

Army War College (National War College)  
In Fort Lesley J. McNair, entrance on P Street  
between 3rd and 4th Streets, SW  
Washington, D.C.

HABS No. DC-277

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
393-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

STATE Washington, D.C.	COUNTY	TOWN OR VICINITY
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HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Army War College	HABS NO. DC-277
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SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE  
National War College

COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES)  
on Fort Lesley J. McNair, entrance on P Street, between 3rd and 4th Streets, SW

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1903-1907	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) McKim, Mead, and White
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SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE)  
As established as a central feature of the "New Army," created by President Theodore Roosevelt and Secretary of War Elihu Root. The building is thus a physical manifestation of America's growing perception of itself as a world power at the turn of the century. Served as central educational and coordinating unit in adapting the army for its part in this new world leadership

STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) // role. As the National War College, after WW II, played much the classical Revival // same role for all branches of the military.

MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS)  
brick with granite trim

SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE)  
Cross-shaped; 3-story; terrace on north; basement exposed on south; cross gable roof; dome at crossing; south elevation central feature is 2-story bow

EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE  
Criteria at eave line; principal entrance and east and west gable ends are pedimented and have gable style in antis porticoes with great arches above the entablature containing sculptured eagles; arches filled by metal screenwork; third story treated as clerestory with arched openings.

INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED)  
Central three story rotunda with ballustraded galleries; inner saucer dome with oculus and chandelier; rotunda contains portraits and busts of American military figures; west wing contains library; east wing contains offices and classrooms.

MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES  
East wing interior modernized in recent years; additional office space added under terrace on north side.

PRESENT CONDITION AND USE  
In good condition as of 1974.

OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE

SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.)  
Schwartz, Nancy B. Historic American Buildings Survey, District of Columbia Catalog, 1974.  
Listed as National Historic Landmark. (Some information above taken from nomination form.  
Listed as a Category II District of Columbia City Landmark.

COMPILER, AFFILIATION	DATE
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SELECTED SOURCES

Army War College (National War College)  
In Fort Lesley J. McNair, entrance on P Street  
between 3rd and 4th Streets, SW  
Washington, D.C.

HABS No. DC-277

Fort Lesley J. McNair. A Brief History of the Post. (Washington, D.C.: The National War College), 1950.

Masland, John W. Soldiers and Scholars. (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1957.

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Ceremonies at the Laying of the Cornerstone of the Army War College Building at Washington Barracks, February 21, 1903. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), 1903.

U. S. Army War College. Chronicle of the Army War College. Prepared by LTC G. P. Ahern, (Washington, D.C.: Army War College), 1919.

U. S. War Department. "Operations on Buildings, Army War College . . . , " Annual Report, Vol. VIII, Report of the Chief of Engineers, Part 4. 1904.

Washingtoniana Room, District of Columbia Public Library. Collections under "Army War College" and "National War College."

ADDENDUM TO  
ARMY WAR COLLEGE  
In Fort Lesley J. McNair, Entrance on P Street,  
Between Third and Fourth Streets  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-277

HABS  
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XEROGRAPHIC COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013

ADDENDUM TO  
ARMY WAR COLLEGE  
(National War College)  
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393-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
ADDENDUM TO ARMY WAR COLLEGE

HABS  
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WASH,  
393-

This report, an addendum to a two-page report previously transmitted to the Library of Congress in 1974, focuses on the building's West Wing/Library.

Location: In Fort Lesley J. McNair, entrance on P Street between Third and Fourth Streets, SW, Washington, District of Columbia

USGS: Alexandria, Virginia Quadrangle  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
18.324980.4303300

Significance: The Army War College was conceived at the turn of the twentieth century by Secretary of War Elihu Root and President Theodore Roosevelt, in an effort to reinvigorate the U.S. Army after the Spanish-American War, and to respond to the country's new position of world power. Root envisioned a war college, based on European prototypes, that would serve as the pinnacle of an expanded training system for the professional Army, where officers could train for high-level positions and study the strategy and logistics of warfare. The site selected for the Army War College was within the grounds of the former Washington Arsenal (now known as Ft. McNair), a military reservation located in the nation's capital at the confluence of the Washington Channel and the Potomac River. In 1946, following World War II, this system of officer education was broadened to include all branches of the military, and the name of the institution was changed to the National War College. In 1976, the schools were reorganized into the National Defense University. The mission of the National Defense University is to prepare future leaders of the Armed Forces, State Department, and other civilian agencies for high-level policy, command, and staff responsibilities by conducting a senior-level course of study in national security strategy and national security policy process.

Despite these organizational and curricular changes, the building's West Wing/Library has remained an integral interior space. This library is one of several locations in the District of Columbia that feature stacks manufactured by Snead & Company Ironworks, a premiere library bookshelf manufacturer of the period. Snead book stacks can be found in many parts of the country in public, governmental, and university libraries. In Washington, Snead stacks are extant at the War Department Library at the Old Executive Office Building (dating to 1885), the Library of Congress (dating to 1890), and the Mt. Pleasant Branch Library (dating to 1925). The composition of stacks in the West Wing/Library, installed in stages between 1906 and 1919, represent the additive capability of the stack system.

Description: The red-brick Neoclassical structure built to house the Army War College was based upon a clear Beaux-Arts plan oriented on a cross-axis formed by the intersection of a domed

central pavilion and lateral wings. The main north pavilion is distinguished by a tall, arched loggia featuring a distyle *in antis* Ionic screen surmounted by a sculptured eagle, a motif repeated in the east and west gable ends of the building. The slate-covered roof features acroteria, and the two 12-bay wings feature four great, arched clerestory openings at the third level. On the interior, a central square rotunda is flanked by symmetrical wings containing the monumental library to the west and the former map room (now substantially altered) to the east, and a projecting auditorium bay to the south. The interior is finished in smooth plaster and is accented by iron-spot brick piers, ornamental terra-cotta work, and Guastavino tile cohesive construction vaults. Round-arched clerestory windows and a central oculus brought light into the interior volumes. The singular, distinctive, historic feature of the library's interior is the Snead system of library book stacks.

History: Original architectural drawings and correspondence in the National Defense University Special Collections Library confirm that the Army War College Building, also known as Theodore Roosevelt Hall or Building 61, was designed by the noted New York City architectural firm McKim, Mead and White for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The building's cornerstone was laid on February 21, 1903, and it was completed by 1907 at a cost of \$700,000. The building has been held in continuous ownership by the U.S. Army since its completion. Major renovations to the building undertaken in 1946 and 1964 have resulted in a loss of historic fabric.

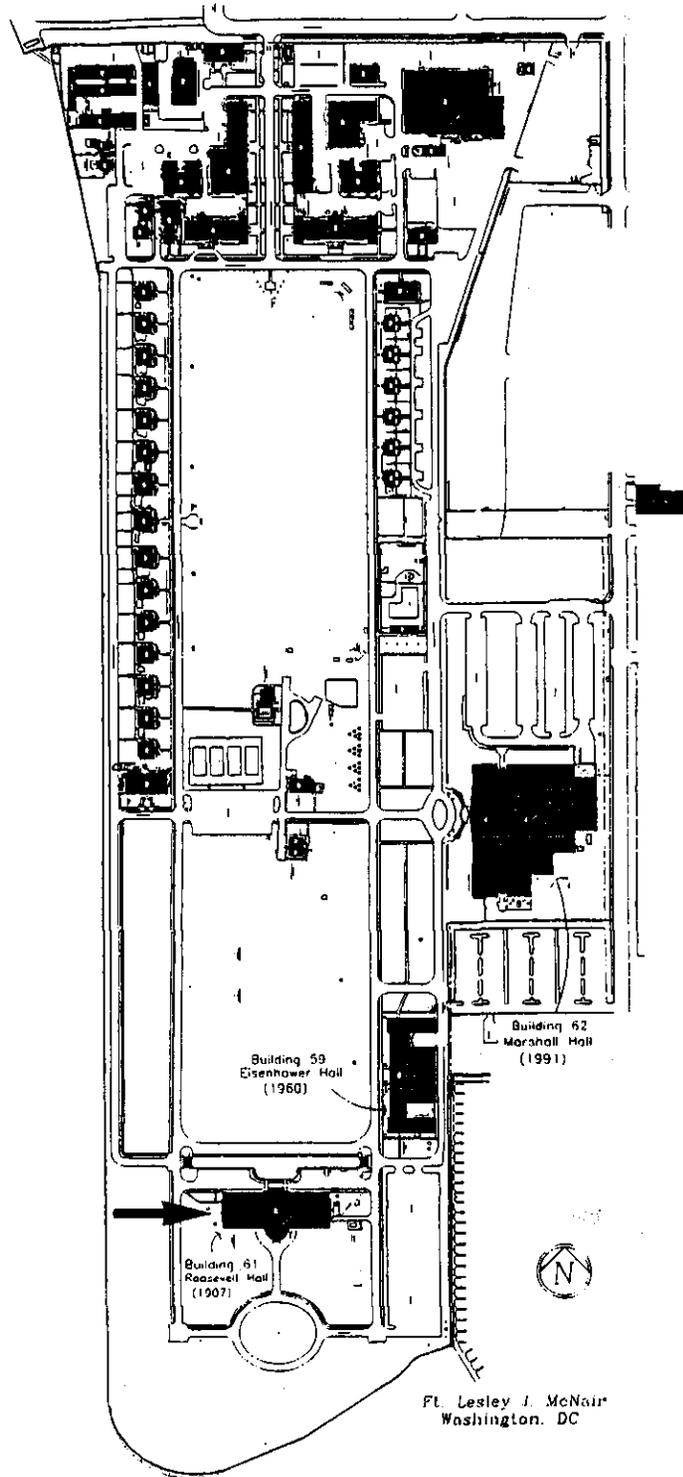
Sources: Ellerbe Becket, Inc. *National Defense University, National War College, Renovation of Building 61 - Roosevelt Hall, Concept Design Submission*. Prepared for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, December 16, 1996.

Robinson & Associates, Inc. in association with Ellerbe Becket, Inc. *National Defense University, Renovation of Building 61, Roosevelt Hall, Historic Preservation Report*. Prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, June 1993.

*Snead & Company Iron Works Catalogs*. Jersey City, New Jersey: The Snead & Company Iron Works, 1901, 1908, 1915, 1931. Located at the National Museum of American History Library, Washington, DC.

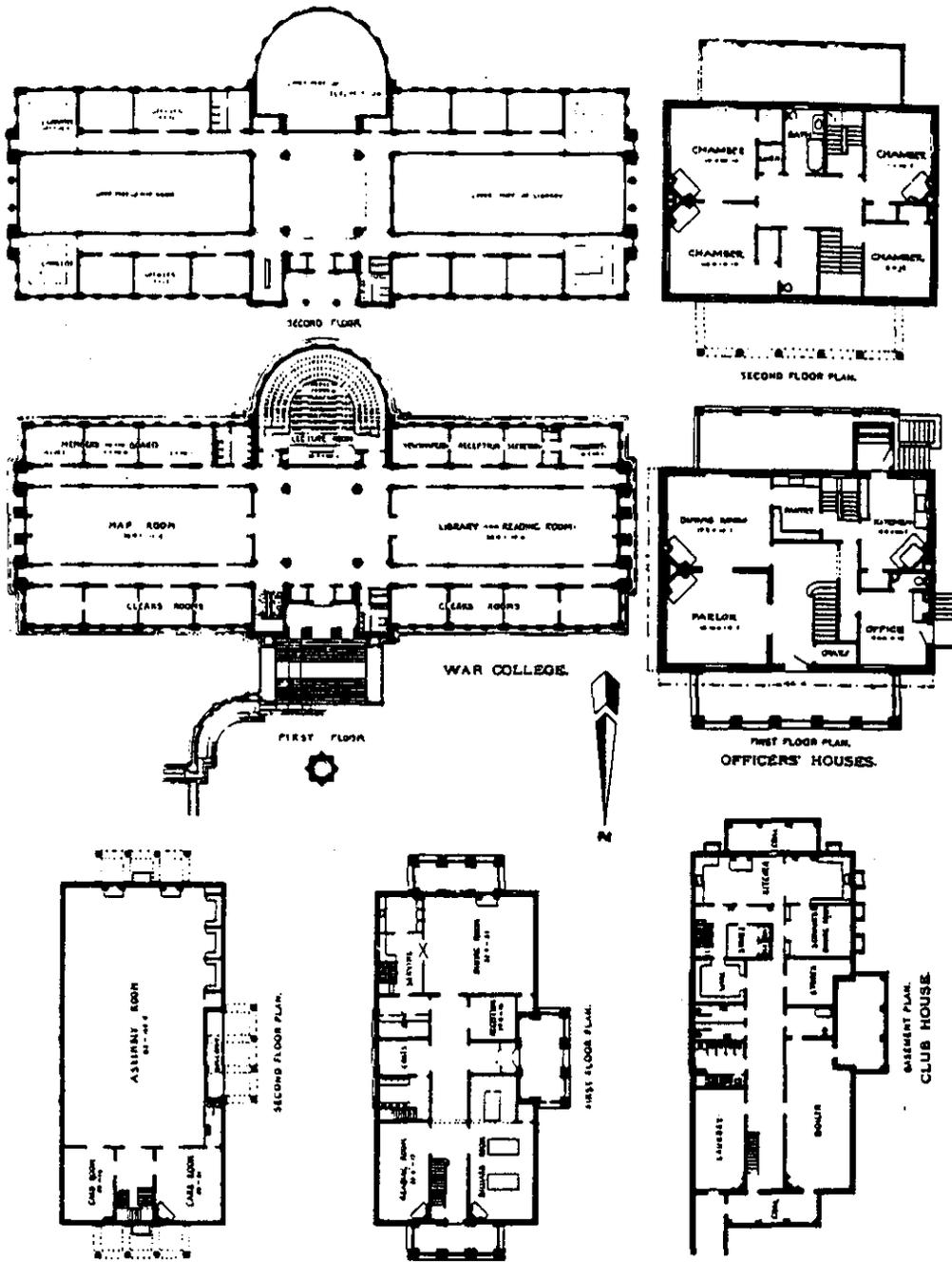
Historians: Laura L. Bobeczko, Judith H. Robinson, Robinson & Associates, Inc., April 1998

This documentation was prepared as a requirement set forth by a Memorandum of Agreement established in 1997 as part of the Section 106 process governing the \$6 million rehabilitation project of Roosevelt Hall (Building 61) at the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, DC. The principal area affected by this project is the building's West Wing/Library, where 18 of 36 ranges of historic five-tier book stacks will be removed. A total of 18 first-tier stacks will be retained. Six of these stacks will be incorporated within the new office design planned for this space, and the remaining 12 stacks will be placed throughout the building at yet undetermined locations.



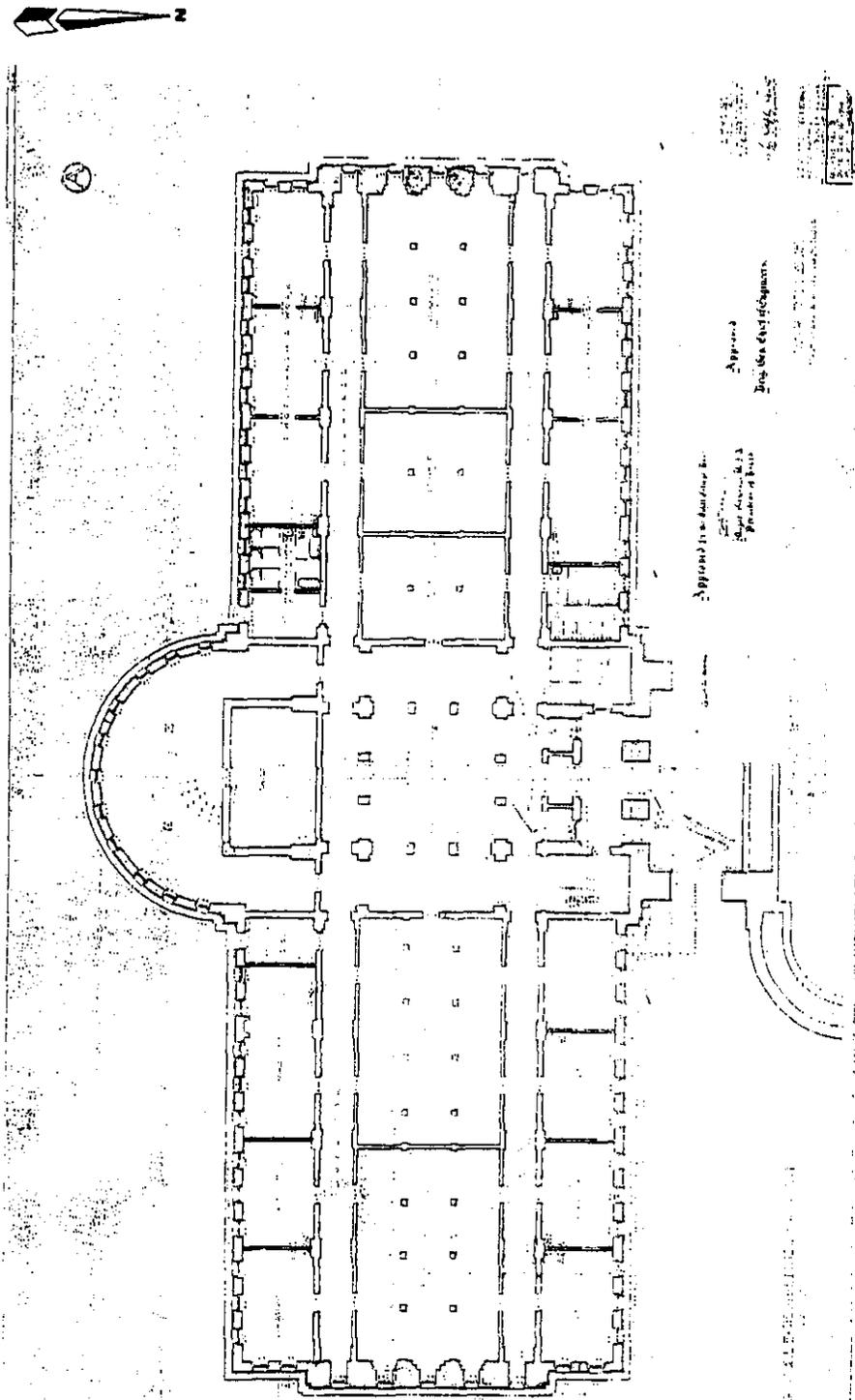
Site Plan

THE BRICKBUILDER.  
 VOL. 16, NO. 6. PLATE 94.

