

FORT RODMAN MILITARY RESERVATION,
QUARTERMASTER'S AND COMMISSARY STOREHOUSE
(Fort Rodman Military Reservation, Building P-21)
Southwestern portion of site, east of Battery Cross
New Bedford
Bristol County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-1256-H

HABS
MASS
3-NEBED,
274-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HABS
MASS
3-NEBED,
274-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

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- Location:** Southwestern portion of site, East of Battery Cross
Fort Rodman Military Reservation
New Bedford, Bristol County, Massachusetts
- USGS Quadrangle: New Bedford, South
UTM Coordinates: 19.341345.4606175
- Present Owner:** City of New Bedford
Municipal Building
133 William Street
New Bedford, 02740
- Occupant:** Storage
- Significance:** The Quartermaster's and Commissary Storehouse retains its integrity of location, design, materials workmanship, and to a large degree, setting. It was built in connection with the development of Fort Rodman during the Endicott Period and thus is related to an important era in coastal defense. The storehouse is also a good example of a utilitarian building of this type constructed of standardized plans. The most unusual feature of the building is its frame construction, for Endicott Period buildings at New England forts were generally made of brick.

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PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1902
2. Architect: Quartermaster General's office
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: United States Army - City of New Bedford
4. Builder: United States Army
5. Original Plans: Constructed from Standard Plan No. 91-E, filed in the National Archives. Records of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Record Group 77. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. P.I. NM-19, E-411 - Standard Fort Plans, Plan No. 91-E.
6. Alterations and Additions: Lean-to addition added on west side (1941-45)

B. Historical Context

The Quartermaster's and Commissary Storehouse was completed in December 1902 as part of the development of Fort Rodman during the Endicott Period. Like almost all of the buildings constructed by the Army at Fort Rodman at the time, it was built according to a standardized plan, in this case Plan No. 91-E. Although storehouses were commonly erected at New England coastal forts during this period, most were brick, unlike this one at Fort Rodman, which is frame construction.

Plans give a good indication of the building's original use. The building was divided into two halves, the north for the commissary and the south for the quartermaster. The main entrance was through the single door at the center, which led into a hall with the commissary office on the right, the quartermaster's on the left, and two clerk's offices at the rear. The commissary office opened into the commissary storeroom; a large room at the north end of the building that could also be entered through the double and single doors at the end of the building. The quartermaster's office opened into a storeroom also accessible through the exterior double doors in the south half of the building. This storeroom led, in turn, into a clothing and issue room at the south end of the building that could also be entered through the exterior at the end. This building continued to be used as a commissary through World War II; in 1959 it was serving as a warehouse and today it is used for storage.

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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. **Architectural Character:** The former Quartermaster's and Commissary Storehouse (P-21) at Fort Rodman is a good example of a standardized utilitarian building constructed by the Army at the beginning of the 20th century.
2. **Condition of Fabric:** The building originally has a third chimney on the south end, circular metal roof ventilators, and solid paneled doors; the long lean-to on the back was added during World War II. Otherwise, the building retains most of its original features and finishes and is a reasonably well-preserved example of its type. ↗

B. Description of Exterior/Interior

The present building is a one-and-a-half story, two-by-eleven bay structure with a gabled roof covered with slate, two rear pilastered chimneys, two hip-roofed vents, the exterior sided with clapboards, and an ashlar foundation. The front of the building has an altering series of windows and doors, both single and double, as well as a narrow porch running almost a whole length of the building. Both gable ends have one window in the gable and two on the first floor the rear has a lean-to set on concrete and wooden piers running the length of the building. Although very plain, the building nonetheless has some period finishes: the slate roof, pilastered chimneys, hip-roofed vents, ashlar foundation, and, perhaps most notably, the scalloped rafter ends, which are also found on two contemporary buildings the Bake House HABS No. MA-1256-C (P-17;1903) and the Fire Apparatus Building HABS No. MA-1256-K (P-9;1903) and apparently were characteristic of Quartermaster General's Office plans of this period.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Drawings

National Archives. Records of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Record Group 77. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

E.393 - Completion Reports. Box 222-Fort Rodman, MA

P.I. NM-19, E.411 - Standard Fort Plans, Plan No. 91-E.

