

Fort Riley,
Building # 24
24 Sheridan Avenue
Fort Riley
Riley County
Kansas

HABS NO. KS-54-A

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81-FORIL,
2-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS NO. KS-54-A

FORT RILEY, BUILDING # 24

Location: 24 Sheridan Ave., Fort Riley, Riley County, Kansas

USGS Junction City Quadrangle Universal Mercator
Coordinates: 14.692165.4326020

Present Owner: U.S. Department of the Army

Present Occupant: Building # 24-B used as a historic museum; # 24-A
is temporarily vacant.

Significance: Quarters # 24 is one of only four buildings remaining from the initial phase of construction at Fort Riley in the 1850's. Constructed in 1855, this was one of the six double quarters built to house the officers of the cavalry. All were built from similar designs and from local, hand-cut, smooth faced ashlar limestone, as opposed to the machine-cut, rock-faced stone used in the later constructed quarters. Building # 24's simple, unadorned design reflects the pioneering spirit of the early years at Fort Riley. Later buildings were larger and more complex in design.

Part I. Historic Information

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1855 is given in the Engineer's Historical Record Book and the Real Property Cards both of which are located in the Directorate of Engineering and Housing (DEH), Fort Riley. W.F. Pride states that on March 4, 1855 Congress made an appropriation for the construction of new permanent quarters for Fort Riley to be built of stone (p. 165). Pride also mentions records which state that in 1855 the fort's layout included six, two-story officers quarters among other buildings (p. 88).

2. Architect: Unknown. Several sources indicated that original plans were drawn up in Washington in the Quartermaster General's Office and sent to Fort Riley (P.G. Lowe, p. 101; Pride, pp. 65, 189, 193, and 200). Joseph O. Sawyer served as "architect and supervisor" on the construction site according to Lowe. The possibility does exist that Sawyer designed some of the early buildings. Although no documentation was found specifically relating to Building # 24, Sawyer did produce plans for buildings constructed at Fort Leavenworth and probably at Fort Riley at the request of Quartermaster, E. A. Ogden (see Plans and Drawings, U.S. Cavalry Museum, Fort Riley).

3. Original and subsequent owners: Building # 24 was owned by the Department of War, known since 1947 as the Department of the Army.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Building # 24 was constructed by hired civilian stone masons and carpenters, under the direction of the Quartermaster, Major E. A. Ogden. Numerous Irish and German immigrants accepted employment in the fort's construction. They worked as masons and carpenters and after the work was finished, they "pre-empted" land along the Kansas River and its tributaries ("Itinerant Missionary," p. 258). Limestone was taken from local quarries, some of which were located on post. The quarry at the site of the Ogden monument was where "stone was obtained for the first permanent buildings at Fort Riley" (Junction City Union, Centennial Edition, June 24, 1953, see "Fort Riley in 1857 photograph"). The necessary woodwork, including doors, frame, windows etc., was made in Cincinnati by Sawyer and McIlain (or McIlwain Company) and shipped with the lumber, hardware and glass by boat to Fort Leavenworth and then brought by wagon to Fort Riley.

5. Original plans and construction: Original plans may be found in Record Group 92 at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Copies of the early plans can be found at the U.S. Cavalry Museum at Fort Riley, including the U.S. Quartermaster's Department drawing of "Quarters, Fort Riley, Kansas, 1867." These drawings include front and side elevations, floor plans, and sectional views (see Supplemental Materials # 1 - # 4). At the Directorate of the Engineering and Housing office (DEH) there are later plans of Building # 24 from the "Office of Construction Quartermaster, Fort Riley, Kansas," along with drawings and specifications for the facade porch. These drawings are the same, except for the conversion of the rear bedroom on the second floor into a bathroom and storage space. Building # 24-B has been restored to reflect the original design (i.e. removal of modern plumbing), while # 24-A remains modernized. Original cost according to the Real Property Cards (DEH) was \$3,500.

6. Alterations and additions: The rear kitchen wing, constructed of wood, was formerly a separate building, but was later connected to the main structure by an addition running the length of the rear elevation (See HABS photo # KS-54-A-3). Javan B. Irvine wrote in 1865 that in the officers quarters at Fort Riley there was "a kitchen in (the) rear, with a porch between that and the dining room..." (Bypaths of Kansas History," p. 326). Today, physical evidence suggest the existence of this breezeway. The dining room window looks into the added room and the inside wall is very thick, suggesting that it was once an exterior wall (See HABS photo # KS-54-A-9). Plans and details of Building # 24 in the Engineer's Historical Record Book, dated June 1930, include the bathrooms on the second story. Added to Building # 24-A are closets in the second floor bedrooms and an access stairway to the basement from the pantry.

B. Historical Context

Building # 24 was built in 1855 by the U.S. Army as one of the quarters provided for officers at Fort Riley. Fort Riley was then the newly established outpost erected for the protection of westward traveling pioneers and a subordinate depot and advanced rendezvous point for troops. Fort Riley was among the nineteenth century forts that contributed to the development and settlement of Kansas. Building # 24 housed military officers continuously until 1974, when it was converted into a museum.

