

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS, NURSES'
QUARTERS NO. 2
(Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Building No. 18)
(Veterans Administration Hospital, Jefferson Barracks)
(Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks
Division, Administration Building)
VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division
1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
Saint Louis
Independent City
Missouri

HABS MO-1943-J
MO-1943-J

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS, NURSES' QUARTERS 2
(BUILDING 18)

HABS No. MO-1943-J

- Location:** Building 18, VA Medical Center, 1 Jefferson Barracks Drive,
St. Louis, Missouri
USGS Quadrangle Oakville, Missouri
UTM Coordinates 16 7259009 E 9965686 N
- Date of Construction:** 1939
- Designer:** U.S. Veterans Administration (VA)
- Contractor:** Unknown
- Present Owner:** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Present Use:** Administration
- Significance:** Nurses' Quarters 2 was built in 1939 as part of a New Deal-era improvement campaign at the U.S. Veterans Hospital, Jefferson Barracks. The building continued to serve as nurses' quarters through World War II and the postwar era, and was converted to administrative use for the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, in 1980.
- Project Information:** This project was sponsored and funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as mitigation for the demolition of buildings at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, a property that has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places via consensus determination of eligibility between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources State Historic Preservation Office.

Description:

Nurses Quarters 2 (Building 18) is a three-story stucco-clad building with a hipped roof and replacement double-hung metal windows. The building is long and narrow, twenty-three bays long and three bays deep, with the facade on the east side of the building. The facade has a gabled central block flanked by hipped wings. The exterior has been altered but retains some original architectural details. The structure of the building is composed of reinforced-concrete posts and floors, with the wall spaces between the concrete posts filled in with brick and terra-cotta block. The structural materials are not visible from the exterior since all wall surfaces are coated with stucco. The interior of the building has been completely remodeled and retains no aspects of the original floor plan or interior finishes, aside from a remaining central staircase.

The facade (east wall) of the Nurses' Quarters 2 is arranged symmetrically and is twenty-three bays long, with a gabled five-bay center block that projects out slightly. Concrete steps at the center of the facade lead up to a concrete platform in front of the main entrance. The center block of the facade features an aluminum and glass replacement main entrance with original stucco-covered brackets and cornice positioned above. The center three windows on the second floor are capped with stucco arches with keystones, and the gable has a small arched louvered opening with a stucco arched molding with keystone. The gable features a white cornice at its bottom and a white raking cornice along the roofline.

The north and south wings of the facade each feature a symmetrical arrangement of double-hung metal replacement windows and two gabled pavilions near the far end of each wing. Each pavilion has arched windows on the second floor and a gable with cornice and raking cornice.

The north and south (side) walls of the building each feature a stucco-clad porch with arched openings on the first floor and rectangular openings on the second floor. Each porch is gabled, and each gable has a white cornice and raking cornice. The hipped roof of the side wings contains a series of arched dormers with double-hung metal replacement windows and wood trim. The rear (west) wall has a symmetrical arrangement of replacement windows, a projecting central block, gabled side pavilions, and arched roof dormers, very similar to the facade. The rear wall, however, also features a glass and stucco elevator tower that was added to the building during a 1980 renovation.

The interior of Nurses' Quarters 2 was remodeled in 1980 for office and administrative space. The current interior has corridors and office spaces with gypsum board walls, tile and carpeted floors, and acoustical drop ceilings with recessed fluorescent lighting. All original aspects of the original interior have been removed except for one staircase, which opens into the central hallway and has stairs with paneled metal risers. These risers, the

stair treads, and other structural elements of the staircase are original. All other original features of the interior have been destroyed.

History:

The U.S. Veterans Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, was part of an early 1920s plan to reform health care for veterans. Before the early 1920s, health care for veterans had in many cases been dispensed from improvised facilities that were in poor condition and not well suited for the task. After a well-publicized tour of some of these hospitals, the U.S. Veterans Bureau began planning and construction on new, modern hospitals throughout the United States. Planning for the U.S. Veterans Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, including drafting of construction drawings, took place in 1922. Construction on the hospital complex began in 1922, and the buildings were completed in 1923.

