

Fort Sam Houston National Historic Landmark  
Officer's Quarters (Building #179, Artillery Post)  
San Antonio  
Bexar County  
Texas

HABS No. TX-3303-16

HABS  
TEX  
IS-AMT.  
37P-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Architectural and Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20340

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
FORT SAM HOUSTON NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

HAB  
10X  
17-3700  
E 11-1

OFFICER'S QUARTERS  
Building #179, Artillery Post

HABS No. TX-3303-16

Location: 179 Artillery Post Road, on the northwest corner of Artillery Post Road and New Braunfels Avenue, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

Present Owner and Occupant: United States Army

Present Use: Officer's Quarters

Significance: This 2-1/2 story buff brick residence is a good example of officer housing provided on post during the first decade of the twentieth century. Built in 1909 from standardized plans issued from the Office of the Quartermaster General, it is one of three similar residential plans of the cavalry and light artillery addition to the post.

The structure's most distinguished resident, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, occupied these quarters in 1941, just prior to the U.S. involvement in World War II and Eisenhower's European command.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1909
2. Architect: Office of the Quartermaster General; Plan #163B.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: U.S. Army from date of construction to the present.
4. Contractor: Unknown
5. Original Plan and Construction: The residence is a two-bay by three-bay building with a center-hall plan. There is a rear, two-story kitchen/servants' quarters wing. A two-tier porch across the front and continuing along the northeast side adds an asymmetrical element to the plan. Built of buff brick, this 2-1/2 story structure has a hipped roof over the main block with a ridge running northeast-southwest and dormer windows both front and rear. A hipped roof also extends over the rear wing. All roof surfaces are covered with French clay tiles.

The house was built in 1909 at a cost of \$17,328.06.

6. Alterations and Additions: Few alterations to the original plan have been made. The addition of aluminum screens on all windows is the most noticeable exterior change. A lavatory has been added on the first floor, under the main stairway. A second-floor fireplace has been removed, and the kitchen has been significantly modified.
- B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with Structure: Colonel and Mrs. Dwight D. Eisenhower occupied these quarters for a short time in 1941 after his promotion to full colonel and assignment to Fort Sam Houston. In December of that year, with the U.S. entrance into World War II, Eisenhower was called to Washington. He played a prominent role in the war, leading the African Invasion and soon after becoming Supreme Allied Commander of the European Theatre.

After the War, Eisenhower served as president of Columbia University and was then elected to two terms as President of the United States.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Quarters #179 is one of thirteen identical residences built c. 1909 from standardized plans of the Office of the Quartermaster General. More than thirty similar quarters were built between 1905 and 1912 along Artillery Post Road. Many individual details (including the modified center-hall plan and fenestration detail) are suggestive of the then popular Georgian Revival style, the dominant clay tile roof and simple porch detail result in a more regional eclectic appearance.
2. Condition of Fabric: The fabric is in good to excellent condition; tie rods were added in the 1950's, some brick separation is visible between the main block and the rear wing.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all Dimensions: The main block is a two-and-one-half story three-bay by two-bay symmetrical plan with approximate measurements of 43'-6" by 34'. A two-story, four-bay by one-bay kitchen/servants wing, approximately 39' by 21', extends from the rear.

2. Foundations: The foundations are raised rockfaced limestone ashlar walls.
3. Wall Construction, Finish and Color: The walls are yellow brick laid in a 5-1-5 (stretcher to header) common-bond pattern.
4. Structural System: The walls are brick load-bearing walls which are approximately 1'-3" thick resting on raised limestone ashlar foundation walls, approximately 2' thick.
5. Porches and Bulkheads: The building is located diagonally on a corner lot, facing southeast, with a two-tier porch extending out 10' across both the front and the northeast side. The porch is six steps above grade at the front. There are poured concrete steps at the front center entrance.

The porch is supported by evenly-spaced modified Tuscan columns, with a 2' high squared balustrade and molded railing on both the first and second floors. The floor is wood tongue-and-groove decking.