Part II. Architectural Information

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Included in the original plats for the fort, Building # 24 is the only remaining double quarters of six built in the 1850's in a rectangle around the cavalry parade. This mid-nineteenth century, simply designed structure built of locally quarried, hammered limestone reflects the pioneer existence led by residents of the fort during its early years. Many of the earlier buildings found in this area of Kansas were also constructed of hammered ashlar limestone, due to the stone's abundance and ease of cutting, and also due to the lack of wood in the area. Building # 24's design also reflected the increasing use of standardized designs by the Quartermaster General's Office. An 1860 publication on U.S. Army barracks and quarters included an elevation for a frame officer's quarters that closely resembled the design of Building # 24 (Regulations Concerning Barracks and Quarters for the Army of the United States, 1860. Washington: George W. Bowman, Printer, 1860).

2. Condition of the fabric: The overall house has been well maintained and appears to be in fairly original condition with mantels and other interior details intact (with the exception of changes noted in Building # 24-A).

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: This is a two story rectangular duplex with half story windows on the second-story facade. It has a partial basement and a high one-story rear kitchen wing. Dimensions of the main block are approximately sixty feet across and forty feet deep. The main block is six bays by three bays with a one bay deep rear addition and a one bay by two bay kitchen wing.

2. Foundations: The hammered ashlar limestone foundation is at least sixteen inches thick.

3. Wall construction: There is no visual distinction made between foundation and walls. Exterior walls, sixteen inches thick, are of

hammered ashlar limestone with no ornamentation. These walls were shaped by hand with special chisels, and long diagonal tool marks can be seen on each stone (See HABS photo # KS-54-A-5). The rear kitchen ell is of tongue-and-groove construction.

4. Structural system and framing: Building # 24's walls are load-bearing limestone. Floors and partition walls rest on a wooden floor structure of joists and beams.

5. Porches: A wooden porch runs the length of the facade with a low shed, overhanging roof. The roof is supported by seven square, beveled posts with triangular brackets with semi-circular cut-outs, and has a plain, squared balustrade. The wood floor is of tongue-and-groove construction. A wooden lattice divides the porch in half. This porch dates from the 1870's.

6. Chimneys: The house has three brick, corbelled interior chimneys, all located along the partition wall between the quarters, each shared by both sides of the duplex. On each, the shaft flares out near the base. The first chimney is located in the center of the west slope of the roof and the second is on the rear slope. The third is centrally located on the kitchen wing and rises higher than the others.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The front entryways are located at either end of the facade (east and west). Both are slightly recessed and elevated one step, with four pane side-lights with a wooden panel below, and above the door is a five-light transom and smooth-faced limestone lintel above. The lower panels of the door are wooden with glass panels above.

b. Windows: On the west side of the duplex, the center bay is one over four double-hung sash and the bay to the east is one over one sash. On the first story facade on the east side of the duplex the windows are one over one sash. On the second floor of the facade are shutter-like casement windows, four lights in each side. In both side elevations are nine over nine double-hung sash windows, as are the windows in the kitchen wing. The windows in the gable ends of the side elevations are six over six sash. These windows may date from the 1950's. Finally, all windows have hammered limestone lintels and lug sills. Existing hardware in the exterior walls indicate that the house once had shutters.

8. Roof

a. Shape and covering: The house has a low-pitched gable roof, on both the main block and rear wing. The roof, originally

covered with wooden shingles, and then later in the 1930's covered with slate, is now covered with raised seam metal. (See HABS photo # KS-54-A-3).

b. Cornice and eaves: The eaves of the roof project approximately one foot on all elevations over exposed purlins. The fascia covers the purlin ends. Quarters # 24 has a plain wooden frieze and cornice.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plan: Upon entering Building # 24-A there is a stairhall with a single-flight stairway along the east wall (See HABS photos # KS-54-A-6 & 7). To the west is the parlor with an adjoining dining room to the rear. To the east is the dining room and adjoining it to the west is a den or study also entered from the hall. To the rear of the den is the maid's room which opens into the butler's pantry to the west. The pantry is also entered through the dining room at the south and the kitchen wing to the north. Behind the kitchen is a small single frame utility room. Returning to the hall and ascending the stairway, there is a landing towards the top and the stairs then turn towards the west. Ahead is the front, master bedroom with a dressing room, which connects with a bedroom behind it (See HABS photo # KS-54-A-10). To the east is a third bath (still a bedroom, as designed, in Building # 24-B). The ceiling, following the roof line, slopes down towards the outside walls, meeting the front windows which go, then, almost to the floor. The "B" side of this duplex is the direct reverse of this plan.

2. Stairways: There is an open stairway along the interior wall of the hall. Approximately three-fourths of the way up is a landing with three octagonal steps to the side. It has a black walnut bannister with tapering octagonal balusters and a large, octagonal newel cap. There are arched brackets alongside the open end of the steps (See HABS photo # KS-54-A-6).

3. Flooring: Narrow pine board flooring covers the original wide board, random-width flooring in the stairhall. The floors are covered with a clear varnish.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings are unornamented plaster and all are painted white.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The doors throughout are wooden with horizontal panels and are painted white. The first floor rooms are connected by large, approximately five foot wide, squared

openings, without doors but with the same trim. The moldings around the doorways on the first floor are made of plain, flat two inch by four inch boards. The trim in the hall of Building # 24-B is dark stained, unpainted wood. There is a simple molded architrave above the doorways on the first floor (See HABS photo # KS-54-A-7). The trim on the second floor is also plain but without an architrave molding. The baseboards on the first floor have a curved molding along the floor and a flat stepped three board molding above.

b. Windows: Building # 24 has plain flat board molding around all windows. The second floor windows are low to the floor and all windows are deep-set with wide flat wooden sills, and two inch by four inch boards below the sills (See HABS photo # S-54-A-10).

