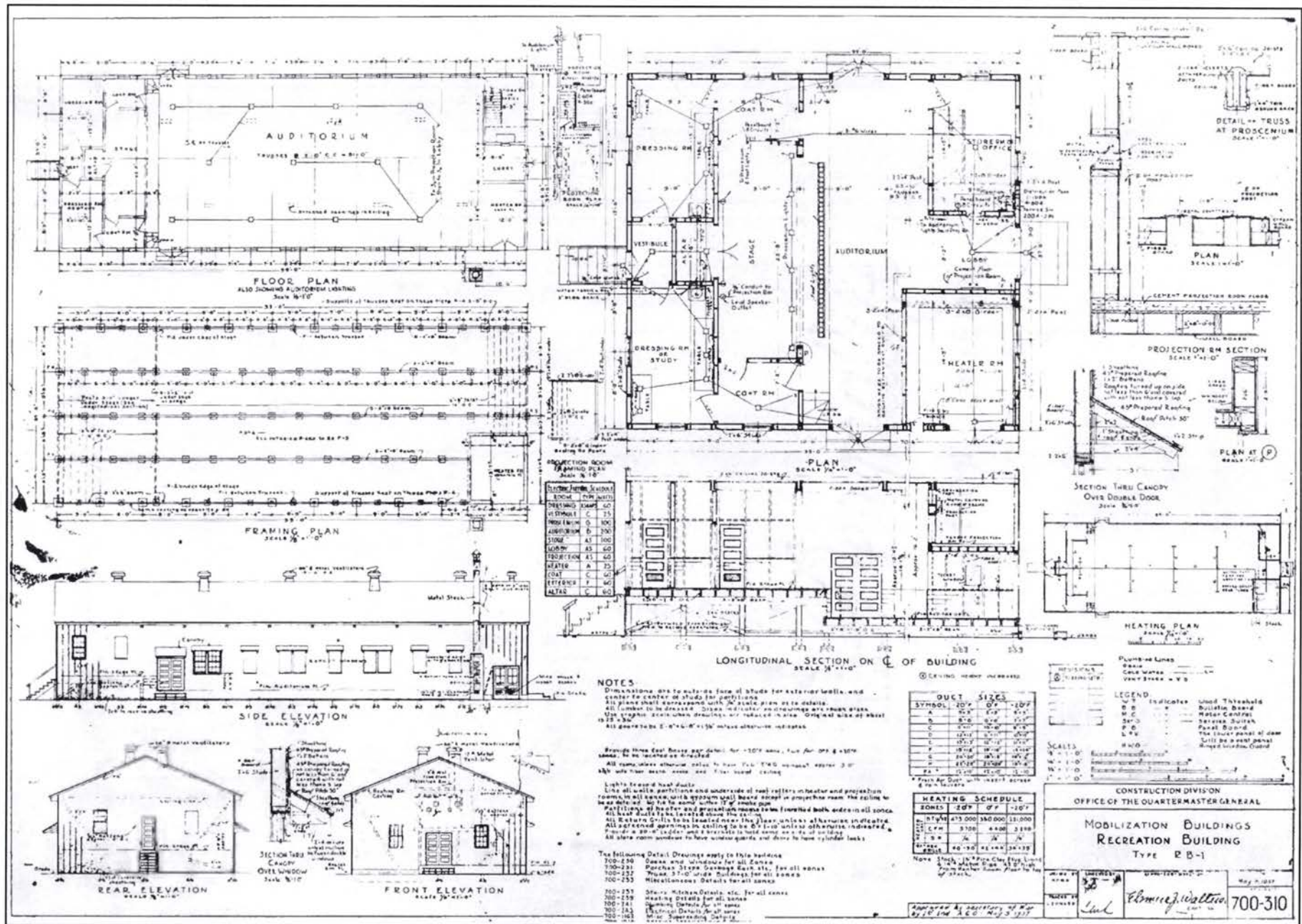
Service Club, Plan 800-529.1

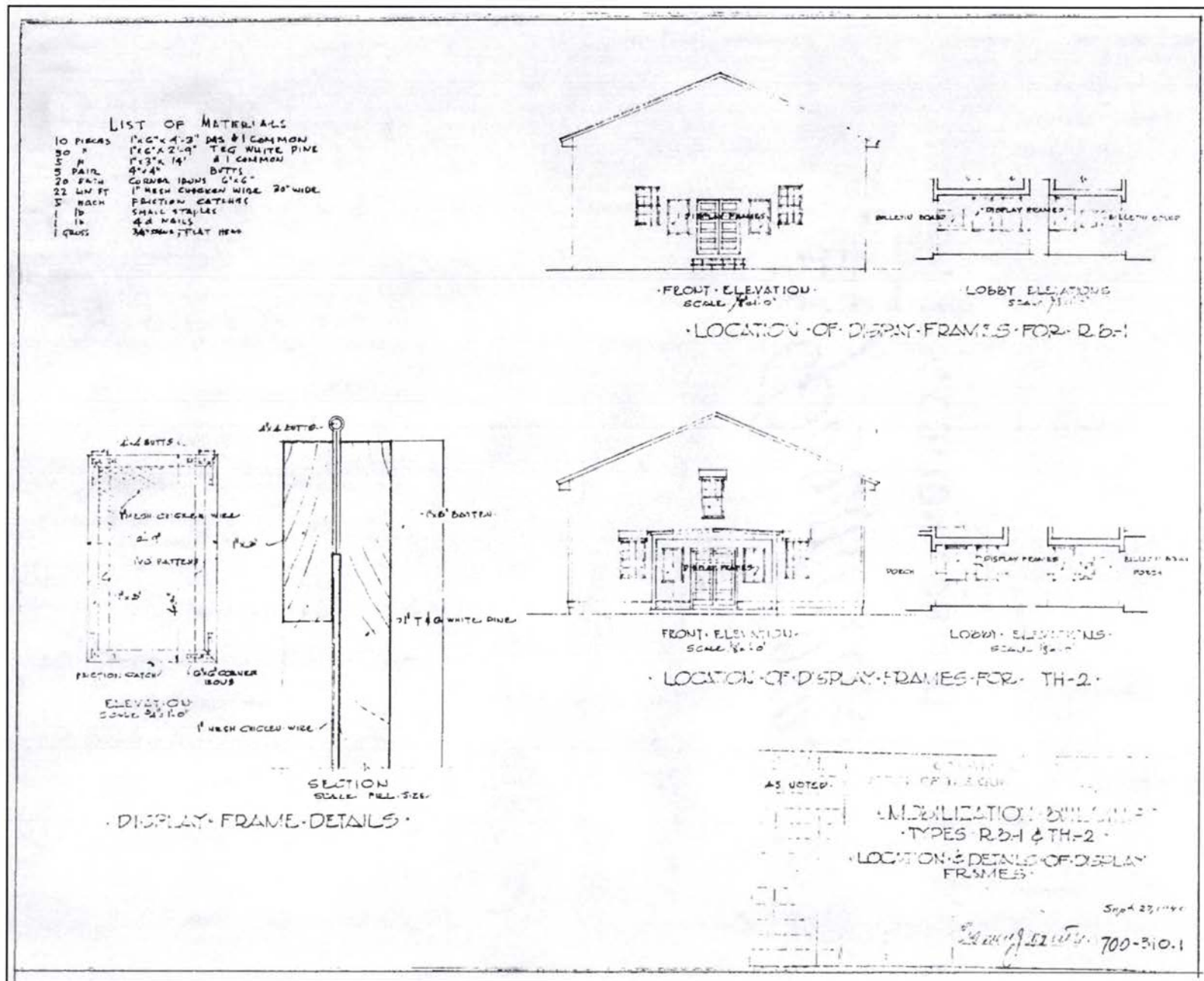




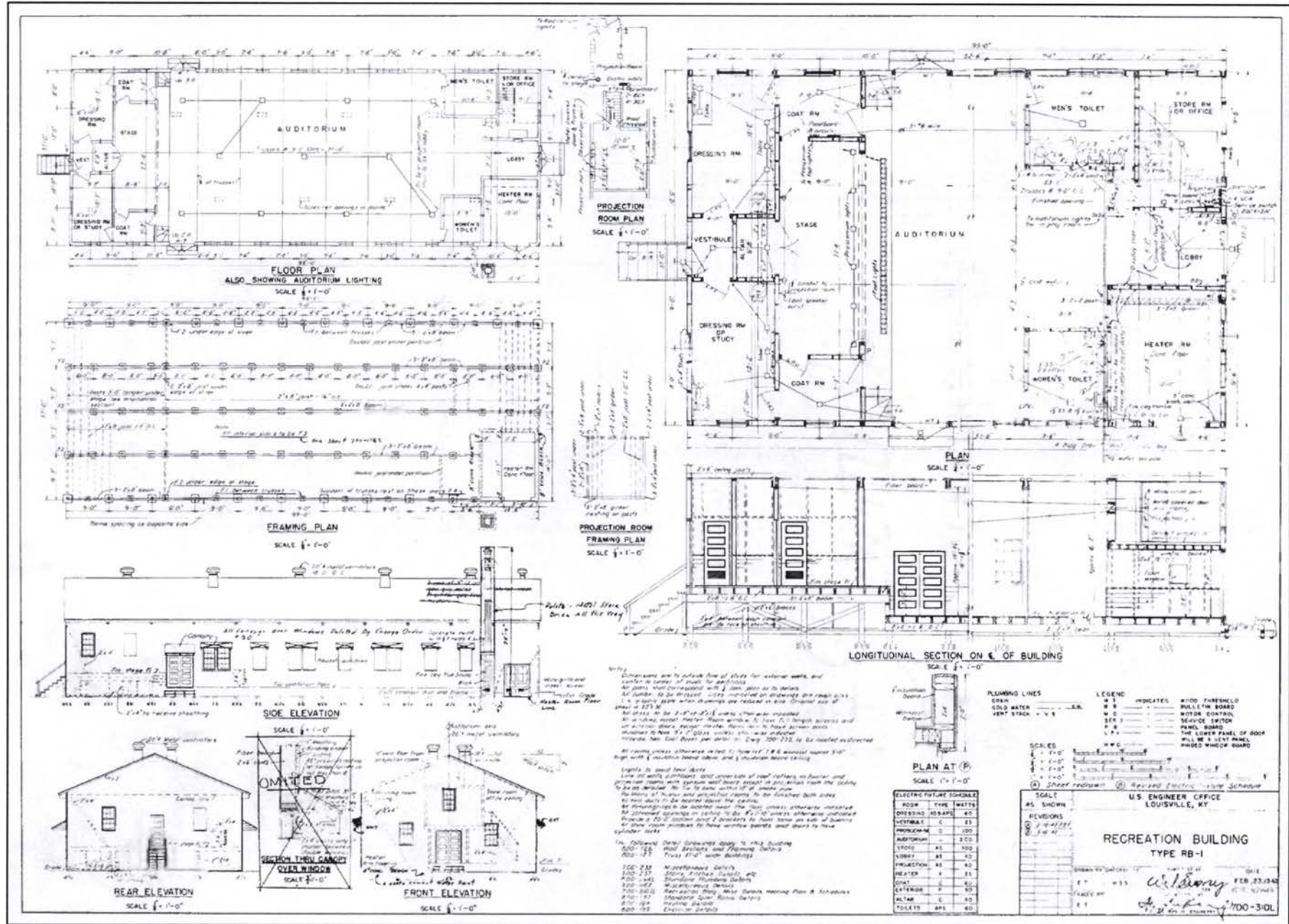


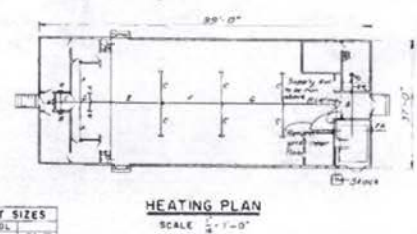
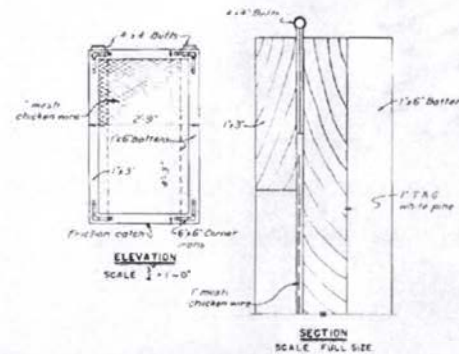
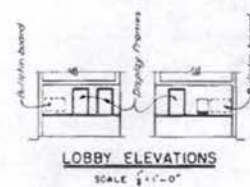
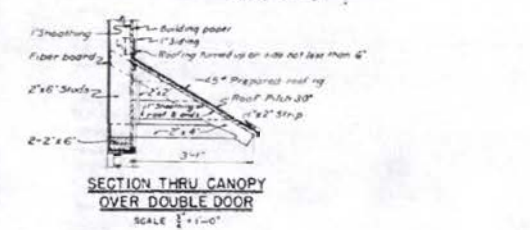
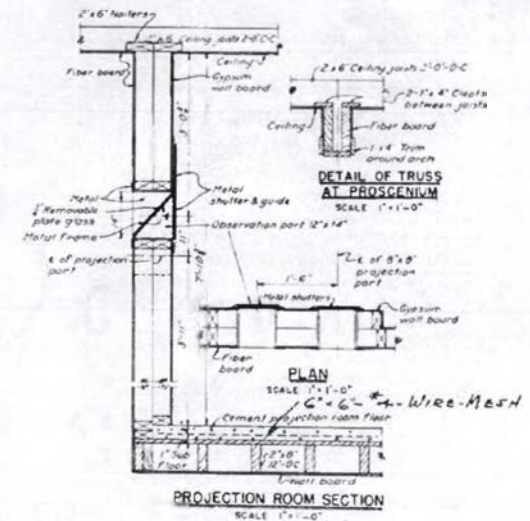












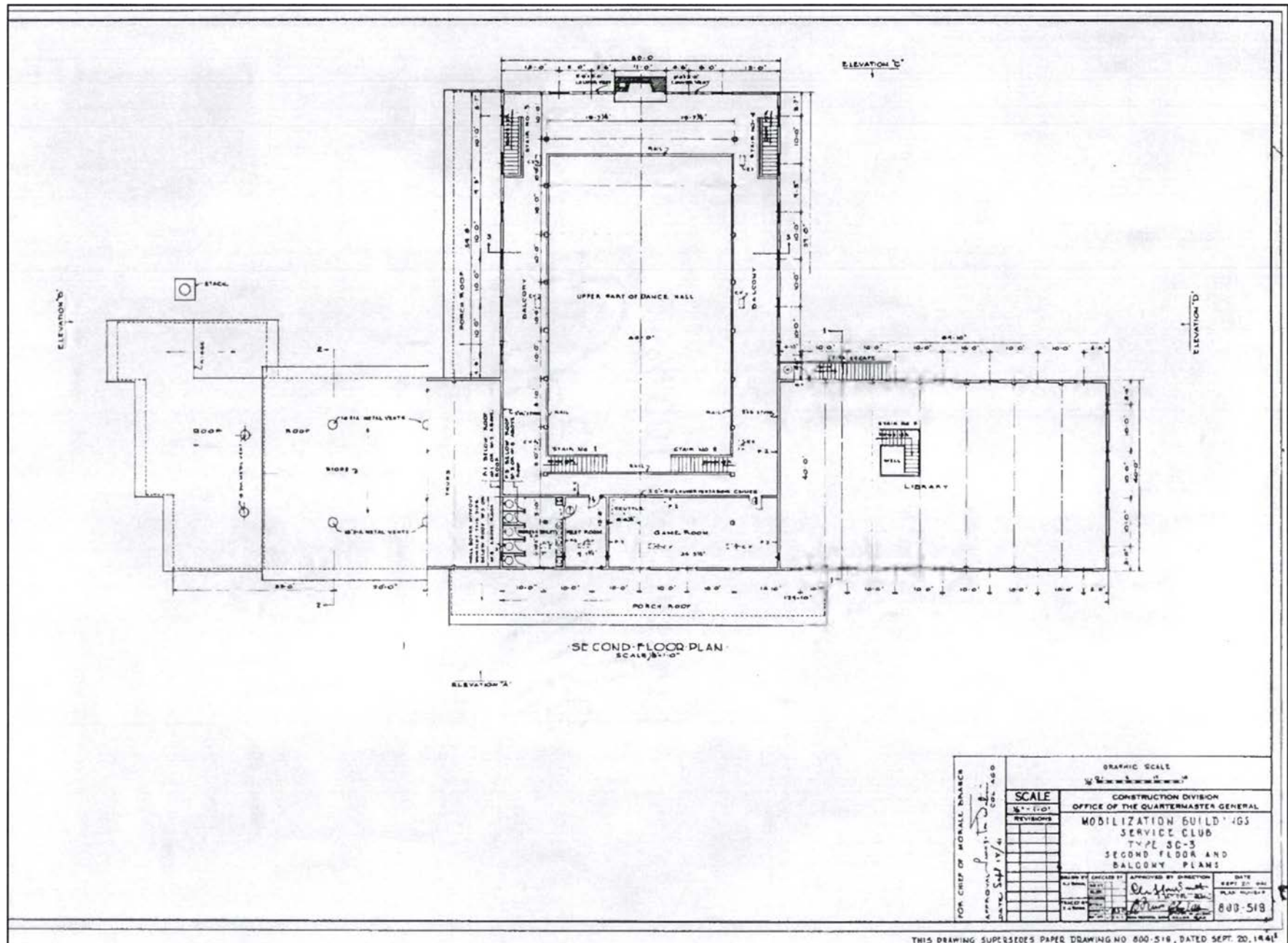
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B	8" x 8"
C	10" x 10"
D	11" x 11"
E	12" x 12"
F	16" x 16"
G	18" x 18"
H	20" x 20"
LA*	12" x 12"

