

Rainbow Hydroelectric Facility,
Clubhouse
1300 feet southwest of Powerhouse
Great Falls Vicinity
Cascade County
Montana.

HAER No. MT-95-H

HAER
MONT
7-GREFA
2H-

PHOTOGRAPHS

~~AND LITERATURE~~

WRITTEN HISTORICAL DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Rocky Mountain System Support Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

RAINBOW HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY,
CLUBHOUSE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Location: The Clubhouse is located at the Rainbow Hydroelectric Facility on the Missouri River, two miles north of Great Falls, Montana. It stands 1300 feet southwest of the southwest corner of the Rainbow Powerhouse. The Clubhouse contributes to the significance of the Great Falls Hydroelectric Facilities Historic District.

Quad: Northeast Great Falls, Mont.

UTM: Zone 12: 485050 Easting; 5264470 Northing

Date of Construction: 1925

Present Owner: The Montana Power Company

Present Use: Apartments

Significance: The Great Falls Hydroelectric Facilities Historic District is significant for its association with the industrial development of Montana and the consolidation of most of the state's electric industry into The Montana Power Company. The district is also associated with John D. Ryan, the promoter of hydroelectric development at Great Falls. The Clubhouse contributes to the significance of the district for its association with construction of permanent operators' camps by the utility as a means to provide efficient operation and maintenance of their isolated power facilities. It also serves of an example of design concepts of the period.

Historian: Mary McCormick
Renewable Technologies, Inc.
Butte, Montana 59701
June 1996

II. HISTORY

The Great Falls Power Company constructed the Clubhouse at the Rainbow operators' camp in 1925 (figure 1).¹ It relied on building plans completed by The Montana Power Company in January of that year. The Clubhouse provided permanent housing for unmarried operators at the facility. Plans for the building show that it was also intended to house persons employed by the Company to maintain the Clubhouse and work in its community kitchen. A bedroom in the building also was reserved for the teacher at an on-site school. In addition to dormitory-style living quarters, the Clubhouse included a large "club room" that presumably became the focal for recreational activities at the operators' camp.²

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

A. EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The Clubhouse is at the west end of the Rainbow Hydroelectric Facility's operators' camp (see figure 1). The building is constructed of hollow-clay tiles and has a central two-story block with a one-story wing at both sides. Its footprint measures 112'0" long (southwest-northeast) x 42'0" wide (southeast-northwest). The Clubhouse rests over a full, concrete-walled basement. A post-and-beam system in the basement supports the first-story sub floor. The exterior walls of the Clubhouse are veneered with dark red, rake-finished brick in the running bond pattern. A band of header and soldier courses encircles the base of the first story and bricks in a diamond pattern are between the second floor windows on the front facade only. All roofs are hipped.

The basement of the Clubhouses stands a full story above grade at the front (southeast) and both side walls (northeast and southwest) but is below grade at the rear (northwest). There are nine, 6-over-6 double-hung windows positioned in the basement's front wall (southeast), but those at the center portion of the wall are obscured behind an enclosure beneath the front porch (see below). The basement's northeast wall has a garage opening and a single, 6-over-6, double-hung window toward the south; the garage opening holds a pair of wood, inswinging doors each with a fixed, 2x3-light window. A bulkhead stands against the wall's northwest end. It is sided with wainscoting, has a paneled-wood door at the southeast side, and is topped by a flat roof. A wood, sliding garage door with a pair of fixed, 2x3 windows is centered on the basement's northwest wall. It is flanked on both sides by a 6-over-6, double-hung window with wood sash. The basement's rear wall (northwest) has three, fixed windows each fronted by a shallow, concrete-lined well.