6. Decorative features and trim: Approximately one foot below the ceiling is a picture molding around all four walls in all rooms. The house has four fireplaces, all with notable mantels. In all rooms the chimney block extends about two feet. The parlor fireplace has a limestone hearth and a black cast-iron chimney piece with a decorative floral pattern (See HABS photo # KS-54-A-8). The mantel in the dining room is oak, featuring carved Corinthian columns with the same tile work, hearth, and cast-iron chimney piece and has a backboard behind the mantel shelf. The second floor fireplaces in the bedrooms have wooden mantels with plain square pilasters and limestone hearths with brick fireboxes added during the twentieth century (See photo # KS-54-A-10). In the rear kitchen wing is a large, open, brick fireplace suitable for cooking. It has a limestone hearth, and a plain shelf supported by wooden brackets. To either side of the fireplace are frame cupboards (doors removed). In the sidehall entranceway along the inside wall is a plain flat board set approximately one foot off the floor, located at the inside corner of the front wall. The closet door is removed on the "B" side (see HABS photo # KS-4-A-9).

7. Hardware: Building # 24-A has plain brass doorknobs and box locks on the closet doors throughout. In # 24-B the door hardware is mostly new.

8. Mechanical equipment: Building # 24 has steam heat produced by a Kewanee Boiler, Type R, manufactured in Kewanee, Illinois. Building # 24-B has central air conditioning. There are old-style, decorated radiators in # 24-A. Originally heated by wood and coal burning fireplaces, a steam heating system was established in 1889 connecting some eighty-three buildings on

post to one central system. The system was composed of a battery of seven boilers and a pump-room and consumed sixteen to twenty-five tons of coal each day ("The Cavalry Post at Fort Riley," pp. 188-189).

D. Site

Building # 24 faces south onto Sheridan Avenue, oriented towards the Cavalry Parade Field. It sits on a flat lot, shaded by trees on all sides. Sheridan Avenue is a tree-lined street that borders on the parade field. Original plats show Building # 24 to lie on the north side of the fort's rectangular formation of buildings. Thus, this building was part of the original design of Fort Riley which suggests a defensive arrangement of quarters in a tight axial configuration (see Supplemental Material # 5). Building # 24 was the only one of the quarters from this original plan of the fort which was retained during the redesigning of the fort lay-out in the 1880's and, therefore, is the only surviving remnant of the original rectangular configuration of buildings (see Supplemental Material # 6).

Part III Sources of Information

A. Architectural Drawings: See description of drawings in "Original Plans and Construction;" See 1863 and 1867 plats of buildings at Fort Riley. U.S. Cavalry Museum, Fort Riley, Kansas.

B. Early Views: Photograph ca. 1930 , Engineer's Historical Record Book (D.E.H.).

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

a. Clippings file, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

b. Engineer's Historical Record Book, D.E.H., Fort Riley, Kansas.

2. Secondary and published sources

a. Lowe, P.G. "Reflections of Fort Riley," Kansas State Historical Collections, Vol. 7, 1901-1902.

b. Pride, W.F. The History of Fort Riley, n.p., 1926.

c. Regulations concerning Barracks and Quarters for the Army of the United States, 1860. Washington: George W. Bowman, Printer, 1860.

d. Sawyer, E.O., Jr. "Tragedy and Heroism Were Mingled in Fort Riley's Development Nearly a Century Ago." Wichita Eagle Magazine, November 8, 1953.

e. Thomas, Sister M. Evangeline, "The Rev. Louis Dumortier, S.J. Itinerant Missionary to Central Kansas, 1859-1867," Kansas State Historical Quarterly, 20:3, August 1952, pp. 252-270.

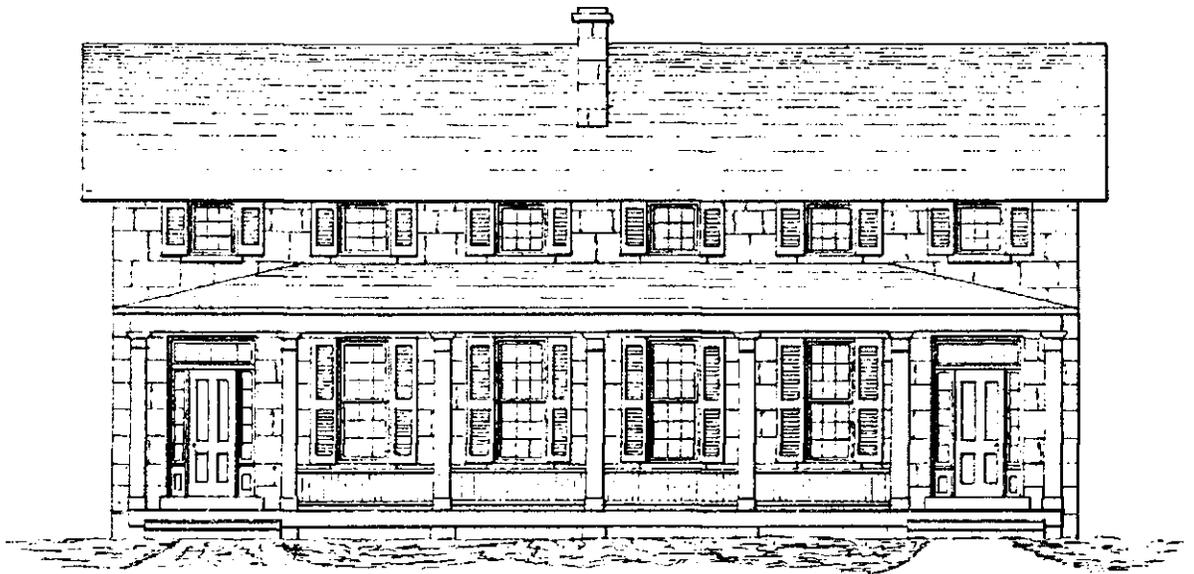
f. "The Cavalry Post at Fort Riley," Journal of the United States Cavalry Association, Vol. 13, 1902-1903, pp. 188-128.

