

U.S. Military Academy - Cavalry Barracks
West side of Wilson Road, south of intersection
with Eichelberger Road
U.S. Military Academy
West Point
Orange County
New York

HABS No. NY-5708-28

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HABS
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY - CAVALRY BARRACKS

LOCATION: West side of Wilson Road, south of intersection with Eichelberger Road, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, Orange County, New York.

USCS, West Point Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.586510.4581140.

PRESENT OWNER AND OCCUPANT: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.

PRESENT USE: Enlisted men's barracks.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Cavalry Barracks is one of a group of five Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson buildings that define the western and southern edges of Buffalo Soldier Field. The neo-gothic character of the buildings create a cohesive group and reflect the general style of the firm's work at the Academy. Although their original function no longer exists, the five buildings are symbolic of an historical military tradition.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1904-1908.
2. Architect: Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, Architects, Boston and New York.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.
4. Builder: Church Construction Company. The Church Company defaulted on construction and the work was finished by a bonding company.
5. Original plans and construction: Consult the original Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson drawings in the Facilities Engineer's Office, U.S. Military Academy, for the original interior arrangement. As a unit the buildings cost \$547,107.

The Annual Report of 1909 mentions the site work: "The work of grading, top soiling, and seeding the new artillery and cavalry drill ground at the south end of the post, was completed early in June, with the exception of a small portion in the vicinity of the south gate guardhouse, which had to be postponed until the stonecutting yard of one of the contractors could be removed. This was done early in July, and the grading of the

new drill ground practically completed by August 1. A good growth of pasture grass has been obtained, which it is believed will withstand the wear and tear of mounted drill sufficiently to prevent the annoyance from dust that usually occurred when the old ground was used."

6. Alterations and additions: "Wings similar to those on the Artillery Barracks were also added to this building in 1919. The first interior alterations took place in 1947, with major alterations begun in 1974. The original windows of this building were also replaced in 1980. (Grashof)
- B. Historical Context: The Cavalry Barracks was designed as part of a group which consisted of the Artillery Barracks (HABS No. NY-5708-27), the Artillery Stables (HABS No. NY-5708-46), the Cavalry Stables (HABS No. NY-5708-47) and the Gun Shed (HABS No. NY-5708-56). These were grouped around the "Cavalry and Artillery Plain" where instruction was given. The area was renamed Buffalo Soldier Field after the Ninth Cavalry detachment of black cavalrymen assigned to West Point in 1907. For the historical context of this area within the overall development of West Point see HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 2: "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Cavalry Barracks is representative of the work of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson at the U.S. Military Academy in the first decade of the 20th century. The brick exterior walls with limestone detailing, the protruding brick "buttresses" around the entry "sallyport" and the varied chimney masses combine to strongly create a neo-gothic appearance that was highly distinctive on a campus that, at that time, was composed of a wide variety of architectural styles. Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson was, without doubt, the most prominent architectural firm at West Point in this century. Their work is a clear reflection of the "medievalist" craftsman philosophy of Ralph Adams Cram. This is seen not only in their other buildings at the Academy, but also in their later work nationally.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Cavalry Barracks is essentially a "T" shaped building with a rectangular crossing mass in the stem of the T, two small projecting masses under the arms of the T, and closing end masses at the ends of the arms. The length of the building along the arms, or crossing, is approximately 280'-0", while its width is 32'-0". The stem of the T is 108' long and 38' wide. The end pavilions on the crossing, measuring 32' x 46', are cross gable units which reflect the cross gable of the entry sallyport and help define the barracks as an architectural whole.

The long veranda along the front (east) facade of the building, with segmentally arched openings framed by protruding brick piers helps maintain a medieval flavor while tying the extension of the crossing into the central entry mass. Except for the three story cross gable entry mass, the building is two stories tall. The Cavalry Barracks is 23 bays along its front facade without limestone keystones in the arches.

2. Foundation: Concrete with granite watertable.
3. Walls: This information is similar to the Artillery Barracks (HABS No. NY-5708-27) except: the entry arched opening is segmental and has a limestone arch, not brick and limestone combination; the wall embellishment differs, having two carved limestone panels above the third level, flanking the center; while a third carved limestone panel, in the gable peak, has two crossed swords and the initials "USMA".
4. Structural systems: Load bearing brick walls with brick facing were the only readily apparent structural systems observed.
5. Verandas, chimneys: Two eight bay verandas flank the main entry projection, running north to south along the front wall of the barracks. They are flat roofed, have brick piers and segmental arches, with limestone thrust elements and parapets.

