

Fort Sam Houston, Stable Guard and Shop
(Fort Sam Houston, Building No. 239)
South of Wilson Street between Liscum Road
on the east and Stanley Road on
the west
San Antonio
Bexar County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3303-20

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Intermountain Region
National Park Service
P.O. Box 728
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Fort Sam Houston, Stable Guard and Shop
(Fort Sam Houston, Building No. 239)

HABS No. TX-3303-20

Location: South of Wilson Street between Liscum Road on the east and Stanley Road on the west, Fort Sam Houston, Bexar County, Texas

Quadrangle: San Antonio East, Texas 7.5'

UTM: 14.551800.3257400

Date of Construction: 1910-11

Architect/
designer: Office of Quartermaster General

Builder: Ziegler Brothers, Junction City, Kansas, General Contractor

Present Owner: U.S. Army, Fort Sam Houston 78234

Present Use: Vacant

Statement of Significance: Building 239, a stable guard and shop building, was constructed in 1910-11 as part of Fort Sam Houston's fourth construction program. Associated with the horse stables area of the Cavalry Post, the building is an intact example of the architectural style, construction, and materials of the period and contributes to the architectural development of Fort Sam Houston.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Description: Building 239 is a one-story, load-bearing brick-masonry building with a gable roof. Built on a brick and stone footing wall, the building was designed to accommodate activities associated with the horse stables of Fort Sam Houston Cavalry Post. The vernacular-style building is constructed of locally manufactured, buff-colored brick set in a lime and sand mortar. The bricks are nominally sized at 4" x 8" x 2-1/4" and the joints are approximately 1/2" wide. Header courses are separated by five stretcher courses. Masonry openings have segmental arches made up of double soldier courses. Window sills are of cut limestone.

The building's gable roof is framed with wood joists and rafters spaced at 2'-0" on centers. Rafter ends project beyond the wall plane at the eaves and are decoratively cut. At the gable ends of the building, the roof overhangs the wall plane and is finished with simple barge trim. The beaded-wood roof deck is clad in monochromatic, red, French-type clay-tile shingles with decorative ridge caps. Two brick chimneys with projecting brick trim penetrate the ridge, and a circular, sheet-metal vent topped with a star penetrates the roof offset to the ridge. At the eaves, half-round metal gutters run the length of the building and drain to fluted metal downspouts.

Windows are six-over-six double-hung wood sash set in wood frames and are covered with recently installed metal security screens. Original wood doors have been replaced over the years and more-recent doors have been clad in sheet metal. Concrete steps lead to a single door set in the northeast end of the building.

Building 239 is one of three surviving buildings of its type and is laid out in a simple floor plan. The building is divided into two connecting rooms that served as quarters for stable guards and a separate, larger room that was used as a shop. The floor of the guard quarters is wood set on wood floor joists, the walls are of exposed brick, and the ceiling is of plaster on wood lath. In the shop, the floor is brick,

the walls brick, and the ceiling has been removed exposing the roof structure.

2. Condition: The building is in poor condition having experienced significant foundation movement that has caused extensive brick masonry cracking and deterioration. A 1-1/4" metal tie rod with locking plates and nuts extends along the southeast wall and indicates the long history of structural problems at Fort Sam Houston because of local expansive clay soils.
3. Original and subsequent owners: United States of America, War Department; United States of America, Department of Defense.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Ziegler Brothers of Junction City, Kansas, was awarded the contract to erect Building No. 239 and several other buildings in June 1910. Kansas City Slate & Tile Roofing Company provided tile for the roof. William G. Schuwirth of San Antonio, Texas, was the successful bidder for all plumbing, heating, and electrical work.
5. Original plans and construction: No original architectural drawings are known to exist.
6. Alterations and additions: Building 239 has experienced minor alterations that include covering doors with sheet metal, installation of metal security screen over windows, covering the original brick floor in the shop room with concrete, and the installation of electrical conduits, switch boxes, and lighting.

B. Historical Context:

Building 239, a stable guard and shop building, was constructed in 1910-11 at the end of Fort Sam Houston's fourth construction program. Begun in 1905, the program made Fort Sam Houston the largest post in the country. It was initiated in response to efforts by the War Department to consolidate troops and buildings in well-built, permanent posts where all arms of the service would be present for combined arms training. With the exception of an early aerodrome, buildings constructed at Fort Sam Houston between 1904 and 1911 served cavalry and infantry troops. Typically, they were built of brick and stone and had tile and slate roofs. Heavy reliance was placed on standardized

plans, and work frequently was done by private contractors, many of whom had experience on other army posts. The greatest part of the pre-World War I building effort occurred prior to 1910, and by 1911, when Building 239 was completed, construction consisted largely of infill.¹

During the period 1895-1913, Fort Sam Houston underwent a dramatic physical transformation as the army building program itself changed. According to Clary,² the 1890s represented "the clearest demarcation between an 'Old Army' and a 'New Army' before World War II." Consolidation of forces continued and increased in pace so that the ninety-six garrisoned posts in existence in 1892 had decreased to eighty in 1894 and to seventy-seven in 1896.