g. Webb Scrapbook, Vol. 5, August-September 1855, Kansas State Historical Society.

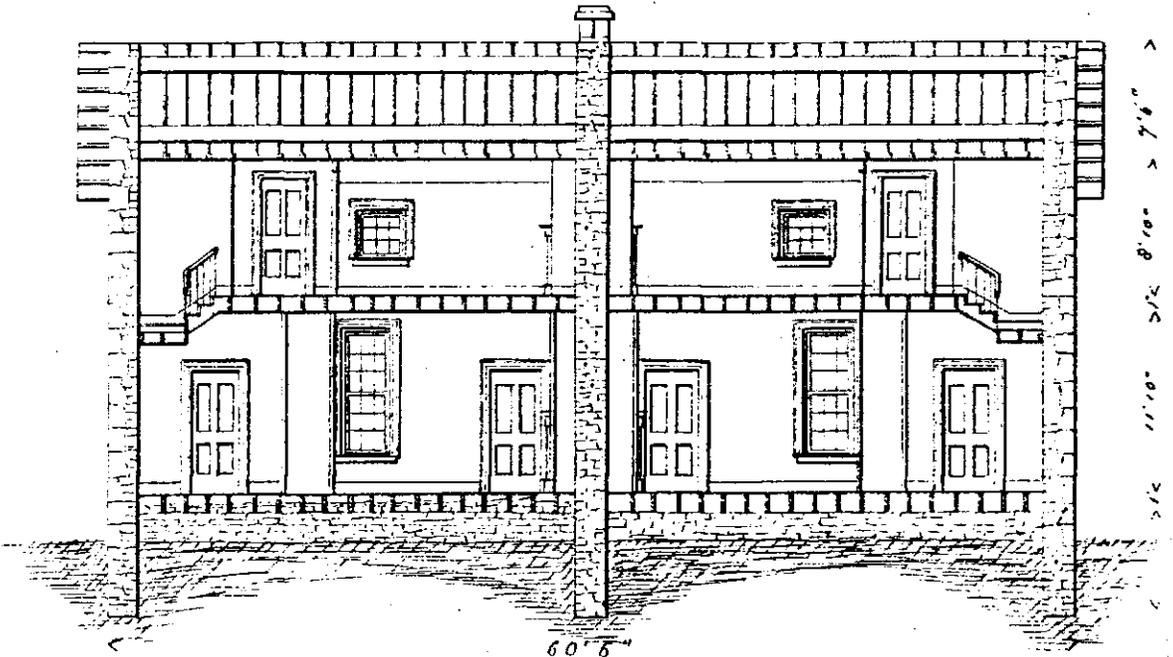
Prepared By:

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Summer, 1985

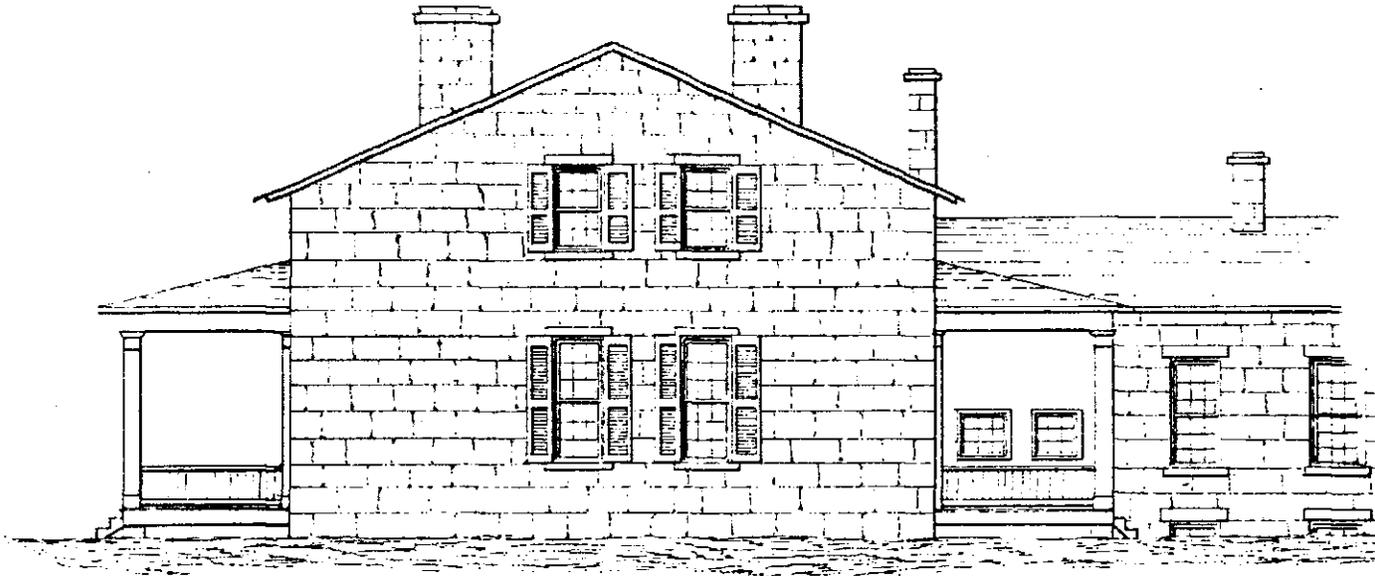
D. Supplemental Material
1. Front Elevation and Sectional