The Clubhouse proper displays a highly symmetrical facade (southeast). The central block is organized into five bays while the wings have two bays each. The main entry is at the center bay. It has a full-light, 12-pane door with multi-pane side lights and transoms. The interior bay at

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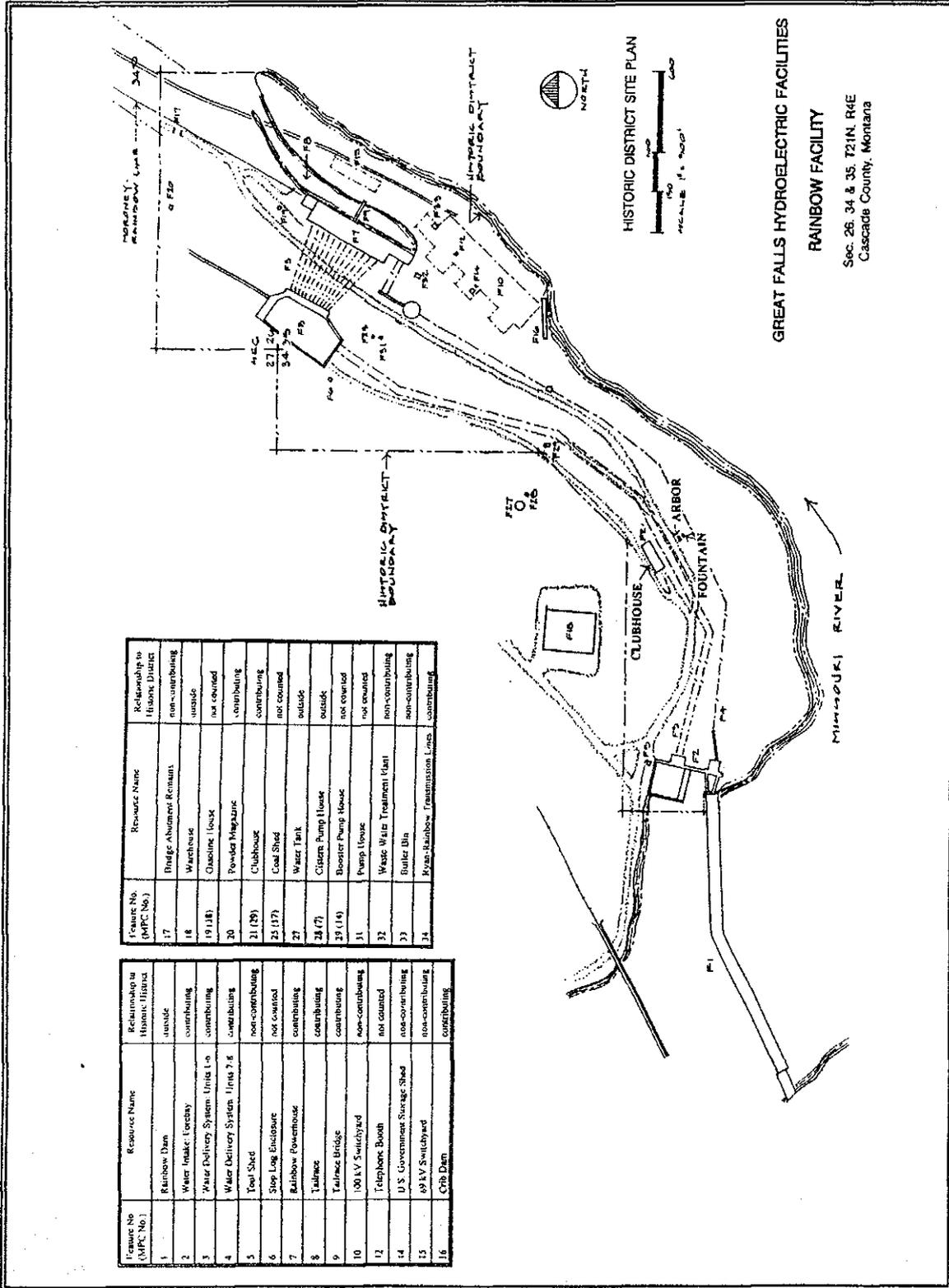


Figure 1. Rainbow Hydroelectric Facility.

both wings each hold a full-light, 12-pane door. The remaining bays each have a window opening (one at both floors on the central block) with rowlock sills and soldier course headers. Most of these openings contain a single, 6-over-6, double-hung window with wood sash. However, the second story opening at the center bay features a pair of multi-light, casement windows.