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	CFM	4,400
	SP	1/2"
Return Grille 2'-0" x 3'-0"		

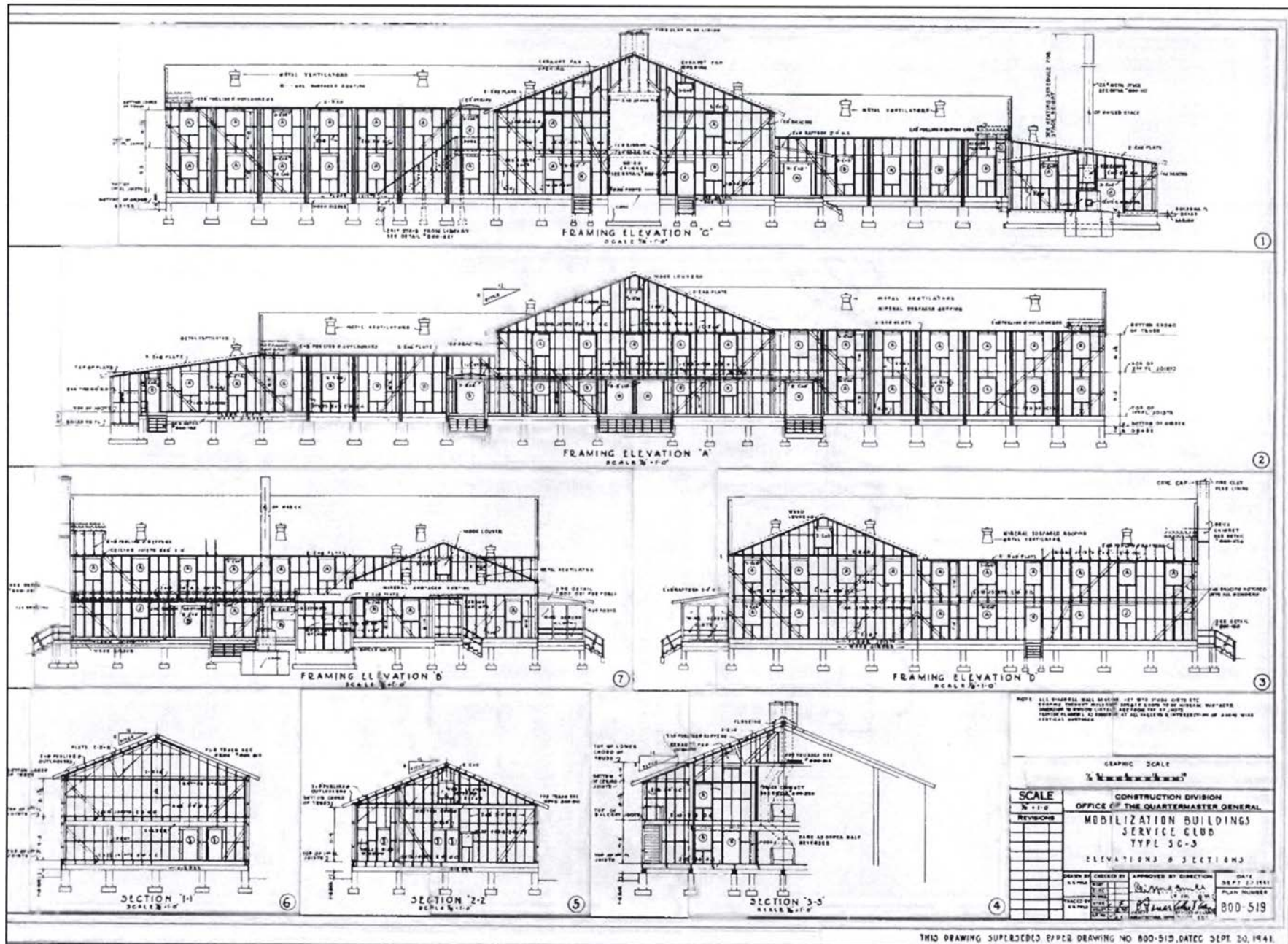
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AS SHOWN	LOUISVILLE, KY.		
REVISIONS			
1. 12-14-67			
2. 1-1-68			
RECREATION BUILDING			
TYPE RB-1			
MISCELLANEOUS DETAILS			
Drawn by	Checked by	Date	
W.H.H.	W.H.H.	FEB 23, 1942	
Traced by	W.H.H.	PLAN NUMBER	
W.H.H.	W.H.H.	700-30.15	





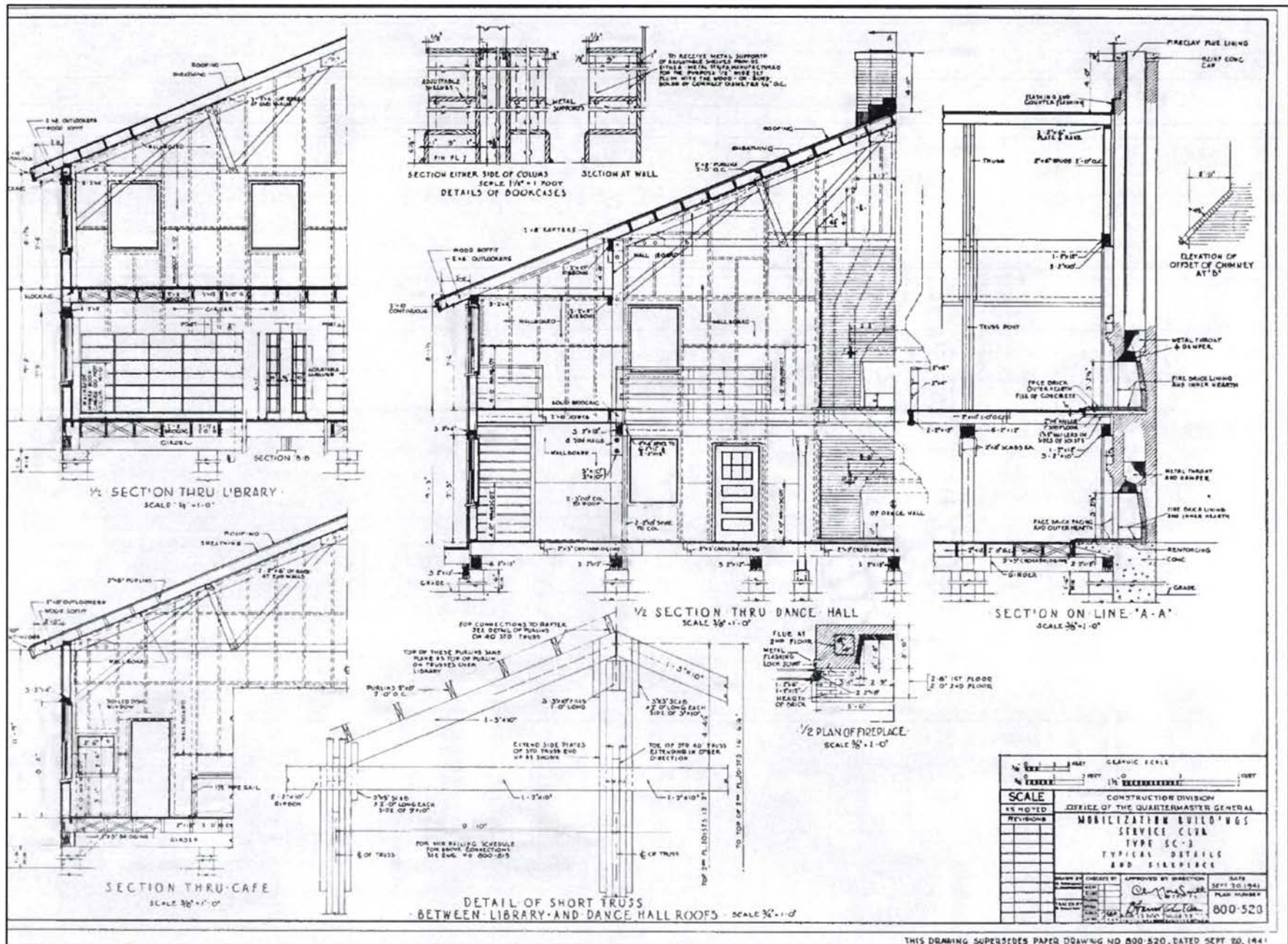




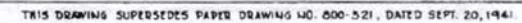


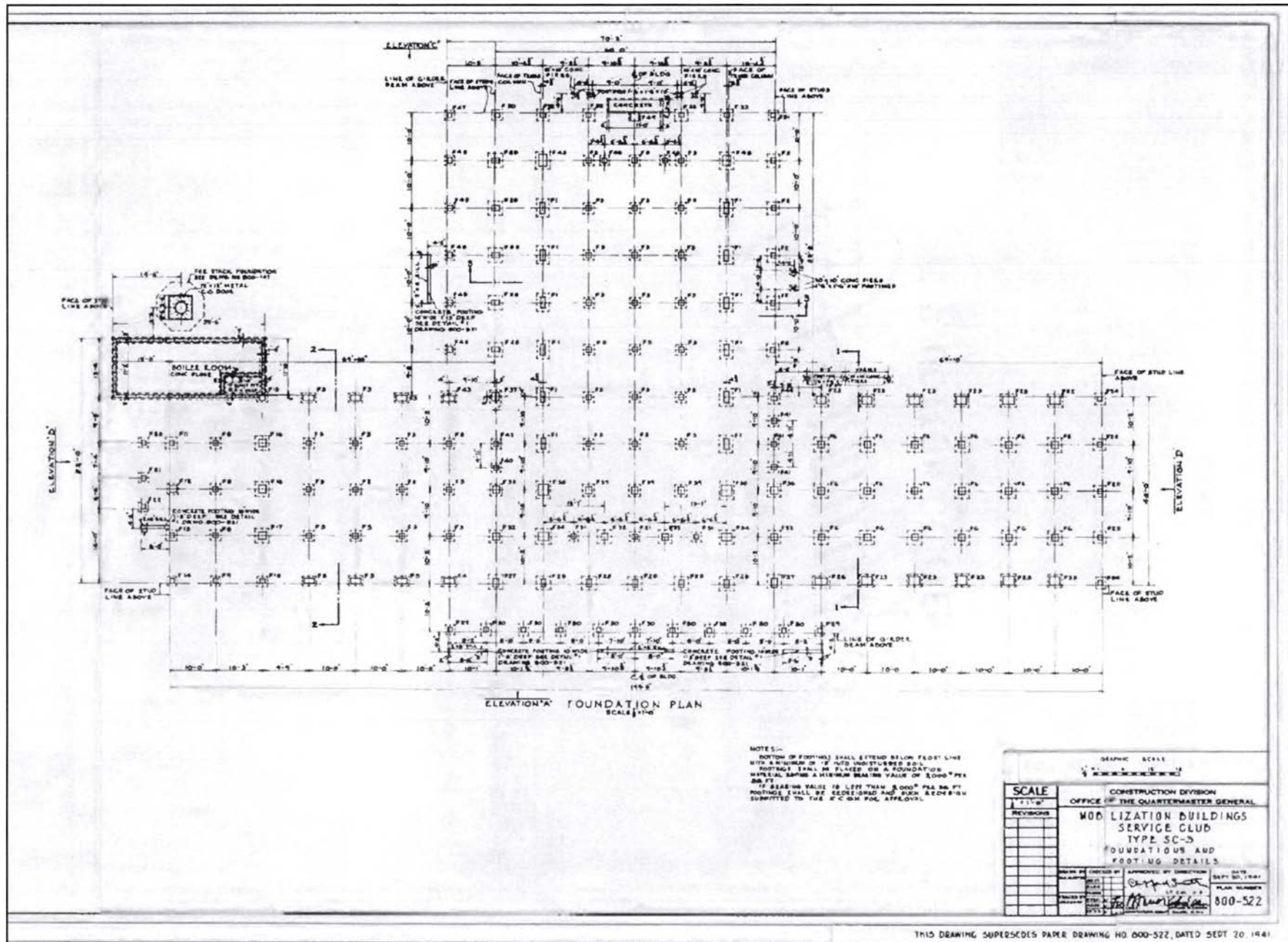
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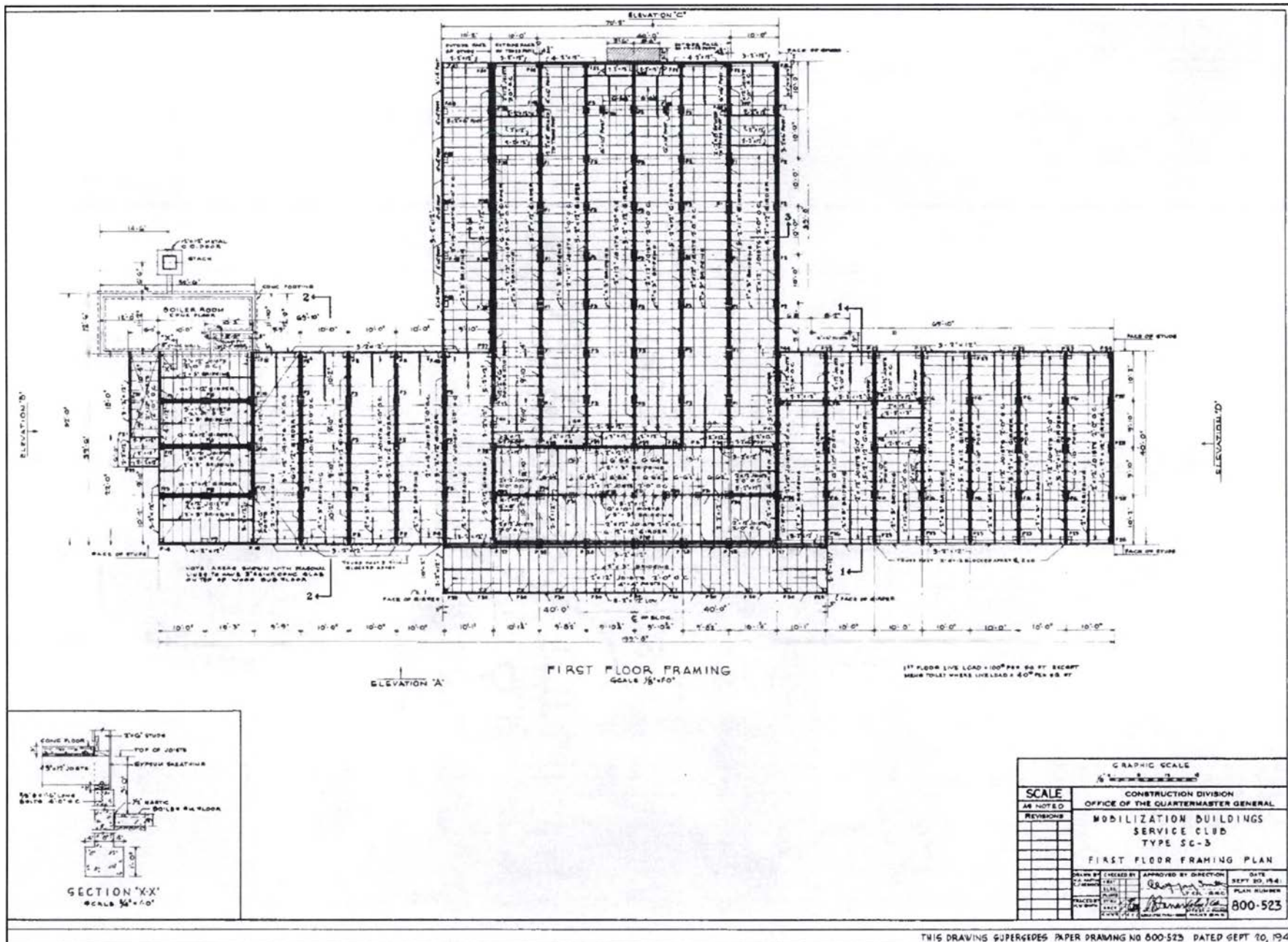


