

FORT DEFIANCE INDIAN HOSPITAL,
PHYSICIAN'S COTTAGE
(Fort Defiance Indian Hospital, FD-34)
Navajo Indian Reservation
Bonito Drive
Fort Defiance
Apache County
Arizona

HABS No. AZ-227-A

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
Southwest System Support Office
National Park Service
P. O. Box 728
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Fort Defiance Indian Hospital, Physician's Cottage
(Fort Defiance Indian Hospital, FD-34)

HABS AZ-227-A

Location: Navajo Indian Reservation
Bonito Drive
Fort Defiance, Apache County, Arizona

UTM: Zone 12, 673543E, 3957827N

Present Owner:
Indian Health Services

Present Use:
The building is currently used as an office by Indian Health Service security personnel. It was used primarily as housing for hospital staff, most recently for pharmacy students, until the hospital closed in 2005.

Significance:
The Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Physician's Cottage, constructed in 1930, is significantly associated with the expansion of the original 1912 Fort Defiance Hospital into a 100-bed general hospital in 1929. From the late 1920s to 1942, delivery of government health services to the Navajo Nation proliferated. There was a two-fold increase in the number of medical facilities; specific programs directed at eradicating tuberculosis and trachoma were initiated; and concomitantly, there was a dramatic increase in the number of medical employees. Secondly, the Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Physician's Cottage has architectural significance because it represents an earlier, pre-New Deal style of architecture.

Description:
The following description (excluding edits and/or updates in parenthesis) was published in *Historic Indian Health Service Buildings on the Navajo Reservation*, by David Kammer and Veronica E. Tiller, published by Tiller Research, Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1991.:

Built in 1930, (the cottage) is a one-story residence (of 1830 s.f.) with a stone foundation, (wood frame) walls with a (painted) stucco finish, and an asphalt shingle hip roof. With wide eaves, three porches, and a rectangular floor plan, the building is a late example of the Hipped Cottage Style.

The foundation is coursed native sandstone. There is a buttressed exterior double metal door to the (cellar). The walls are roughly textured stucco. The hip roof has two offset hips in the northeast and northwest corners. The eaves extend thirty inches and have brown exposed rafters. There are two yellow brick chimneys both with brick coping. One is interior, and the other is exterior (on the front façade) with sloped shoulders.

Four concrete steps rise to the 6' x 16' east-facing porch. The porch is enclosed by a stucco (seat-) wall with a concrete coping and punctuated with piers. A wide

arch opens to a recessed entry. And the door is wood plank with a large single light. The side porch to the south has four concrete steps and stucco-covered (seat-) walls and piers also with a coping. It also is recessed and has a fifteen-light glass door with small four-over-four double-hung windows flanking it. The rear porch is a concrete platform with three concrete steps and a wood panel door with two large lights. Fenestration varies and includes single and triple six-over-six double-hung windows and eight-light wood casement windows at the west porch. All of the windows have wood surrounds and wood sills, continuous in the case of grouped windows.

A hall on a front-to-rear axis divides the public and private spaces with the living room, dining room, and kitchen and breakfast nook lying to the south, and the three bedrooms paralleling them to the north. A wood stairway leads from the hall to the (cellar).

The floors are hardwood (in the living room, dining room and master bedroom; The kitchen and baths flooring are now sheet vinyl.) The walls and ceilings are (painted) plaster with a diamond scoring in the kitchen and breakfast nook. Arched alcoves appear in the bathroom for the shower and tub areas and in the dining room where an arch frames a slightly recessed built-in cabinet with multi-light glass doors. A double arch separates the living room and dining room. Other decorative elements include a fireplace with a white plaster bas-relief below the mantel (living room), a telephone niche with a wood screen, wood baseboards and molding, and plaster ceiling molding (coved in the living and dining rooms). The original mechanical equipment (and plumbing and electrical) has been replaced.

The cottage sits within a fenced yard dotted with mature Siberian Elms and conifers, on Bonito Drive directly opposite the Hospital. A 3' wide concrete walkway, leading to the walled front porch, links it to the sidewalk abutting the street.

History:

Part I. Historical Information

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection:
1930

2. Architect:
Not known. It is likely that the Physician's Cottage was a standard plan rendered by designers or engineers working for the Office of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C.

