

FORT DRUM, ORDNANCE WAREHOUSE
(Fort Drum, Building T-81)
Northwest corner of Railroad Street and Ordnance Road
Watertown Vicinity
Jefferson County
New York

HABS No. NY-6337-A

HABS
NY
23-WATO.V,
1A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
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200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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1A-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FORT DRUM, ORDNANCE WAREHOUSE (Fort Drum, Building T-81)

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Location: Northwest corner of Railroad Street and Ordnance Road, in the warehouse area of the Main Post of Fort Drum, Watertown vicinity, Jefferson County, New York.

USGS Quadrangle Black River, New York; 7.5 minute series 1982 (photorevised from 1958); UTM Coordinates: Zone 18. 437990 E 4875200 N

Present Owner: United States Army

Original Use: As a storage facility for weapons and munitions.

Present Use: Currently used as a storage facility for building materials and other items.

Significance: The Ordnance Warehouse is the only relatively unaltered example of this type of structure situated at Fort Drum. The building's original purpose was for the storage of weapons and munitions. The design for the Ordnance Warehouse is probably based on the 700 Series of standardized construction drawings developed by the War Department for the mobilization effort during World War II. A reference on War Department Office of the Quartermaster General Form Number 117 for the Ordnance Warehouse is made to Plan Number 700-1480, but no other documentation was found to further substantiate this assumption.¹

This report is based on the review of plans that are filed at Fort Drum and on field observations, and these show that the Ordnance Warehouse is constructed utilizing techniques common to most World War II-era temporary structures.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. **Date of erection:** According to both O.Q.M.G. Form Number 117 and the Real Property Record for the Ordnance Warehouse, the construction was completed on June 9, 1941. As noted above, it was probably constructed according to Plan Number 700-1480 of the standard War Department drawings for the 700 Series.²
2. **Architect:** The development by the War Department of the 700 Series of construction drawings to be used in the event of another mobilization effort was a process that began in the late 1920s, with the drawings being based on those that were used during the First World War. However, it was not until

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Hitler's rise to power during the 1930s that the true necessity of plans on a grand scale to accommodate a large fighting force began to be realized in the United States, and called for by a small, but vocal, group of military planners. Among this group was Colonel Charles D. Hartman, who had been with the Quartermaster Corps during World War I, and he proceeded with producing the 700 Series with very little financial support. By 1940, when Hartman became the Chief of the Construction Division of the Quartermaster Corps, the development of the 700 Series was well on its way, with the assistance of Major Elsmere J. Walters. Major Walters was the Executive Officer of the Engineering Branch, and he oversaw the revisions to these drawings; the work was directly supervised by Major Robert B. Field, assistant to Major Walters.³ The construction activity during 1940-41 that occurred at Fort Drum (then known as Pine Camp) was administered by Major Gerald R. Tyler, Constructing Quartermaster.⁴

3. **Original and subsequent owners:** In 1909, the federal government acquired land north of the Black River in the area that is now known as the original cantonment of Fort Drum. Prior to 1909, the ownership of this land was held by private entities. Since that time, the government landholdings have been used for military purposes and have been expanded.⁵ The United States Army is the current owner.
4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** This structure was erected during the first major wave of pre-World War II construction at the post that began in the late fall of 1940 and ended in the early fall of 1941. The primary contractors for this work were the John W. Cowper Company, Incorporated, of Buffalo, New York, in partnership with Senior and Palmer, Incorporated, of Great Bend, New York. The two firms were successful in maintaining the construction schedule, and were commended by the chief of the Construction Division of the Quartermaster Corps.⁶ Much of the lumber used during this work was provided by the War Department.⁷ It is assumed that other materials were obtained through local suppliers.
5. **Original plans and construction:** The Ordnance Warehouse was probably constructed from Plan Number 700-1480; a copy of this drawing was not found in the records at Fort Drum. However, a floor plan at 1" = 20' scale, a wall section at 1/4" scale, and a revised foundation plan for this type of building were found; only the foundation plan is dated.⁸ The cost of construction for this building was \$5069.00.⁹
6. **Alterations and additions:** According to the photograph attached to O.Q.M.G. Form Number 117, some alterations have been made to the Ordnance Warehouse including the replacement of the four original roof ventilators with three larger ones, and the replacement of three of the original sliding doors. A new asphalt shingle roof was installed in January of 1977.¹⁰ On the interior, partitions have been erected to create a room in the northeast corner of the building; this room presumably serves as an office for this facility. The electrical wiring has been updated at some point. Also, a drawing dated April 14, 1970, indicates that the foundation of the building was modified at some point.¹¹