Specifications

National Archives, Records of the Quartermaster General's Office. Record Group 92. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Blueprint File. Fort Rodman. #4 - Specifications for a Frame Quartermasters and Commissary Storehouse at Fort Rodman, MA.

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Historical Information

Seasholes, Nancy

Office of Public Archeology - Boston University

Architectural Inventory of the Fort Rodman Military Reservation in New Bedford, MA
Office of Public Archeology Report of Investigations No. 72

Site Plans

Anonymous

1959 Fort Rodman Site Plan. Map on file at the U.S. Army Base, Fort Rodman, New Bedford, MA.

Quartermaster's Corps

1941 Fort Rodman: Sewer Systems and Drainage. Map on file at the U.S. Army Base, Fort Rodman, New Bedford, MA.

Post Engineer's Office

1945 Fort Rodman: Water System. Map on file at U.S. Army base, Fort Rodman, New Bedford, MA.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The City of New Bedford entered into a consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and the Conservation Law Foundation in 1986 to construct a secondary wastewater treatment facility as a result of the city's violation of the Clean Water Act. The Project includes a new secondary wastewater treatment plant at Fort Rodman, decommissioning and demolition of the existing primary plant, improvements to historic Fort Taber and development of Taber Park, and rehabilitation of the existing 60-inch outfall. The majority of buildings comprising the Fort Rodman Military Reservation will be demolished; several will be retained or relocated and renovated for community purposes. Following completion of the plant, the existing primary plant will be demolished and the Fort Rodman site will be restored, including significant mitigation in the form of Taber Park. Taber Park will be a community recreational park, around the site's existing national register-listed fort and batteries. The park will provide an appropriate setting for the historical resources of Fort Taber and the batteries, as well as recreation opportunities such as picnic areas, multipurpose playfields, and trails and paths. The Memorandum of Agreement for the Project was developed between the City of New Bedford, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the National Park Service, the Department of the Army, and the Massachusetts Historical Commission. EPA, as enforcer of the Clean Water Act, is the primary agency for ensuring NHPA compliance. The US Army Corps of Engineers is also involved as a holder

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of property restrictions on the site. The National Park Service is involved due to property restrictions.

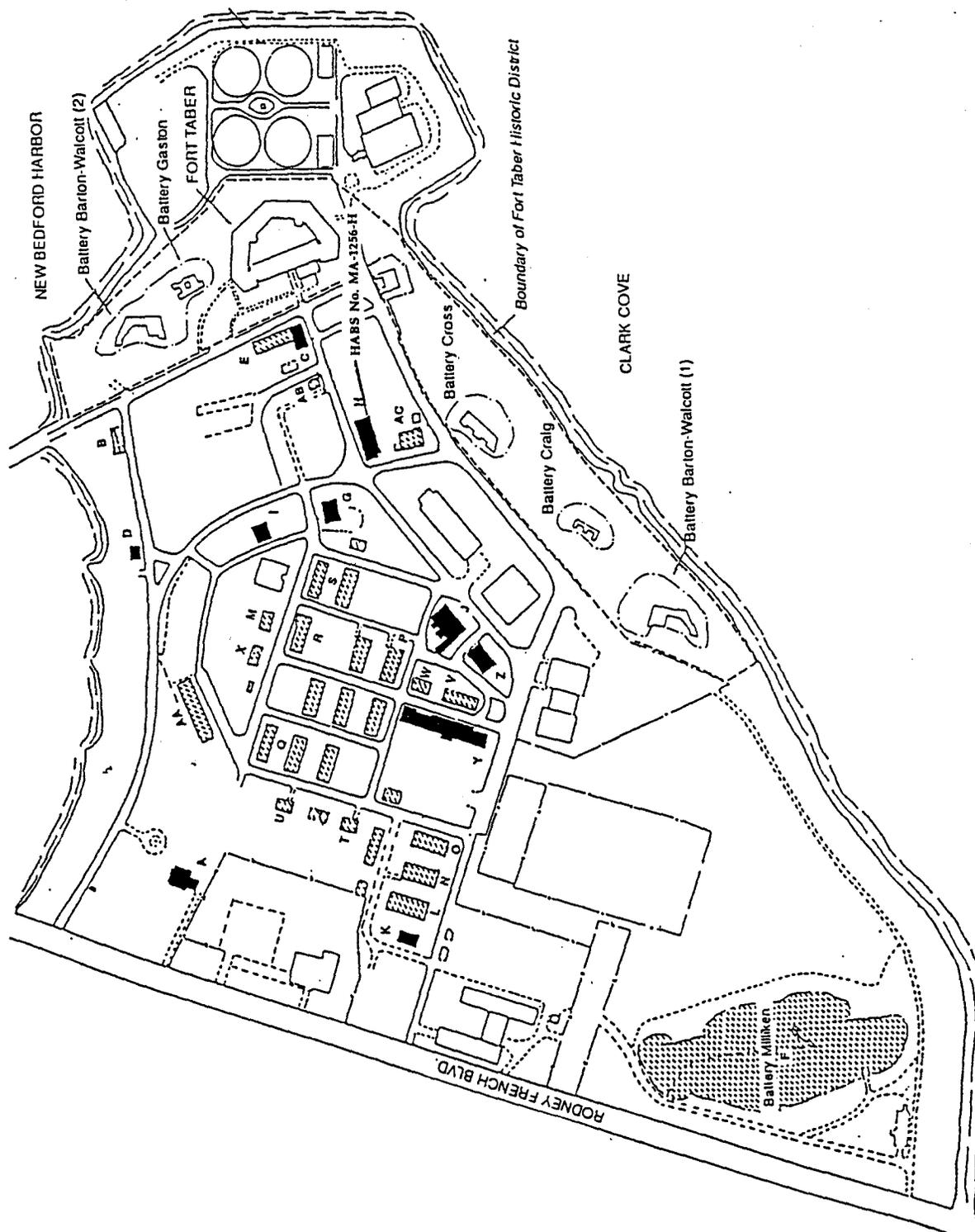
Prepared by: Elizabeth Beardsley, based on studies and documentation performed by Donald G. Jones and Nancy C. Seasholes, Office of Public Archaeology, Boston University (historical and archaeological research and analysis) and Martin Stupich (photography).

