

FORT SNELLING, TEMPORARY MOTOR SHED
(Fort Snelling, Bldg. No. ~~T202~~)
Fort Snelling Drive T203
Minneapolis Vicinity
Hennepin County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-56- BB

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FORT SNELLING, TEMPORARY MOTOR SHED HABS No. MN-56-BB
(Fort Snelling, Bldg. No. T203)

Location:

Fort Snelling Drive
Minneapolis Vicinity
Hennepin County
Minnesota

Quad: Saint Paul West, Minnesota

UTM: 15:484860:4970800

Present Owner: United States Government

Significance: From its construction in the 1820s until the Civil War, Fort Snelling served as a military post and the main outpost for transportation, protection, and commerce in the northern United States. The fort's geographic influence gradually declined after the Civil War, but its military importance continued. Fort Snelling became the headquarters for the Department of Dakota in 1881, and trained and housed men who fought in the Spanish-American War. Fort Snelling expanded after the Spanish-American War to serve as a brigade post for domestic and international missions. As part of this 1903 expansion, storage and maintenance facilities were constructed for field artillery, including a stable (Building 202), horseshoeing shop (205), blacksmith shop (206), and gun sheds (207 and 209). Two motor sheds (Buildings T203 and T203A) were erected in 1940 after another stable burned down and artillery was subsequently reassigned elsewhere. These buildings are significant not only because they lie within the Fort Snelling Historic District, but also because of the employment of early standardized plans (in 202, 207 and 209) and rarely used 700-series plans (T203 and T203A).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1940
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: United States Government
4. Builders, contractors, suppliers: Unknown
5. Original plans and construction: On the building records, "O.Q.M.G. Plan 700-372" is indicated, but it could not be located for this study.
6. Alterations and additions: Original building 203 was destroyed by fire 9 April 1939.

B. Historical Context: For context of site, see HABS No. MN-56-AA: Fort Snelling, Building 202, Part I.B. After the original stable on this site burned down in 1939, Building T203 was constructed in 1940 as a motor storage garage, with a capacity of 30 vehicles. After World War II, when this and surrounding buildings served as the post's service and supply division, the fort was decommissioned and the building was transferred first to the Veterans' Administration and then to the Air Force. In the late 1960s and 1970s, after being turned over to the Bureau of Mines, the building was used for the storage of equipment and large rock specimens.¹

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is a simple, one-story, rectangular shed covered by a low-pitched gable roof. The 700-series of plans was produced in an effort to improve and modernize military construction following World War I. However, the economic downturn during the 1930s meant that military allocations were cut back, resulting in limited military construction between the wars. Work on the 700-series correspondingly declined, and many of the plans were even lost by the late 1930s. Increasing hostilities in Europe, as well as the need for a cheap and economic means of construction under Roosevelt's New Deal, caused the plans to be resurrected for early World War II construction, only to be replaced in late 1941 by the 800-series. The 700-series, as well as other standardized plans produced by the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps, were always simple, rectangular, easily altered, and quickly constructed, partly so that the building could be used for other purposes after they had served their original function.²
2. Condition of fabric: Fair to poor. Much of the paint has chipped off, and one door is missing.

¹Information from Q.C., Building T203; Department of Veterans Affairs; and Lander to Hellison.

²William R. Henry, Jr., and Irene Jackson Henry, "An Overview of Standardized Military Construction 1917-1945," HABS/HAER Inventory, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, n.d., 65-67.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 46' x 180'8"
2. Foundations: Concrete.
3. Walls: The northwest and southeast walls are completely filled with doors. The gable ends are horizontal milled timber siding, with tongue-and-groove connections.
4. Structural system, framing: Balloon frame, with 2" x 4"s nailed at corners for bracing.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: None.
6. Chimneys: None.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The large doorways are the major architectural features of this building. There are fifteen ground-to-cornice doors on each side; the doors on the southeast side are numbered above the frames. All doors (except #7 and #10 on southeast side) have inverted "V" panelling with a middle vertical wood brace and two horizontal braces separating each door into thirds. Doors #7 and #10 are Dutch doors, which split the door into a top third and a bottom two-thirds. Unlike the other doors, these have horizontal tongue-and-groove panelling with two diagonal wooden braces, one for the top section, one for the bottom section. These two doors do not appear to be original. One pedestrian hinged door also has been cut into the southwest end.
 - b. Windows and shutters: None.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The roof is a low-pitched gable covered with composition shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: The northwest and southeast sides have a short overhang and rafters are completely exposed. The northeast and southwest ends have wooden fascia boards partially covering the exposed purlins.
 - c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Approximately 8300 square feet. The building is one large room.
2. Stairways: None.
3. Flooring: Crushed rock, uneven in many places.
4. Wall and ceiling finishes: The gable end walls are painted horizontal timber planking. The lower third of the supporting posts have been painted, but the rest of the interior is unfinished with exposed rafters.

5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: On the inside, the large doors have diagonal milled timber (placed in a "V" pattern on the inside; opposite from the outer doors) braced by a diagonal metal piece. Each door also has two wood block handles.
 - b. Windows: None.
6. Decorative features and trim: None.
7. Hardware: Standard large metal bracket hinges on the large doors.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: None.
 - b. Lighting: Electric light sockets with exposed wiring are strung along lengthwise beams.
 - c. Plumbing: None.

D. Site: For site information, see HABS No. MN-56-AA: Fort Snelling, Building 202, Part II.D.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

See HABS No. MN-56-AA: Fort Snelling, Building 202, Part III.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

See HABS No. MN-56-AA: Fort Snelling, Building 202, Part IV. The report was prepared in October 1992 by historians Charlene K. Roise and Deanne L. Zibell of Hess, Roise and Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota.