

FORT BENJAMIN HARRISON
East 56th Street (Aultman Avenue) and Glenn Road
City of Lawrence
Marion County
Indiana

HABS No. IN-289

HABS
END
49-LAWR,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Great Lakes System Support Office
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha Nebraska 68102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
FORT BENJAMIN HARRISON

HABS
IND
49-LANE,
1-

HABS No. IN-289

Location: East 56th Street (Aultman Avenue) and Glenn Road
City of Lawrence
Marion County
Indiana

Quad: Indianapolis East, 1:24,000
UTM Coordinates: (1) 16.584871.4412877 (3) 16.584871.4411969
(2) 16.584043.4411945 (4) 16.584043.4412877

Present Owner: City of Lawrence, Marion County, Indiana; Fort Harrison
Reuse Authority; Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Present Use: The Fort is in transition. Most of it will become the City of
Lawrence, administrative center, commercial and industrial
activities and private residences. In addition, a portion will
become a 1,700 acre State Park.

Significance: Fort Benjamin Harrison is nationally significant as an
example of a well preserved, Pre-World War I military
installation. Established by Congress in 1902 as a regimental
infantry post of the U. S. Army, it was a self-contained
community, originally built between 1906-1910, upon
standardized plans. From its beginning, it served as a
garrison for troops as well as a training center. During two
wars it became a regional mobilization center. Later it
became a site of state CCC and other training activities, and
an Army Air Corps airfield. Specialized instruction facilities
at the fort have included finance, administrative, chaplain,
baker and cooks schools. Following a period of uncertainty
after World War II, the fort was reopened as the Army's
Finance Center. It served in this capacity until it was
scheduled for closure in 1991.

Project
Information: This documentation was prepared by Camille B. Fife and
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PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Fort Benjamin Harrison was established by Congress in 1902, but its roots are considerably older. In March of 1901, Lieutenant Colonel Russell B. Harrison returned home to Indianapolis to attend the funeral of his father, Benjamin Harrison, the twenty-third President of the United States. While there, he learned that a local landmark, the U. S. Arsenal at Indianapolis, was being phased out. The Arsenal had been a fixture of Indiana's military life since its construction in 1861. Moved from its original site in the heart of downtown, by the close of the Spanish-American War (1898-1901) it was located on a 75 acre tract on the east side of Indianapolis. The younger Harrison, recalling the Arsenal's "brilliant record" during the Civil War, set off for Washington DC to plead for its continuing use. Toward the end of 1901, a military board recommended the conversion of the Arsenal to a battalion military post. It would create facilities for an Army that had doubled in size during the recent war. ¹

Local opposition to locating the base so near the city called for an alternative, and Russell Harrison was successful in proposing the sale of the old Arsenal grounds and the purchase of outlying land in Marion County. By 1904, the Arsenal grounds had been sold and the War Department officially announced the purchase of land for "military purposes... about nine miles northeasterly from Indianapolis." ² The initial purchases of land in 1903-4 included 1,994 acres, with another 423 acres acquired in 1906-08, bringing the total to 2,417 acres at a cost of approximately \$279,000. The land was pristine, filled with forests, streams and varied topography which Russell Harrison saw as "well-adapted" for military purposes. ³ The site was named Fort Benjamin Harrison in honor of the late president and the efforts of his son on its behalf.

The land which was destined to become Fort Benjamin Harrison had originally been owned by farmers, some of whom had settled in this area many years before. A Gothic Revival farmhouse, originally owned by Newton Reddick once stood on the corner of Glenn Road and 56th Street (Aultman Ave.) and served

¹ Stephen E. Bower, *The American Army in the Heartland, A History of Fort Benjamin Harrison 1903-1995*, U.S. Army Soldier Support Center, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, 1995. p. 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³ *Ibid.*

for several years as noncommissioned officer quarters. Newton's father, Elisha Reddick had been one of the first to settle in Lawrence Township, purchasing 132 acres in 1823. The Spring Valley Cemetery, presently located on the fort grounds, contained the earliest graves in the township. ⁴

The construction of the fort began in earnest in 1906. That summer, the fledgling facility welcomed 20,000 troops for joint maneuvers between the Regular Army and the National Guard from six midwestern states. From its beginning, the fort had a positive impact on the economic life of Indiana's capital city. The installation was a small community, vividly described by a contemporary source as a "military city housed in thirty beautiful buildings of brick and stone, set on a horseshoe curve, with a parade ground in the center." ⁵ The complex was designed by the Army Quartermaster Corps, incorporating standardized plans used during this era. As noted, the focus of the base during these early years was its graceful parade ground, with its curvilinear drives. All of the administrative structures were located along the drive or immediately to the east. Streets were named to commemorate heroes of the Spanish-American War. ⁶

Fort Benjamin Harrison, from the time of its construction until the First World War, served as a garrison for the 10th and 23rd U. S. Infantries, and as a training center for the Indiana State Militia. The 10th Infantry was organized in 1855 in Pennsylvania, serving in the so-called "Mormon War", the Civil War and the Spanish-American War before locating at Fort Benjamin Harrison, where it was charged with continuing the development of closer ties between the Regular Army and regional National Guard units. The 23rd Infantry Regiment had been scattered among several smaller posts along the Mexican border in Texas before moving to Fort Harrison in 1912. After a year, the regiment returned to Texas. Although the fort came under consideration for closure several times before the outbreak of World War I, it was ultimately retained. This was probably due to the recognition, by a respected military spokes person, of its value as a mobilization site in the advent of a serious war. The central location and exceptional railroad facilities gave it great

⁴ Bower., pp. 28-9.

⁵ "Fort Benjamin Harrison is Rapidly Being Prepared as the Home for Uncle Sam's Soldiers," *Indianapolis Star*, July 14, 1907, quoted in Bower, p. 10-11.

⁶ D. E. McGillem & Assoc./URS/David R. Bush," National Register nomination for Fort Benjamin Harrison", 1989/1993, p. 2.

advantages. Indeed, it later became a strategic mobilization site for both world wars in which the United States fought during the Twentieth Century. ⁷

When the United States entered World War I, in 1917, Fort Benjamin Harrison played an important role as a training center. An estimated 12,000 men were in position at the height of this activity in June of 1917. Three Officer Training Camps, scheduled for three months intensive drill and instruction had begun operating, the first with an enrollment of 5,200 men. Fort Benjamin Harrison's grounds were decorated with a network of trenches and their support systems, as thousands of men learned to construct and fight in these World War I embattlements. Medical Officers Training Camps and later, an Engineers Training Camp followed, the latter preparing up to 9,000 men for duty primarily as railroad specialists. During the war era, the 10th regiment was divided into three new regiments and many Indiana National Guard units trained at the post. Among these was the 150th, called the "Rainbow Division" because it was mobilized with troops from other states to support the effort in France.

The renowned Indianapolis pharmacy company of Eli Lilly became involved in the war effort through a \$25,000 contribution to establish Eli Lilly Base Hospital 32 at Fort Benjamin Harrison. This was one of 33 voluntary base hospitals organized nationally prior to the U.S.'s entry into the war. Staffed by local doctors and nurses, the institution set up a 500 bed hospital in France. The fort was the site of an important medical convention in October of 1917, when approximately 1,300 officers and 2,000 enlistees gathered to hear talks by the important speakers. The Surgeon General of the U. S. Army, the Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service as well as British and French medical experts were in attendance. ⁸

Activity at the fort continued apace through 1918, including the establishment of General Hospital No. 25 to treat injured troops returning from the war. Mortality from the influenza epidemic, then raging across the country, was high. Later, the hospital specialized in the treatment of mental patients, especially troops suffering from "shell shock". It was closed in September of 1919. ⁹

⁷ Bower, pp. 16-17.

⁸ Bower, pp. 17-24.

⁹ibid.

Between World War I and World War II, Fort Benjamin Harrison served a variety of purposes. The National Defense Act of 1920 had reorganized the Army into nine corps areas. Originally the fort was named as the headquarters for area five, but by 1922, Ohio had wrested this distinction from Indiana. The fort became the home of the 11th Infantry. Founded in 1798, it was one of the nation's oldest Army regiments, with a proud history of continuous service and would be garrisoned at the Indiana post until 1941. Two others, the 3rd Field Artillery and 5th Tank Platoon were also in residence. At this time Fort Benjamin Harrison was considered one of the better equipped installations in area five. When the disastrous flood of 1937 struck along the Ohio River, troops from the 11th assisted the emergency relief effort, moving to Cincinnati, then Louisville as well as helping families in ravaged river towns like Lawrenceburg, Indiana. ¹⁰

Citizens Military Training Camps were active at Fort Benjamin Harrison for sixteen years, beginning in 1925. In response to anti-military public concern, the Army stressed the non-military aspect of the camps as "schools in citizenship". With the onset of the Great Depression, rosters for the camps were full on the first day of enrollment. Each man received free transportation, uniforms, laundry, shoes and meals for a full month. By 1933, the programs of the CCC had begun to operate and the fort served as Indiana's District Headquarters. Between 1933 and 1938, the CCC completed many projects in the Hoosier state and many companies were organized at the post, including Company 3550, an all-black group which moved from Fort Knox, Kentucky to Fort Benjamin Harrison in 1936, specializing in reforestation and soil conservation.

Fort Benjamin Harrison served as the site for various specialized schools, including the Bakers and Cooks school, during this era. Changes to the fort included the construction of various buildings and facilities, including new brick barracks, to replace outmoded frame structures, a Bandstand on the parade, and revisions to the post hospital. Schoen Field, was dedicated in 1922 as a 100-acre air field and expanded to 185 acres in 1933. The grounds of the renovated post hospital were enhanced by extensive landscape improvements and the roads of the complex were renamed in 1939, to honor

¹⁰ Ibid., and pp., 71-74.

commanders and men who had been stationed at the fort and distinguished themselves in action. ¹¹

The outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939 caused a notable change of pace at Fort Benjamin Harrison. By the fall of 1940, it was obvious that Fort Benjamin Harrison would be too small to adequately train troops for modern warfare; instead, it became a midwest induction center and provided logistical support services. A large hospital complex was constructed and the Finance, Chaplain and Baker and Cooks schools were opened and/or enlarged. A prisoner-of-war camp for Italian and German prisoners was maintained at the site from 1944 to 1945, as well as Army disciplinary barracks. ¹²

Following the close of hostilities, in 1946, many of the functions at Fort Benjamin Harrison were moved or deactivated. The new hospital was deactivated, the Finance School moved and the disciplinary barracks scaled down. The post was scheduled for closing. Although the post was briefly turned over to the Air Force, by 1950 it had been reopened as an Army facility, and became the permanent home of the Finance School. Another new function, the Adjutant General's School also moved into the fort. A new 315,000 square foot building to house their combined functions was completed and dedicated in 1957. During the 1950s, the fort also became the home of the centralized operations of the Army's Finance Center. A huge, \$19 million building, 1/5 mile long and 1/8 mile wide was constructed on a portion of the old Schoen Air Field. By 1957, 5,000 Hoosier employees were at work within its walls. ¹³

Fort Benjamin Harrison continued to serve as a training center, particularly for various administrative skills and operations. Although the names of the schools changed, these functions remained similar over the years from the 1950s through 1980s. Other activities, including National Guard, the Office of the Chief of Army Bands, and a center for enhanced physical fitness, were also established at the site. In 1987, the post hosted some of the activities of the 10th Pan-American Games, held in Indianapolis. Nonetheless, increased concerns for costs of defense after the cessation of the Cold War, resulted in consolidation and reduction of Army activities, including the standardizing of

¹¹Ibid., pp. 75-88.

¹² D.E. McGillem & Assoc., "Fort Benjamin Harrison Historic District National Register Nomination", 1993.

¹³ Bower, pp. 195-229.

all finance and accounting functions. In 1991, Fort Benjamin Harrison was added to the list of military installations scheduled for Base Realignment and Closure. A Fort Harrison Transition Task Force, composed of representatives from the fort and the adjacent towns of Lawrence and Indianapolis, became the official agency for the disposal and reuse of the facility. A National Register Nomination for the core area of the historic base was prepared in 1993, and, with some additions, was accepted in 1995. At the time of this writing, the base is scheduled for closure by 1997.

PART II. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

The early post, like a little "city", contained all the requirements for a population of about 1,000 people. During maneuvers, this number enlarged considerably, with the troops garrisoned in tents on the grounds surrounding the parade. Homes for the officers and their families lined the west and north side of the parade, ranging in a military-style hierarchy from the grand, single home of the base Colonel, to the duplexes and family quarters for lesser officers and noncommissioned officers. Bachelor officers lived in a gracious building on the northeast edge of the reservation. Post and Regimental Headquarters were housed in a substantial three-story building

The 2,400 acre installation was set in a rural area, close to a developing urban center. The post, including the northern area around Fall Creek, encompasses a large expanse of rolling and level land suitable for troop maneuvers. Its proximity to Indianapolis allowed for easy access to civilian labor and supplies. Railroad services were excellent, with a major line running through the center of the post. A passenger depot for the Interurban line had been built at the site in 1908 (it was individually nominated to the National Register in 1984.)

The layout and the original buildings of Fort Benjamin Harrison, taken together, form a planned, architecturally and functionally integrated community whose social hierarchy is reflected by building location and stylistic detailing. Many of the buildings constructed during later expansions complement the original style and planning which had been established during the pre-World War I era. The parade ground, surrounded by and transected by curvilinear drives, forms a graceful central feature of the base. Its plan is evocative of the type of configuration made popular by Olmsted and his successors in town and city planning. Trees planted along the drives and in graceful groupings at the perimeter have enhanced the residential setting of this portion of the base.

Natural ravines and other land forms, primarily to the east of the parade, have been utilized as landscape features. South of the former hospital (now headquarters building), the remnants of land forms of past garden installations can still be seen. Throughout the course of its history, Army administrators have attempted to enhance the landscape features of the residential portion of the post.

The buildings constructed during the first era of the fort, from 1906 through 1910 incorporated standardized plans used throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. The predominant design is based on the Colonial Revival style, reflecting the country's nostalgic attitude toward styles prevalent in the

East Coast during the early years of the nation's birth. The social/military hierarchy of the original community is reflected both in the residential pattern and stylistic detail. Officer quarters are clearly separated from enlisted men's housing and service areas. Size of buildings, as well as ornamentation differentiate senior officers from their subordinates. Group housing is less ornate, and administrative and service buildings are more sedate in their design.

All of the buildings in the original fort complex are clean of line, with ornamentation limited to eaves and cornices, gables, windows, doors and residential interior features. Invariably, they are constructed of brick with wood and stone trim. Foundations are poured concrete faced with coursed limestone up to a dressed limestone water table. Walls are common bond brick. Window and door frames have dressed limestone sills and flat or arched voussoirs above. Gabled and hipped roofs were common, originally covered with slate tiles, but now replaced by asphalt roofing. Porches are large, open verandas with wood columns and balusters (some are screened.)

Detailing on each building varies according to function. The most elaborate can be found on the senior officers' family quarters which are located on the north and west sides of the parade grounds. Variation in detail is according to rank. Bachelor officer quarters are less individualized and have simpler trim and less ornate porches than the family officers' residences. Administrative buildings are primarily located on the east side of the parade. The hospital complex is located to the east of the parade ground, with its own, less imposing officers' quarters located across the road to the east. The main building was constructed at the same stylistic level as the bachelor quarters and administrative buildings. Married non-commissioned officers housing is similar to the married officers quarters, but more modest. Enlisted men's quarters -- large barracks -- have little ornamentation except for their columned porches and stylized brick work above the windows. At the lowest end of the spectrum are the service buildings -- warehouses stables, commissary, utility buildings, etc. -- which have the basic structure and materials common to all original fort complex buildings. Individually, these structures are well preserved examples of a style common throughout the United States and its territories during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Together, however, they contribute to an overall integrity of design, setting, materials and workmanship that reflects a controlled, patriotic community unique to the military.

The Fort Harrison Historic District includes approximately one hundred twenty-six buildings, six structures and two sites. Part of this complement is a nineteenth-century cemetery, which pre-dates the establishment of the fort. The buildings within the district were constructed between 1906 and 1945. They can be divided into three sections: Residential and administrative buildings around the parade grounds; Service and utility structures east of the parade grounds; Hospital (now headquarters) unit, including four residences northeast of the parade grounds. In addition, two residential sections west of the parade ground and to the northeast were added which were constructed between 1929 and 1945.

The Residential/Administrative section which surrounds the parade grounds, forms the focal point of the original fort complex and the Historic District. This includes many buildings from the original construction era, as well as one and two car garages built in the World War II era for use by the senior officers, located behind the residences. Additional concrete block buildings and bleachers are of post-1952 construction. Buildings in this section and their original functions include officers family residences, the Commanding Officer's residence, bachelor officers' quarters, enlisted men's barracks, the original administrative building, a guardhouse, fire station, Post Exchange/NCO Club, bakery and the Interurban Railway Depot.

The Service/Utility Building section includes buildings which were originally constructed as: the fort commissary, a quartermaster storehouse and other storage sheds, a quartermaster corps office, the blacksmith shop, stables, as well as the original water tower and pump house for the fort's water system. The Hospital Unit area contains the original fort hospital (with several additions, it served most recently as headquarters for the Soldier Support Center), and several officer's family residences. Other areas in the historic district include buildings dating from 1929-1945. To the west of the parade loop are 13 duplex residences, "Sergeant's Row", non-commissioned officers residences, all built of brick and stone from uniform plans. Harrison House (originally quarters for nurses), and single residences of brick with concrete foundations are located to the northeast of the parade. The Officers Club, south of the golf course is of stone and was constructed in 1945.

Outside of the Historic District is the golf course (to the north of the district), and buildings which were, for the most part, constructed after World War II., notable among these are the Finance Center, Gates-Lord Hall (originally built to house the Adjutant General's and Finance Schools) as well as contemporary family housing, hospital, barracks, storage and service buildings. In the

northeast section of the complex is a tract of 1,700 acres which includes Delaware Lake, one of three small ponds in the area. This section of the post which contains streams, rare plants, virgin forests, as well as numerous varieties of wildlife is destined to become a nature preserve and state park.

PART III. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Thompson, Timothy W. & Technical Assistance Center, US Army Corps of Engineers. "Fort Benjamin Harrison Historic District (Boundary Increase). Champaign, Illinois & Fort Monroe, VA, 1994.

Bower, Stephen E. *The American Army In The Heartland, A History Of Fort Benjamin Harrison, 1903-1995*. Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana: Command History Office, U.S. Army Soldier Support Center, 1995.

Shafer, Tom. "Fort Benjamin Harrison Historical District", Unpublished MSS, Fort Benjamin Harrison, 14 march 1990.

Historic Photographs

A large number of historic photographs, documents and negatives have been turned over by Fort Benjamin Harrison personnel to the Fort Harrison Historical Society. As of October, 1996, these were stored in Building 611 on the site. An inventory follows. Because these documents are in transit it was not possible to rephotograph them. The Historical Society hopes to obtain a permanent repository on or near the post in the near future. Mr. Fred Spaulding is the President of the Society (daytime telephone: 317-846-4306.)

Inventory of photographs & documents (per Fort Benjamin Harrison staff, 1996)

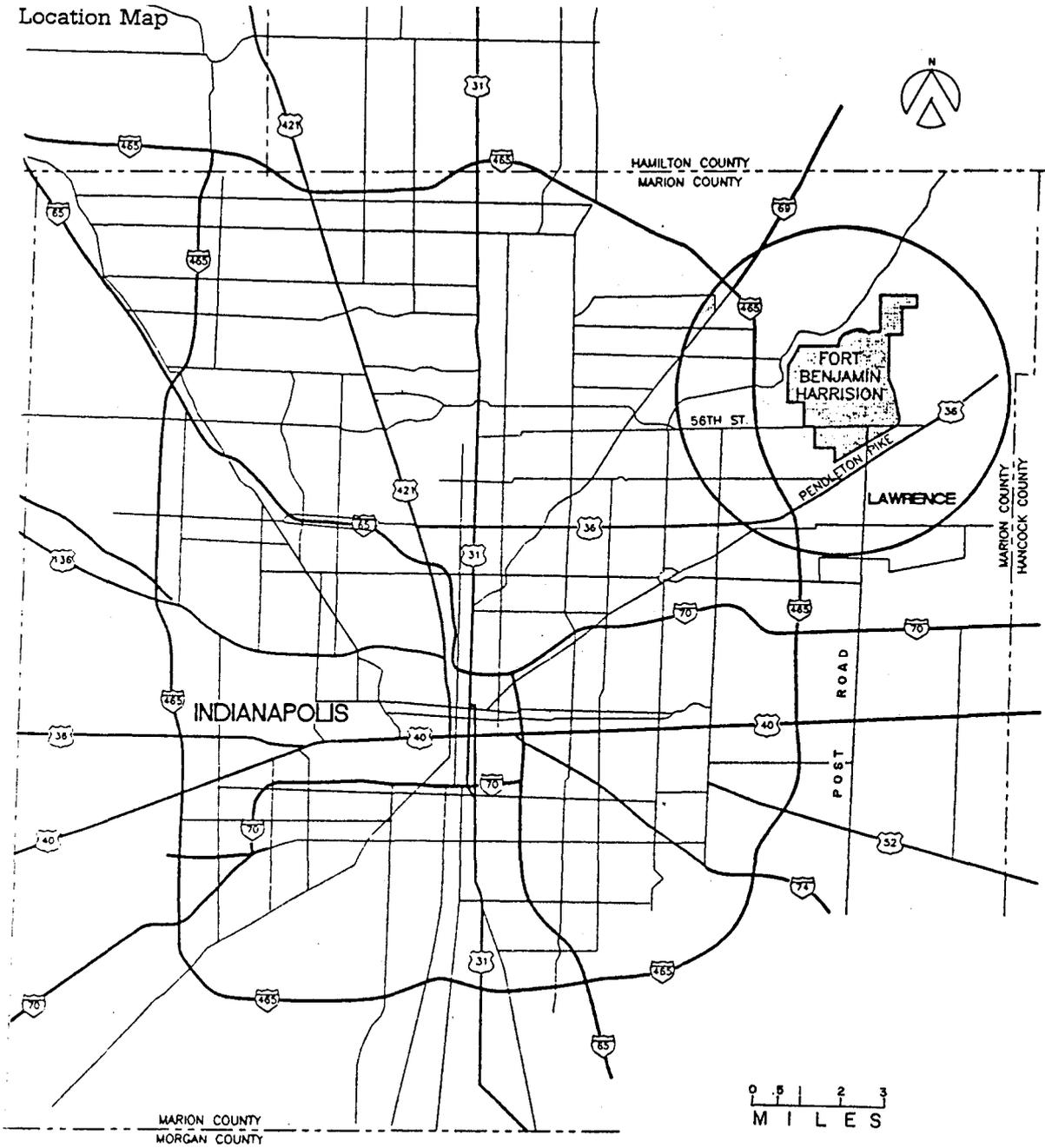
1. OFFICERS 19TH FIELD ARTILLERY	11-15-38
2. 3RD INF. OFFICERS TRAINING SCHOOL	SEPT. 1917
3. HQ 11TH INFANTRY	1938
4. 19TH CO. 5TH TRAINING BATTALION	?
5. BLDG. 666,667,668	JAN 7, 1917
6. FINAL REVIEW OF TROOPS	NOV. 23, 1918
7. 4TH CO.	AUG. 1918
8. LOOKING W. FROM WATER TOWER	1918
9. CO. D 10TH INF.	OCT. 1917
10. BIRDSEYE VIEW OF W. CANTONMENT	AUG. 1, 1918
11. BIRDSEYE VIEW OF FBH	1938
12. OFFICERS TRAINING CAMP	?
13. 11TH B. CO.	DEC. 14, 1938
14. 11TH INF BAND	JAN, 1938

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15. 14 QUARTERMASTER OFFICERS	1892
16. 14TH INF. OFFICERS TRAINING CAMP	SEPT. 1917
17. LOOKING W. FROM WATER TOWER	1917
18. PARADE 8" & 9" TRAINING DIVISIONS	JUNE, 1917
19. 2ND COAST OFFICERS TRAINING CAMP	SEPT. 1917
20. BLDG. 666,667,668,669	?
21. PANORAMIC VIEW OF LAWTON LOOP	?
22. CO D 138TH ENGINEERS	DEC. 15, 1918
23. FBH	1926
24. 11TH U.S. INFANTRY	DEC. 14, 1936
25. 1ST BN 3RD FIELD ARTILLERY	OCT., 1931
26. FBH INFANTRY POST	1931
27. 12TH CO. 16 DEPOT BRIGADE	?
28. FINAL REVIEW OF TROOPS	NOV., 23, 1918
29. 19TH ENGINEER DETACHMENT	SEPT. 3, 1918
30. AGOAC 4-81 (BRASS PLATE)	NOV. 20, 1981
31. TRAINING CAMP FBH	1917
32. BIRDSEYE VIEW/EAST CANTONMENT	AUG. 1, 1918
33. C.M.T.C. HQ CO.	1927
34. BOOK, "SNAP IT UP"	1925
35. TRAINING CAMP BOOKLET	NOV, 1917
36. BOOK, "SNAP IT UP"	1925
37. ANNUAL REPORT AG SCHOOL	1955
38. BOX OF 154 EA. VARIOUS PICTURES	
39. BOX OF 40 EA. PHOTO NEGATIVES	
40. BOOK OF 24 EA. POSTCARDS	
41. PICTURE OF FOOTBALL SQUAD	NOV. 17, 1938
42. VIDEO TAPE - USASSC DISCONTINUANCE AND RETIREMENT CEREMONY MG BROOKS	
43. 36 PHOTOS OF PAST FBH AND SSC COMMANDERS	
44. FLAG, BOY SCOUT, FBH	
45. BRIGADE PARADE	1917
46. MISCELLANEOUS CHECKLISTS	

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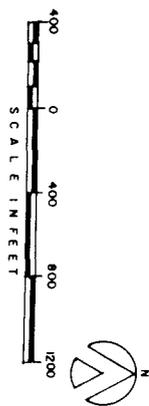
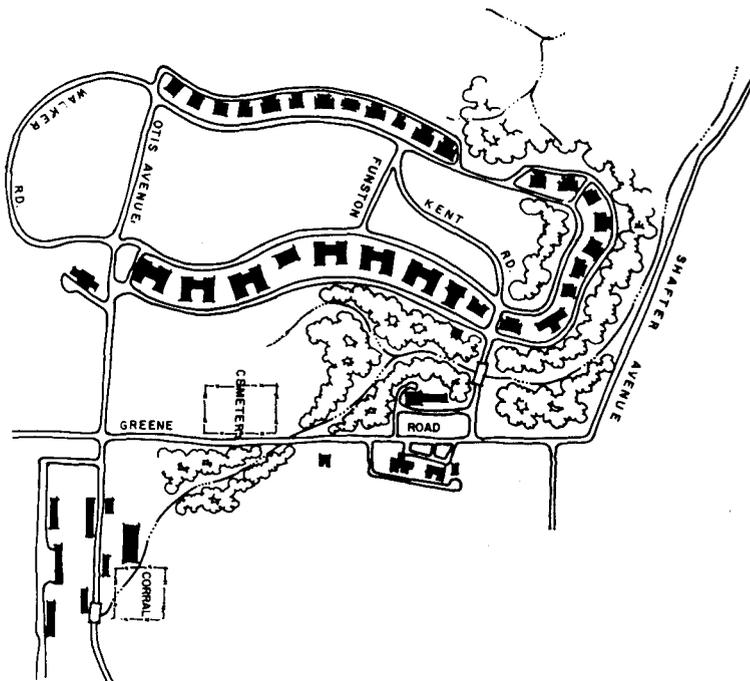
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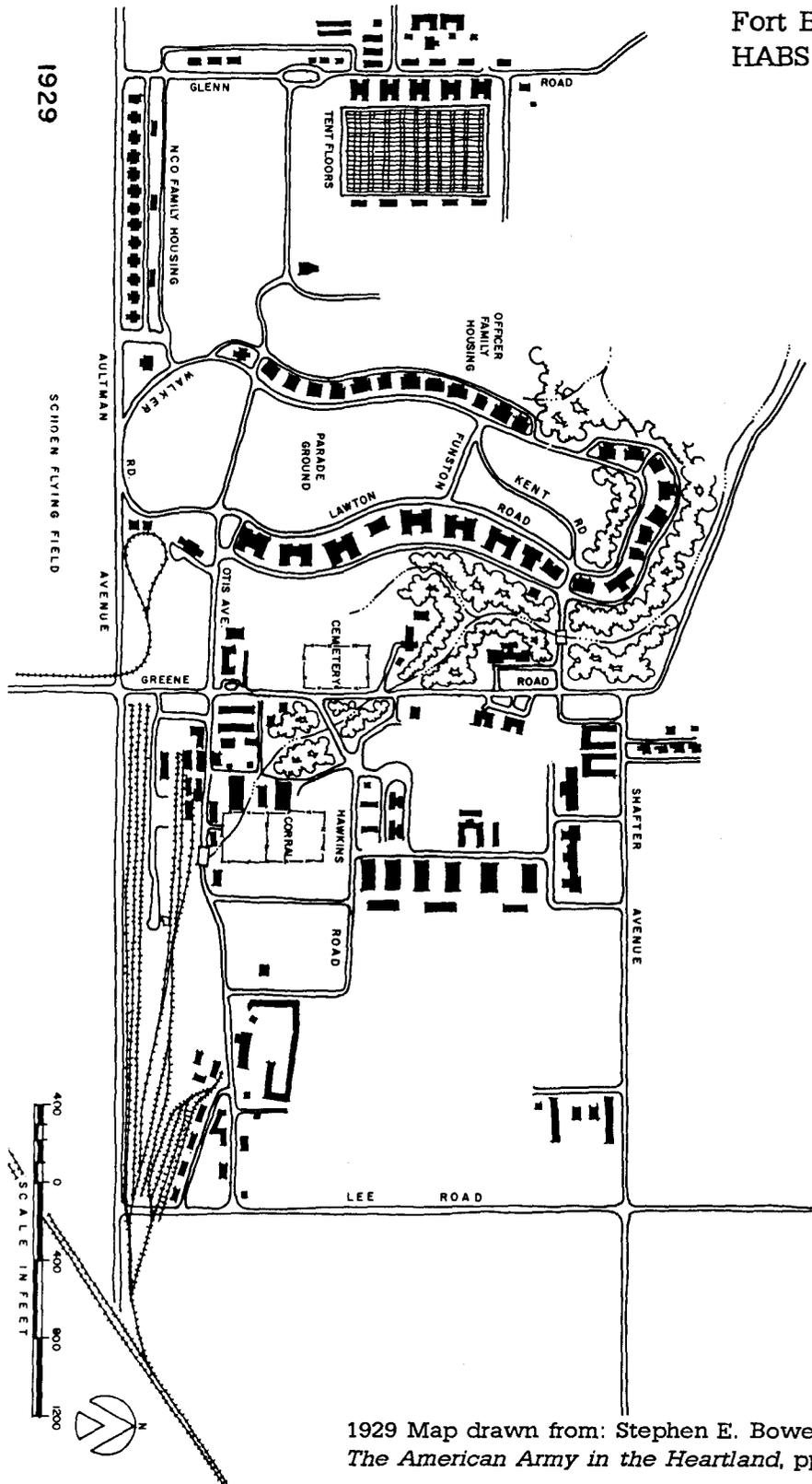


AREA MAP

1913

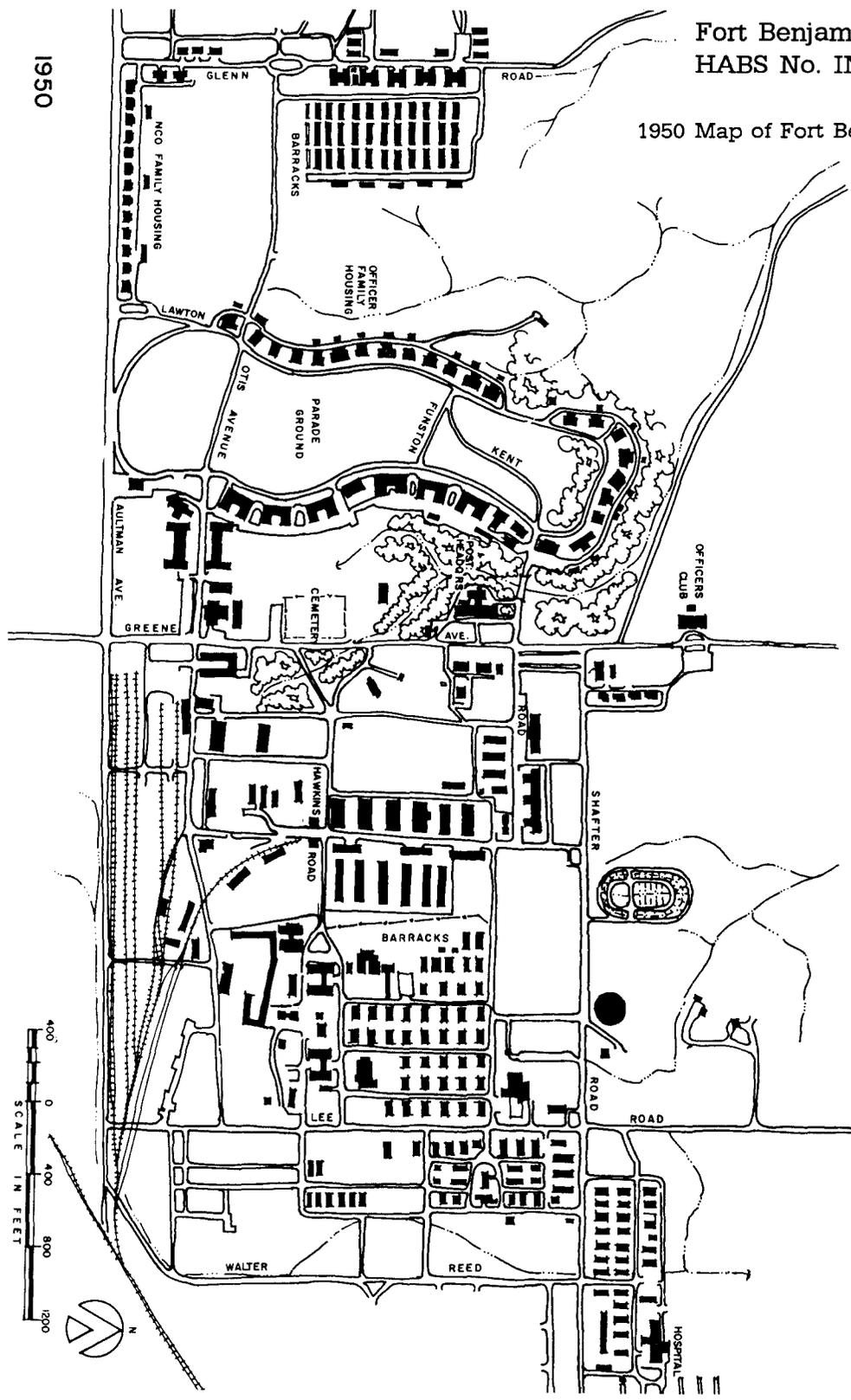
1913 Map drawn from Fort Harrison Historic District application
and boundary map of Fort Harrison