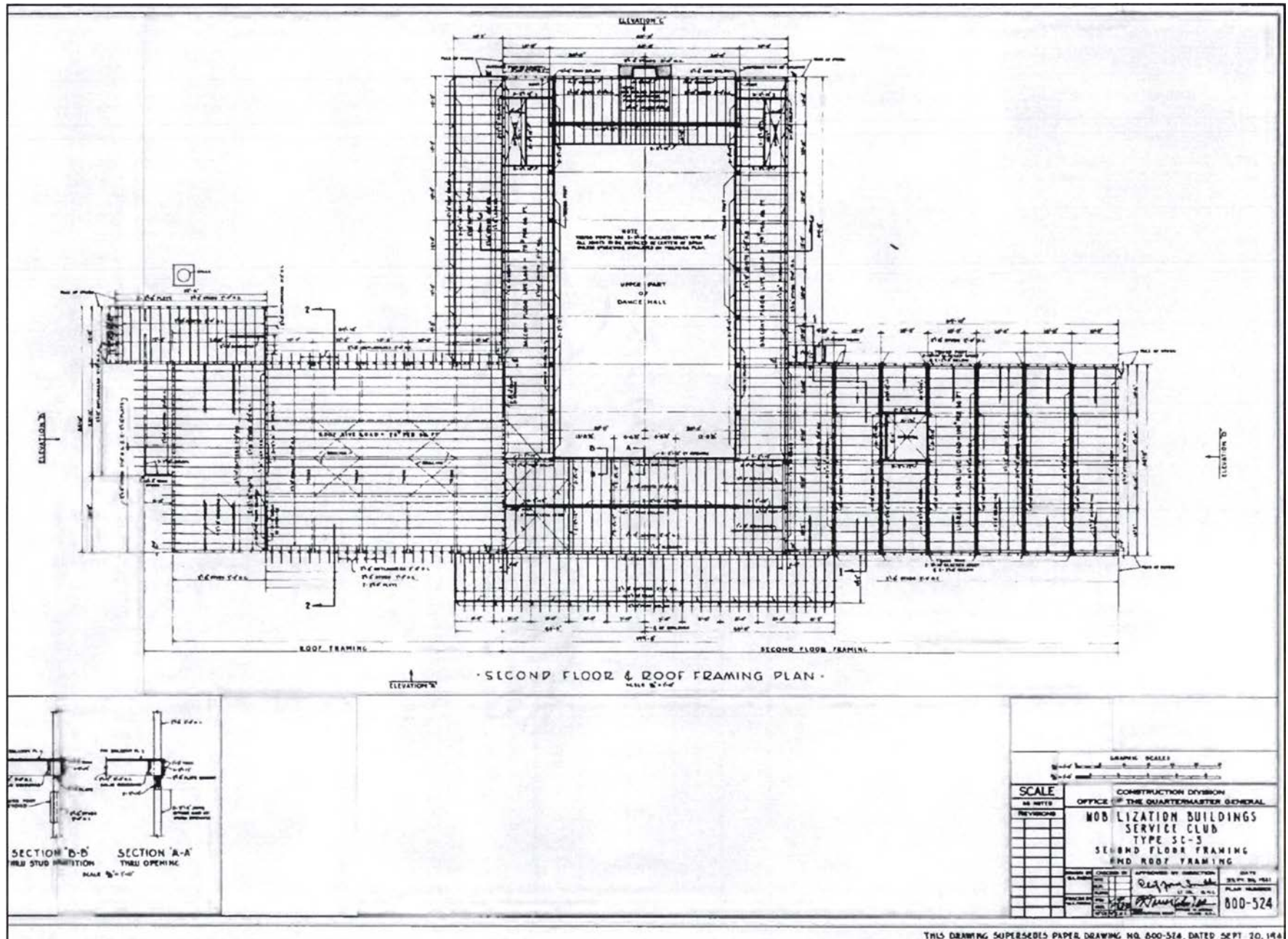




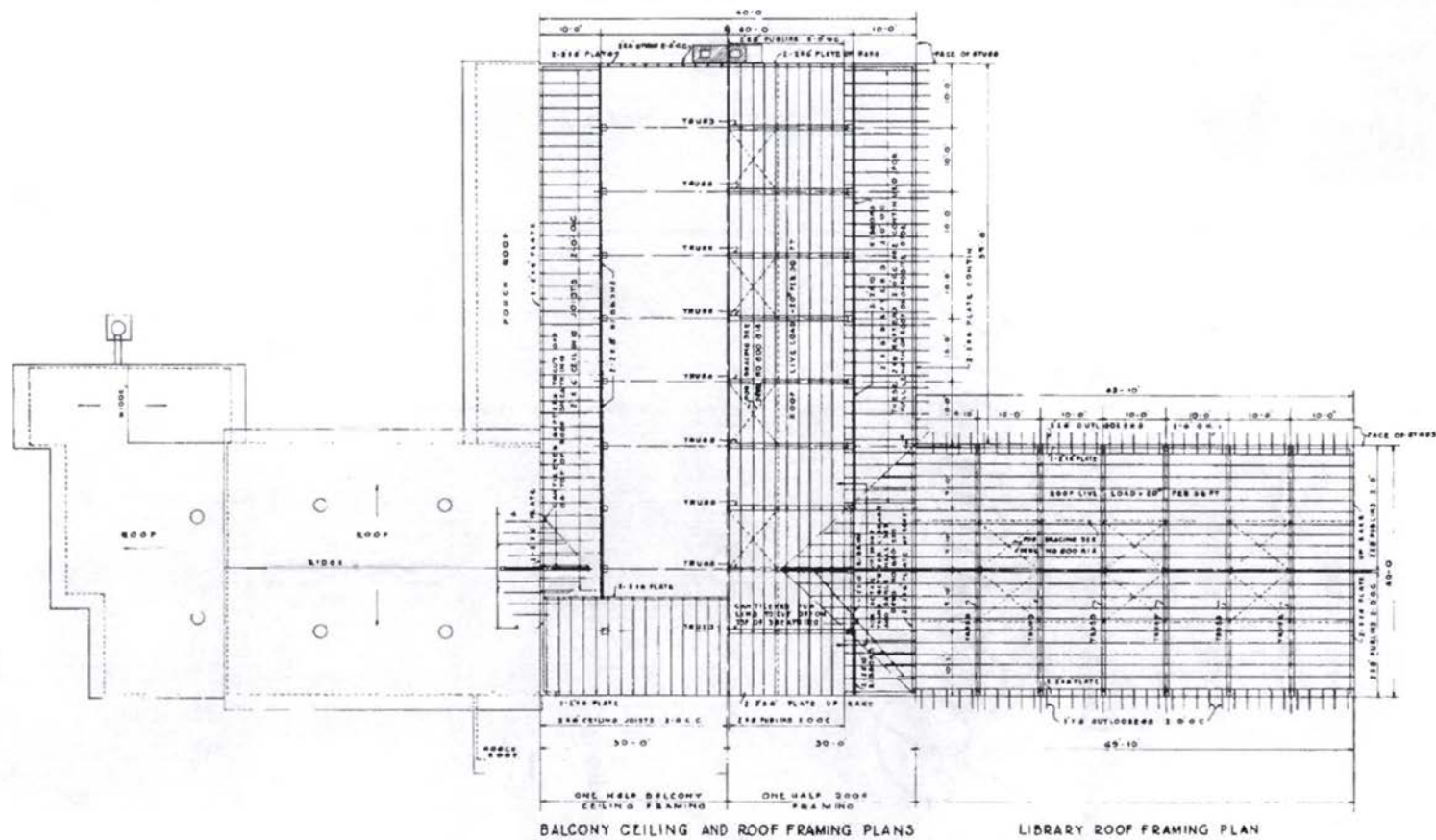


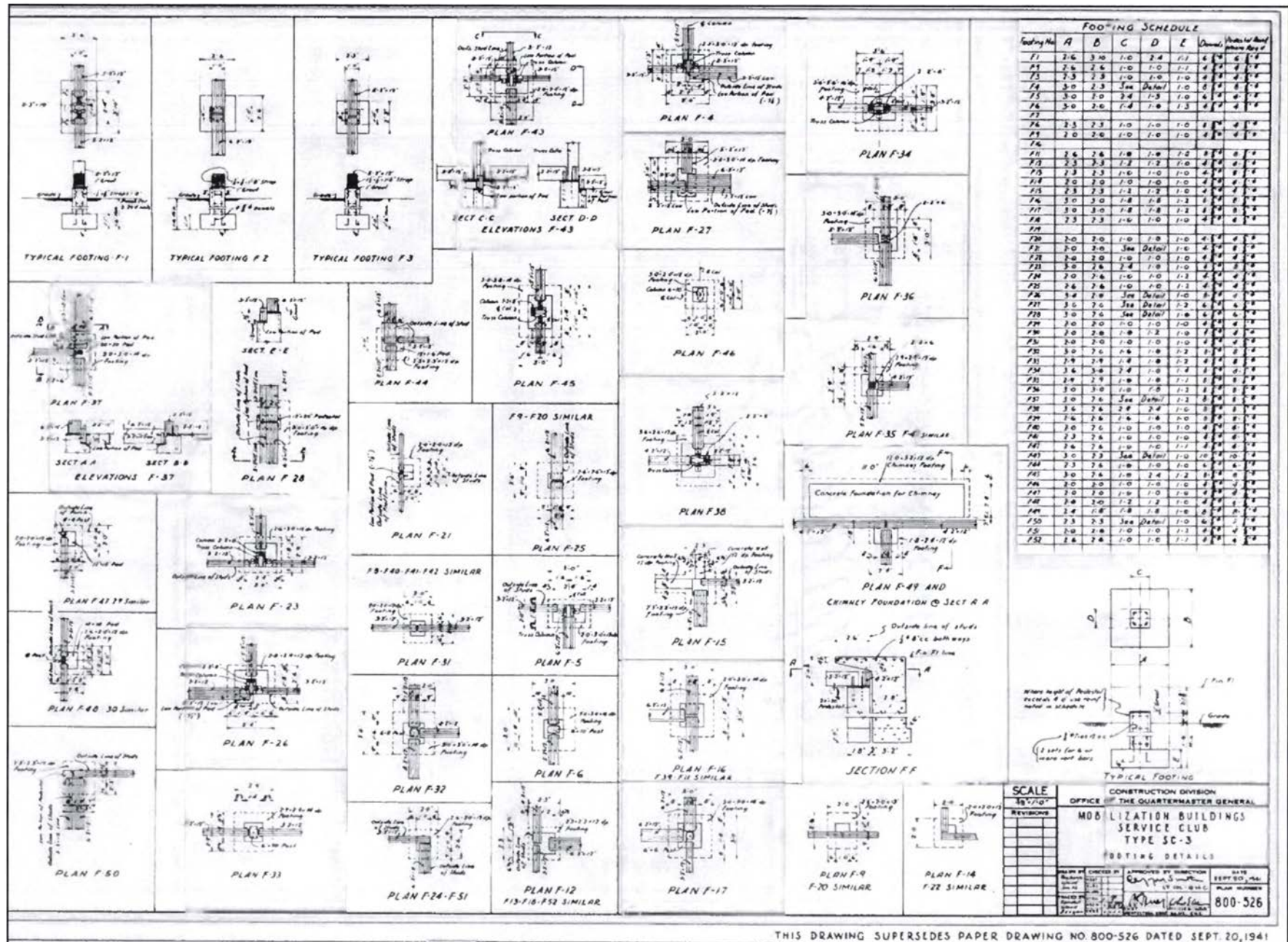






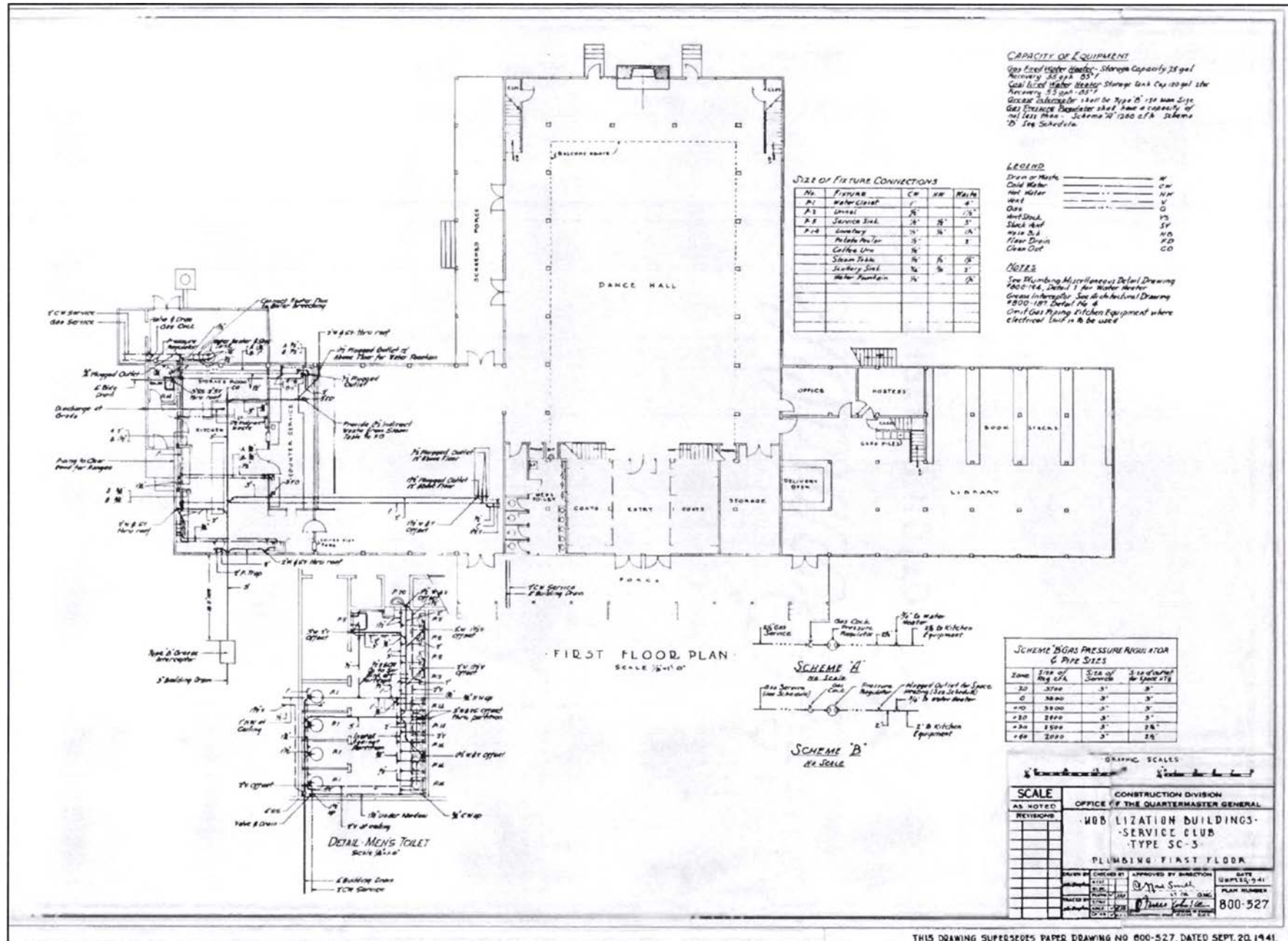


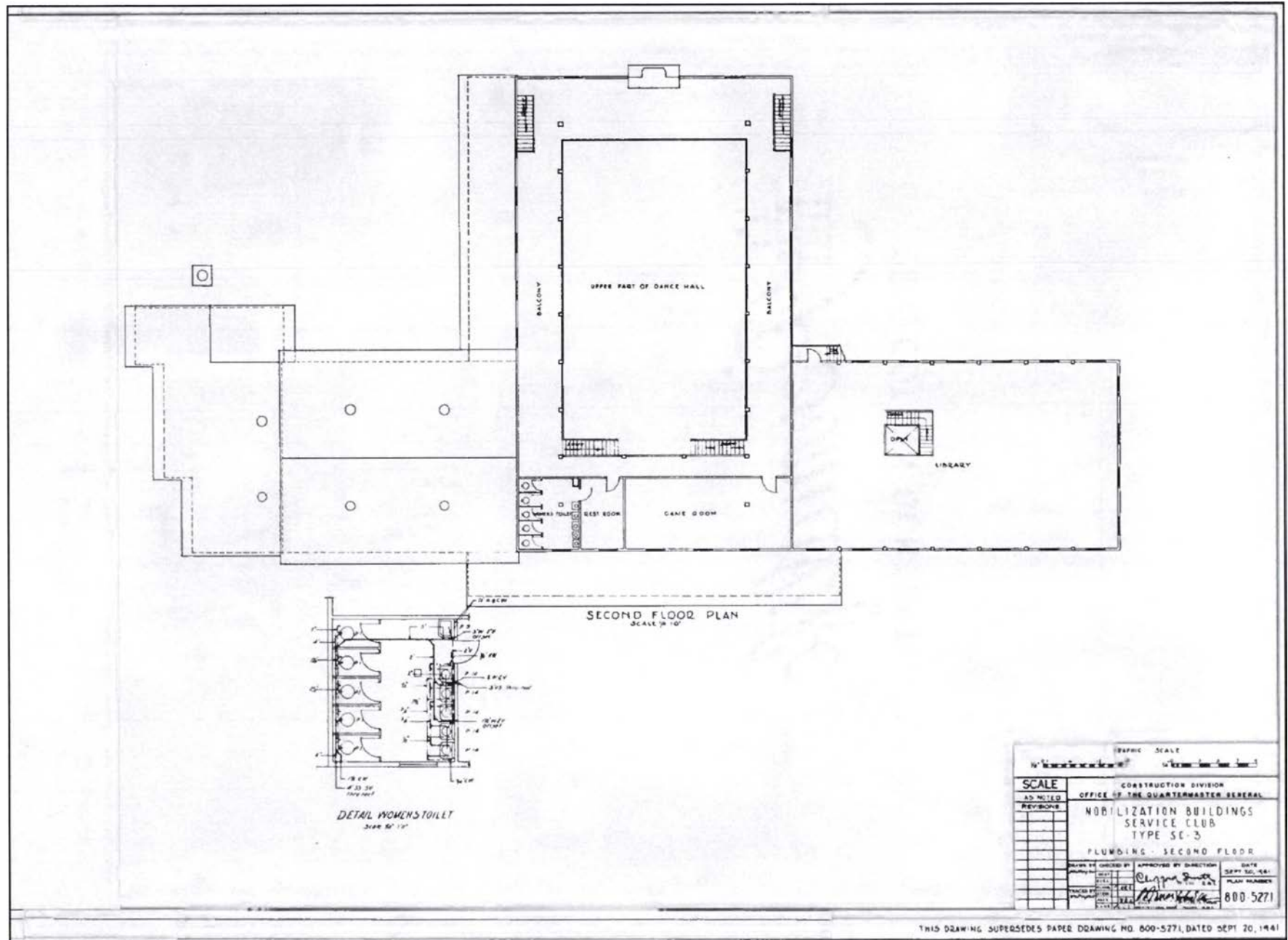
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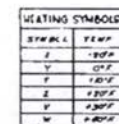
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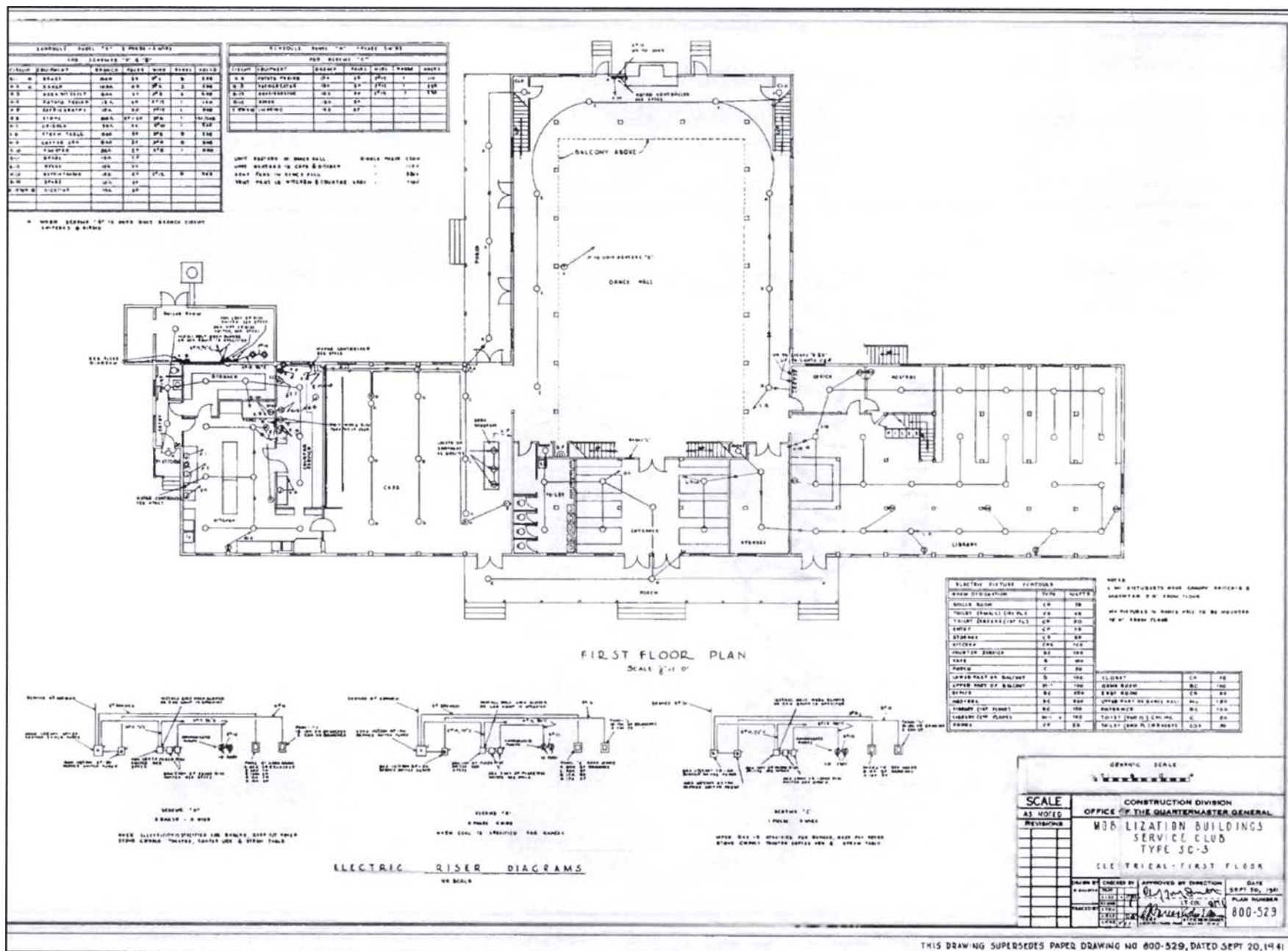


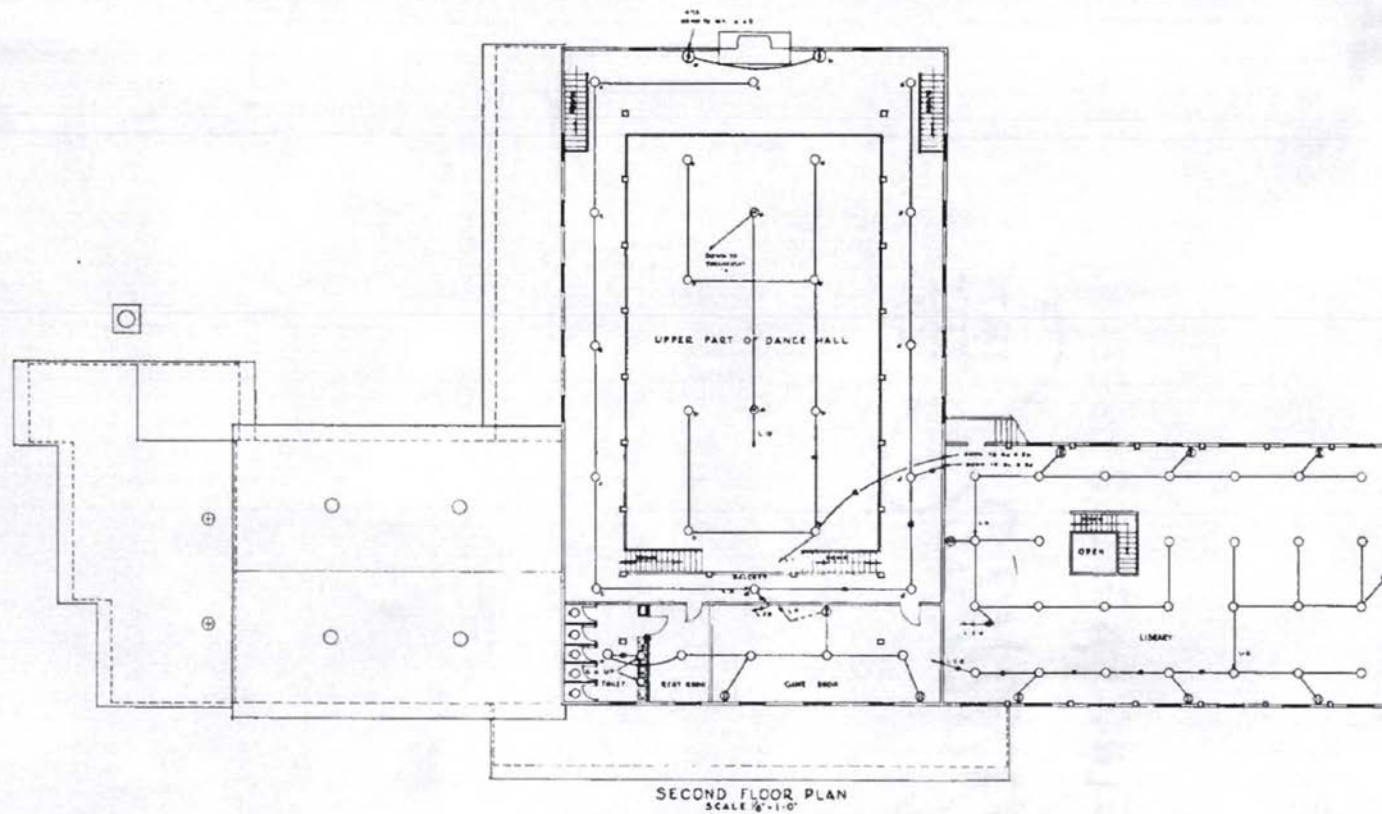
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B B	2"	3"	2 1/2"	2 1/2"	2 1/2"	2"
C C	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	2"	2"
W F	3"	3"	2"	2"	2 1/2"	2 1/2"
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J J	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"
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A A	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"
B B	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"	1 1/2"

SCALE		GRAPHIC SCALE	
AS NOTED		CONSTRUCTION DIVISION	
REVISIONS		OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL	
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SECTION OF	CHANGES BY	APPROVED BY	DATE
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91	91	<i>W. J. G. R.</i>	SEPT 10, 1941
92	92	<i>W. J. G. R.</i>	SEPT 10, 1941
93	93	<i>W. J. G. R.</i>	SEPT 10, 1941
94	94	<i>W. J. G. R.</i>	SEPT 10, 1941
95	95	<i>W. J. G. R.</i>	SEPT 10, 1941
96	96	<i>W. J. G. R.</i>	SEPT 10, 1941
97	97	<i>W. J. G. R.</i>	SEPT 10, 1941
98	98	<i>W. J. G. R.</i>	SEPT 10, 1941
99	99	<i>W. J. G. R.</i>	SEPT 10, 1941
100	100	<i>W. J. G. R.</i>	SEPT 10, 1941