Nurses' Quarters 2 (Building 18) was part of a late 1930s expansion of the hospital, which by then was affiliated with the Veterans Administration, the agency that replaced the Veterans Bureau in 1930. Before the construction of Nurses' Quarters 2, nurses at the Jefferson Barracks VA Hospital were housed in Nurses' Quarters 1 (Building 3), which had been built in 1922-1923 with the other original hospital buildings. The hospital's medical facilities expanded once in the late 1920s with the addition of a Neuropsychiatric Building (Building 25) in 1929. In 1936-1937, the addition of the Dining Hall (Building 23) and the Recreation Building (Building 24) allowed former dining and recreation space in the Main Hospital (Building 1) to be converted to space for additional medical treatment facilities. This facility expansion likely led to the need for more nurses at the hospital, which in turn led to the construction of Nurses' Quarters 2 in 1939. In 1940, after Nurses' Quarters 2 was completed, Nurses' Quarters 1 (Building 3) was converted to quarters for a mixture of nurses and hospital attendants.¹

Nurses' Quarters 2 was designed by the Veterans Administration in a Neoclassical Revival style very similar to the architectural style of the 1920s buildings at the Jefferson Barracks VA facility that had been designed by the Department of the Treasury's Office of the Supervising Architect. The exterior of Nurses' Quarters 2 had a large hipped roof with a central gabled bay on the facade. The interior layout was similar to the layout of the 1922-1923 Nurses' Quarters 1 and was composed of communal spaces in the center of each floor, and apartments for nurses in the east and west wings of the first and second floors.²

The center portion of the first floor of Nurses' Quarters 2 had a large community room, two small rooms adjoining the community room (labeled as alcoves), and a small kitchen.

¹ U.S. Veterans Administration. *Attendants' Quarters, Building No. 3, Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.*, 1940, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

² U.S. Veterans Administration, *Nurses' Quarters, Building No. 18, Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.*, 1939, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

The north wing's first floor had seven small one-room apartments measuring 10'4" x 12'0". Each of the one-room apartments was equipped with a closet, a sink, and one door that opened out into a central corridor. The north wing also had three areas where the one-room apartments were connected by a door to an adjacent sitting room. It is not clear if these rooms were communal sitting rooms or if these sitting rooms were part of two-bedroom apartments for nurses with greater seniority. The first floor of the north wing also had one shower room and one toilet room for the entire wing. A fairly large porch sat at the end of the main corridor on the north end of the north wing. The layouts of the south wing of the first floor and both second-floor wings were largely identical to the first-floor north wing, except that the south wing of both floors contained a two-room apartment—on the first floor, the south wing apartment was for the chief nurse, and on the second floor, for the chief dietician.³

Nurses' Quarters 2 continued in its original function through the 1940s. The building was listed as Nurses' Quarters on a 1950 master plan map of the VA Hospital at Jefferson Barracks.⁴ However, the continued proliferation of personal automobiles and the development of south suburban St. Louis County in the 1960s and 1970s lessened the need for on-site quarters for nurses and hospital attendants, and several of the quarters buildings at the Jefferson Barracks VA facility were converted to other uses. In 1980, Nurses Quarters 2 underwent a complete renovation to be converted to an administrative facility. The interior of the building was gutted and rebuilt, and an elevator tower was added to the rear of the building in the center. All exterior and interior windows and doors were also replaced at this time.⁵ By 1990, the building was still in use as an administrative facility,⁶ and it is used for that purpose today. The only remaining interior finish or feature observed on the interior of the building was a staircase located next to the central entrance hall; this staircase still contains original steel-paneled risers and original treads. Upcoming plans for the redevelopment of the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, do not call for the demolition of this building.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Jamieson and Spearl, Architects and Engineers, *544-Bed Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Master Plan*, 1950, on file at St. Louis VA Hospital, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

⁵ U.S. Veterans Administration, Construction drawing files for Building 18, 1939-2010, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

⁶ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *Annual Real Property Survey Report, Building Numbers and Locations, Jefferson Barracks VAMC*, 1990, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