The structure's clay-tile hipped roof continues out over the porch with a wide overhang supported by carved outriggers.

The porch rests on limestone block piers. The northeast corner of the second story is screened.

A small, screened, one-story rear entrance porch, approximately 22' by 7'-6" stands off the kitchen/servants' quarters on the northeast side. Its design is similar to that on the front. This porch is six steps above grade, with poured concrete stairs and black metal pipe railing.

A rear bulkhead on the northwest side wall of the kitchen bay provides exterior access to the basement. The bulkhead is nine steps below grade with poured concrete and limestone block well walls.

6. Chimneys: Two interior yellow brick chimneys are symmetrically set, projecting from either side of the center ridge of the main hipped roof. Chimneys are simple with three rows of stretchers forming corbelled caps.

An interior chimney projects from the ridgeline of the rear kitchen bay.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and Doors: The center double doors at the entrance, repeated on the second story, are simple with upper glass panes and two lower horizontal panels. Doorways are framed with five-pane transom lights, and three-paned sidelights above a molded raised panel base.

The side rear porch provides access to the kitchen and also provides the only entrance to the rear servants' quarters. Both doors have four upper panes with two horizontal raised panels below and a two-pane transom light above.

The rear basement bulkhead entrance has double doors with upper glass panes and lower panels.

The front doors off the porch and the basement doors both have outer wood frame screen doors.

All exterior doors have flat-arch gauged brick lintels.

- b. Windows: All windows have two-over-two, double-hung sash with flat-arch gauged brick lintels and dressed limestone lug sills. Windows have outer, incompatible, six-panel aluminum frame screens.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape and Covering: The main roof is hipped with a slight flare over the porches. The ridgeline runs northeast-southwest. A half-hip roof extends out from the rear covering the two-story wing. The roof has a French clay tile covering with prominent ridge caps.

The attached one-story rear side porch has a half-hip roof with standing seam metal covering, painted red.

- b. Cornice, Eaves: The roof has wide tongue-and-groove overhanging eaves with carved outrigger supports.

An attached metal gutter edges the entire roof.

- c. Dormers: Hipped-roof dormers project from the front and rear of the main roof. The dormers have two-pane casement windows with screens. The cheek walls of the dormers are covered with red clay tile shingles.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. Basement: The basement is an approximately 37' by 18' open space with a straight run frame stair descending into the center from the first floor kitchen. The walls are cement-covered limestone walls.
  - b. First Floor: A center hallway runs from the entryway to the kitchen wing. The living room is off the hall in the front south corner of the main block, with a large open stairhall behind. A small lavatory is found beneath the three run stairs off the stairhall. The library is off the hall in the front east corner, and the dining room is directly behind it. The kitchen wing is accessible either through a connecting pantry off the dining room or through the center hall. The rear stairs to the basement and to the second floor are off the back of the kitchen. An outside door off the kitchen leads to the northeast side porch and provides the only access to the rear servants' quarters at the back of the building.
  - c. Second Floor: The front stairhall in the west corner of the main block leads up to the second floor and opens into a central hall running southeast to northwest. The central hall provides access to five bedrooms and two full baths on the second floor.
  - d. Attic: The front open staircase continues 43'-6" up to a large open attic space approximately 43'-6" by 34' in the main block. The attic is unfinished with an exposed beam ceiling and brick walls, functioning primarily for storage. Natural light is provided by dormer windows in the front and rear.
2. Stairway: The main staircase runs from the first floor up to the attic three flights between floors around an open well. It is an open string staircase up to the attic. Simple brackets are below each step.

The newel post is rectangular with inset panels and molding. Similar posts are at each landing, rectangular but with chamfered corners rather than inset panels. Landing posts extend down, forming pendant drops.

Turned balusters, molded handrail, and posts are varnished natural wood with many balusters of a lighter wood (apparently later replacements).

Two narrow rear stairways, one running to the basement and the other running to the second floor, are off the kitchen.