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:

The Fort Defiance Physician's Cottage was originally owned by the Office of Indian Affairs, known as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) after 1947. The building remained under the jurisdiction of the BIA, Navajo Area Office, until Congress transferred Native American health services to the Public Health Service (PHS), part of the Department of Health Education and Welfare, in 1955. It remained under the control of the PHS under the Division of Indian Health until 1970 when the Indian Health Service (IHS) was created.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:
Not Known.

5. Original plans and construction:
The exterior of the cottage has been minimally altered since its construction. Aside from new roofing, and paint, the exterior remains essentially unchanged from the original appearance.

6. Alterations and additions:
A steel accessibility ramp has been added to the side (south elevation) entry, with little or no alteration of the steps and walkway below. The cottage has been repainted and reroofed, and floor finishes and interior lighting have been changed or added to accommodate new uses for the building. The original kitchen cabinetry has been replaced by modern pre-fabricated cabinets. Most of this work appears to date from the 1990s, based upon the appearance and styling of the added materials.

B. Historical Context

The Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Physician's Cottage is a part of the Fort Defiance Indian Hospital complex (HABS AZ-227) and readers are directed to that record for historic context information on the complex itself.

Throughout the Navajo Agency's history, no matter what federal Indian policy was in effect, one theme stood out: that there never was enough or adequate living quarters for employees. Perhaps the underlying reason for the failures of many aspects of federal Indian policies was due to the government's lack of consideration for its own employees' living conditions. While it is a well-known management principle that happy employees are better workers and tend to stay longer on the job than unsatisfied employees, this principle applied two-fold in an isolated, socially and economically under-developed community, as Fort Defiance was up to about 1930. Yet, the federal government made minimal efforts in making its employees comfortable by providing adequate housing. Nonetheless, agency superintendents charged with the monumental task of administering federal Indian policies and programs, with limited funding and

manpower resources, never wavered from endlessly trying to obtain more monies for better housing for the agency work force.¹

Various strategies were used throughout history by agency superintendents to house their personnel. Most Indian agencies usually had an employees' club house where they could relax, socialize, and take their meals. This arrangement may have suited the single employees, but was totally unsatisfactory for married employees with families. The very existence of the clubhouses seemed to have justified quartering employees wherever space could be found. At some agencies, such as Tohatchi and Tuba City, employees were occupying a section of the dormitories intended solely for students, or living in school building when there already was a shortage of classrooms. At Tohatchi and Chinle in 1934, some of the rooms of the hospital were occupied by certain personnel, because there was no other room for them.

Usually when a building was abandoned, employees more than likely inherited it as living quarters, despite the reason for its abandonment in the first place. For instance, when a student dormitory was declared obsolete, unsafe, and dilapidated, the government was shamed into building a new one. Invariably, the old one was not immediately razed but somehow reclassified as adequate living quarters for employees. In 1920, an inspection report made by the Superintendent of Construction indicated that some of the employees were quartered in a building that was built during the time Fort Defiance was an army post. Because of the lack of funds, he recommended that it be remodeled, and that it continue to be used as an employee's quarters.

Employee quarters were not only the last to be built, but last to be completed, maintained and remodeled. An Indian Office letter written in 1920 pointed out that at Fort Defiance there were five cottages assigned to employees "which have no sewer connections and therefore unsatisfactory." In 1928 the Superintendent was proud of the set of new quarters in which the two agency physicians were living. The quarters were nicely furnished, neat, commodious, and satisfactory, but he added, "They have no steam heat installed." Heating was provided by the stoves and fireplaces. The Superintendent was particularly concerned about having the steam heat brought in, because he felt that "in order to keep competent physicians it is necessary that they have living accommodations equal to that which they have been used to in private life."

Not an uncommon approach was to renovate old buildings for the employees. An inspection report of 1921 noted that there was a very serious shortage of quarters for employees, and in one of the employee's quarters, a family of four was occupying one room. The inspector suggested that the agency remodel the old mission building and convert it into three room apartments consisting of a bedroom, sitting room, and kitchenette. This was to cost less than building, a small cottage.

¹ The historic context for the Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Physician's Cottage is excerpted from David Kammer and Veronica E. Tiller, Historic Indian Health Service buildings on the Navajo Reservation, Albuquerque: Weller Architects, 1991, pp. 54-56.

This chronic problem of inadequate housing facilities in which old hospitals and missions were made over into staff quarters became even more glaring at Fort Defiance in the late 1920s with the expansion of the old general hospital. In light of the \$55,000 budget for the expansion, the neglect of the staff's housing needs threatened to undermine morale. Noting that the current housing conditions were not "conducive to that contented frame of mind which every employee must have to render that efficient and constructive service to which the Government is unquestionably entitled," the Agency superintendent wondered where he would house the new personnel scheduled to arrive when the expanded hospital opened in the fall.

