

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 4 1980

DATE ENTERED MAR 13 1980

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

U.S. Army Fort Thomas Mess Hall

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Cochran Avenue (Building 26)

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Fort Thomas

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6

STATE

Kentucky

__ VICINITY OF

CODE

021

COUNTY

Campbell

CODE

037

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Fort Thomas--c/o Mayor Fred W. Erschell, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall

CITY, TOWN

Fort Thomas

STATE

Kentucky 41075

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Campbell County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Newport

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE

1979

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built between 1888 and 1892, the Fort Thomas Army Mess Hall is located in Campbell County, in northern Kentucky, approximately one-quarter of a mile west of the Ohio River. This brick building is composed of a one-story, rectangular main block, 150 feet long and 50 feet wide with no center supports; and a smaller rectangular block attached to the rear. Both sections appear to have been constructed at the same time, with the back portion used as the kitchen. The facade is 15 bays wide and has a pedimented pavilion (See photos 1&2). A common bond brick pattern was employed throughout, all window and door openings are round arched and the cornice is corbeled. The structure sits on a rough cut stone foundation and has a stone belt course at water table level. A hipped slate roof covers the main block, while the rear section has a gabled roof. The interior of the structure is completely open, with uncovered brick walls and a pressed tin ceiling (see photo 5).

The Mess Hall only is nominated at this time to expedite the processing of a federal restoration grant. Other historic structures that once composed Fort Thomas will be nominated at a later date. The foundation of the building marks the boundary.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1892

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fort Thomas U.S. Army Mess Hall is an excellent example of well designed institutional-type architecture from the late 19th century. For 53 years, between 1887 and 1940, this post served as the headquarters for the Southern Division of the U.S. Army and played an important role in the development of the city of Fort Thomas.

The site for the U.S. Army's first permanent base in the Northern Kentucky/Southern Ohio area was Fort Washington in 1789. As the nearby community of Losantiville (later known as Cincinnati) continued to grow and since the need for protection from Indian attacks had diminished by 1803, the Army left the northern shore of the Ohio River and was re-established in the Newport Barracks, a six-acre tract of land on the eastern bank of the Licking River at its confluence with the Ohio River.

Soldiers from the Barracks participated in the Battle of Tippecanoe, the Mexican War, and the Civil War. Visited at times by Generals Robert E. Lee and U.S. Grant, the post eventually became military headquarters for the Southern District, U.S. Army.

Flooding of the area by both rivers created the need for the Barracks to find a place on higher ground. General Phillip Sheridan visited the area and was encouraged by the sight of highland property overlooking the Ohio River about four miles from the Barracks. Congress appropriated \$165,000 for the purchase of land and construction of the new post in 1887. While legend says General Sheridan named the new installation, actually Army Secretary Proctor designated "the post at Newport, Kentucky...Fort Thomas in honor of General George H. Thomas and that at San Antonio...Fort Houston in honor of General Sam Houston."

The first structure was the home of the commanding officer, Colonel Melville A. Cochran. The Colonel's interest in trees and flowers provided many large old trees now in the area and, as long as the Army remained at Fort Thoams, there were many well-cared-for flower gardens to be enjoyed.

The total cost of the military establishment was 3 1/2 million dollars. The construction period lasted from 1888 to 1894, with most buildings being completed by 1892. From the Infantry Regiments (Second, Third, Fourth, Sixth, Ninth, and Tenth) and a battalion of Phillipine natives, soldiers left Forth Thomas for the Spanish-American War and both World Wars. During the 1930's the idea of larger military establishments began growing. There were problems at Fort Thomas with the lack of training space. The situation was alleviated for a period by the annual march of the regiment to Fort Knox for summer camp. The Tenth Infantry, which was destined to be the last of the "regulars" stationed at Fort Thomas, arrived in 1922 and remained until 1940. At that time recruitment activities replaced the Tenth Infantry's home base as the body was

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Knapp, Paul T. Fort Thomas, Kentucky, Its History and Heritage. 1967,

Wadworth, Randolph. Paper read at the Cincinnati, Ohio meeting of the Literary Club, January 7, 1957.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1/4 acre.

QUADRANGLE NAME Newport, Kentucky Quadrangle

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1 6 | 7 2 1 1 0 0 | 4 3 2 7 2 2 0

B | | | | | | | | | |

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the nominated area is the foundation of the present structure.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jayne C. Henderson / Historian

DATE

Kentucky Heritage Commission

August 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

104 Bridge Street

502/564-3741

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Frankfort

Kentucky

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Edward W. Miller

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

12-19-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3/13/80

ATTEST:

W. Ray Luce
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3/11/80

Kristin J. O'Connell
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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U.S. Army Fort Thomas Mess Hall
Fort Thomas, Kentucky

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moved to Iceland. The Mess Hall was in constant use until the Veterans' Administration obtained the property after the second World War. The post was used as an army reception center for several years, and an induction center for this area until 1964.

Incorporated in 1867 and known originally as the District of the Highlands, the city of Fort Thomas had many social ties with the soldiers, officers, and families of "the Post." The site of Fort Thomas on the hills above the Ohio River was often called the West Point of the West. It was the only military post in a metropolitan area with access to the heart of the city (Cincinnati) by street car in less than 30 minutes. The lovely grounds with trees and flowers resembled a well-kept college campus more than a military base. Military rotation brought personnel from the Phillipines to Fort Thomas for a pleasant return "to the states." Sporting events and social affairs at the Post welcomed townspeople and the community welcomed the Army personnel. After retirement, many soldiers and officers returned to the city of Fort Thomas for a permanent home after finding it so comfortable and attractive during their tours of duty.

The dining hall is a clear example of late 19th century American military aesthetics. Closely related to industrial buildings of the period, the hall was designed as a long horizontal building with a central pavilion entrance.

The pavilion is given emphasis with a broad arch and stone impost blocks and tympani. Above the stone base and beyond the pavilion, the brick walls are enriched only with simple corbelled cornices and unembellished drip courses. The interior is a single, long room, with exposed brick walls, a pressed-tin ceiling, and a tile floor. In summary, the military function of the building required a spare yet monumental style.

¹There are other existing military buildings connected with the post which include: the Armory, water tower, and a complex of living quarters. Because of a pending restoration grant, the Mess Hall was selected for individual nomination, with the remaining buildings to be nominated at a later date.

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Fort Thomas Mess Hall
Campbell County, Kentucky

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ADDENDUM

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary line of the nomination extends thirty feet in all directions from the foundation of the building.