A one-story front porch on tall, brick posts extends across the full length of the central block and the interior bay of both side wings. A wood, fluted square column stands on each brick post at the central block and support a hipped roof with a central pediment. The porch has a balustrade of closely-spaced square wood balusters, a wood deck (1"x4" boards), beaded-board ceiling, and a double-entry staircase at the front. The center area at the porch's sub-level was enclosed after the building was constructed but mostly likely before the early 1940s. The enclosure has horizontal wood siding, two 4-light fixed windows at the front (southeast), and a wood-paneled door on the northeast.

The rear wall (northwest) of the Clubhouse has ten bays at the central block. Each of these bays has a single, 6-over-6 double-hung window on both floors. The windows at the central two bays are slightly smaller in size than the others. The rear wall also has two, 2x4-light fixed windows at the wing toward the southwest and two, 6-over-6 double hung windows and a small, metal door at the wing toward the northeast. The metal door opens into a walk-in icebox in the Clubhouse's original kitchen (see below).

Four, evenly-spaced, 6-over-6 double-hung windows are position on Clubhouse's southwest wall. In contrast, the northeast wall has a half-light, paneled-wood door flanked by a small, double-hung window toward the north and two, standard-sized double-hung windows toward the south. The door is accessed from a side porch atop the bulkhead (described above). The side porch is encircled by a post balustrade and is without a roof.

The hipped roofs on the Clubhouse are each composed of a ridge beam running southwest-northeast, 2"x7" rafters on 2" centers, and board decking surfaced with interlocking asphalt shingles. The eaves at the roofs have a wide overhang trimmed by a boxed cornice and beaded-board soffits. A wood frieze board encircles the building at the roof-wall juncture. The roof over the central block has two, hipped-roofed dormers on both the front and rear slopes. Each dormer holds a pair of 6-light, wood-sash hopper windows and has inslu-brick covering on the side walls.

B. INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior of the Clubhouse's basement originally was an open garage except for a concrete-walled room at the northeast corner. This configuration was modified in recent years by the enclosure of the southeast end of the garage, creating another garage (figure 2). The floors