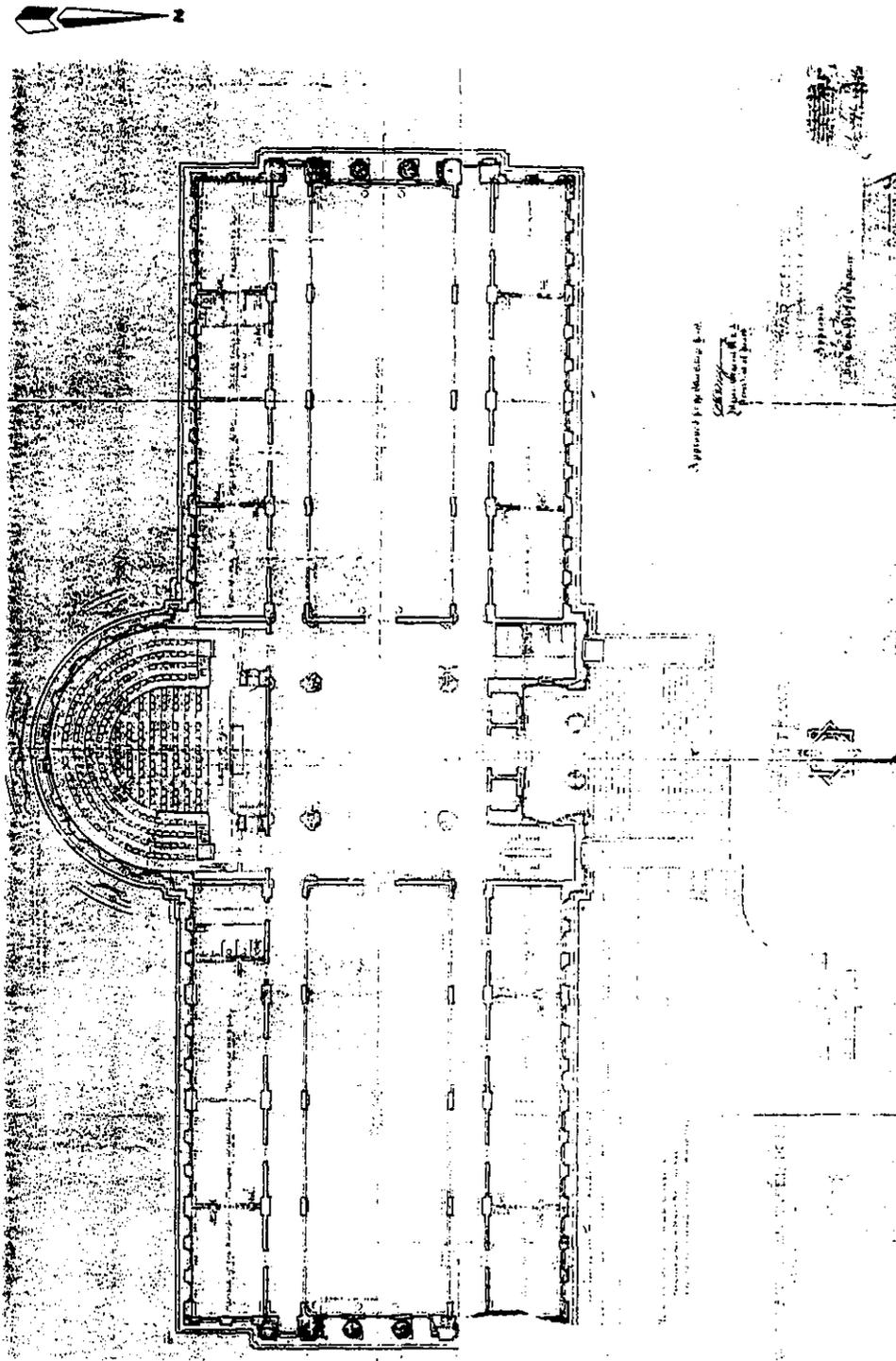


PLANS, WAR COLLEGE GROUP, WAR COLLEGE AND ENGINEER POST, WASHINGTON, D. C.  
 MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE, ARCHITECTS.

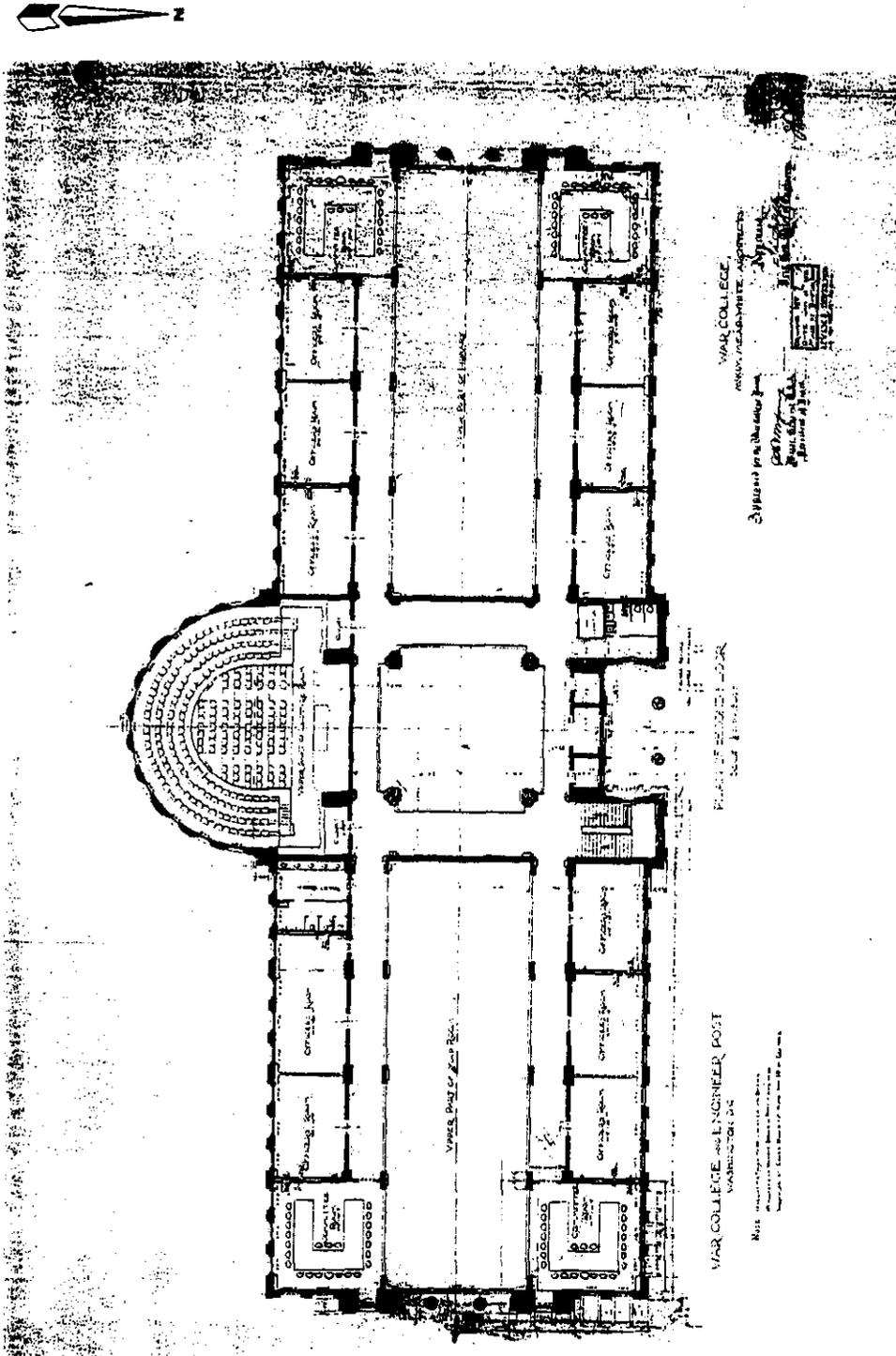
Photocopy of Architectural Drawings of Army War College Building, from *The Brickbuilder*, Volume 16, Number 6 (June 1907): Plate 94.  
 FLOOR PLANS OF FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS.



Photocopy of Architectural Drawing of Army War College Building. Original drawing courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
FLOOR PLAN OF BASEMENT.