Of equal importance was the development of an organized approach to planning and construction, which was accompanied by increasing development and use of standardized plans; use of new construction materials and systems, such as steel, concrete, and stucco; and increasing reliance on civilian contractors, electricians, plumbers, and other members of the building trades.³

While Building 239 was constructed on property that had been acquired by the War Department before 1900, it was part of a building program that was focused on the construction of a sizable new post to the north. The Cavalry and Light Artillery Post was the fourth construction program at Fort Sam Houston, and at its conclusion, the fort was the largest post in the United States. Construction of barracks, mess halls, lavatories, and quarters for captains and lieutenants began in June 1904. The 1904 program was followed by

¹Manguso, John, *Pocket Guide to the Cavalry and Light Artillery Post, Fort Sam Houston, Texas*. Typescript in the collections of the Fort Sam Houston Museum, San Antonio, Texas.

²Clary, David A., *A Life Which is Gregarious in the Extreme: A History of Furniture in Barracks, Hospitals, and Guardhouses of the United States Army 1880-1945*, Volume I. Bloomington, Indiana: David A. Clary and Associates, 1983, pp. 10, 35, 39, 41.

³Freeman, Martha Doty, *Fort Sam Houston, An American Depot, Headquarters, and Training Facility, 1876-1946*. Fort Worth, Texas: Komatsu/Rangel, Inc., 1994, pp. 46-47.

another building program in 1905-06, acquisition of additional acreage in 1907, construction of a new Station Hospital in 1908, construction of a veterinary hospital on land that had been acquired in the 1870s, and continued planning for additional officers' quarters, barracks, lavatories, and mess halls.

In May 1909, *The San Antonio Daily Express*⁴ reported that the Quartermaster General of the United States Army had added twenty-two new buildings to his list of new structures to be erected at Fort Sam Houston, among them a stable guard building. However, President Taft, alarmed by the rapid growth of military and naval expenditures, issued instructions soon thereafter that appropriations had to be cut significantly. Congressman James Luther Slayden, who represented Texas and was a member of the Committee on Military Affairs, assured concerned San Antonio citizens that he would confer directly with Taft and support projects that were already planned for Fort Sam Houston.⁵

Slayden's lobbying efforts were successful, and within one month, the Quartermaster General informed the Constructing Quartermaster at Fort Sam Houston that eleven buildings had been approved for construction during fiscal year 1910.⁶ Correspondence between the fort and War Department about the buildings necessary to complete the new garrison continued during 1910, and by March 1910, the Secretary of War had approved construction of thirteen new buildings at a cost of \$134,000. News arrived that plans and specifications for the work would be prepared as soon as possible, and a map showing the locations of all proposed buildings was requested from the fort.⁷

⁴*San Antonio Daily Express*, 25 May 1909, pp. 3, 5.

⁵*San Antonio Daily Express*, 26 May 1909, p. 7.

⁶Quartermaster General, U.S. Army, to Constructing Quartermaster, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, June 12, 1909. Document No. 246999, Box No. 6134, Record Group 92, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁷Clark, E. W., communication to the Chief Quartermaster, Department of Texas, San Antonio, Texas, March 19, 1910. In Document No. 246999, Box No. 6134, Record Group 92, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

By April, the Secretary of War had authorized the construction of buildings at Fort Sam Houston in accordance with plans and specifications prepared in the office of the Quartermaster General in Washington, D.C.⁸ Subsequently, proposals for construction were solicited, and abstracts of the bids were forwarded to the War Department on June 10, 1910. Bidder for construction of the guardhouse, administration building, artillery stables, and stable guard and shop buildings with tile roofs at a cost of \$74,399.00 was Ziegler Brothers of Junction City, Kansas. William G. Schuwirth of San Antonio was the successful bidder for installing plumbing, heating, and electrical work on all the buildings, including the quarters to be built by H. D. Rheiner & Bro., also of San Antonio; and on June 15, the Constructing Quartermaster was instructed to accept the bids.⁹ According to post engineer's records, Building No. 239, the stable guard and shop, was completed approximately one year later, on April 11, 1911, at a cost of \$3,815.72.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Building 239 is a one-story, load-bearing brick-masonry building with a gable roof. Built on a brick and stone footing wall, the building was designed to accommodate activities associated with the horse stables of Fort Sam Houston's Cavalry Post. The vernacular-styled building is constructed of locally manufactured, buff-colored brick. Building 239's simple lines and utilitarian detailing blend with other similar buildings in Fort Sam Houston's complement of military buildings.
2. Condition of fabric: Building 239 is in poor condition having experienced significant foundation movement that has caused extensive brick-masonry cracking and