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B. Historical Context:

The general area of where the present-day Fort Drum is located has been of vital military importance due to the presence of the St. Lawrence River to the north and Lake Ontario to the west. The town of Sackets Harbor, approximately 15 miles west of Fort Drum, was a strategic post during the years leading up to, and including, the War of 1812; it, along with nearby Madison Barracks, served as a center of naval and military activity into the 1840s.¹²

In 1908, Brigadier General Frederick Dent Grant, son of General Ulysses S. Grant, came to the Pine Plains, as the Fort Drum area was known at that time, with 10,000 soldiers, most of whom were militia, and found the area north of Watertown along the Black River to be ideal for training troops. The following year, some of the land at Pine Plains was acquired by the federal government; more land was added to this initial acquisition in the ensuing years. By 1935, the government's holdings at Pine Plains were of substantial consequence to accommodate the largest peacetime maneuvers conducted in the United States.¹³

As a result of the war in Europe during the late 1930s and the early 1940s, the United States began to turn its attention to its own military defenses, and began the massive undertaking of creating a modern fighting force capable of defending the country against attack. At Pine Camp, as it was known during the Second World War, this tremendous effort took shape in the construction of approximately 800 buildings,¹⁴ and the creation of a small city beginning in November, 1940.¹⁵

Troops of the Fourth Armored Division began arriving at Pine Camp both by train and armored vehicle convoy in mid-April of 1941;¹⁶ the post was officially activated on April 15, with Brigadier General Henry W. Baird overseeing the ceremony and reviewing 4,000 soldiers.¹⁷

The first wave of construction took less than a year to complete, and by the fall of 1941 the military post had grown to encompass over 80,000 acres. At that point, Pine Camp could accommodate about 15,000 soldiers.¹⁸

General George S. Patton's 4th Armored Division, as well as the 45th Infantry Division and the 5th Armored Division all trained at Pine Camp during World War II.¹⁹

In 1951, Pine Camp became Camp Drum, named in honor of Lieutenant General Hugh A. Drum, the commander of the First Army during the first part of World War II. The installation was redesignated Fort Drum in 1974, and in 1984 it was selected as the site for the location of a new light infantry division, the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry). The current size of the post is 107,265 acres.²⁰

The Ordnance Warehouse, completed in June 1941, was one of the structures built during the pre-World War II activity at the post during 1940-41.²¹ It is the only relatively unaltered example of an Ordnance Warehouse remaining at Fort Drum. The building was used as a storage facility for weapons and munitions, and was controlled

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by the Ordnance Department, which was responsible for procuring and distributing ammunition and weapons.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: This building is a fairly intact example of a World War II-era Ordnance Warehouse and is presumably constructed according to the 700 Series of standard War Department plans. Built in 1941, the existing structure is simple and utilitarian in character and has undergone some minor alterations over the years, but these changes do not adversely affect the historic character of the building.