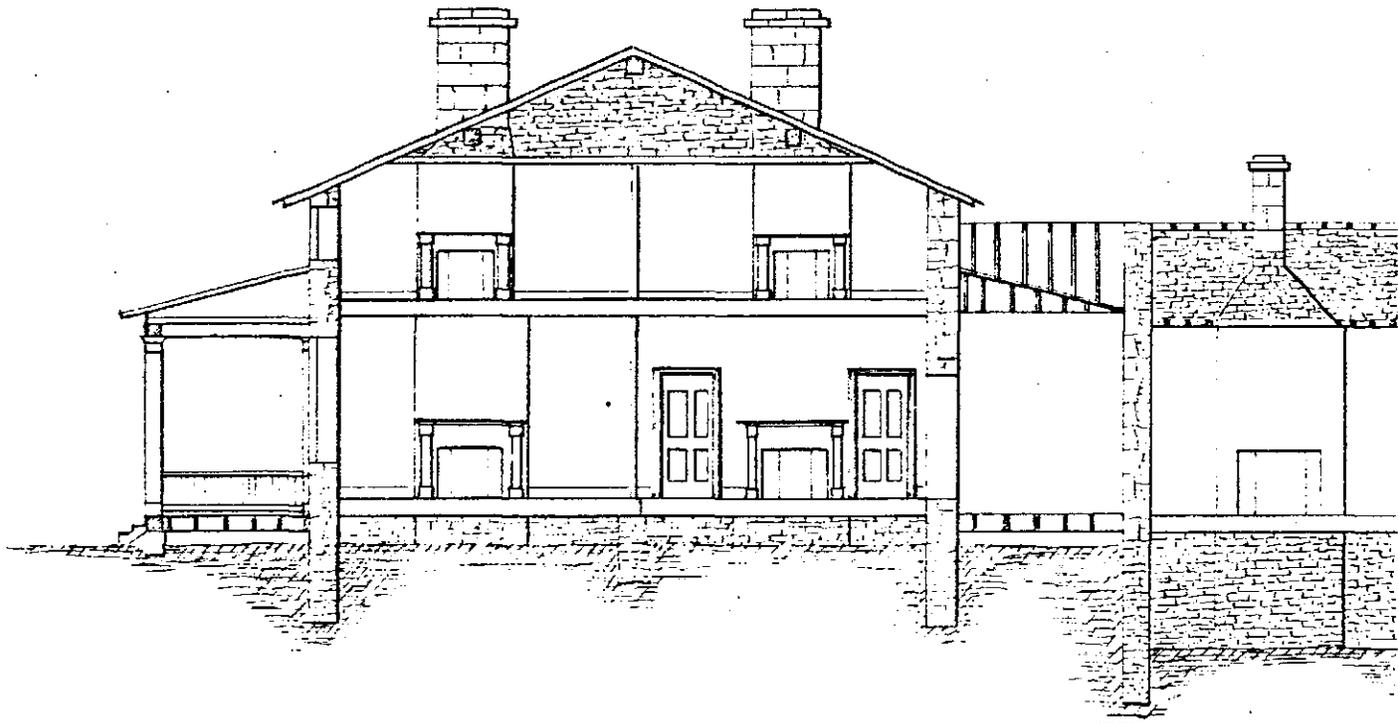
FRONT ELEVATION.



2. Side Elevation and Sectional

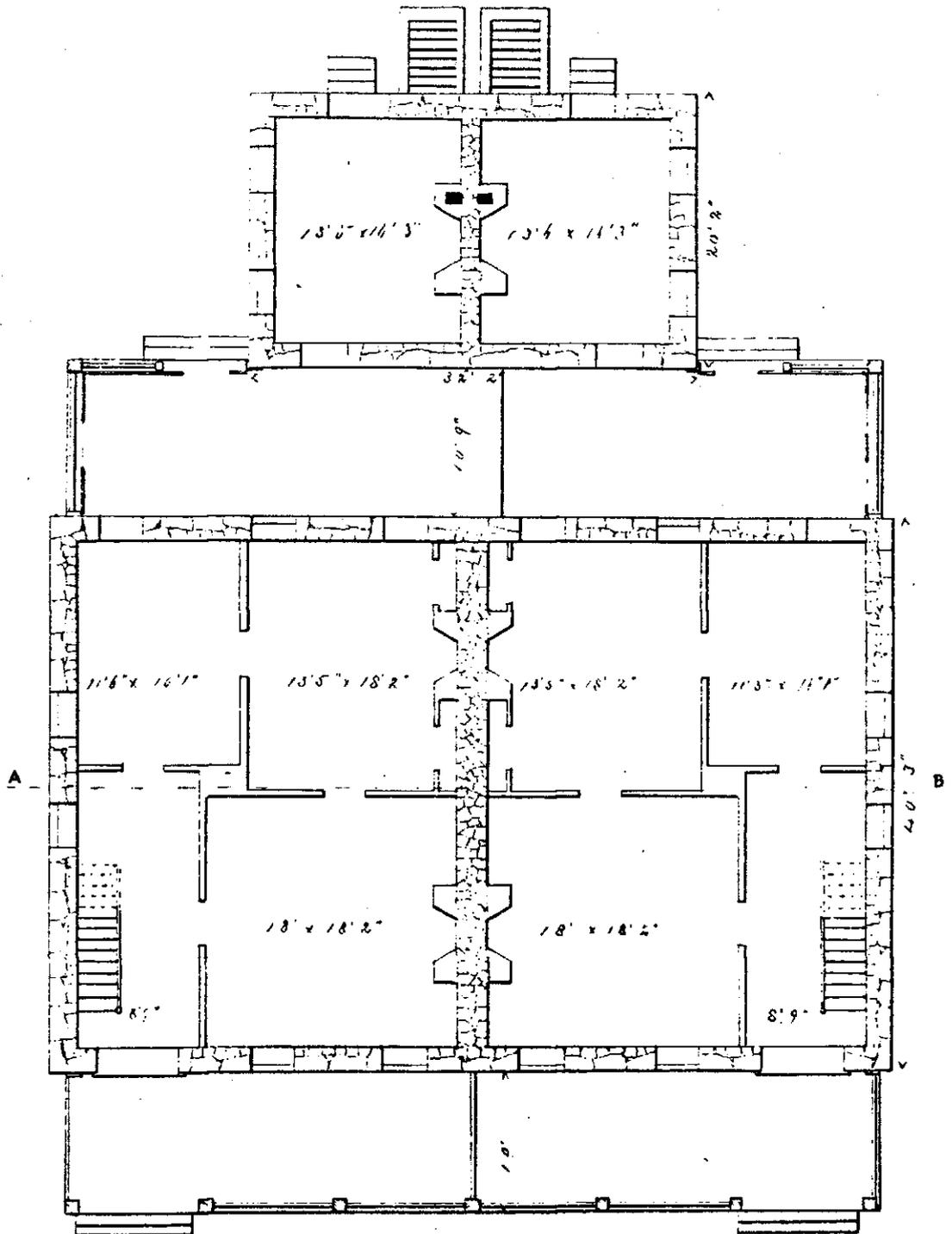


SIDE ELEVATION.



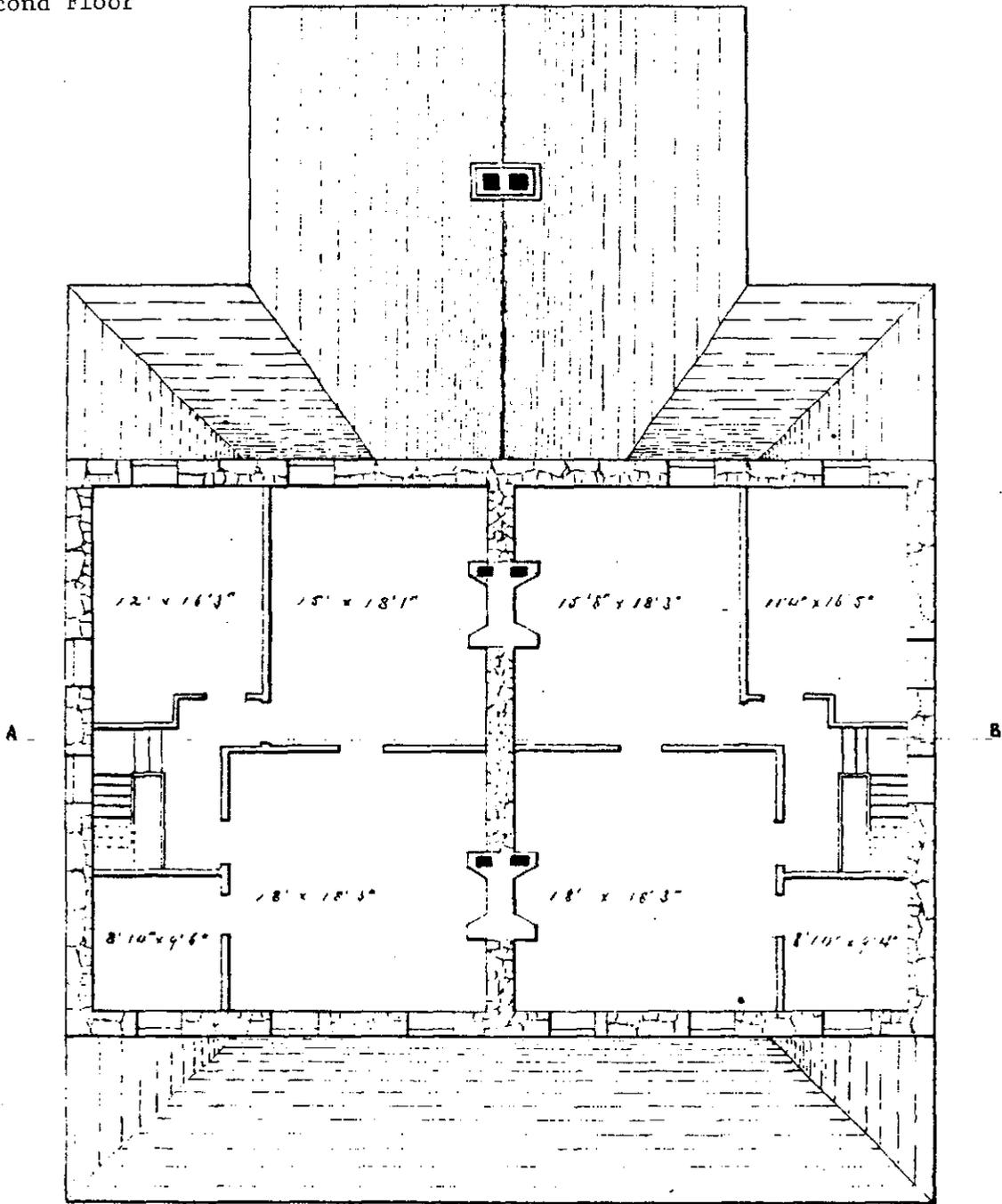
SECTION ON C. D.