Title: Engineer

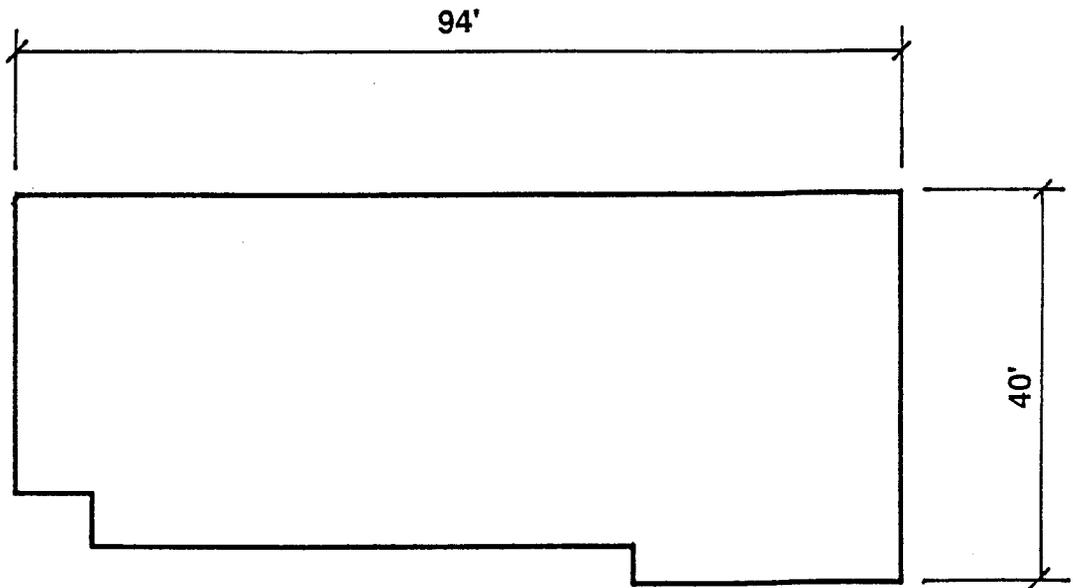
Affiliation: Camp Dresser & McKee Inc.

Date: 1992

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SCALE: 1"=20'