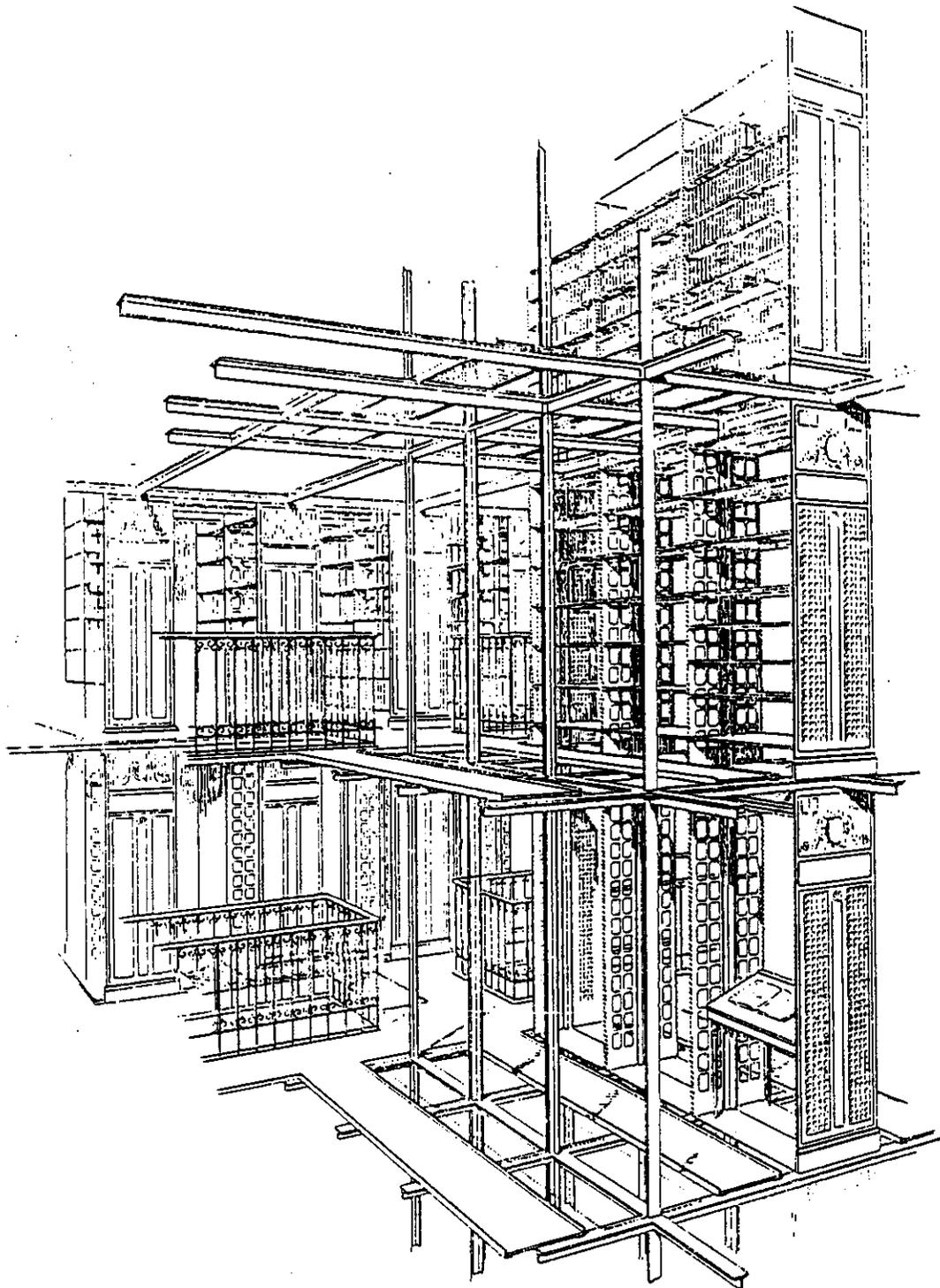


Photocopy of Architectural Drawing of Army War College Building. Original drawing courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
FLOOR PLAN OF FIRST FLOOR (INDICATING LOCATION OF LIBRARY AND READING ROOM).



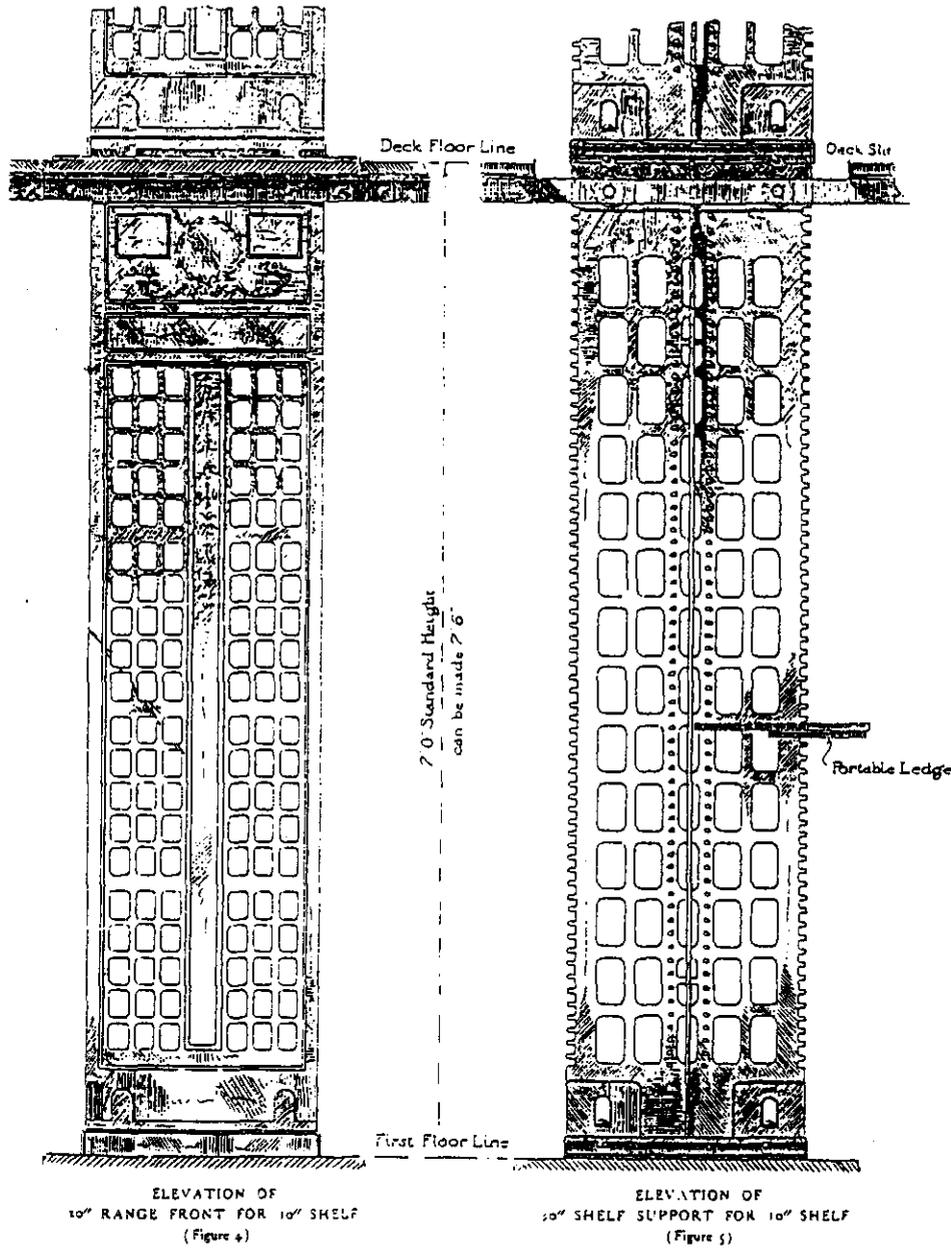
Photocopy of Architectural Drawing of Army War College Building. Original drawing courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
FLOOR PLAN OF SECOND FLOOR (INDICATING UPPER LEVEL OF LIBRARY).





Photocopy of Drawing from 1908 *Snead & Company Iron Works Catalog*. Original catalog located at the National Museum of American History Library.  
DETAIL DRAWING OF SNEAD LIBRARY STACK SYSTEM COMPONENTS.