3. Flooring: The basement floor is poured concrete. All baths and pantry have tile floors. The kitchen floor is covered with linoleum.

All other rooms have hardwood floors with approximately 4" finished floor boards. The staircase is carpeted between the first and second floors.

4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: Most walls throughout have been sheetrocked, although original plaster walls are still found in the kitchen wing. All walls are painted an off-white. 10" high molded baseboards are found in each room. A molded wainscote, five feet high, is found in the kitchen.
5. Doors and Doorways: Most interior doors have five horizontal panels. The second floor bedroom doors have two-pane, operable transoms above.

Five-panel pocket doors close off the living room, library, and dining room from the center hallway.

French double doors with five vertically set glass panes are located off the dining room and the second floor bedroom above, leading onto the side porch.

6. Special Decorative Features: The residence originally had five fireplaces, three on the first floor and two on the second floor. A fireplace on the second floor has since been closed off.

Each fireplace has rectangular openings enclosed with embossed black stove doors and surrounded by varying color tiles. Mantelpieces vary in each room.

The living room mantelpiece has two-tier Ionic columns. The lower tier columns flank the fireplace and support the mantel shelf. The smaller upper tier columns rest on the mantel shelf and flank a beveled mirror with surrounding egg and dart molding.

The library mantelpiece has very simple lines. Flanking modified Tuscan columns support the upper mantel shelf.

The dining room mantelpiece is unusual, and has a projecting leaded glass cabinet above supported by narrow columns and corner bracing. The cabinet has two fixed leaded glass panes in the center, with two leaded glass operable cabinet doors on the end.

The mantel in the upstairs bedroom across from the stairhall on the second floor is also simple. The hearth stones are red brick. The surrounding tiles have been painted white and the mantel shelf is supported by carved coupled brackets at each end.

Standing radiators are found in all rooms. The dining room radiator has built in bun-warmer shelves with hinged doors.

A clawfoot bathtub remains in the bath of servants' quarters.

7. Hardware: Most doors retain their brass oval doorknob plates with beaded edges.
8. Mechanical Equipment:
  - a. Heating: Originally heated by a coal-fired steam heating system, this structure is now heated by a gas-fired system with the main furnace in the basement, American Standard Radiator.
  - b. Lighting: Lighting is provided by overhead incandescent lighting throughout.
  - c. Miscellaneous: The house has been equipped with a smoke alarm system.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation: The house is set diagonally on a lot at the northwest corner of Artillery Post Road and New Braunfels Avenue. The house faces southeast and is at the eastern boundary of the Artillery Post residential development of the first decade of the twentieth century. The Spanish Revival style residences built during the second quarter of this century are east of this building.

A small frame garage, approximately 11' x 19', stands behind the residence on the opposite side of the rear service road.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Maps:

1905 and 1922 maps of post held at the Fort Sam Houston Military Museum (Bldg. #123), Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Real Property Records, Directorate of Facilities Engineering, Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas.

Historical data of San Antonio and Fort Sam Houston, a donation of Col. M.L. Crimmins, held in vertical files of the main branch of the San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.

3. Secondary and Published Sources:

Fort Sam Houston Historic Tour, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977. (K-1866/22) (No author identified)

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Correspondence and other miscellaneous files relating to Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas. National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The detailed survey of eighteen (18) architecturally representative structures, and a group of streetscapes, at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas, was undertaken in 1980 by the National Architectural and Engineering Record (NAER) after a comprehensive inventory of the Post was conducted. Funding for the project was made possible through the cooperative efforts of the Department of the Army, Fort Sam Houston, and the San Antonio Conservation Society.

Building 179  
HABS No. TX-3303-16 (page 9)

This project was under the general supervision of Kenneth Anderson, Acting Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Architectural and Engineering Record. Sally Tompkins of the NAER staff was project supervisor. Project Historian was Kathryn A. Burns, San Antonio, Texas. Photographic records were provided by David Kaminsky, Roswell, New Mexico.