3. First Floor



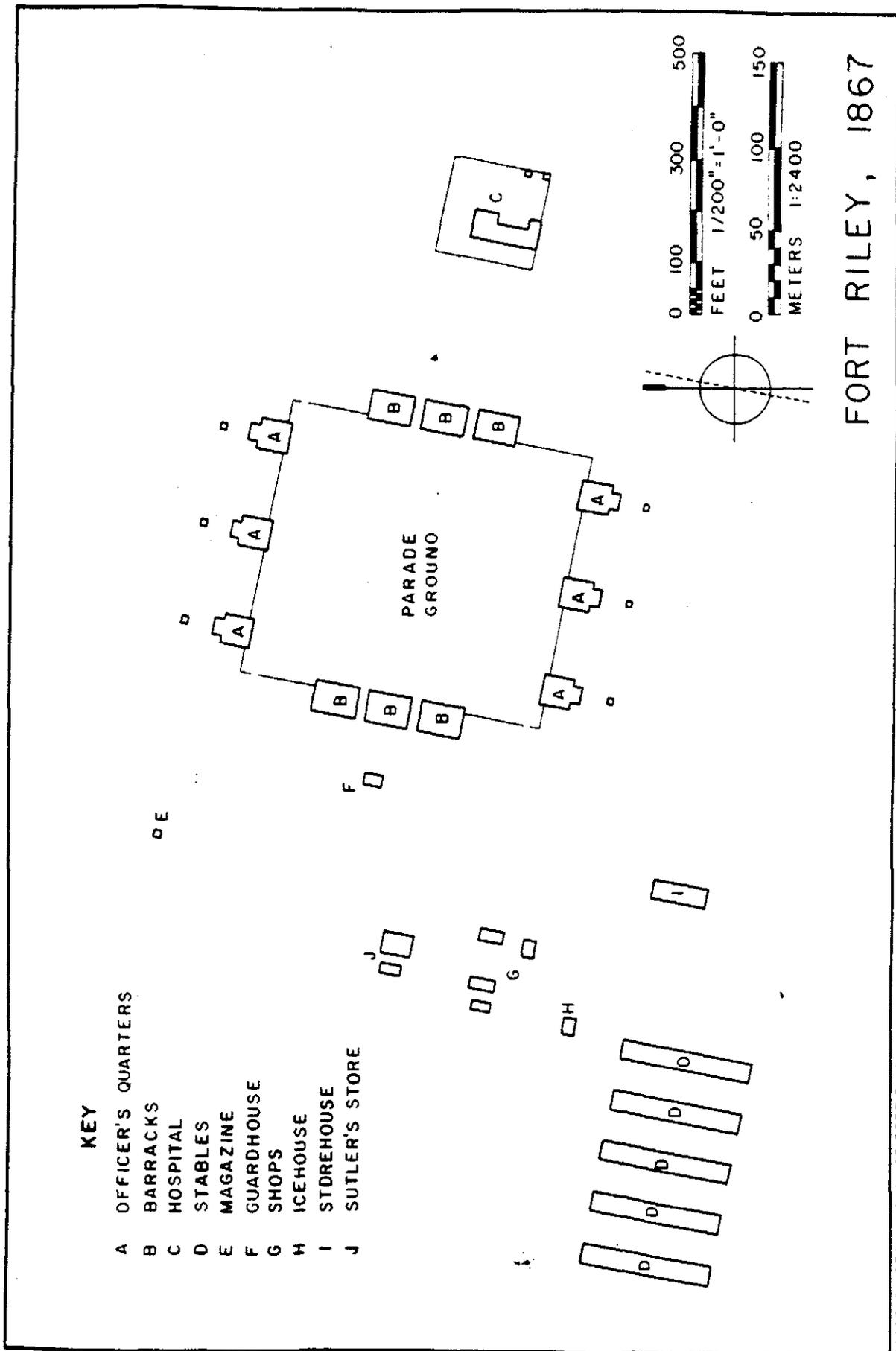
PLAN OF MAIN FLOOR.

4. Second Floor



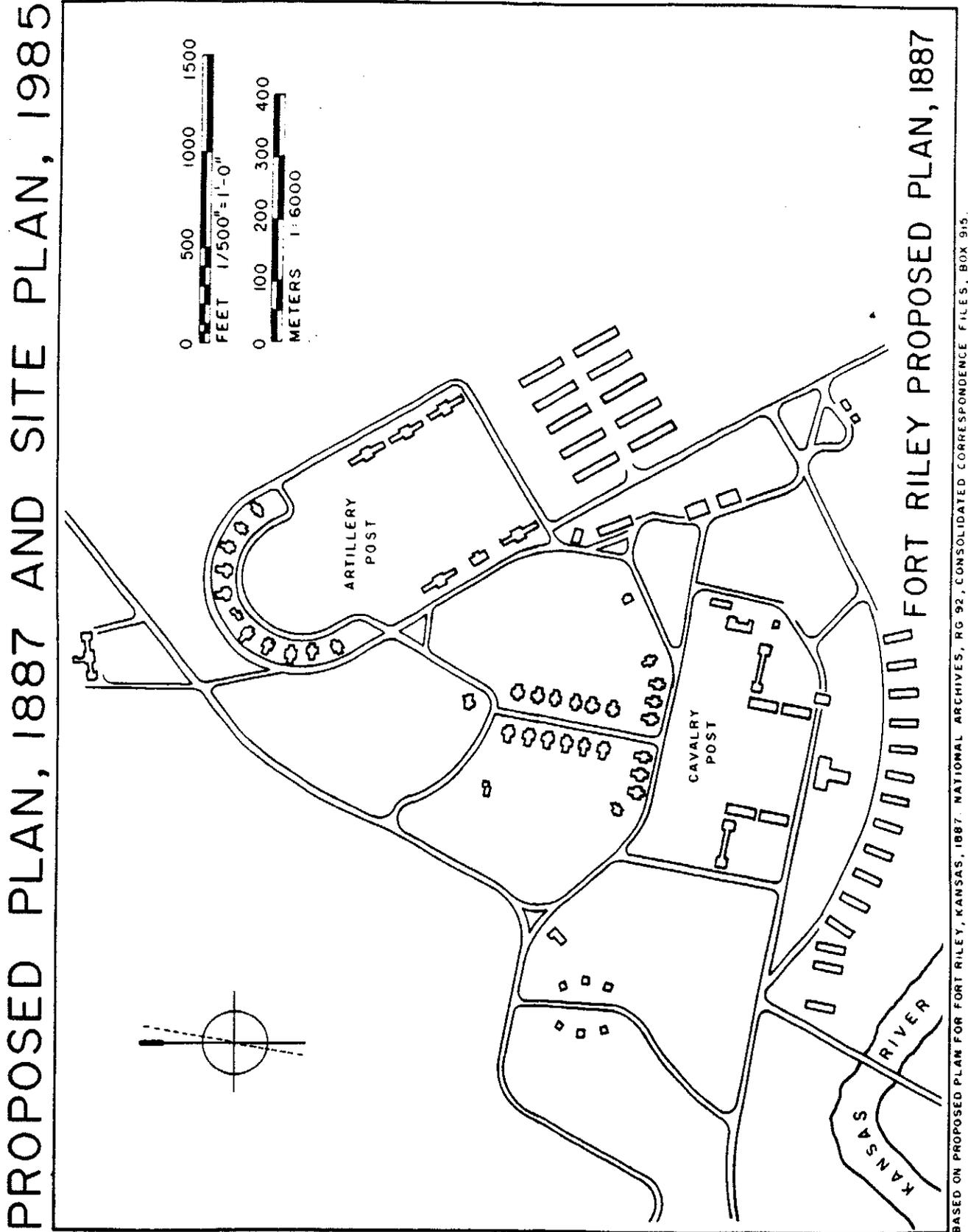
PLAN OF SECOND FLOOR.

5. Fort Riley, Early Plan, 1867



FORT RILEY, 1867

6. Fort Riley, Proposed Plan, 1887



BASED ON PROPOSED PLAN FOR FORT RILEY, KANSAS, 1887. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, RG 92, CONSOLIDATED CORRESPONDENCE FILES, BOX 915.

Part IV. Project Information

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the National Park Service in agreement with the Post Commander of Fort Riley, Kansas, and the headquarters of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, D.C. The project was completed under the general supervision of Robert J. Kapsch, Chief of the HABS/HAER Division. Sally Kress Tompkins served as Program Coordinator and Robie Lange as Project Leader. The field supervisor was James A. Glass (historian, Cornell University). The project historians were Catherine Crawford (University of Maryland) and Joseph Rodriguez (University of California). Large format photography was conducted by Mike Whye. Documentation was prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by Catherine Crawford.