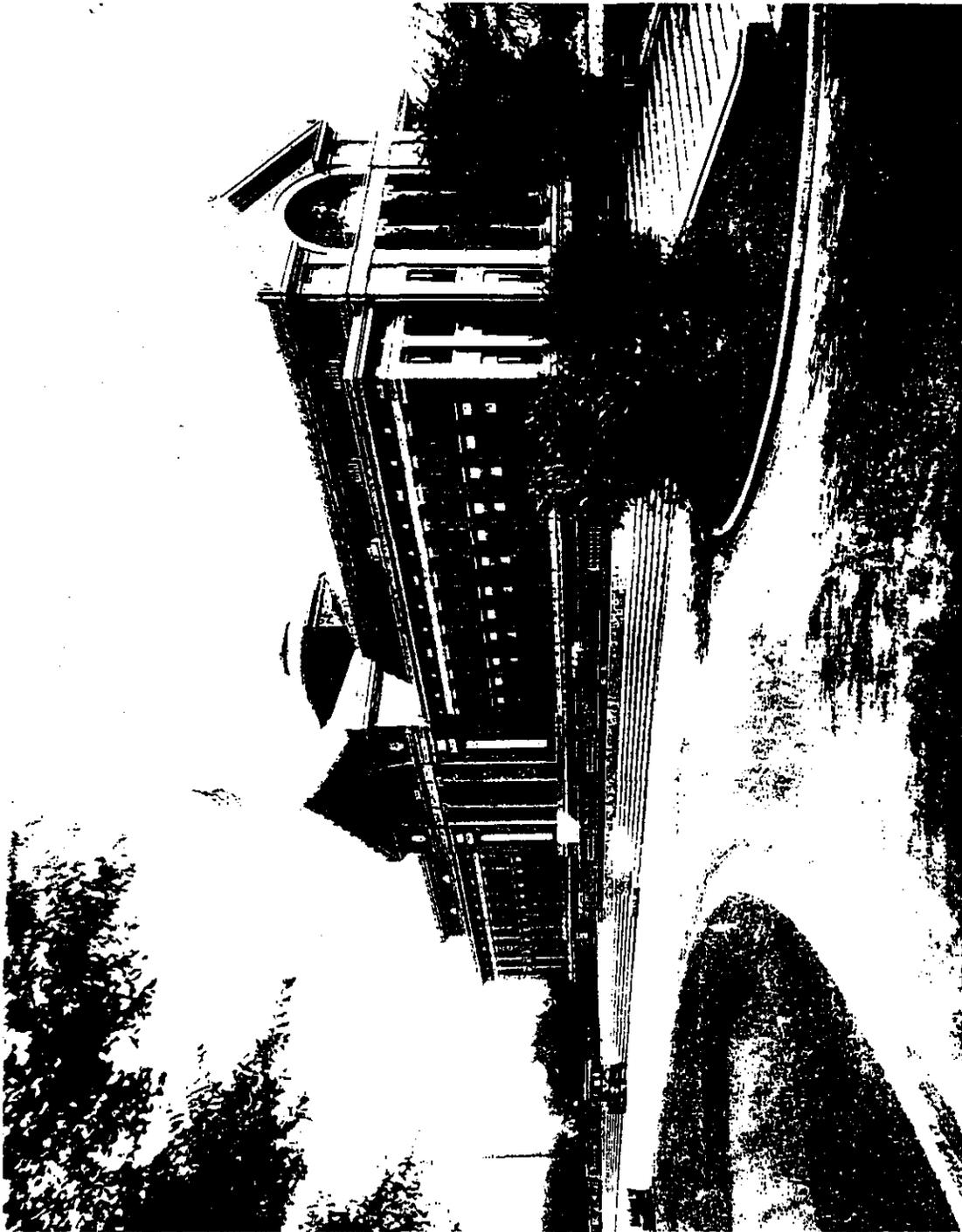
BOOK STACK AND SHELVING FOR LIBRARIES



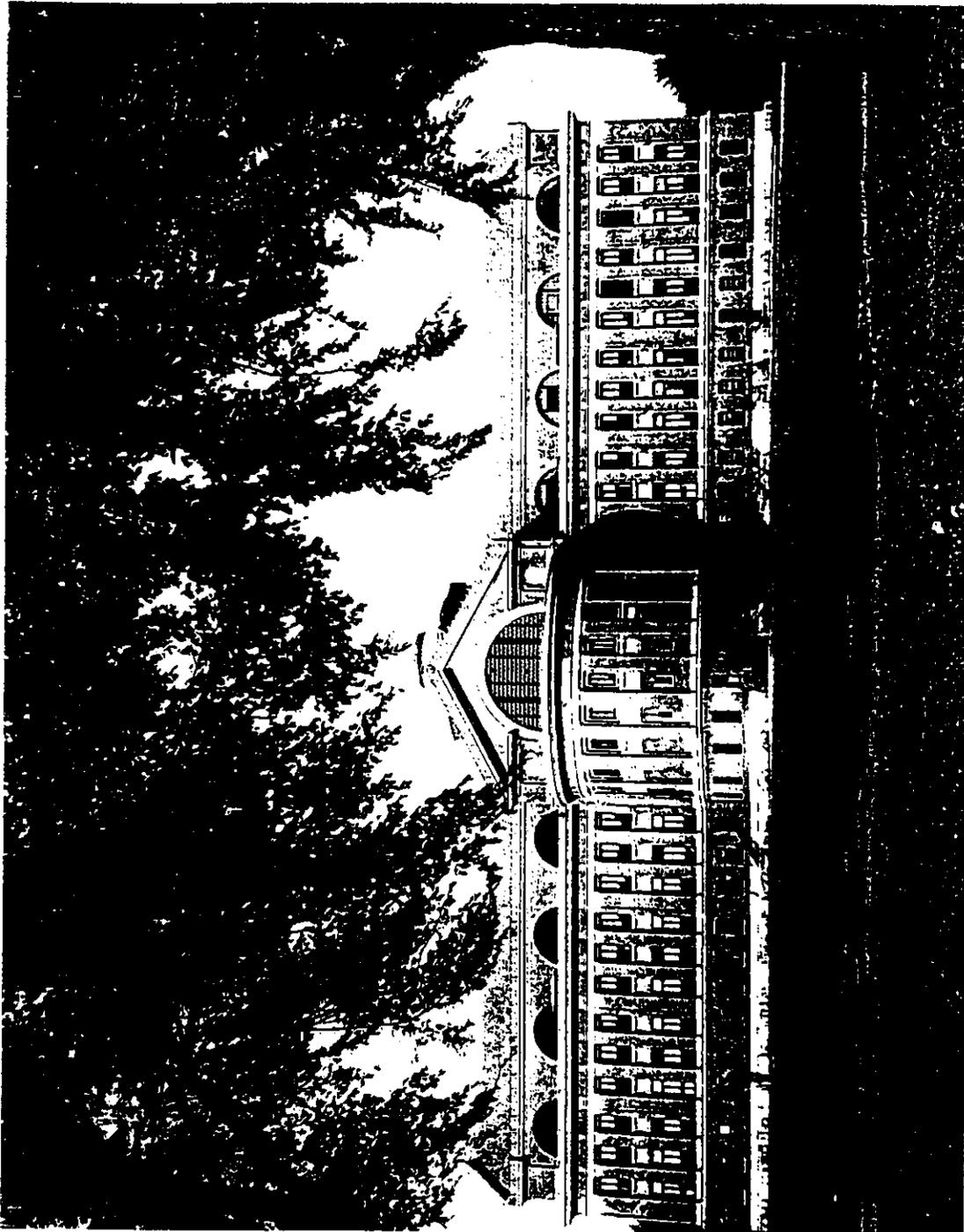
Photocopy of Drawing from 1908 *Snead & Company Iron Works Catalog*. Original catalog located at the National Museum of American History Library.  
 DETAIL OF RANGE FRONT THAT MATCHES FIRST TIER OF 36 LIBRARY STACKS IN WEST WING/LIBRARY, NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY.