GRAPHIC SCALE		CONSTRUCTION DIVISION	
1" = 10'-0"		OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL	
REVISIONS		MOBILIZATION BUILDINGS	
		SERVICE CLUB	
		TYPE SC-3	
		ELECTRICAL - SECOND FLOOR	
DESIGNED BY	CHECKED BY	APPROVED BY	DATE
PLANNED BY	REVIEWED BY	DATE	PLANNED BY
800 5291			



## **ATTACHMENT C: SKETCH PLANS**

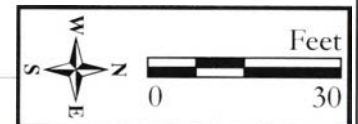
### **DCM Architecture & Engineering (2016)**

#### Inventory of Sketch Plans:

Floor plans, Building 801, Bachelor Officers' Quarters  
Elevations, Building 801, Bachelor Officers' Quarters  
Sections, Building 801, Bachelor Officers' Quarters

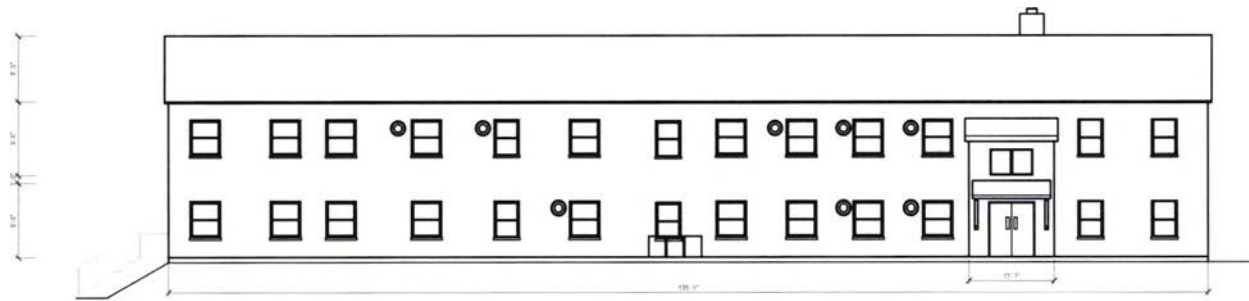
Floor plan, Building 806, Recreation Building  
Elevations and section, Building 806, Recreation Building

First floor plan, Building 871, Service Club  
Second floor plan, Building 871, Service Club  
Elevations, Building 871, Service Club  
Sections, Building 871, Service Club



Floor plans, Building 801, Bachelor Officers' Quarters.





1 801 - EAST ELEVATION

+28'-0"  
T.O. Ridge

20'-0"  
T.O. Second Floor Ceiling

+10'-0"  
T.O. Second Floor

+0'-0"  
T.O. First Floor Ceiling

+0'-0"  
Finished Floor

+0'-0"  
Minor Grade



2 801 - NORTH ELEVATION



3 801 - SOUTH ELEVATION

+28'-0"  
T.O. Ridge

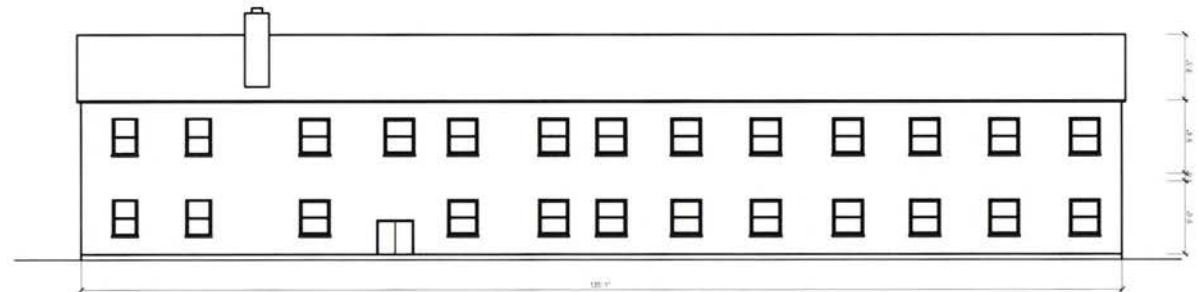
20'-0"  
T.O. Second Floor Ceiling

+10'-0"  
T.O. Second Floor

+0'-0"  
T.O. First Floor Ceiling

+0'-0"  
Finished Floor

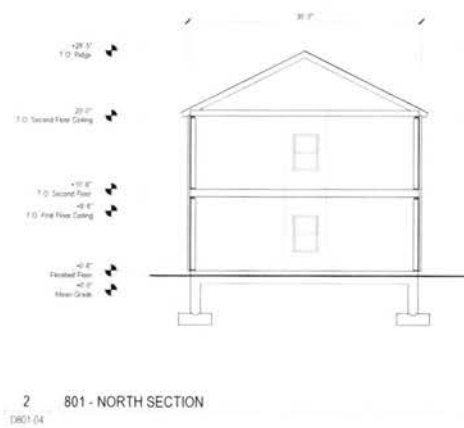
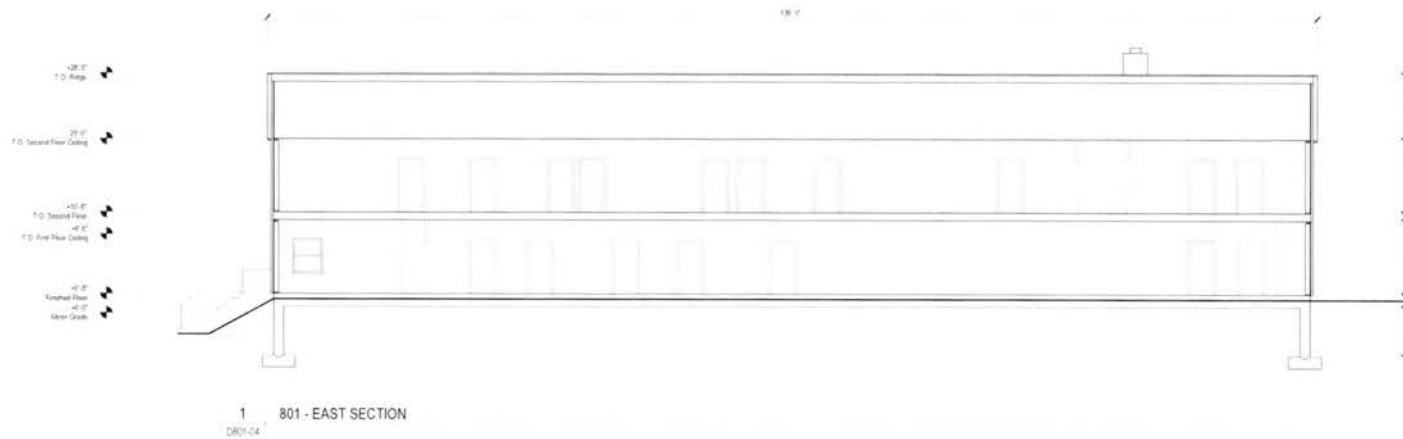
+0'-0"  
Minor Grade