The 700 Series is typified by the use of 2" x 4" or 2" x 6" platform framing, double-hung wood windows with divided lights (six-over-six or eight-over-eight), and central heating. "Aqua medias" were significant elements found on some types of buildings from this series (primarily barracks and mess halls); these were continuous eaves running the entire perimeter of both one- and two-story structures. These buildings were to be temporary in nature, and yet certain features such as concrete foundation piers and termite shields were incorporated to increase their durability.²²

2. Condition of Fabric: Overall, the Ordnance Warehouse is in fair condition. The paint finish at the exterior is extremely deteriorated, especially at the windows and window trim, the west facade, and the doors; according to the Real Property Record, the building was last painted in 1968. The 5½" wide drop (German) wood siding is showing signs of wear in the areas where the paint finish is failing. Some trimwork is deteriorated with the worst areas being the window trim, corner boards, and raking boards at the eaves. Several panes of glass are broken or missing. The roof ventilators are rusted in areas, but the general state of the roof seems to be sound.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall Dimensions: The Ordnance Warehouse is a simple rectangle in shape, measuring roughly 25'-0" at the north and south facades and 64'-6" at the east and west facades. It is a single story structure with the height from grade to the roof ridge being approximately 21'-0".
2. Foundations: According to a revised foundation plan dated April 4, 1970, the foundation of the building at the east and west walls consists of a 6" wide poured concrete continuous grade beam that is 6" above the finished floor. The grade beam is supported by 8" square concrete piers at about 8'-0" on center; below the piers are 16" square reinforced concrete footings. At the north and south walls the concrete slab continues beyond the perimeter to form aprons at the door openings.

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3. Walls: The perimeter walls are composed of 2" x 4" wood studs together with wood sheathing, building paper, and 5½" drop exterior siding. The corner boards are plain 1" x 4" members.
4. Structural systems, framing: Except at the location of the door openings, there is a sill plate composed of two 2" x 4"s bolted to the concrete grade beam running along the perimeter of the structure. The building is composed of eight 8'- 0" wide bays, with each bay being divided into three sections by four 2" x 4" studs at about 32" on center; a window is located in each center section. The studs run full height to a double 2" x 4" top plate, the top of which is about 14'- 11" above the finished floor level. Horizontal 2" x 4" girts let in between the studs occur 7'- 8" above the floor, just below the windows. At either side of and below each window is a diagonal 2" x 4" running from the sill plate up to the girt just under the lower corner of the window; from the same point above the girt, another diagonal 2" x 4" extends up to the outer stud at a height of about 13'- 0" above the floor. At either side of the door openings is a 5'- 4" wide bay, divided equally by three studs; the diagonal braces are crossed at these bays, with the upper diagonal members continuing to the top plate. Of note is the use of triangular-shaped plywood gussets applied as reinforcement at the bottom, midpoint, and top of the outer studs at each bay; at the midpoints the triangular pieces form a diamond shape.

There are seven modified pitched trusses spaced at 8'- 0" on center; the top and bottom chords are single 2" x 8"s with 2" x 6" diagonal webs between, and each truss is reinforced with two 2" x 8" knee braces. The center of the bottom chords are reinforced by 2" x 8" gussets at both sides; at the ridge the trusses are fortified with what appear to be 2" x 10" gussets. Connected to the top of each truss with metal straps and bolts is probably a double 2" x 6"; between each truss are 2" x 6" rafters at 24" on center that support the roof decking.

5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and Doors: There are four 6'- 0" wide x 14'- 0" tall wood sliding doors, two each at the north and south elevations. The east door at the north facade is the only original unit; in the upper section are twelve lights (now covered with plywood), the lower section is accentuated with two 6" wide cross braced members that have beveled edges and the remainder is filled in with 6" wide vertical boards. The top rail and stiles are 8" wide, the bottom rail is 12" wide and is clad with a steel plate. The two doors at the south are composed of 6" wide vertical boards; the remaining door is divided into two sections each with 6" wide cross braces and 6" wide vertical boards.
 - b. Windows: Sixteen nine light wood windows punctuate the east and west elevations, eight on each side. Each unit measures 2'- 7" x 3'- 6½", and all retain the original wire screens. The plain wood trim is approximately 3½" wide and is in generally poor condition.
6. Roof:

- a. **Shape, Covering:** The roof of the Ordnance Warehouse is a gable one with a pitch of about 5 in 12. The ridge runs east/west and the wood sheathing is covered with asphalt shingle roofing material.
- b. **Cornice, Eaves:** At the north and south facades, the raking boards are 3½" wide plain wood members. A flat, plain 8" wide cornice board runs along the east and west eaves and is bolted to the roof structure.