⁸B. F. Cheatham, letter to the Constructing Quartermaster, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, April 16, 1910. In Document No. 246999, Box No. 6134, Record Group 92, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁹B. F. Cheatham, letter to Constructing Quartermaster, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, June 16, 1910. In Document No. 246999, Box No. 6135, Record Group 92, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

deterioration. A 1-1/4" metal tie rod with locking plates and nuts extends along the southeast wall and indicates the long history of structural problems at Fort Sam Houston because of local expansive clay soils.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 20'-0" x 57'-10"
2. Foundation: The foundation is a continuous brick footing set on a limestone base.
3. Walls: Exterior walls are of load-bearing, buff-colored brick set in a lime and sand mortar. Headers are separated by five courses of brick laid in a running-bond pattern. The walls are 14" thick and mortar joints are 1/2" wide. Masonry openings are segmental arches made up of double soldier courses.
4. Structural system: The gable roof is framed with 2" x 6" rafters and ceiling joists set at 20" on centers. A 1" x 8" riser runs from the joists to the rafters at the ridge.
5. Porches: None.
6. Chimneys and flues: The building has two brick chimneys mounted on the ridge and a single metal ventilator mounted offset to the ridge. The brick chimneys have corbelled tops and the ventilator has a decorative star mounted on its cap.
7. Openings: Door and window openings are segmental arches, and window sills are of limestone. A large opening for a service door is spanned by a steel I-beam. Windows are six-over-six double-hung wood sash. Wood-panel doors are sheathed with sheet metal.
8. Roof: The gable roof has a wood deck sheathed in red French-style clay tile. Special tile shapes are used at the ridge and at the gable rake. The rafters, which extend beyond the exterior wall lines, have decoratively cut ends.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The floor plan of the building divides

the structure into three rooms that include a large work room and two smaller room used as quarters.

2. Stairways: None.
3. Flooring: The floor of the work room is brick and the floor of the quarters is of tongue-and-groove wood set on wood floor joists.
4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Walls are of painted brick. Ceilings are of plaster on wood lath in the quarters and exposed structure in the work room.
5. Door and window trim: None.
6. Decorative features and trim: No decorative features on the interior.
7. Hardware: Hardware includes utilitarian mortise locks with brass knobs and rectangular plates. Hinges are of brass and are of the loose-pin type.
8. Mechanical and electrical equipment: The building has no mechanical or plumbing equipment. Electrical systems include a basic supply and distribution system with a meter, disconnect, and conduit. Glass insulators remain mounted to an exterior wall from an earlier electrical service. Lighting fixtures include suspended incandescent fixtures.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Building 239 has its length running northwest-southeast and its width running northeast-southwest. The building is sited on ground that gently slopes to a creek located to the north of the building. Building 239 is the central of three such buildings adjacent to the creek.
2. Historic landscape design: The site is generally open and the ground covered in grass. Large, mature pecan and oak trees are located adjacent to the building.
3. Outbuildings: None.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: There are no original architectural drawings known to exist.
- B. Early views and site plans: The buildings are located on Fort Sam Houston site plans after 1911.
- C. Interviews: No interviews were undertaken to complete this form.
- D. Bibliography:
1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Fort Worth, Texas. Federal Records Center. Plans and Drawings.

San Antonio, Texas. Fort Sam Houston. Directorate of Public Works. Plans and Drawings.

Correspondence from the Quartermaster General. U.S. Army. Document No. 246999. Box No. 6134. Record Group 92. National Archives. Washington, D.C.

Manguso, John. Pocket Guide to the New Post, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Typescript in the collections of the Fort Sam Houston Museum, San Antonio, Texas.
 2. Secondary and published sources:

Clary, David A. *A Life Which is Gregarious in the Extreme: A History of Furniture in Barracks, Hospitals, and Guardhouses of the United States Army 1880-1945*. Volume I. Bloomington, Indiana: David A. Clary and Associates, 1983.

Freeman, Martha Doty. *Fort Sam Houston, An American Depot, Headquarters, and Training Facility, 1876-1946*. Fort Worth, Texas: Komatsu/Rangel, Inc., 1994.

"Army Work is Halted; Taft Cuts Appropriation," *San Antonio Daily Express*, 25 May 1909, pp. 3-4.

"Many New Buildings are Planned for Post," *San Antonio Daily Express*, 25 May 1909, p. 5, col. 1.

Fort Sam Houston, Stable Guard and Shop
(Fort Sam Houston, Building
No. 239)
HABS No. TX-3303-20
(Page 10)

"Army Bill Cut Means Delay at the Post Here," *San Antonio Daily Express*, 26 May 1909, p. 7, col. 5.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of Building 239 was carried out under provisions of a Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement regarding cultural resources at Fort Sam Houston. The work was prepared by Prewitt & Associates, Inc., for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District. Field investigation and documentation was accomplished by Joe C. Freeman, AIA, Architect. Joseph Murphey, architect for the Corps of Engineers, provided large-format photography. Jim Frisch of Jaster-Quintanilla & Associates, Inc., and Joe C. Freeman prepared the drawings. Martha Doty Freeman provided historical research. The drawings utilized field-gathered documentation.