4 801 - WEST ELEVATION

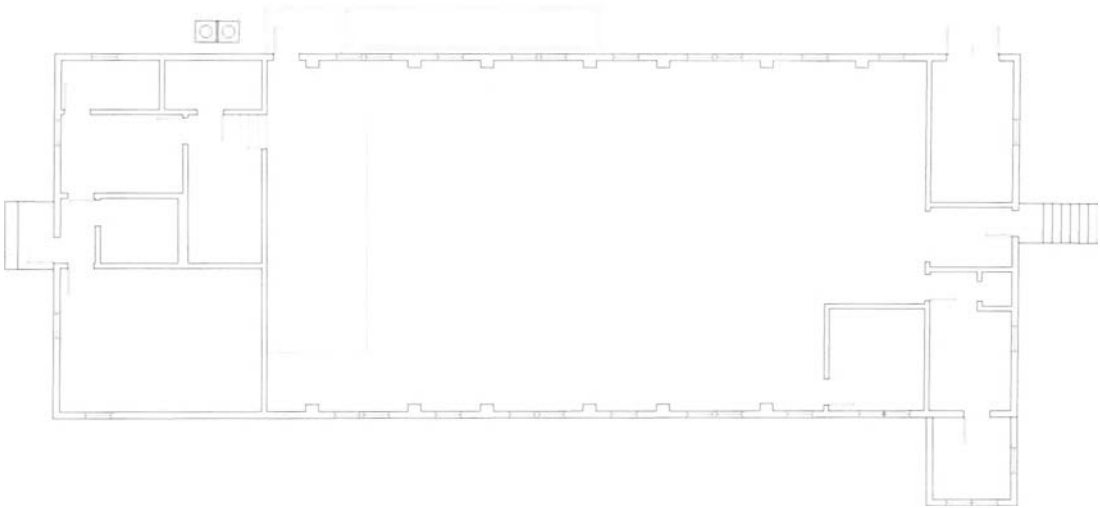


Elevations, Building 801, Bachelor Officers' Quarters.



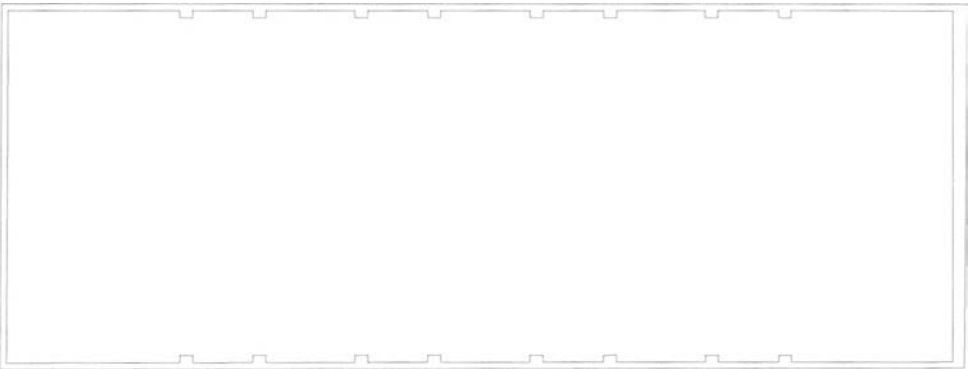
Sections, Building 801, Bachelor Officers' Quarters.





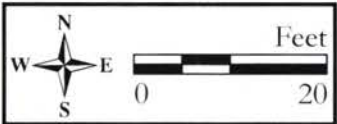
1 806 - DEMOLITION FLOOR PLAN  
D806-02

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



1 806 - DEMOLITION CRAWL SPACE  
D806-02

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

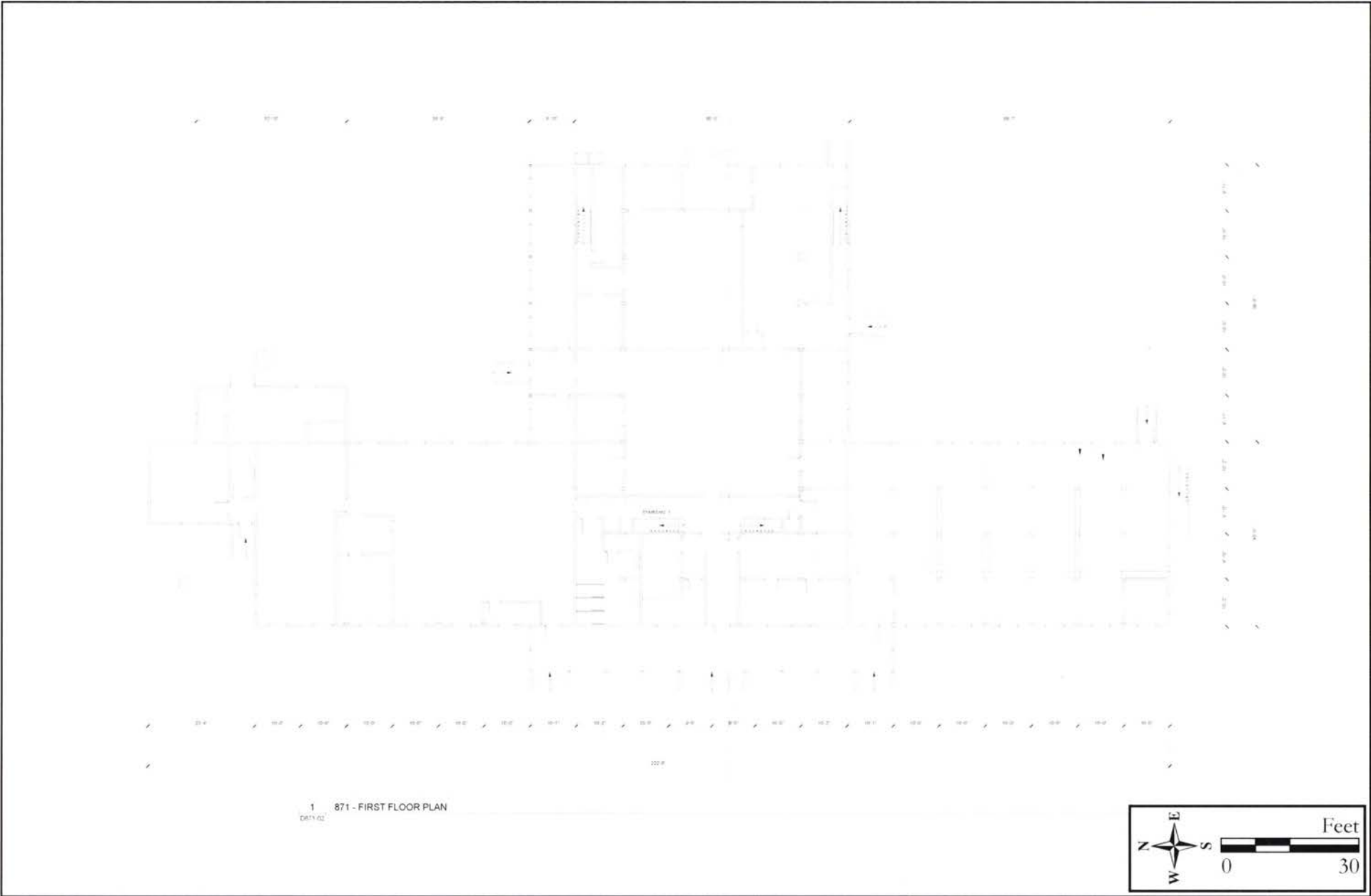


Floor plan, Building 806, Recreation Building.

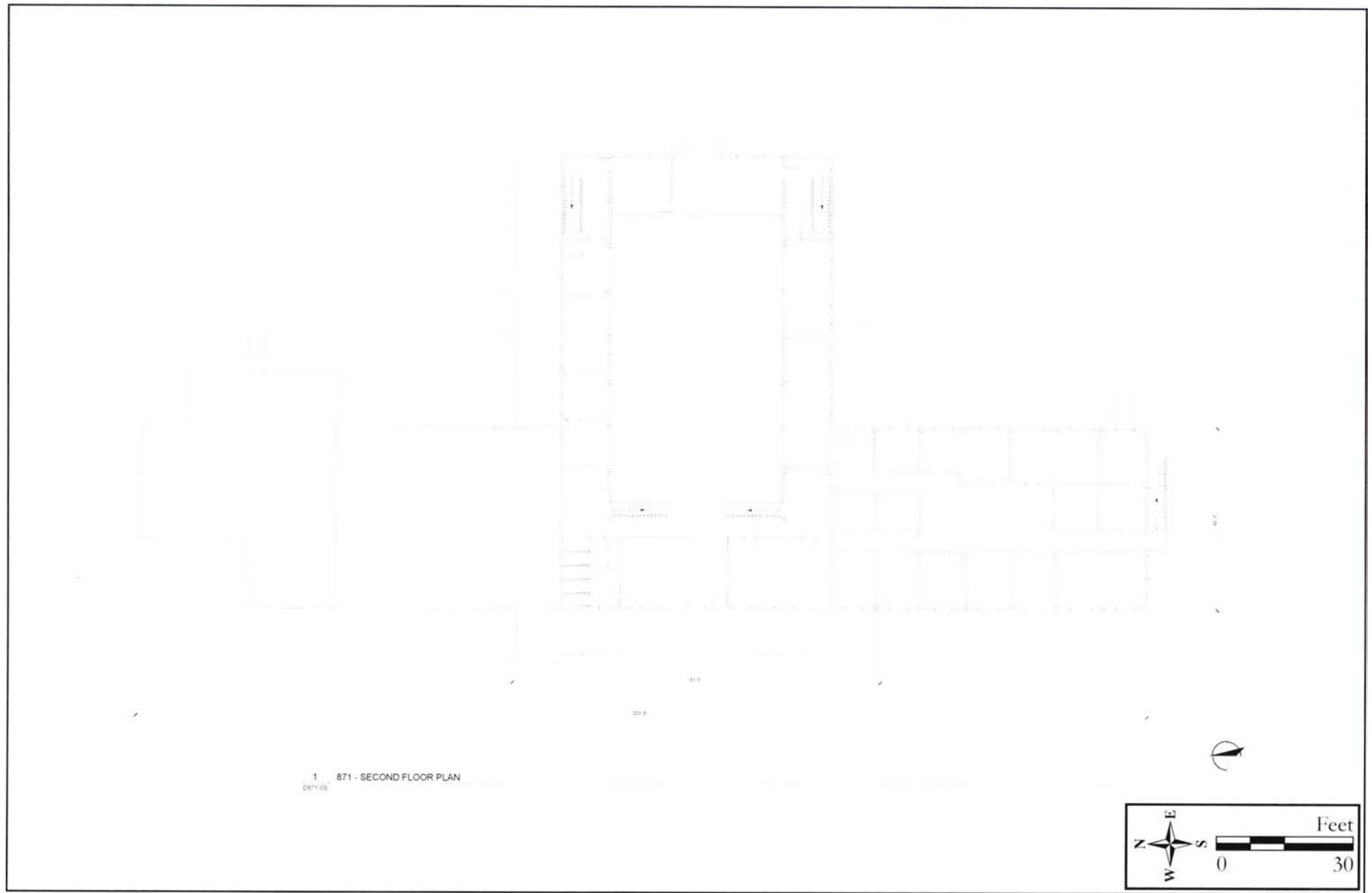


Elevations and section, Building 806, Recreation Building.



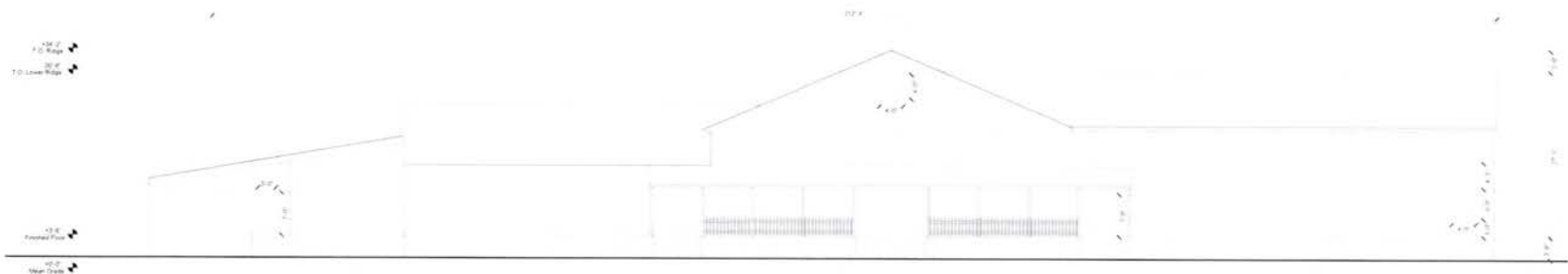


First floor plan, Building 871, Service Club.

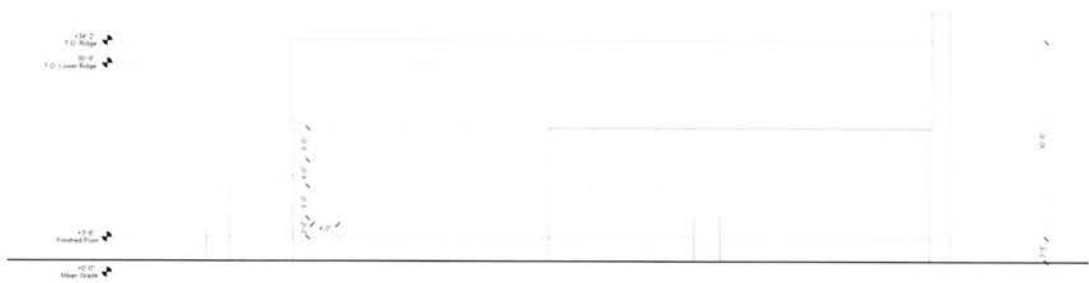


Second floor plan, Building 871, Service Club.

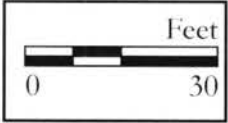




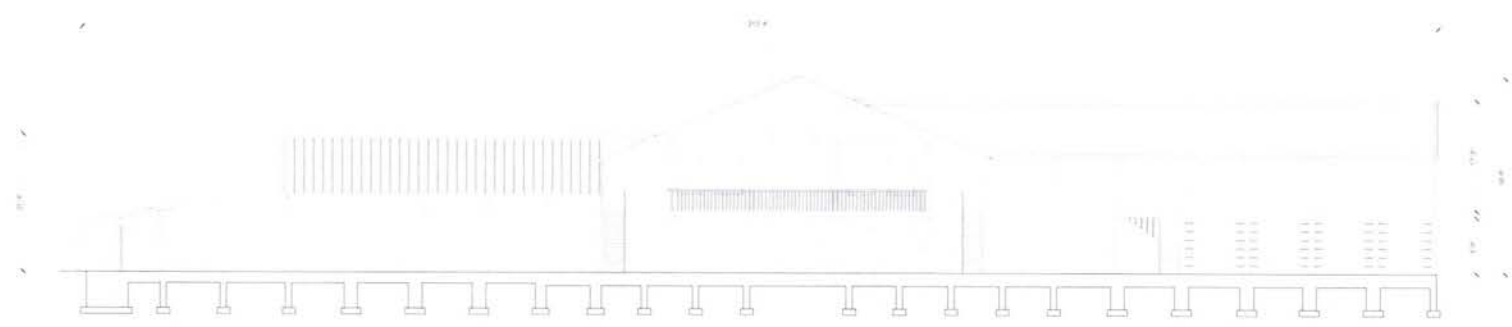
1 871 - WEST ELEVATION  
DS71104



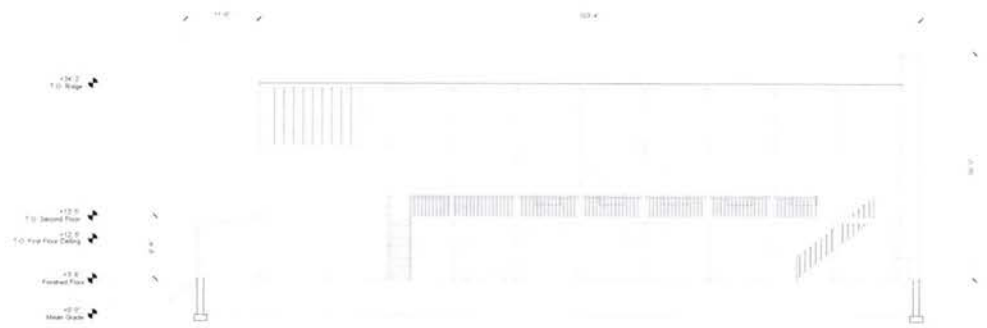
2 871 - SOUTH ELEVATION  
DS71104



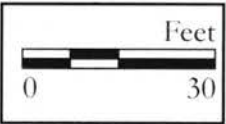
Elevations, Building 871, Service Club.