C. Description of Interior:

1. **Floor Plan:** The Ordnance Warehouse is a simple rectangle in plan; the only variation from this is a room in the southeast corner that was possibly constructed as an office and does not appear to be original. Measuring 8'- 4" x 10'- 8", it is constructed of 2" x 4"s and clad with 1" x 10"s and it is 12'- 2" tall. It is trimmed with 1" x 4"s at the corners and at the top; the wood floor is raised above the concrete floor about 6".
2. **Flooring:** Except for the room described above, the floor consists of four sections of poured concrete.
3. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** All studs, rafters, and trusses are exposed; the non-original room described above is finished with plywood and other materials.
5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and Doors:** The single original sliding door at the north end matches the exterior description above except that the glazing is visible from the inside. The two doors at the south are divided into two sections with 8" wide cross braces and 6" wide vertical boards; the interior finish of the other non-original door is composed of 6" wide vertical boards.

There is a framed opening at the room in the southeast corner; it is 4'- 6" wide and 6'- 10" tall.
 - b. **Windows:** At each window the frame consists of a simple 1½" wide header and sill, with a stud at either side. Connecting the sill and the bottom rail of each window is a hinge, which allows the window to open to the inside.

There is a fixed six light window unit located at the room; it is 2'- 4" tall x 3'- 4" wide and has a 4" wide plain frame.
6. **Hardware:** Most of the original window hardware exists and is composed of a metal spring catch mounted to the top rail of the window, while the keeper is attached to the header. As noted above, each window is hinged at the bottom, and there are chains attached to the stiles to limit the window's projection.

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It is unknown whether or not the 16" long metal door pulls or the metal cane bolts at the sliding doors are original. The doors slide on a 2" diameter metal pipe track that is supported by metal brackets spaced at about 18". Overlapping and bolted to the upper ends of each door are metal straps that extend about 6"-8" above the door; these straps ride on the metal pipe. Bolted to the concrete grade beam at the either end of the east and west sides of the building are 3" wide, 2' long metal straps each with a 6" long return that acts as a door stop.

7. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. Ventilation: Three large metal vents are located on the east slope of the roof; these have replaced the original four vents, two of which are pictured on O.Q.M.G. Form Number 117 for the Ordnance Warehouse.²³
- b. Lighting: Thirteen original pendant-type light fixtures with porcelain enamel reflectors are suspended from porcelain bases that are mounted to what appears to be a flat 1" x 6", continuous, nailed to the underside of the roof rafters.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation: The building faces south, and is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Ordnance Road and Railroad Street, fronting on Ordnance Road. This area is labeled on current maps as "Pine Plains" and its topography is generally flat.
2. Historical landscape design: In spite of alterations and demolition activity that have occurred over the years, the original layout of the area in which the Ordnance Warehouse is situated is generally intact when compared to the 1943 site plan.²⁴ It appears that the building and at least two other ordnance warehouses (and possibly one more) were flanked by larger warehouses of unknown function; the axes of these larger warehouses run perpendicular to that of the Ordnance Warehouse.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: The design for the Ordnance Warehouse is presumably based on the 700 Series of standardized construction drawings that were produced by the War Department prior to and during the United States' involvement in the Second World War. A photocopy of War Department, Office of the Quartermaster General (O.Q.M.G.) Form Number 117 for the Ordnance Warehouse is on file at the Engineering Plans and Services (EPS) Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Building 479, Fort Drum. This form lists Plan Number 700-1480 as the primary drawing used to construct the Ordnance Warehouse, Building T-81; a copy of this drawing was not found in the records at Fort Drum. Three existing drawings associated with this building and filed at EPS are a floor plan at 1" = 20' scale (original

reduced and on bond paper), a wall section drawn at $\frac{1}{4}$ " scale (original reduced and on bond paper), and a revised foundation plan.