Chimney location and description are the same as the Artillery Barracks.

6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: No original doors remain in the Cavalry Barracks. The main entry door has had its arched opening replaced by a limestone lintel and has double metal and glass doors leading into the building.
 - b. Windows: Although most original window openings still remain (some have been converted into doorways), the windows have recently been replaced with metal one-over-one double-hung light sash.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape and covering: The gable roof is covered with different colored slate placed in a random pattern.
 - b. Cornice: The building has a limestone cornice.

C. Description of the Interior: The interior of the Cavalry Barracks has been gutted and rebuilt, and was not surveyed.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Cavalry Barracks is oriented to the east, fronting on Wilson Road. Situated on a hillside considerably above Buffalo Soldier Field, the building, nevertheless, helps define the northcentral western edge of that large, level field. The land terraces down from the barracks to the east before coming to the broad

plain. A granite retaining wall to the north and west of the building provides a buffer to the sharply rising, heavily wooded hillside in those directions. To the south the land slopes gently downward along Wilson Road. The building itself is on a rise approximately 10' above the road.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

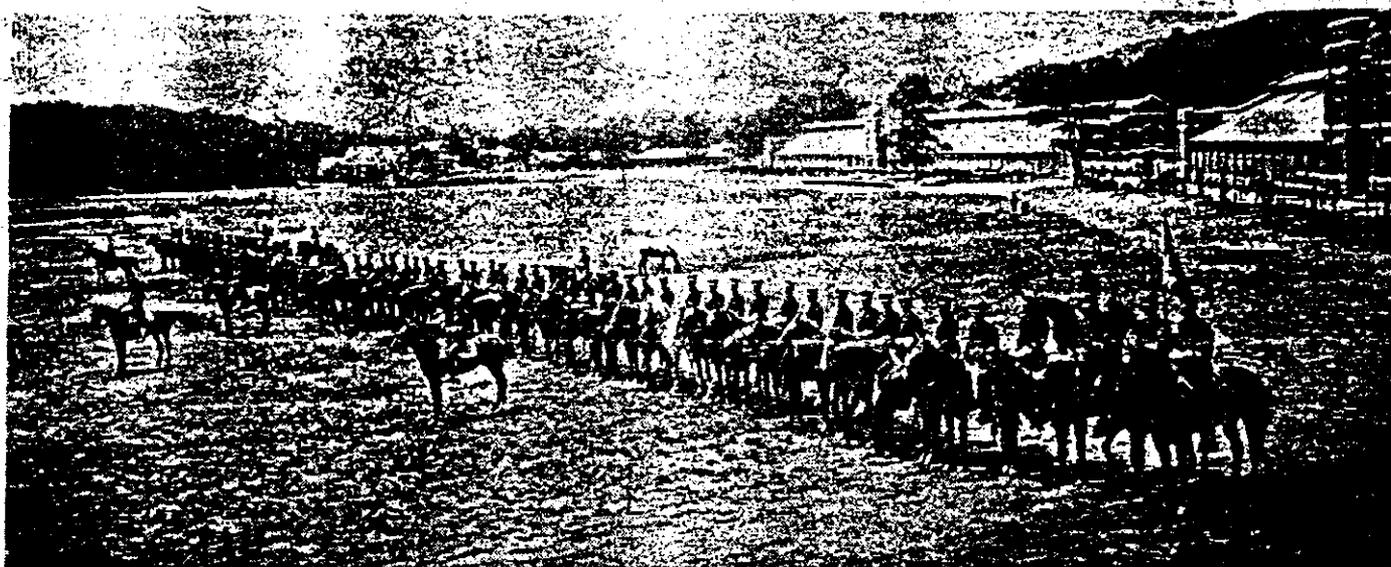
- A. Architectural Drawings: Original ink-on-linen working drawings are in the Facilities Engineer's Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S. Military Academy. Subsequent alteration drawings are also found there.
- B. Early Views: Early photographs can be found in the U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections. Some of these are reproduced in the Grashof and Lange volumes of this project.
- C. Bibliography:
1. Primary and unpublished sources: Records, U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections. See bibliographic essay in the Lange volume of this project for a listing of record groups.
 2. Secondary and published sources:

Annual Reports, U.S. Military Academy Archives.