1 871 - EAST SECTION  
08/11/05



2 871 - NORTH SECTION  
08/11/05



Sections, Building 871, Service Club.



**ATTACHMENT D: PHOTO RECORDATION**

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

CAMP KILMER  
BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
500 Plainfield Avenue  
Township of Edison  
Middlesex County  
New Jersey

Photographer: Allee Davis, November 23-24, 2015

1. Perspective view of the north and west elevations of Building 801 (Bachelor Officers' Quarters), looking southeast.
2. Perspective view of the north and east elevations of Building 801, looking southwest.
3. Perspective view of the south and east elevations of Building 801, looking northwest.
4. Perspective view of the south and west elevations of Building 801, looking northeast.
5. Detail view of the primary entrance and fenestration on the east façade of Building 801, looking west.
6. Interior view, first floor, showing general layout and frame construction of Building 801, looking southeast.
7. Perspective view of the west and north elevations of Building 806 (Recreation Building), looking southwest.
8. Perspective view of the west and south elevations of Building 806, looking northwest.
9. Perspective view of the east and north elevations of Building 806, looking southeast.
10. Perspective view of the east and south elevations of Building 806, looking northeast.
11. Detail view of the primary entrance and fenestration on the east façade of Building 806, looking west.
12. Interior view, first floor, showing the former auditorium in Building 806, looking northeast toward the stage area.
13. Perspective view of the west and north elevations of Building 871 (Service Club), looking southeast. From left, the Mechanical Room, Kitchen, and Café wing are in the foreground.
14. Perspective view of the west and south elevations of Building 871, looking northeast. The Library wing is in the foreground.



15. Perspective view of the east and south elevations of Building 871, looking northwest. The rear of the Library is at left, and the Dance Hall wing is on the right.
16. Perspective view of the east and north elevations of Building 871, looking southwest. The Dance Hall, with enclosed porch, is visible at left, and the Mechanical Room and Kitchen are located at right.
17. Detail view of the second-story entrance and fenestration on the south façade of the Library wing, Building 871, looking north.
18. Detail view of the primary entrance, porch, and fenestration on the west façade of Building 871, looking east.
19. Interior view, first floor, showing the general layout of the Dance Hall in Building 871, looking southeast. The wall at center, with the Gothic arch doorway, was erected c.1965 to subdivide the hall into smaller rooms. Note the balcony, which has been partially enclosed, above the wall. The diamond-shaped windows at the rear of the room indicate the location of the balcony, which was also enclosed in this area.

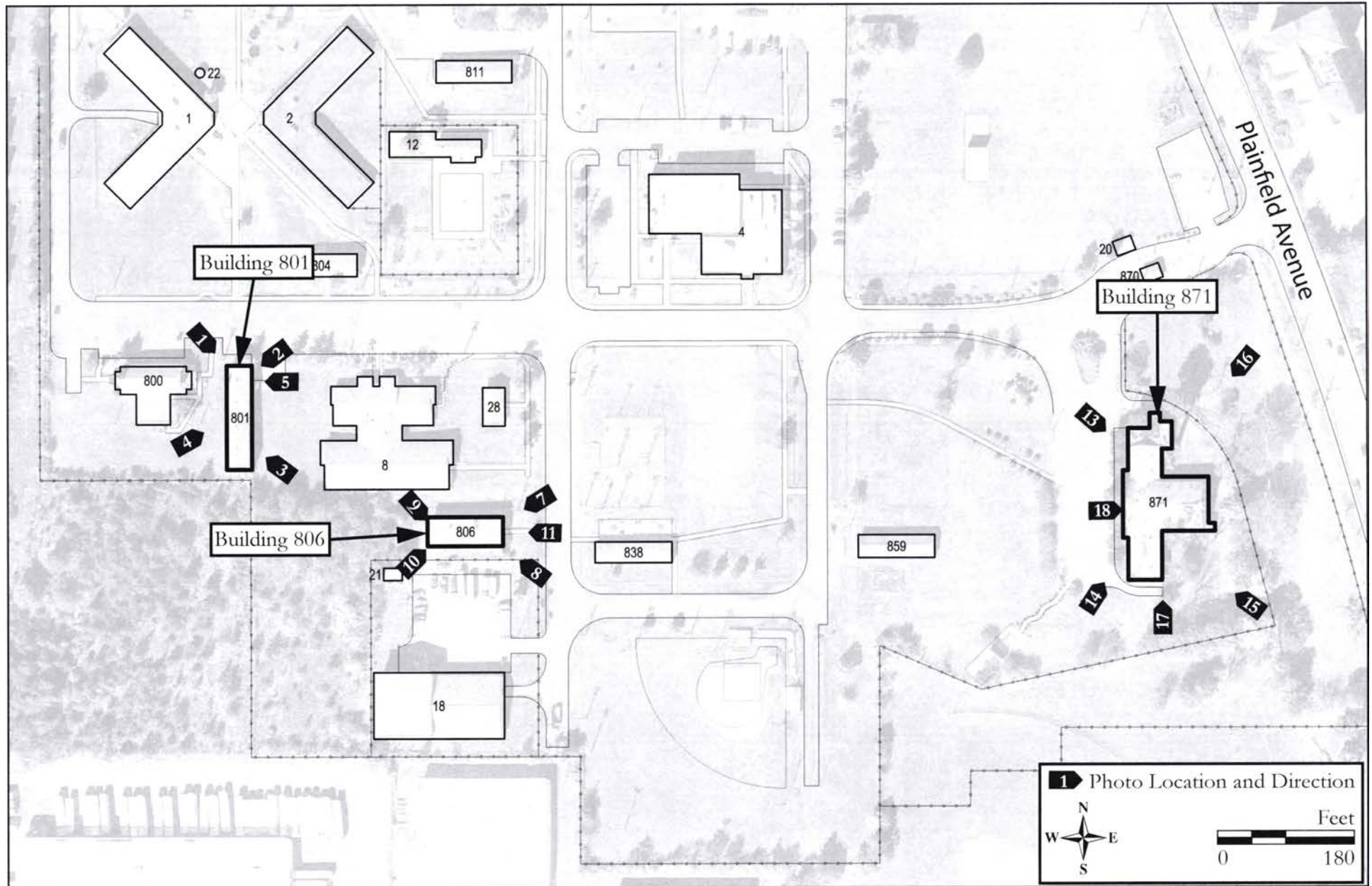


Figure 1: Exterior photo locations for Buildings 801, 806, and 871 at Camp Kilmer.



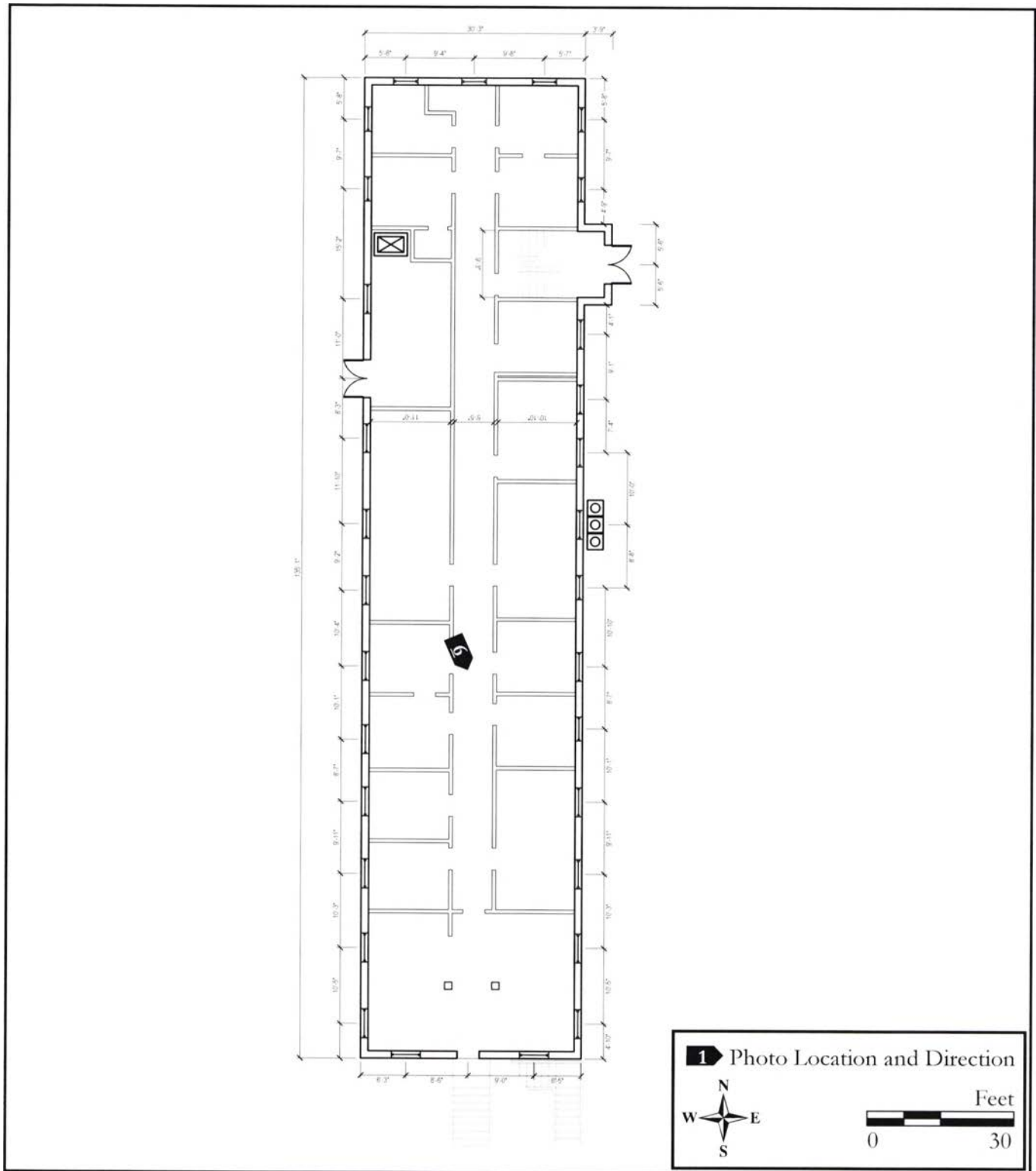


Figure 2: Interior photo location for Building 801 at Camp Kilmer.

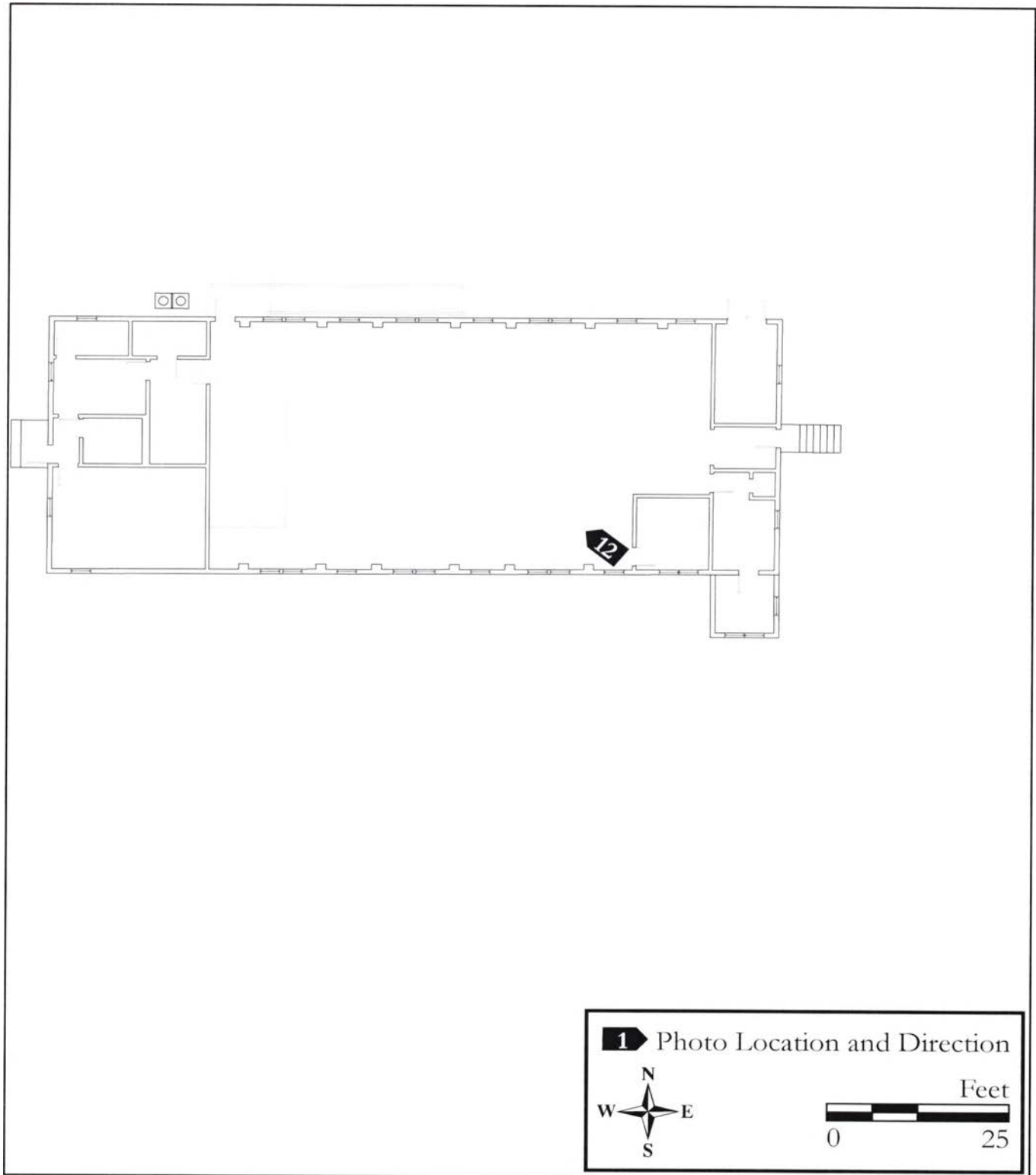


Figure 3: Interior photo location for Building 806 at Camp Kilmer.