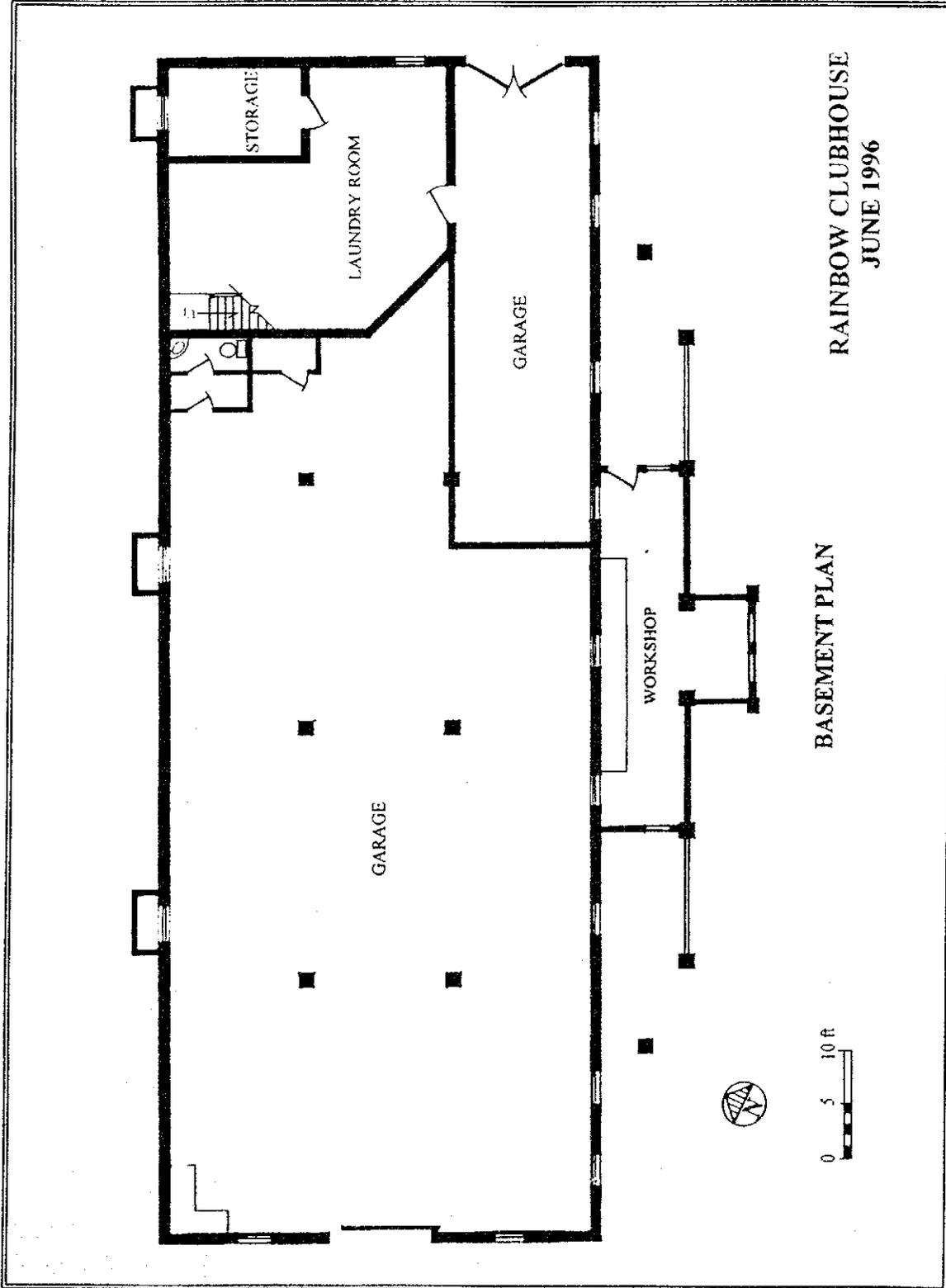


Figure 2. Clubhouse Basement Plan.

and ceiling throughout the basement are concrete. The wall additions enclosing the second garage have wood framing and pressed board siding.

Two rows of three concrete columns each are aligned lengthwise (southwest-northeast) in the original garage. Each column row supports a wood girder that extends the entire length of the building. A small, wood enclosure occupies the northeast corner of the garage. It houses a changing room and a small bathroom with a toilet and sink. A free-standing closet constructed with wainscoting is against the enclosure's southeast wall.

The concrete-wall room at the northeast corner of the basement serves as a laundry room for the occupants at the main apartment on the first floor (see below). There is a concrete-walled storage room in the northeast corner of the laundry room and a partially-enclosed, interior staircase on the southwest wall. The staircase leads up to the first floor where it opens into the Clubhouse's original kitchen.

The small enclosure under the front porch houses a workshop. The walls and floors in the workshop are covered by boards. A long work bench is against the northwest wall.

As built, the Clubhouse proper was laid out with dormitory-style living quarters, a "club room," kitchen, and a community dining hall (figures 3 and 4). Both floors of the central block had a central corridor with four bedrooms or chambers on either side. Each bedroom contained a built-in closet. A two-room bathroom (with a toilet and sink in one room and a bathtub and shower in the other) was centrally located on each floor between the bedrooms on the northwest side of the corridor. The northeastern-most bedroom on the first floor had its own bathroom. An interior staircase was centrally located on the southeast side of the corridor. It ran between the first floor and the attic, with a landing at the second floor. A club room occupied the southwest wing of the Clubhouse, while the northeast wing had a large kitchen in the rear half and a community dining room at the front. The kitchen included a large, walk-in icebox in the northeast corner. An interior staircase to the basement was along the kitchen's southwest wall.