Field observations and measurements revealed that the Ordnance Warehouse was constructed basically as shown on the drawings; any alterations have been noted in the appropriate sections of this report. Since it is the only drawing of the Ordnance Warehouse with the date and other vital information listed, the revised foundation plan cited in the Bibliography has been photographically reproduced and is included with this report.

B. **Early Views:** A photograph of the Ordnance Warehouse is attached to the upper right hand corner of the first page of O.Q.M.G. Form Number 117. The date of the photograph is unknown, but it was probably taken not long after the building's construction since the original sliding doors and roof ventilators can be observed.

C. **Bibliography:**

1. **Primary and unpublished sources:**

a. **Drawings on file at Fort Drum:**

- i. "Standard Ordnance Warehouse. Floor Plan and Section A-A," [no source, date, or drawing number indicated].
- ii. United States Engineer Office, Syracuse District, Syracuse, N.Y. "Pine Camp, N.Y. General Site Plan," August 13, 1943.
- iii. Office of the Engineers, Camp Drum, N.Y. "Revised Foundation Plan for Ordnance Warehouses, Plan & Details," [no plan number], April 14, 1970.

b. **Other records at Fort Drum:**

- i. "War Department, Office of the Quartermaster General Form Number 117. Building Number T-81," [no date]. Filed at Engineering Plans and Services Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Building 479, Fort Drum.
- ii. "Real Property Record. Buildings. Building T-81," [no date]. Filed at Real Property Branch, Engineering Plans and Services Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Building 478, Fort Drum.
- iii. "History of Fort Drum Fact Sheet," [no date]. Photocopy provided by Environmental Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing.

2. **Secondary and published sources:**

Photocopies of the newspaper articles cited were obtained from a clipping file maintained at the Engineering Plans and Services Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Fort Drum.

a. Books and manuscripts:

Fine, Lenore and Jesse A. Remington. *The Corps of Engineers: Construction in the United States.* [volume in the series, *United States Army in World War II: The Technical Services.*] Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1972.

b. Newspaper articles (chronological listing):

"Air Squadron for Pine Camp." *Watertown Daily Times*, November 4, 1940.

"Large Force of Men Transforming 'Bad Lands' at Pine Plains Into Great Military City Comprising Two Miles of Barracks." *The Post-Standard* (Syracuse, NY), November 4, 1940.

"5,598 Employed on Camp Project," *Watertown Daily Times*, December 14, 1940.

"Cowper Firm Lauded; Pine Camp Work Up to Schedule," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, January 31, 1941.

"Carthage Honors Pine Camp Group," *Watertown Daily Times*, February 5, 1941.

"General Baird Takes Command," *Watertown Daily Times*, April 16, 1941.

"Fourth Armored Division Arrives at Pine Camp by Truck and Train From Fort Knox, Ky," *Carthage (NY) Republican-Tribune*, April 17, 1941.

"Building of Camp Nearly Finished," *Watertown Daily Times*, September 24, 1941.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

1. Documentary: Information on the construction firm of John W. Cowper Company, Incorporated, of Buffalo, New York, might be available in that city's research libraries. Additional information about Major Elsmere J. Walters and the role of the Quartermaster Corps in the production of the 700 Series of standard War Department drawings is probably located in the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

2. **Oral History:** An attempt could be made to locate and interview Major Gerald R. Tyler, the Constructing Quartermaster during 1940-41 at Fort Drum (then known as Pine Camp). Another person who might be a knowledgeable resource is Bob Brennan, a local historian from Sackets Harbor.