Sources:

Jamieson and Spearl, Architects and Engineers. *544-Bed Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Master Plan*. 1950. On file at St. Louis VA Hospital, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

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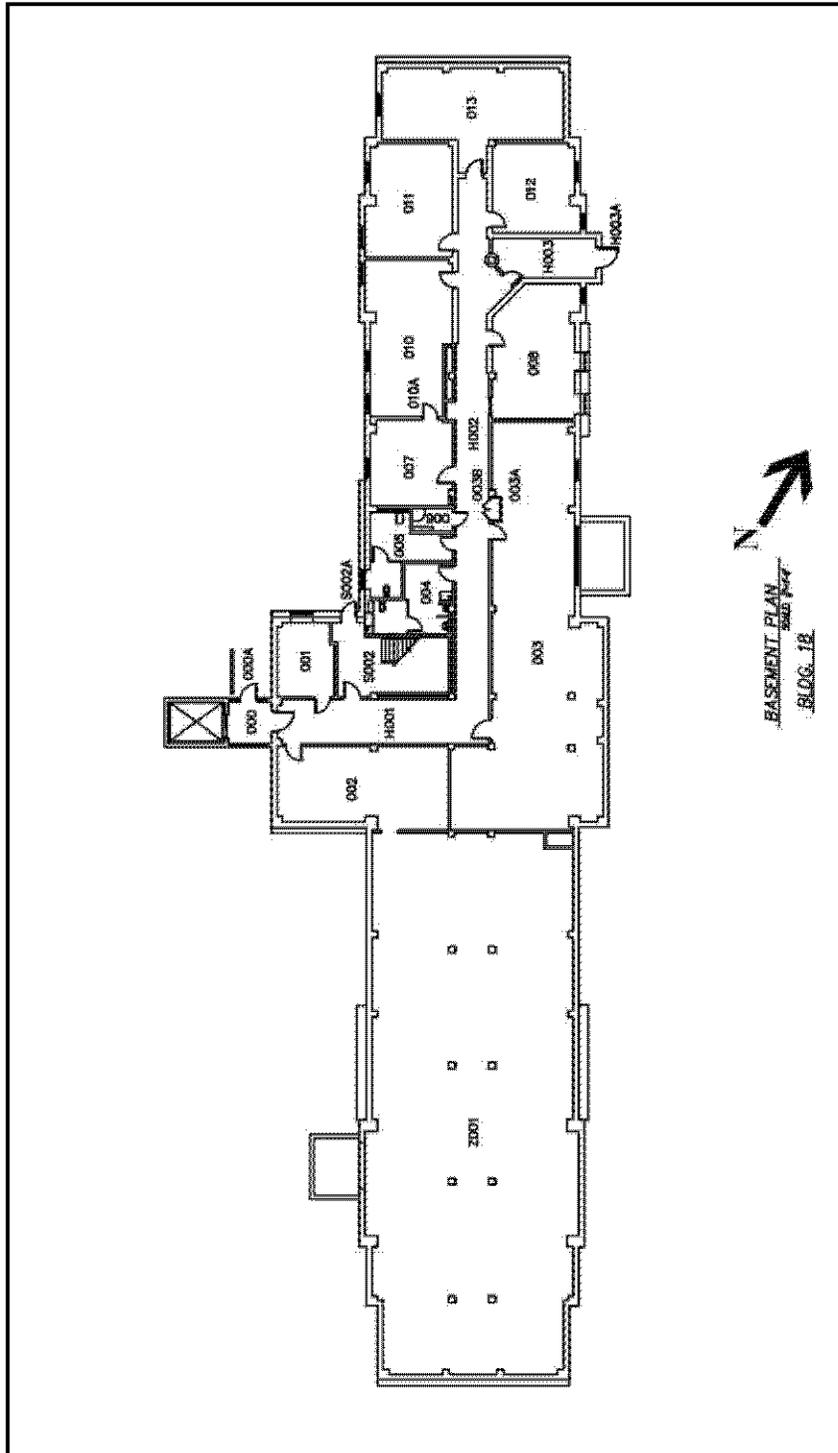
U.S. Veterans Administration. *Attendants Quarters, Building No. 3, Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.* 1940. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