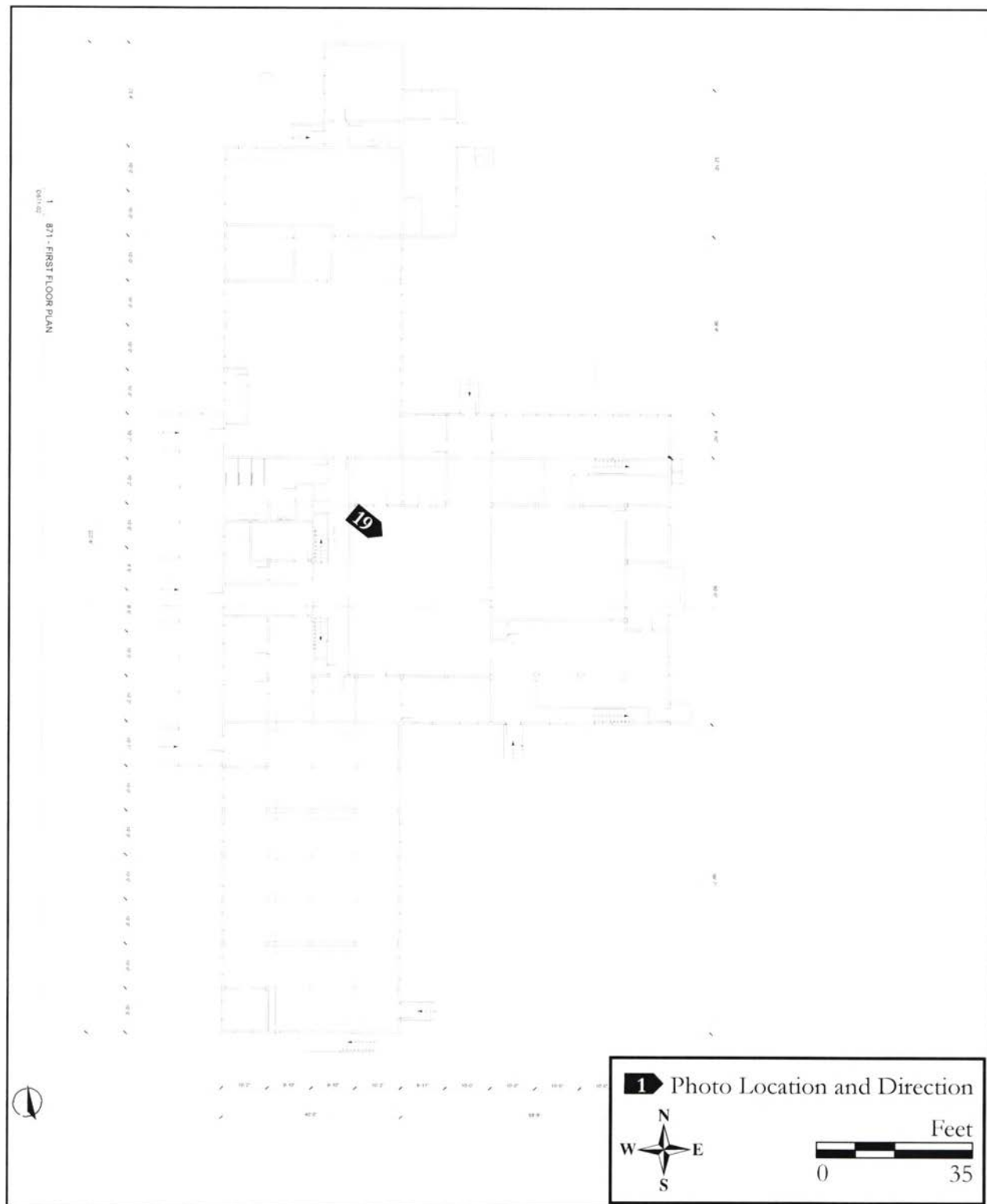
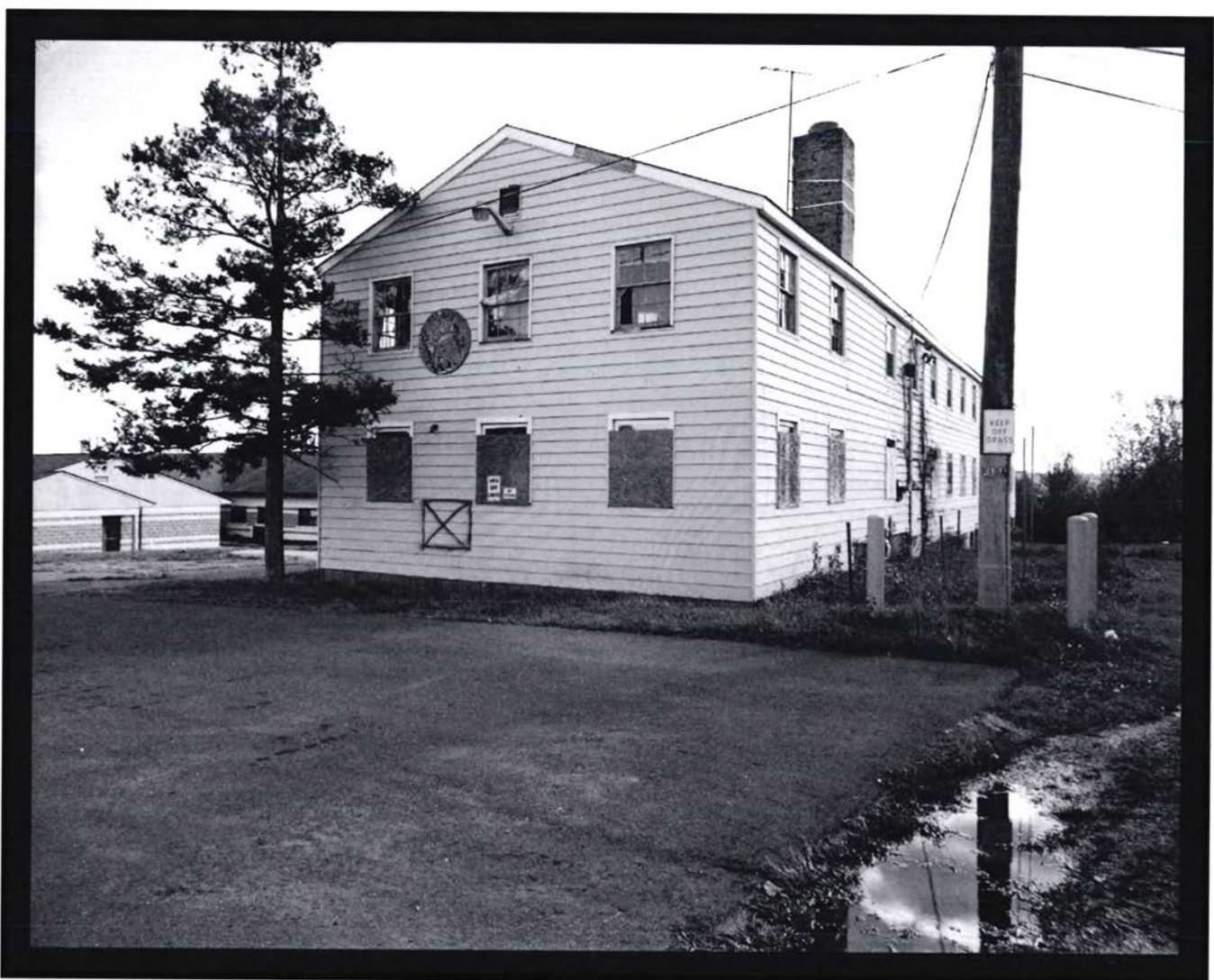
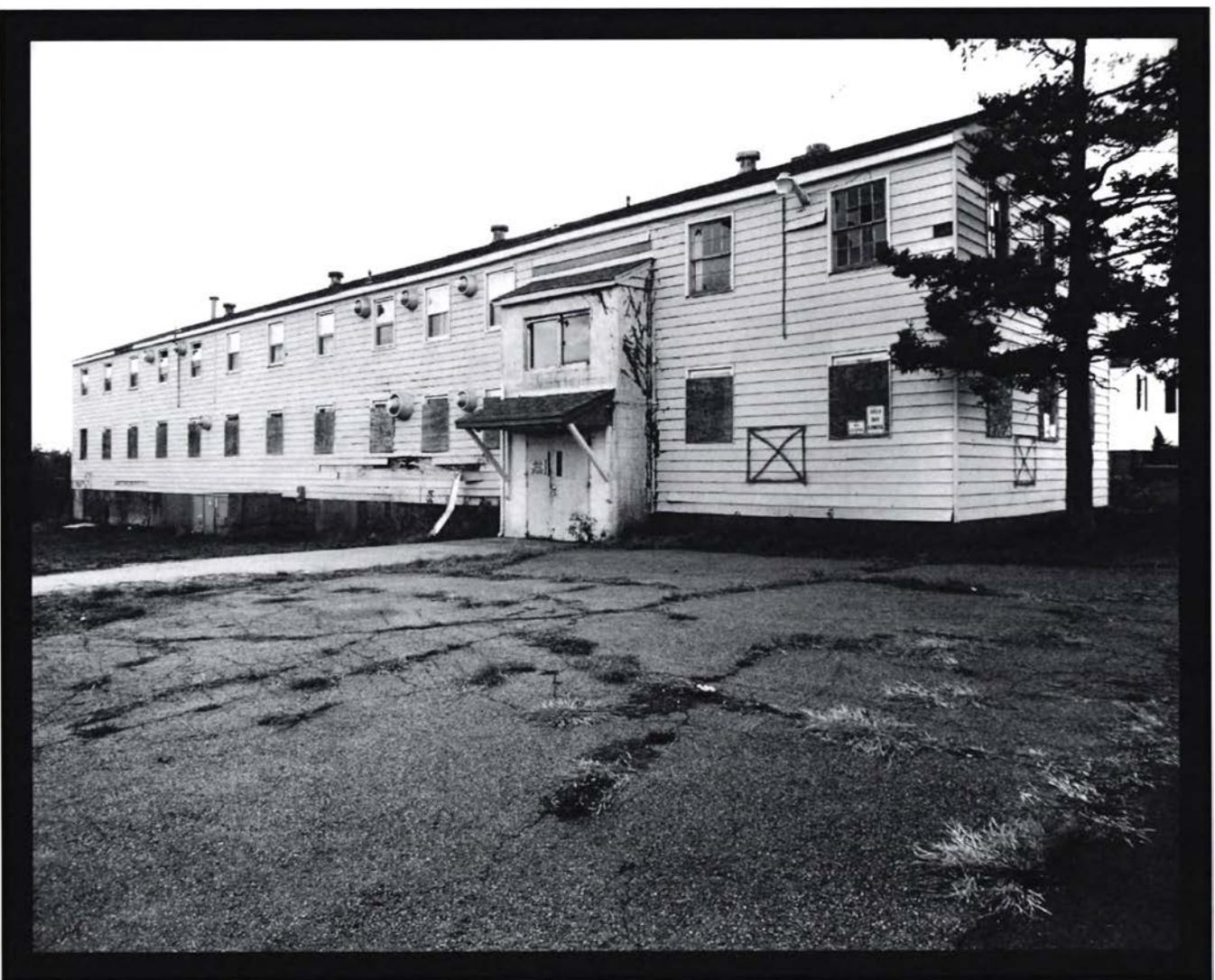


Figure 4: Interior photo location for Building 871 at Camp Kilmer.

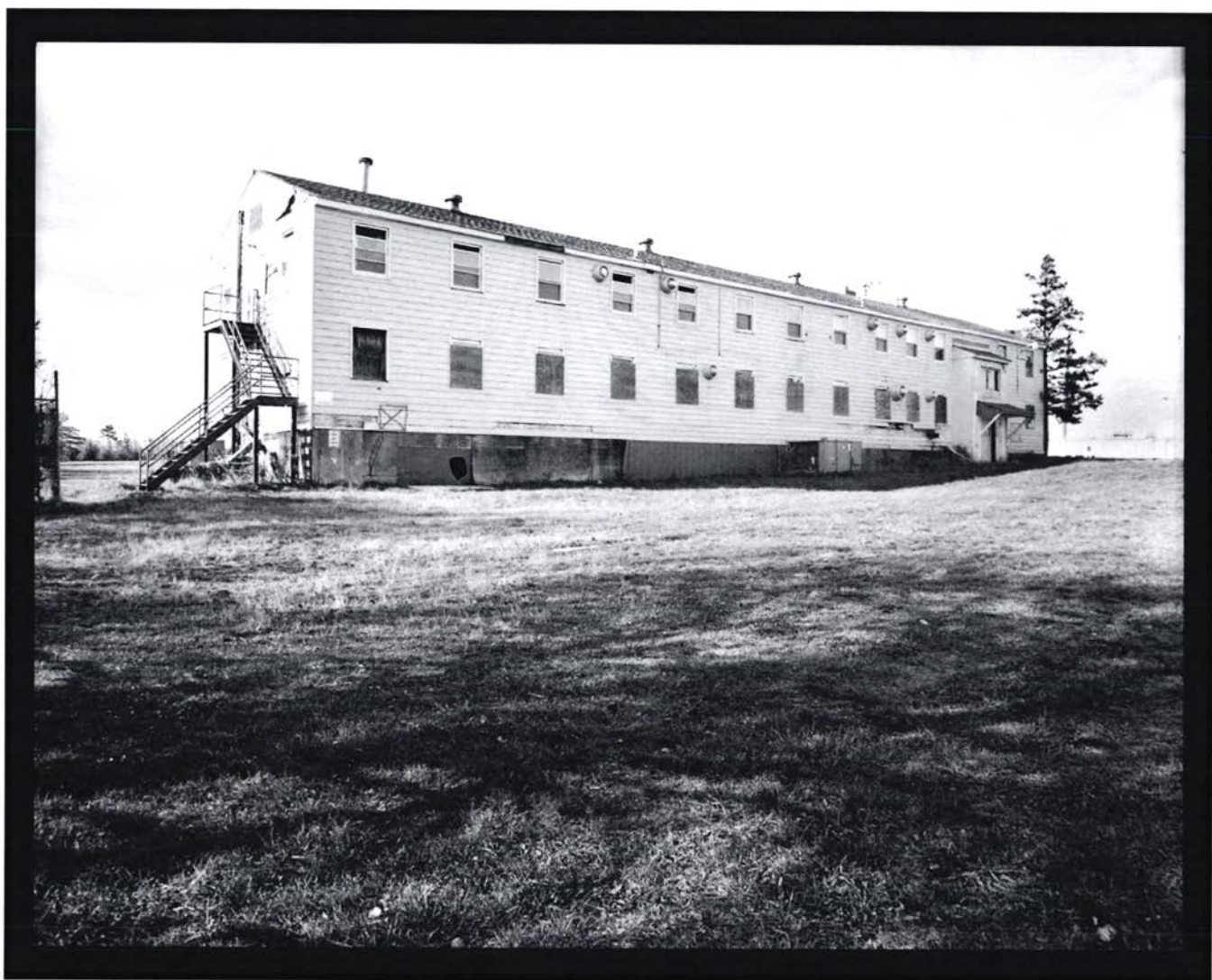


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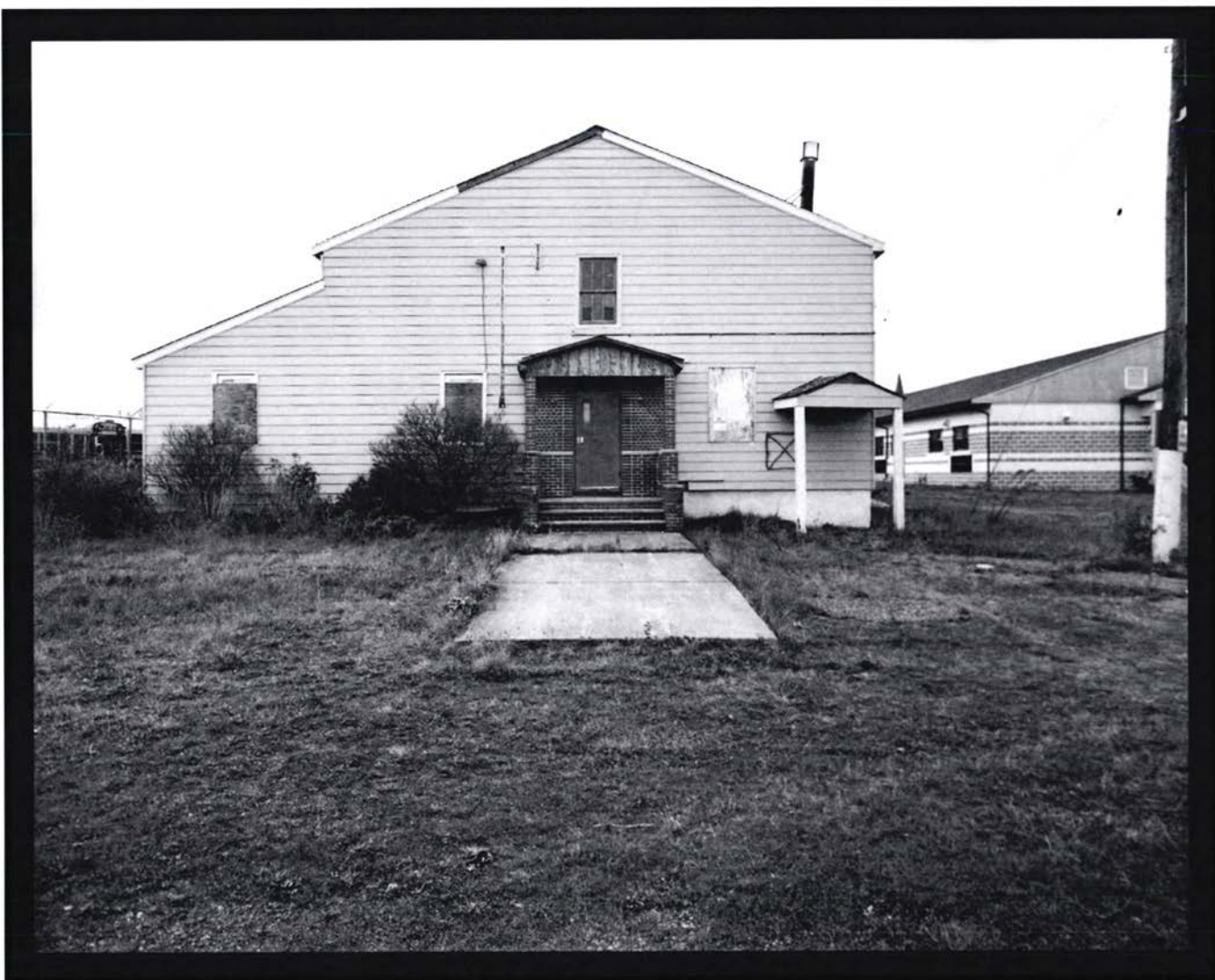