Grashof, Bethanie C. "Building Analysis and Preservation Guidelines for Category I and Selected Category II Buildings at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.

Lange, Robie S. "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.
- D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: The records of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson.
- E. Supplemental Material:
1. "Saga of the 'Buffalo Soldiers,'" Pointer View, May 18, 1973.

1. "Saga of the 'Buffalo Soldiers,'" Pointer View, May 18, 1973, U.S. Military Academy Archives



Part of Ninth Cavalry's "Buffalo Soldiers" assigned to West Point in 1910. Bldgs. 622 and 626 were then stables. (USMA Archives)

Recounted for Armed Forces ceremonies

Saga of the 'Buffalo Soldiers'

For 20 years after the Civil War two black cavalry regiments wrestled the West — from the Dakotas to the Rio Grande — wrangling with hostile Indians, bandits, cattle thieves, murderous gunmen, bootleggers, trespassers, and Mexican revolutionaries.

Near the turn of the century both regiments galloped into the war with Spain, storming San Juan Hill with the Rough Riders and joining the siege of Santiago.

Yet the black cavalymen — dubbed "Buffalo Soldiers" by Indian warriors who learned to respect the dogged Black soldiers — rode quietly and inconspicuously through the chapters of American history.

One of their last rides in the early 1900's brought them to West Point where they turned to training cadets in horsemanship.

Today the Cavalry is gone and the stables are offices. But the name becomes a permanent fixture when West Point salutes the Buffalo Soldiers in Armed Forces Day ceremonies at 1:30 p.m., Saturday. Cavalry Plain, now an athletic field at the south end of West Point, will be dedicated and renamed Buffalo Soldier Field.

Former members of the Ninth and Tenth U.S. Cavalry Regiments and members of the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry Association will attend the ceremonies on the field along with local dignitaries. LTG William

A. Knowlton, USMA Superintendent, will deliver the keynote address.

The ceremonies will only be a part of Armed Forces Day activities planned for West Point and Highland Falls. (See box).

A regiment of cadets is also expected to join marching units in the Armed Forces Day Parade in New York City.

The remarkable story of the unheralded

Buffalo Soldiers' efforts in taming the West unfolds in William H. Leckie's book, *The Buffalo Soldier*.

Leckie noted in his study that "in thousands of pages the Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Cavalry, great regiments all, rode and fought their way to glory, but the Negro troopers were usually dismissed with a bare mention, ignored completely, or their efforts mocked."

"Many a frontier official owed his life and his job to the support given him by these Black men in blue."

As the Indian Wars subsided, Buffalo Soldiers played an integral role in the War with Spain. They fought in the Philippines and Cuba. General Pershing, who earned his nickname of Black Jack by leading Black troops in the West, was proud of his Black troops in the Santiago campaign. Colonel Teddy Roosevelt later wrote, "The 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments fought one on either side of mine at Santiago, and I wish no better men beside me in battle than these colored troops showed themselves to be."

In 1907 a detachment of the Ninth Cavalry was assigned to West Point in support of cadet riding instruction and mounted drill, which was conducted on the ground now known as Cavalry Plain.

In 1931 it was replaced by the 2nd Squadron of the Tenth Cavalry which remained at West Point until its de-activation in 1946.

Tomorrow's slate

TIME	EVENT
10 a.m.- 4 p.m.	Equipment Display at Buffalo Soldier Field.
1:30 p.m.	Dedication Ceremony & Cadet Review at Buffalo Soldier Field.
2:15 p.m.	Demonstration by Cadet Riding Club at Buffalo Soldier Field.
3:30 p.m.	Sky Diving Demonstration by Cadet Parachute Club at Buffalo Soldier Field.
9 a.m.- 5 p.m.	Spring Sidewalk Sale and Arts Festival in Highland Falls.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation is part of a multi-year project sponsored by the National Park Service and the United States Military Academy, explained in the United States Military Academy, HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 1, "Methodology." This written documentation was prepared by Travis C. McDonald, Jr. and Timothy Lindblad, architectural historians, in 1984-1985 based on fieldwork conducted in 1984.