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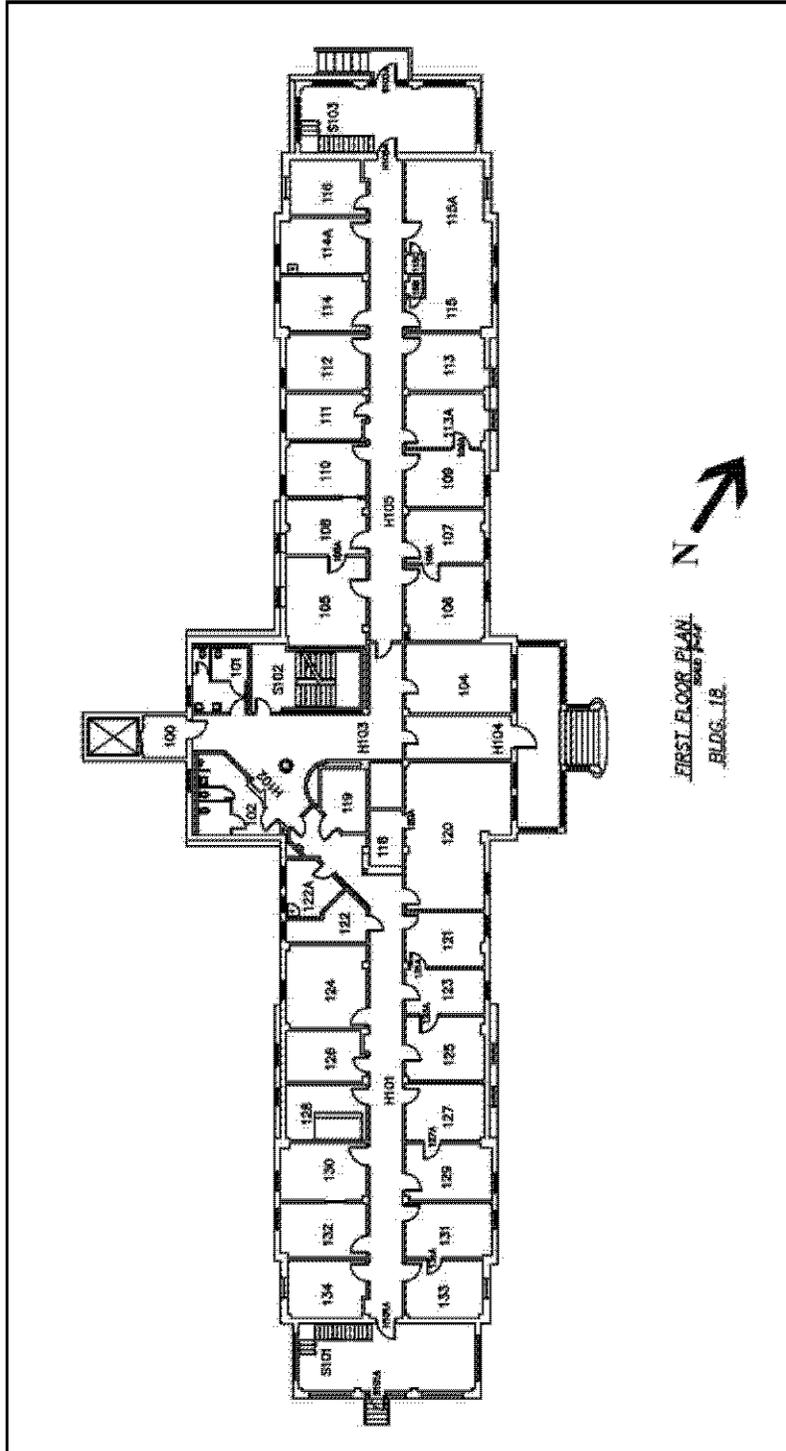
———. *Nurses' Quarters, Building No. 18, Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.* 1939. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