Photocopy of Construction Photograph of Army War College Building, taken March 7, 1906, photographer unknown. Original photograph courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
HOISTING THE 20-TON LINTEL, VIEW FACING EAST OR WEST.



Photocopy of Photograph of Army War College Building, taken ca. 1910, photographer unknown.  
Original photograph courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
NORTH FACADE, WEST WING/LIBRARY TO THE RIGHT, VIEW FACING SOUTHEAST.



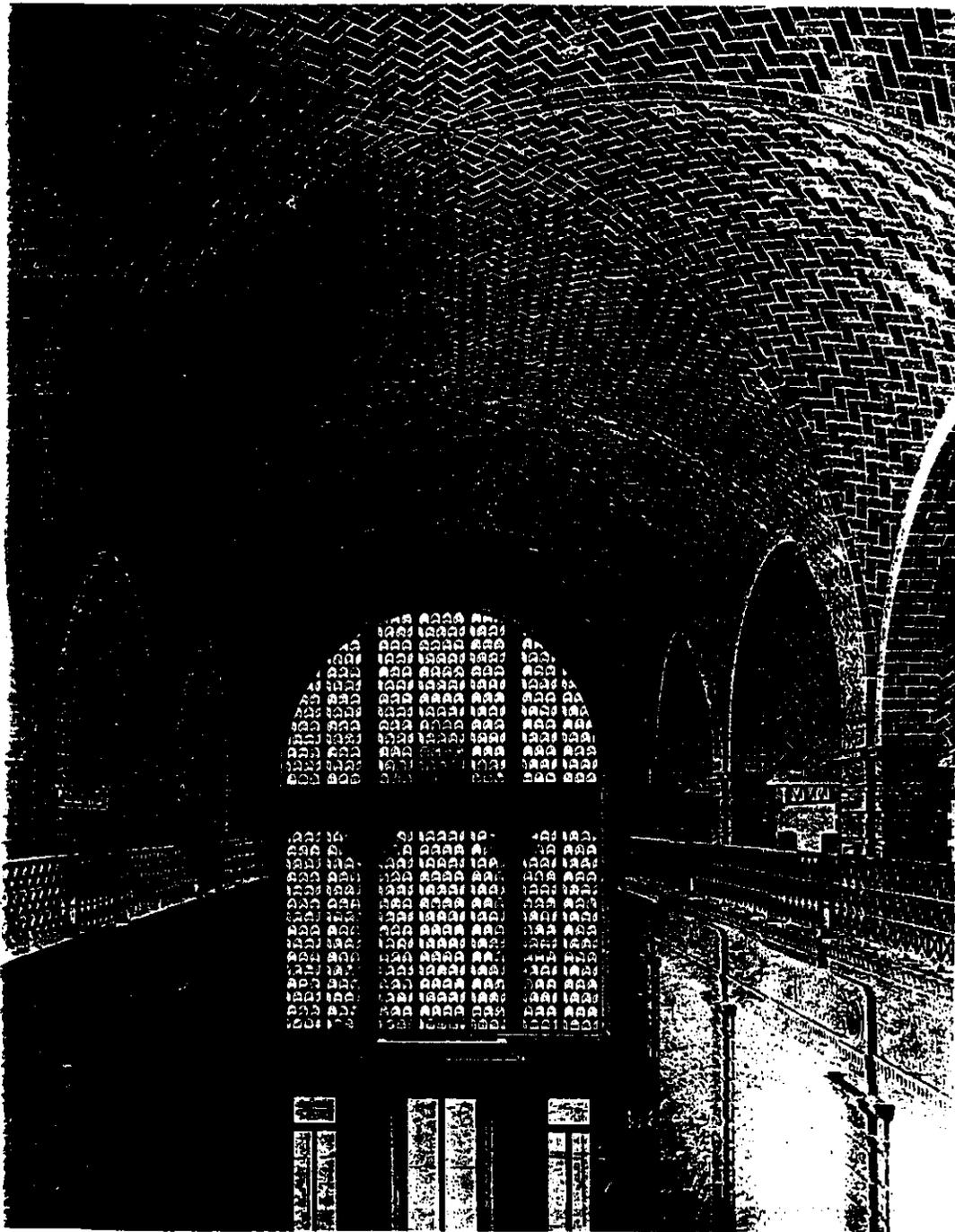
Photocopy of Photograph of Army War College Building, taken ca. 1940s, photographer unknown.  
Original photograph courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
SOUTH ELEVATION, WEST WING/LIBRARY TO THE LEFT, VIEW FACING NORTH.



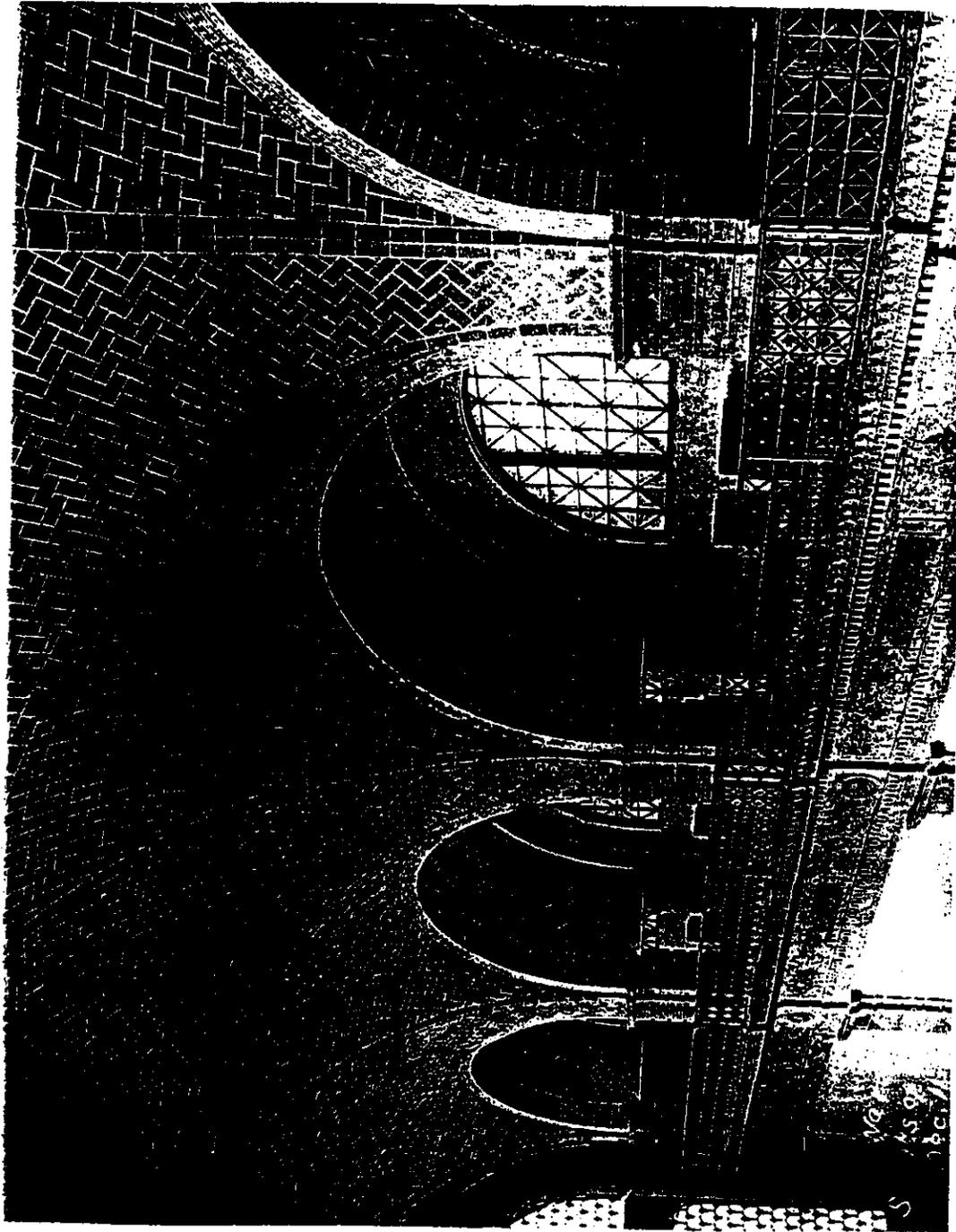
Photocopy of Photograph of West Wing/Library, taken December 11, 1906, photographer unknown. Original photograph courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
INTERIOR OF LIBRARY (WITH ORIGINAL SET OF FIRST-FLOOR SNEAD STACKS), VIEW FACING WEST.