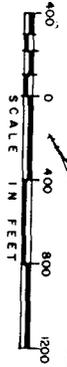


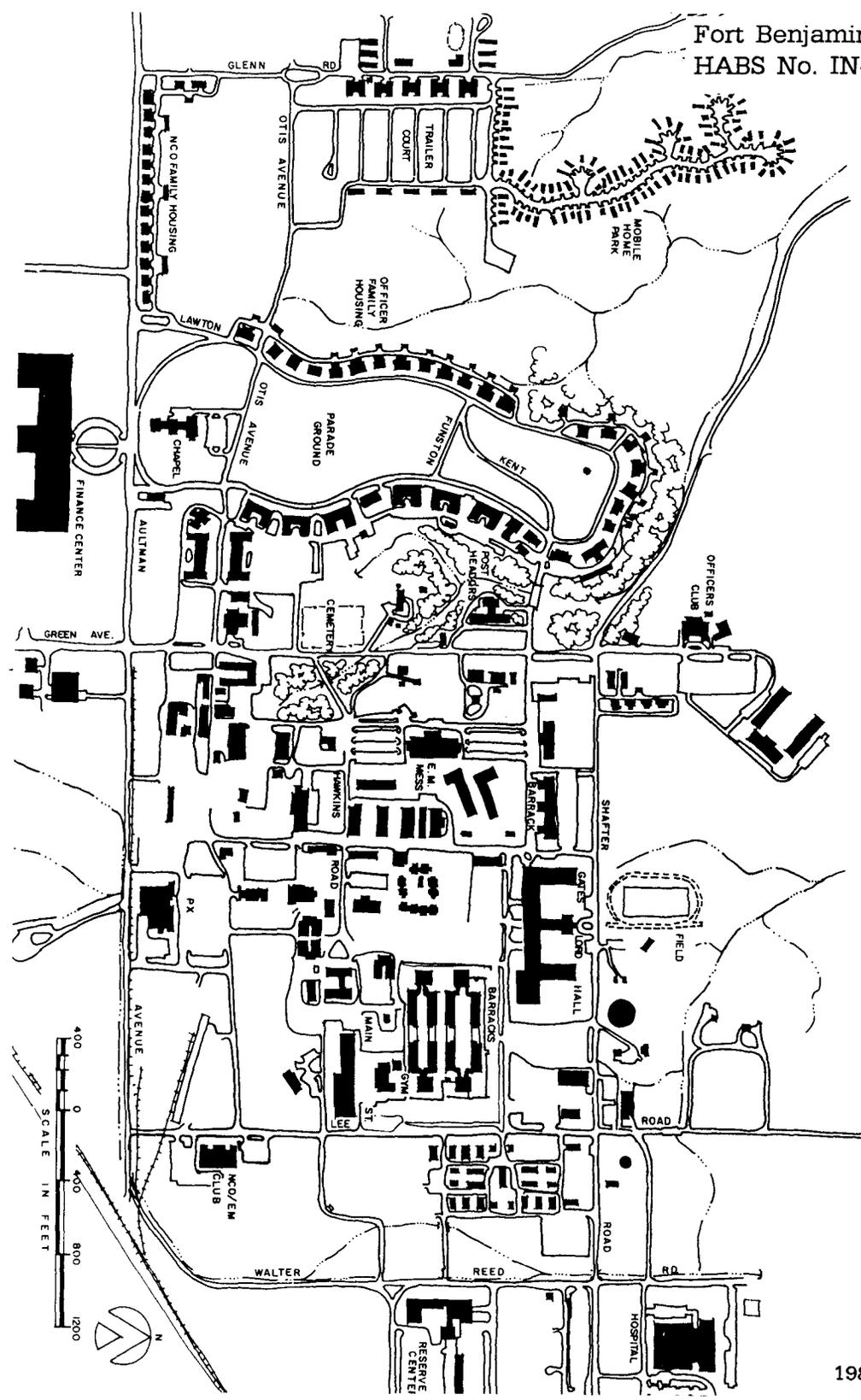
1929 Map drawn from: Stephen E. Bower,
The American Army in the Heartland, pp. 32 and 118.

1950 Map of Fort Benjamin Harrison



1950





1980 - to present