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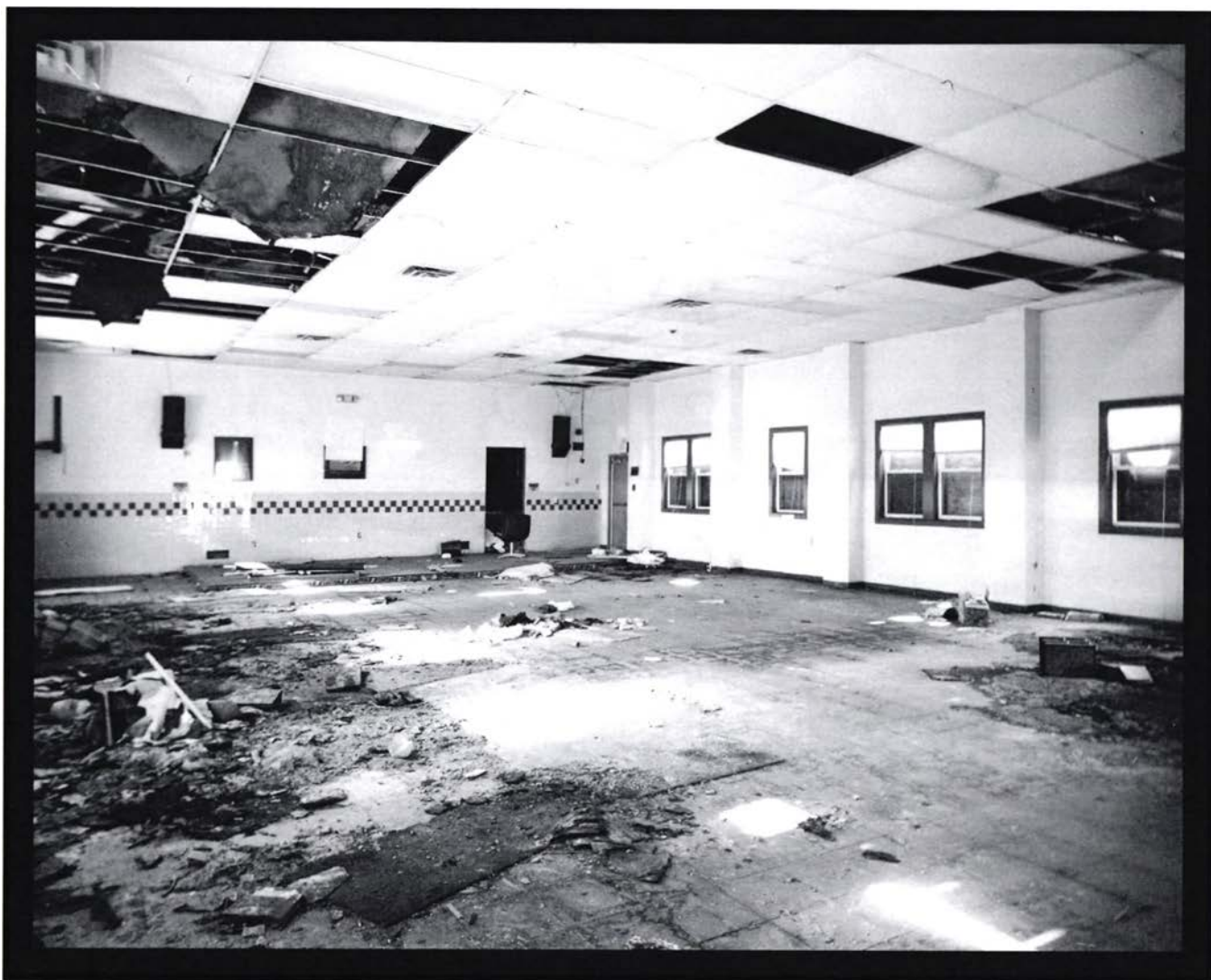


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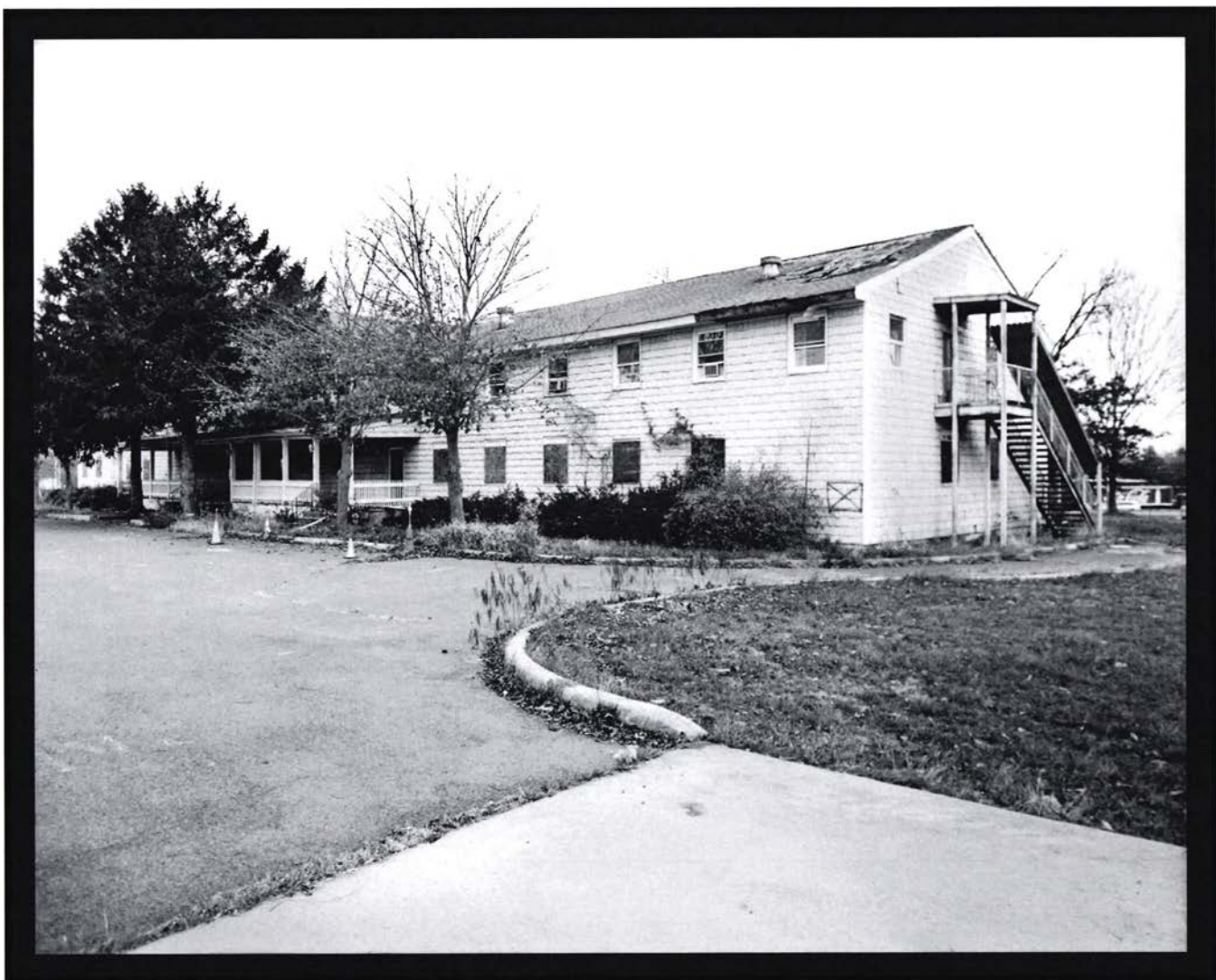


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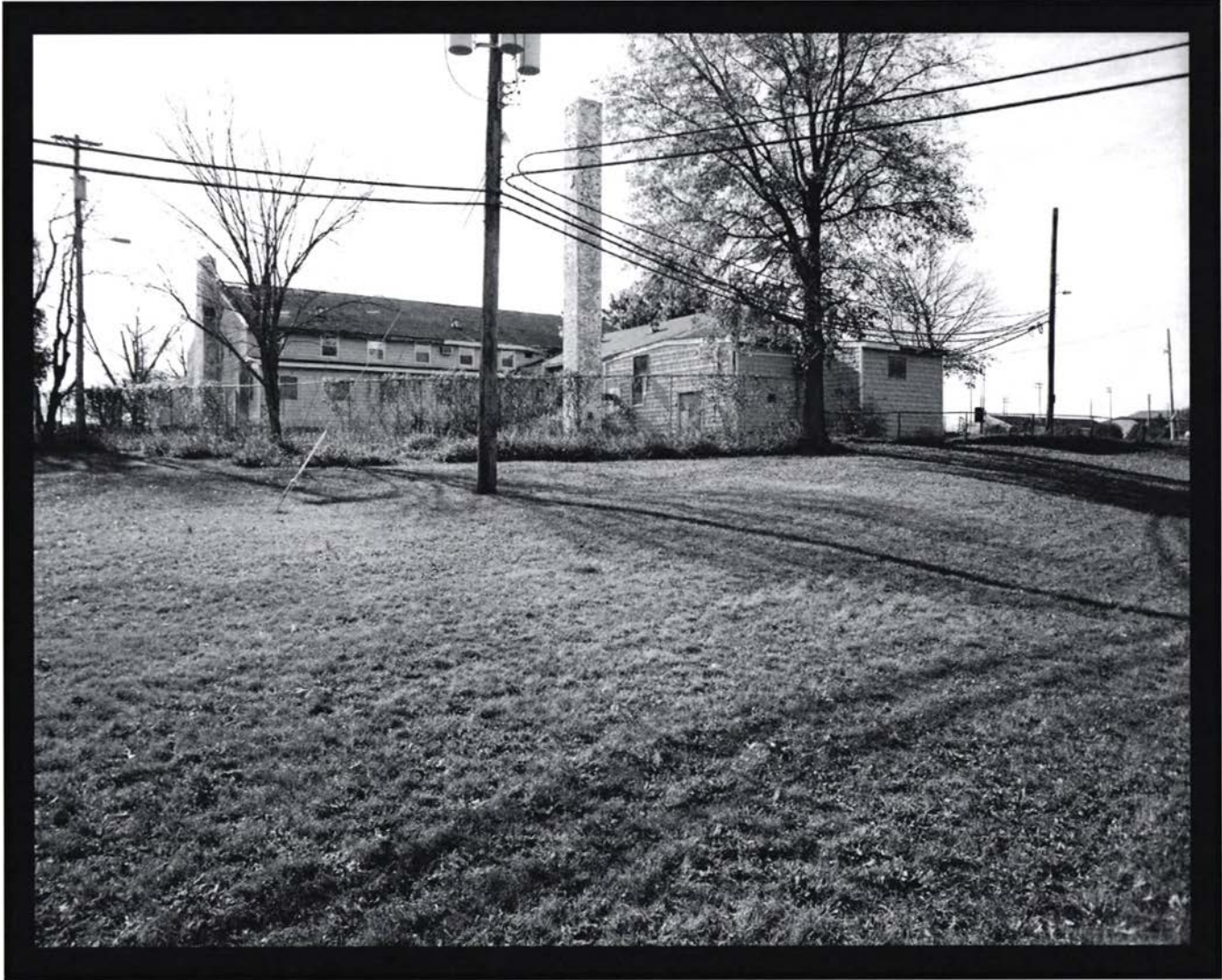


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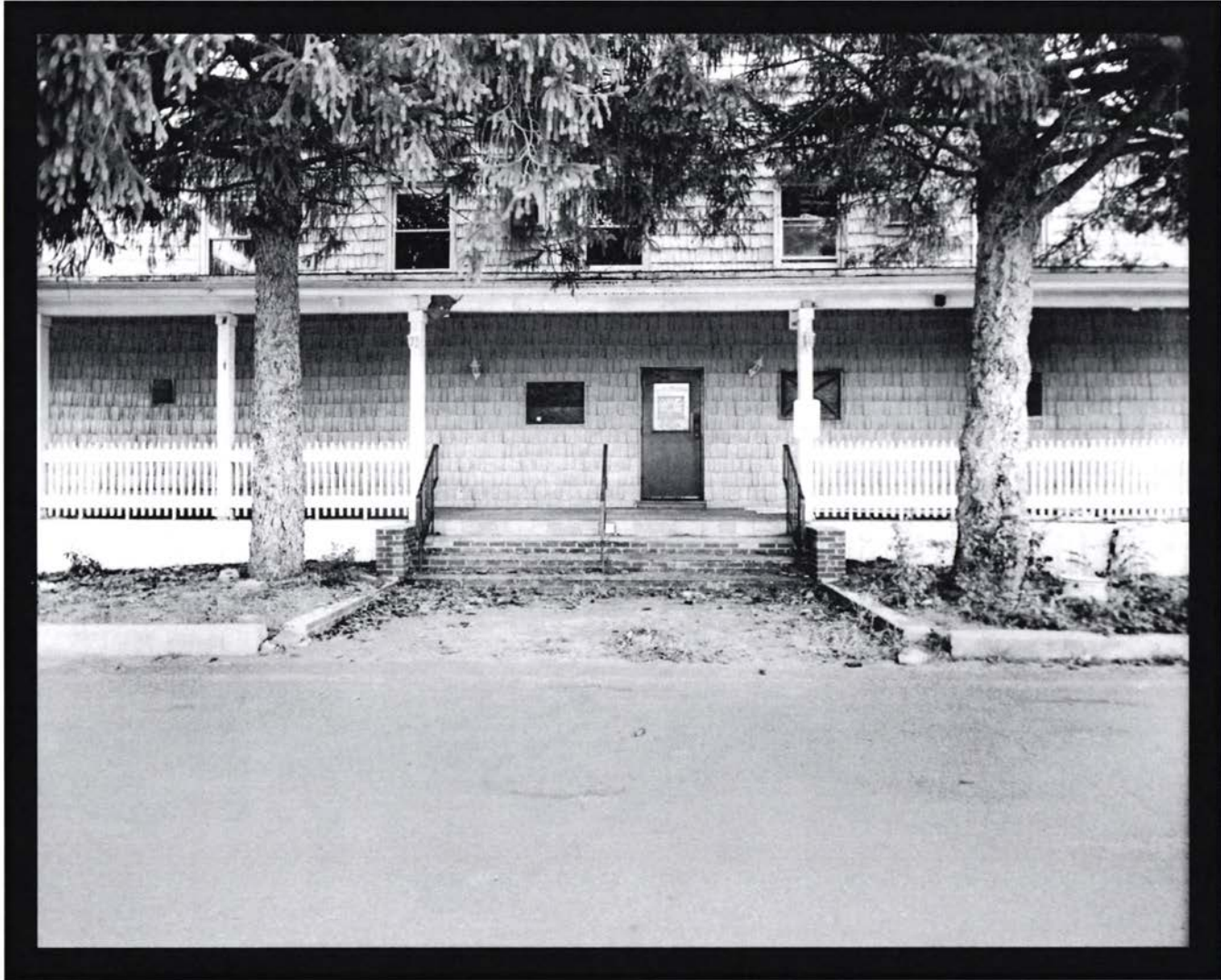


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17 ↑









CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871, 806 AND 871

#1-#3

BUILDING 801

500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE

TOWNSHIP OF EDISON

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

NEW JERSEY

ALLEE DAVIS

NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015





EDISON JOB CORPS LENTER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 801, CAMP KILMER  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

#1

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EDISON JOB CORPS CENTER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871

#2

BUILDING 801, CAMP KILMER

500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE

TOWNSHIP OF EDISON

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

NEW JERSEY

ALLEE DAVIS

NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

<2015-204\_Ed.tif> 017 © HD  
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EDISON JOB CORPS CENTER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 801, CAMP KILMER  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

#3

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 801  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

#4 - #6





CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 801  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEG DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 801  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLGE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 801  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEDAULS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871

#7-#9

BUILDING 806

500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE

TOWNSHIP OF EDISON

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

NEW JERSEY

ALLEE DAVIS

NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015





CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 806  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

#7

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871

# 8

BUILDING 806

500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE

TOWNSHIP OF EDISON

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

NEW JERSEY

ALLEE DAVIS

NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 806  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 806  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

#10-#12



CAMP KILMER BUILDING 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 806  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 806  
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MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 806  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871

#13 - #15

BUILDING 871

500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE

TOWNSHIP OF EDISON

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

NEW JERSEY

ALLEE DAVIS

NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015





CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 871  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 871  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEG DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 871  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 871  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

#16 - #19





CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 871  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 871  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 871  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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CAMP KILMER BUILDINGS 801, 806, AND 871  
BUILDING 871  
500 PLAINFIELD AVENUE  
TOWNSHIP OF EDISON  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
NEW JERSEY  
ALLEE DAVIS  
NOVEMBER 23-24, 2015

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