Photocopy of Photograph of West Wing/Library, taken December 11, 1906, photographer unknown.  
Original photograph courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
INTERIOR OF LIBRARY (WITH ORIGINAL SET OF FIRST-FLOOR SNEAD STACKS), VIEW  
FACING EAST.



Photocopy of Photograph of West Wing/Library, taken December 11, 1906, photographer unknown.  
Original photograph courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
INTERIOR OF LIBRARY, GALLERY, (UPPER TIERS OF SNEAD STACKS NOT IN PLACE),  
VIEW FACING WEST.



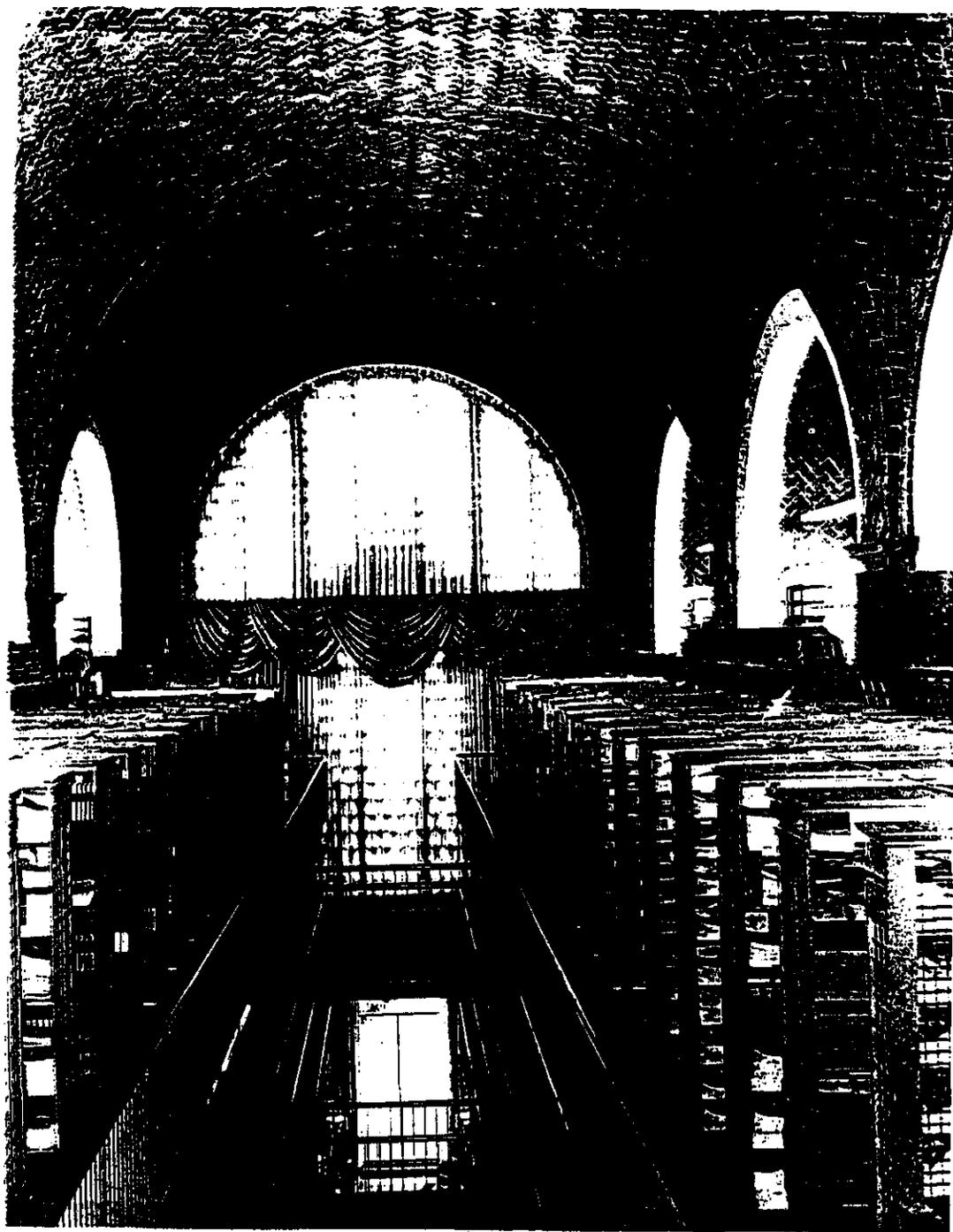
Photocopy of Photograph of West Wing/Library, taken December 11, 1906, photographer unknown.  
Original photograph courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
INTERIOR OF LIBRARY, GALLERY, (UPPER TIERS OF SNEAD STACKS NOT IN PLACE),  
VIEW FACING NORTHWEST.



Photocopy of Photograph of West Wing/Library, taken ca. 1940s, photographer unknown. Original photograph courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
INTERIOR OF LIBRARY, SNEAD STACKS, (FIVE TIERS IN PLACE), VIEW FACING EAST.



Photocopy of Photograph of West Wing/Library, taken ca. 1940s, photographer unknown. Original photograph courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
INTERIOR OF LIBRARY, SNEAD STACKS, (FIVE TIERS IN PLACE), VIEW FACING SOUTHEAST.



Photocopy of Photograph of West Wing/Library, no date, photographer unknown. Original photograph courtesy of National Defense University Special Collections Library.  
INTERIOR OF LIBRARY, UPPERMOST (FIFTH) STACK LEVEL, VIEW FACING WEST.