The 1930s saw a gradual improvement of the staff housing problem. Most of the nurses continued to be housed in the old remodeled but inadequate general hospital, with the doctors occupying two physicians' cottages, including HABS AZ-227-A, completed in 1930. Even these improvements, however, failed to keep pace with the expanding mission of the medical program and the number of employees required staffing it. The completion of the two-story nurses' dormitory (HABS AZ-227-D) in 1942 helped, but by 1940 the medical center required a nursing staff of forty-one, six more than the new building would be able to hold.

Indian Health Service records offer an incomplete listing of the nurses and doctors who have inhabited HABS AZ-227-A over the years. Several notable doctors started or spent part of their careers at Fort Defiance. Some lived in the Physician's Cottage.

Kurt Walter Deuschle began his career as a doctor for the Indian Health Service at Fort Defiance. He was head of the tuberculosis program for the Fort Defiance Indian Hospital. His approach was unique in that he determined that the disease could be combated most effectively by combining Western and Navajo medical practices by involving health workers from the local community. In 1954 he became the director of the Navajo-Cornell Health Project. Later in his career, after leaving Fort Defiance in 1960, Dr. Deuschle went on to create the department of community medicine at the University of Kentucky, then went on to Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York where he worked on the medical needs of East Harlem residents. He also helped to create health programs in Nigeria, China, Vietnam, and Turkey. He died on February 10, 2003, in New York City.²

Dr. Paul C. F. Vietzke graduated from DePaul University in 1926 and soon began work on the Navajo Indian Reservation. He practiced medicine on both the Navajo and Choctaw-Chickasaw Indian Reservations. Office of Indian Affairs records indicate Dr. Vietzke may have lived in the Physician's Cottage in the thirties. By the mid-forties the Vietzke family moved to Valparaiso, Indiana.³

² Stuart Laviertes, "Dr. Kurt W. Deuschle, 79, Leader in Community Medicine," New York Times, March 2, 2003.

³ "Paul C. Vietzke," obituary published in the Northwest Indiana Times, December 18, 2009; Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Area Office, Central Classified Files, 1924-1954, National Archives, Riverside, California.

Sources:

Published Sources:

Newspapers:

New York Times

March 2, 2003.

Government Publications:

Kammer, David and Veronica E. Tiller

1991 Historic Indian Health Service buildings on the Navajo Reservation, Albuquerque:
Weller Architects.

White Oak Environmental Alliance

1998 Navajo Area Indian Health Service Historic Buildings Inventory Forms: Fort
Defiance / Window Rock Service Units. Window Rock: Navajo Area Indian
Health Service Facility Management Office.

Unpublished Sources:

Archival Collections

For their 1991 report, David Kammer and Veronica E. Tiller conducted extensive research at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Because that research was already reflected in the report excerpted here, that research was not duplicated for this report. Collections utilized by Kammer and Tiller included the following:

Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Public Works Administration Files, 1908-1939, Window Rock Agency, Arizona, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Central Classified Files, 1908-1959, Navajo Agencies, New Mexico and Arizona, the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Inspection Reports, Navajo Agency, 1900-1945, National Archives, Washington, D.C

Records of the Indian Health Service 1940-1990 Navajo Area Office,
Indian Health Service, Office of Facility Management, Window Rock,
Arizona.

Additional primary research was conducted at the Southwest Regional Branch of the National Archives, now located at Perris near Riverside, California. Locations for specific documents cited in this report are as follows:

Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Area Office, Central Classified Files, 1924-1954, National Archives, Riverside, California.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None known.

F. Supplemental Material: Sketch plans are attached.

Historian(s):

Robert G. Graham, Architect, Motley Design Group LLC
Douglas Kupel, PhD, Consulting Historian
Donna Reiner, PhD, Consulting Research Historian
Report Date: October 2010

Project Information:

This HABS report was prepared for the owners of the structure, the Indian Health Services, to fulfill mitigation requirements under Section 106 prior to the planned demolition of the structure in 2010. Motley Design Group LLC was the primary contractor, and was responsible for all photography and final document preparation. Douglas Kupel and Donna Reiner, working as a team, provided historic research and Dr. Kupel wrote Part 1: Historical Information. The Indian Health Service office at Window Rock provided copies of the original construction drawings, which were photographed by Motley Design Group.

Floor Plan:

