

United States Helium Production Plant No. 1
Pumphouse, Sluiceway, and Pond
(Federal Aviation Administration Southwest Regional Office)
4400 Blue Mound Road
Fort Worth
Tarrant County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3487-F

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
Southwest System Support Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 728
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

UNITED STATES HELIUM PRODUCTION PLANT No. 1
PUMPHOUSE, SLUICEWAY, AND POND

HABS No. TX-3487-F

LOCATION: 4400 Blue Mound Road, Ft. Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

USGS: Haltom City Quadrangle

UTM COORDINATES: 14.655320.3632600

ARCHITECT, BUILDER: United States Navy Bureau of Yards and Docks

PRESENT OWNER: Federal Aviation Administration

PRESENT USE: Vacant

SIGNIFICANCE: The pumphouse, sluiceway, and pond are significant under Criterion A for their association with the United States Strategic Materials Program following World War I. The original function of the pumphouse, sluiceway, and pond was to provide water for cooling the plant's generating equipment. When the generators were no longer used as a power source, the pond and sluiceway became an aesthetic feature of the landscape. They retain their integrity of location, design, setting, feeling and association.

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Specification Number 3800, "Argon Production Plant at North Fort Worth, Texas," was created by the Navy Department, and released on February 15, 1919. It did not contain specifications for the sluiceway/pond/pumphouse.

About 1924, the pond was constructed to provide water for cooling the plant's generating equipment, which was contained in Building 2, located just to the east of the pond. The pond was initially a creek that ran south by southeast through the property. After the generators were no longer used as a power source, the pond was used as a reservoir for fire-fighting needs, as the site of the Helium Plant was outside of the city limits. The pond is reported to have been prone to heavy flooding, as it provided a drainage area for silt that flowed into it from areas to the north and west. Gradually, the pond was transformed into an aesthetic feature of the landscape, and provided a source of recreation for employees at the reservation (FAA 1976:8).

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

Record Group 71, Entry 649. Bureau of Yards and Docks, Facility Blueprints. On microfilm file, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

B. HISTORIC VIEWS

Record Group 72, Entry 162, Boxes 1, 16, 25. Bureau of Aeronautics, Helium Plant Material, 1919-1930. On file, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

C. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1961

Cook, Gerhard A. *Argon, Helium, and the Rare Gases - the Elements of the Helium Group; Volume II - Production, Analytical Determination, and Uses*. Linde Company and Interscience Publishers, New York.

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Davis, John W., James O. Lewis, and Andrew Stewart. *Report on the United States Helium Project*. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines.

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Federal Aviation Administration, Southwest Region. *Reminiscences on the Reservation: A History of the FAA Southwest Regional Office*. FAA, Fort Worth.

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Federal Aviation Administration, Southwest Region. *Recollections and Reflections*. Public Affairs Office, FAA, Fort Worth.

1989

Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County. *Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey, Volumes I-IV*. Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, Texas.

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Navy Department, Bureau of Yards and Docks. *Activities of the U.S. Bureau of Yards and Docks, World War 1917-1918*. Government Printing Office.

Record Group 70, Entry 11. Bureau of Mines, General Records, Correspondence, Reports. On file, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Record Group 71. Bureau of Yards and Docks, General Correspondence, Shore Establishments, 1918-1925. On file, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Record Group 71, Entry 649. Bureau of Yards and Docks, Facility Blueprints. On microfilm file, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

Record Group 72, Entry 62. Bureau of Aeronautics, General Correspondence, 1925-1942. On file, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Record Group 72, Entry 162. Bureau of Aeronautics, Helium Plant Material, 1919-1930. On file, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Record Group 80, General Records of the Navy, Secretary of the Navy Correspondence, 1916-1926

D. LIKELY SOURCES NOT YET INVESTIGATED

There are a number of repositories and facilities, both in the state of Texas as well as elsewhere, that have the potential to contain records or information pertaining to the former United States Helium Production Plant No. 1 located at 4400 Blue Mound Road, in North Fort Worth, Texas. In addition to the following list, the potential for oral history accounts is a promising avenue for further research. The two FAA publications listed in the bibliography above were very useful in

preparation of this document, and they contain several accounts from local residents employed at the former Helium Plant, many of which could be pursued as further leads. The following is a list for continuation of, or augmentation to, the results of the research presented in this document. The following list is arranged in no particular order, and should not be considered conclusive.

Various archived/microfilmed newspapers/periodicals in the collections of various state public libraries, particularly in Amarillo, Texas, and Wichita Falls, Texas.

Various files and collections at Texas Universities

Federal Aviation Administration Records Facility, Cincinnati, Ohio

City of Fort Worth Planning Department - Historic Building Permits

Navy Historical Foundation

Department of the Interior Library

National Science Foundation

Records of the Lone Star Gas Company

Records of the Linde Company, New York

Records of the Air Reduction Company, New York