Historians:

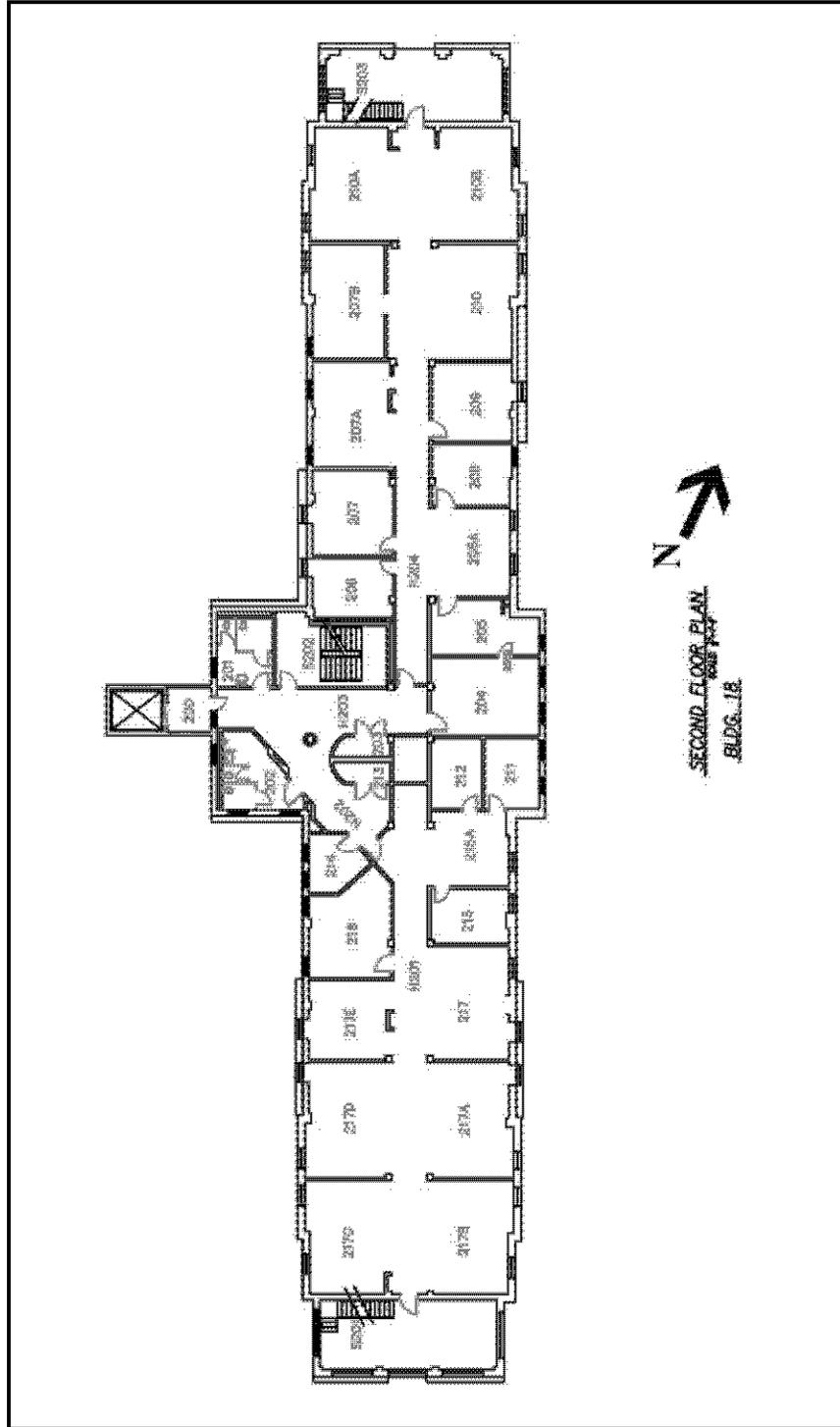
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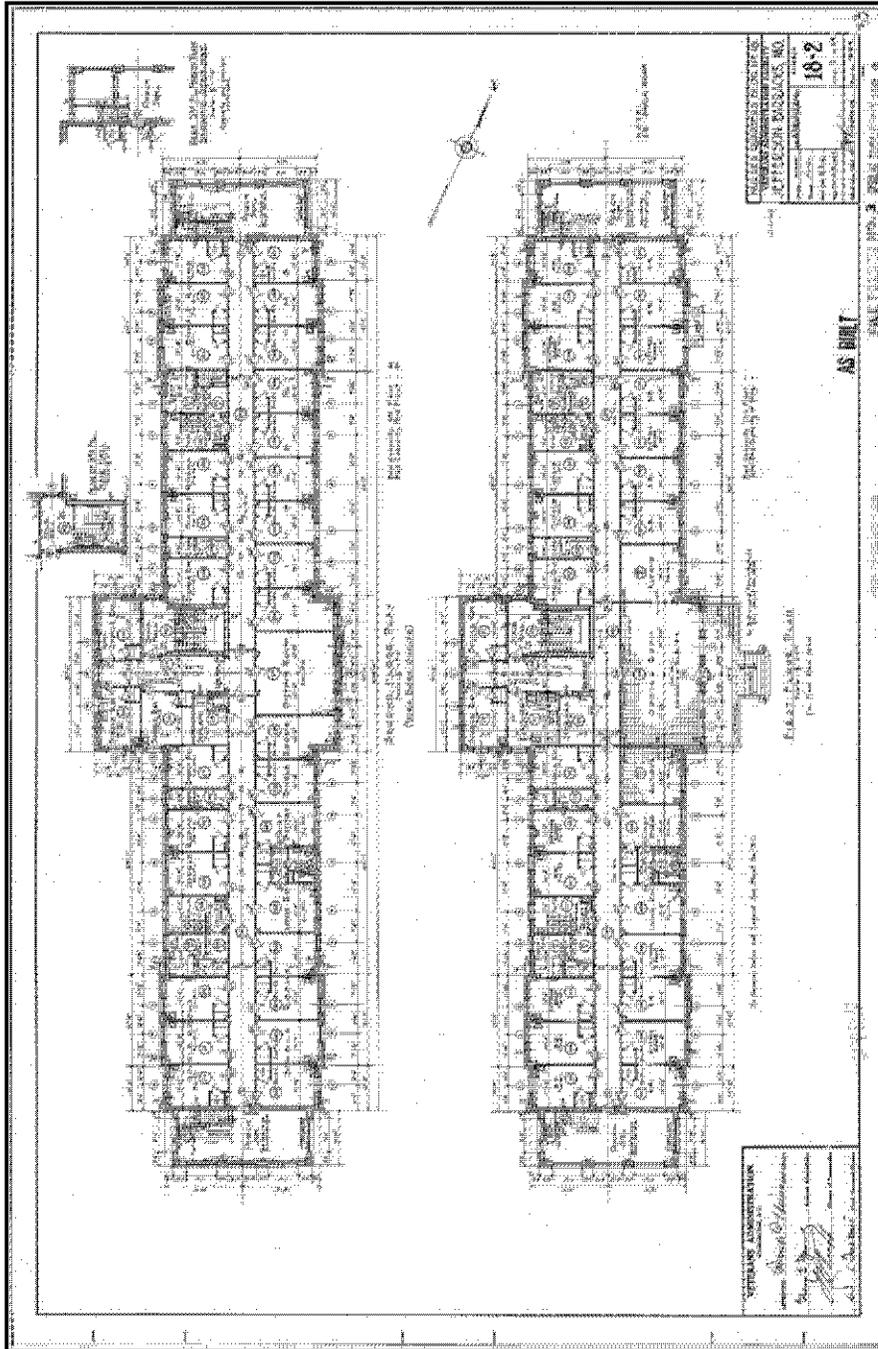
Nurses' Quarters 2 (Building 18), current floor plan for basement



Nurses' Quarters 2 (Building 18), current floor plan for first floor



Nurses' Quarters 2 (Building 18), current floor plan for second floor



Nurses' Quarters 2 original floor plans (Building 18), 1934