The interior plan of the Clubhouse has been slightly modified in recent years. On the first floor, a former doorway in the corridor has been infilled with plywood in order to seclude an apartment that includes the four bedrooms, kitchen, and the dining room in the northeast wing. The remaining living quarters on the first floor as well as the those on the second floor have been converted into small self-contained apartment units (one on the first floor and two on the second) by the conversion of a bedroom at each unit into a kitchen. The two-room bathroom on the second floor was also partitioned, creating separate bathroom facilities for the apartment units.

The attics in the Clubhouse are used for storage (figures 4 and 5). The main attic at the central block has pressed board flooring, wall covering, and ceilings. It includes several small, built-in closets. The attic spaces at each wing are unfinished except for rough-board flooring.

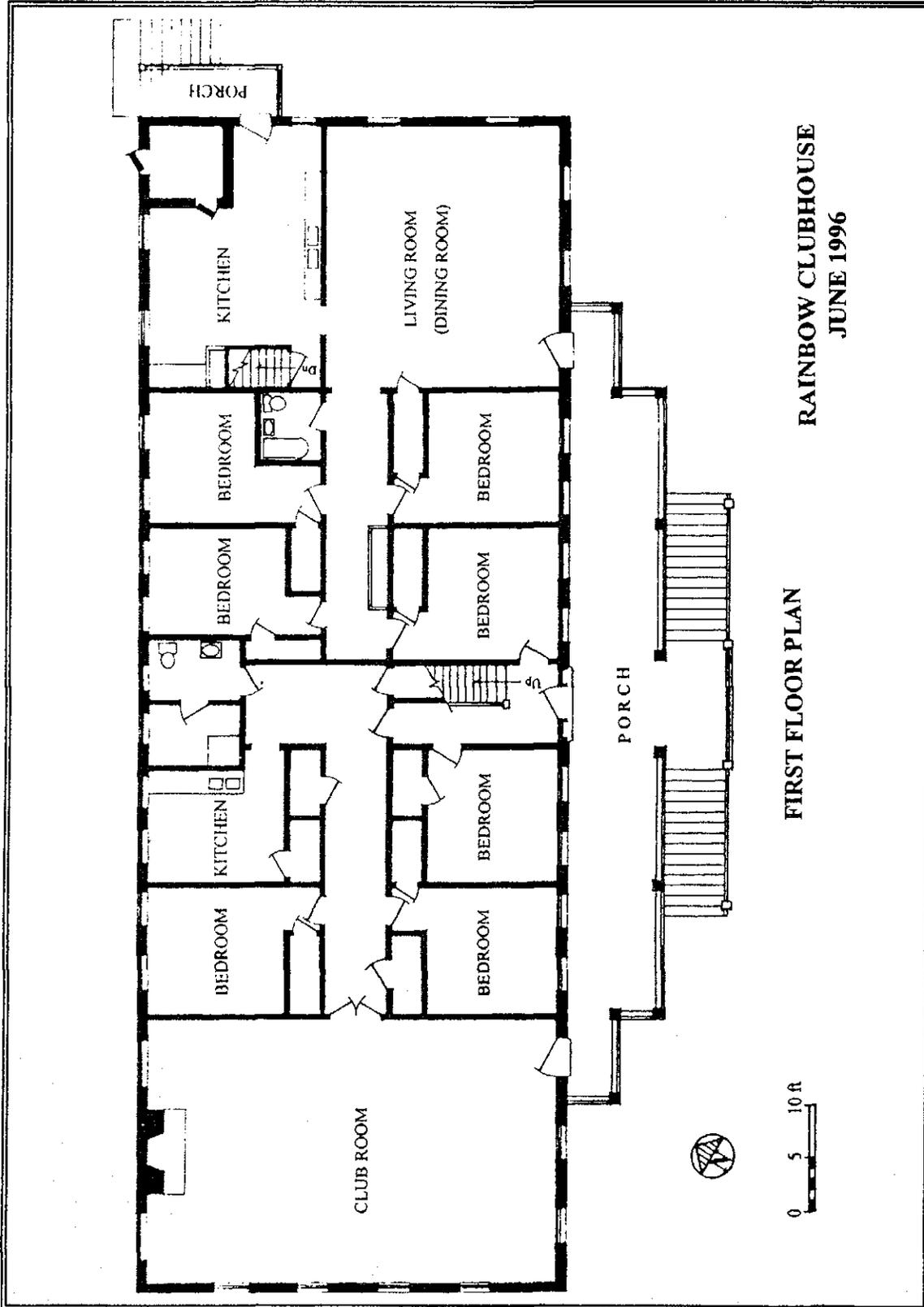


Figure 3. Clubhouse First Floor Plan.

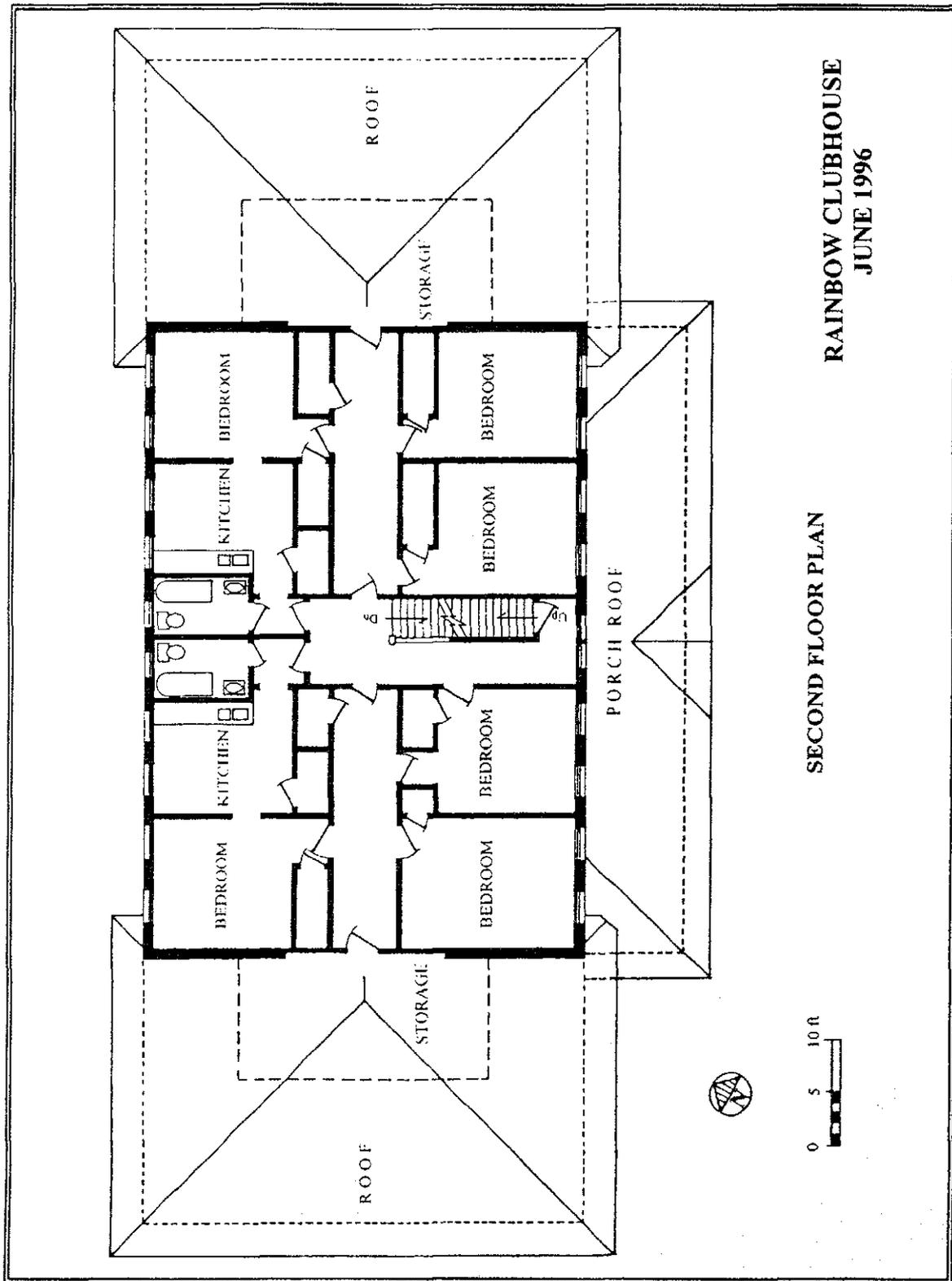


Figure 4. Clubhouse Second Floor Plan.

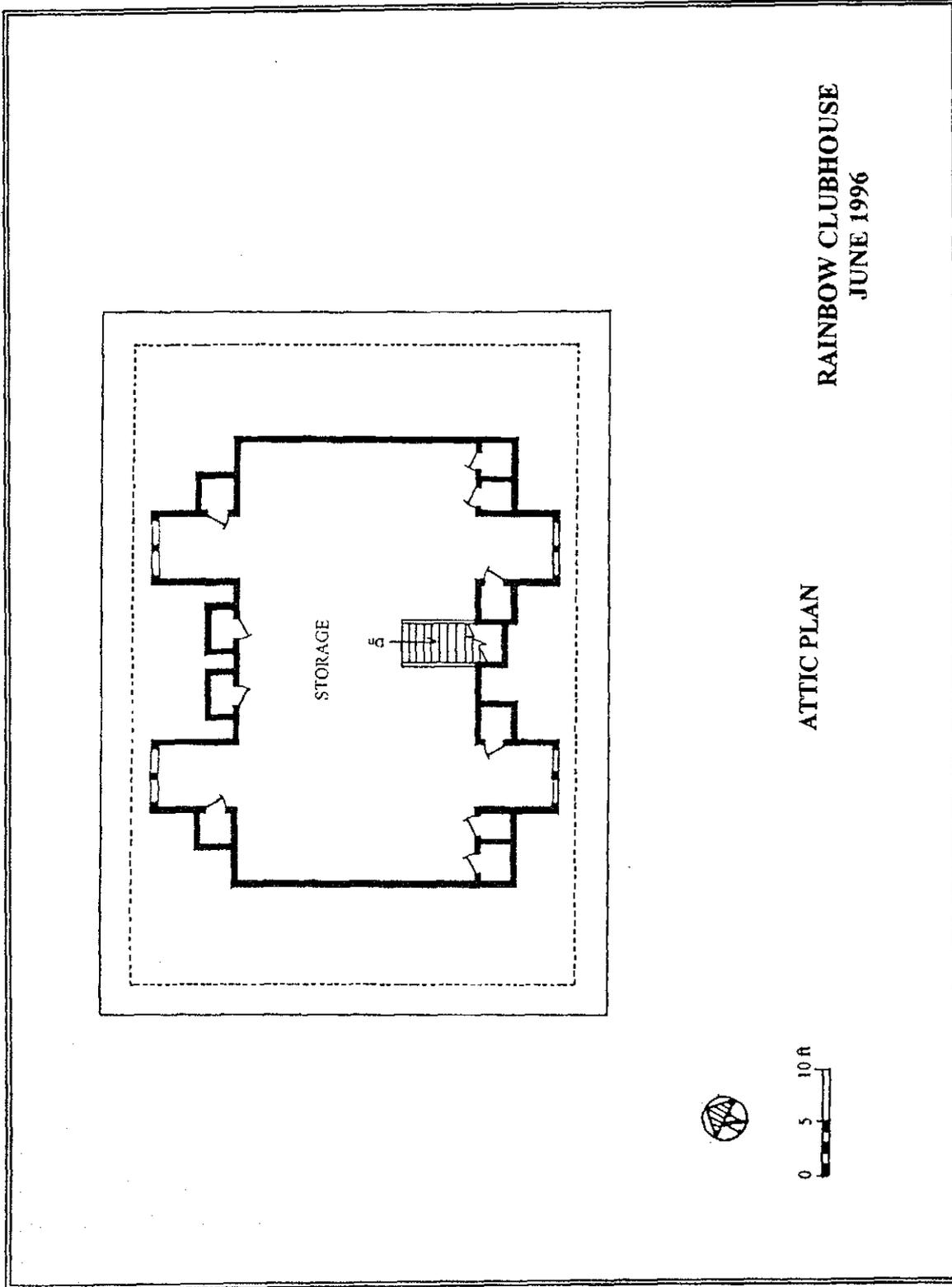


Figure 5. Clubhouse Attic Plan.

The Clubhouse interior displays most of its original finishing materials and retains many original fixtures. The floors in the Clubhouse have wood-strip flooring supported by 1½"x10½" joist on 10" centers. Floors in the modern kitchens and most of the bathrooms have been covered with linoleum. The interior walls are finished with lath and plaster and have square-edge floorboards with ¼-round trim. Walls in most room have a picture molding running about 1' below the ceiling. Ceilings are plastered except in the club room where autistic ceiling tiles have been applied. Doorways have wood, square-edge trim with back-band casing. Doors are wood units with either a two-panel or five cross-panel configuration; most retain their original lock plate and knob hardware set. Window openings are slightly recessed and most lack trim. The original claw-foot tubs and wall-mounted porcelain sinks remain in the bathrooms, but the toilets are modern replacements. The interior staircase at the central block has a wood balustrade with closely-spaced square balusters, a curvilinear hand rail, and square newel posts.

The Clubhouse also retains many original built-in elements. The club room features an electric-log fireplace centered on the north wall. It has a brick mantle with a concrete-slab shelf, a brick hearth, and the original electric-log fixture. Built-in cabinets and shelves are located in the kitchen. A built-in linen closet original to the dining room now stands in the corridor at the main apartment.

The Clubhouse is equipped with electric heating and lighting. Individually-controlled electric heaters are located in each room. Heaters in the smaller rooms are freestanding units, while those in the larger rooms are mounted on the wall. Lighting in each room and the corridors is provided by single-bulb ceiling fixtures. Most have an enameled holder with a white glass shade, except those in the club room which are enameled pendant fixtures. Each bedroom also has a porcelain, pull socket receptacle in one wall.

IV. FUTURE OF THE PROPERTY

The Montana Power Company plans to remove the Clubhouse at the Rainbow Hydroelectric Facility (FERC Project No. 2188). The Company has sponsored recording the building to the standards of the Historic American Engineering Record.

V. ENDNOTES

1. Montana Power Company, "Index of Expenditure and Improvements Requisitions Electric for the Years 1913 to Date," 1939, report on file at Records Services, The Montana Power Company, Butte.

2. Montana Power Company, "Proposed Permanent Quarters Building at Rainbow Plant," January 20, 1925, MPC Drawing No. 15323-C, sheets 1-3, on file at Drafting Services, The Montana Power Company, Butte

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Montana Power Company. "Index of Expenditure and Improvements Requisitions Electric for the Years 1913 to Date." 1939. Report on file at Records Services, The Montana Power Company, Butte.

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