E. Supplemental Material:

1. **Drawings:** A photograph of the drawing produced by the post engineer and a photocopy of the plan and section, both listed in the Bibliography, are included at the end of this report.
2. **Photographs:** A photocopy of a historic photograph attached to War Department, Office of the Quartermaster General Form Number 117 is included. Large-format photographs of Building T-81 are also included as supplemental material.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This report was prepared by the Center for Architectural Conservation, Georgia Institute of Technology, as part of a project to document four representative types of World War II-era temporary mobilization structures at Fort Drum during June, 1992. The project was sponsored by the Tri-Services Research Center, United States Army Corps of Engineers, Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (USACERL), Champaign, Illinois. Keith Landreth, Director of the Tri-Services Research Center, provided assistance throughout the project. Assistance at Fort Drum was provided by Cait Schadock, Environmental Division, and Richard West, Engineering Plans and Services Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing. Large-format photography was done by Martin Stupich.

NOTES:

1. "War Department, Office of the Quartermaster General Form Number 117. Building Number T-81," [no date]. Filed at Engineering Plans and Services Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Building 479, Fort Drum.
2. "War Department, Office of the Quartermaster General Form Number 117. Building Number T-81," [no date]. Filed at Engineering Plans and Services Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Building 479, Fort Drum; and "Real Property Record. Buildings. Building T-81," [no date]. Filed at Real Property Branch, Engineering Plans and Services Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Building 478, Fort Drum.
3. Lenore Fine and Jesse A. Remington. *The Corps of Engineers: Construction in the United States.* [volume in the series, *United States Army in World War II: The Technical Services.*] Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1972, pp. 68, 69, 73, 108, 115, 116, & 163-166.
4. "Carthage Honors Pine Camp Group," *Watertown Daily Times*, February 5, 1941. Major Tyler also oversaw the construction of the cantonment at Fort (Camp) Hood, Texas, during 1942; he was a lieutenant colonel at the time. (See *Fort Hood: The First Fifty Years*, Odie B. and Laura E. Faulk, The Frank W. Mayborn Foundation, Temple, TX, pp. 51 & 58).
5. "History of Fort Drum Fact Sheet," [no date]. Photocopy provided by Environmental Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing.
6. "Cowper Firm Lauded; Pine Camp Work Up to Schedule," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, January 31, 1941.
7. "Air Squadron for Pine Camp." *Watertown Daily Times*, November 4, 1940.
8. "War Department, Office of the Quartermaster General Form Number 117. Building Number T-81"; "Standard Ordnance Warehouse. Floor Plan and Section A-A," [no source, date, or drawing number indicated]; and Office of the Engineers, Camp Drum, N.Y. "Revised Foundation Plan for Ordnance Warehouses, Plan & Details," [no plan number], April 14, 1970. Drawings are filed at Engineering Plans and Services Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Building 479, Fort Drum.
9. "Real Property Record...Building T-81."
10. Ibid.
11. Office of the Engineers, Camp Drum, N.Y. "Revised Foundation Plan for Ordnance Warehouses, Plan & Details," [no plan number], April 14, 1970.
12. "History of Fort Drum Fact Sheet."
13. Ibid.
14. "5,598 Employed on Camp Project," *Watertown Daily Times*, December 14, 1940.

15. "Large Force of Men Transforming 'Bad Lands' at Pine Plains Into Great Military City Comprising Two Miles of Barracks." *The Post-Standard* (Syracuse, NY), November 4, 1940.
16. "Fourth Armored Division Arrives at Pine Camp by Truck and Train From Fort Knox, Ky," *Carthage (NY) Republican-Tribune*, April 17, 1941.
17. "General Baird Takes Command," *Watertown Daily Times*, April 16, 1941.
18. "Building of Camp Nearly Finished," *Watertown Daily Times*, September 24, 1941.
19. "History of Fort Drum Fact Sheet."
20. Ibid.
21. "Real Property Record...Building T-81."
22. Fine and Remington, pp. 116, 117.
23. "War Department, Office of the Quartermaster General Form Number 117. Building Number T-81."
24. United States Engineer Office, Syracuse District, Syracuse, N.Y. "Pine Camp, N.Y. General Site Plan," August 13, 1943.