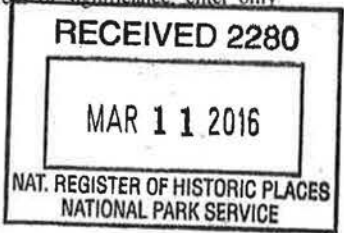


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

206

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: La Crosse Armory

Other names/site number: John Gund Brewing Stables

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 2219 South Avenue

City or town: La Crosse State: Wisconsin County: La Crosse

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

	<u>3/4/2016</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title	Date
<u>Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____ Signature of commenting official	_____ Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

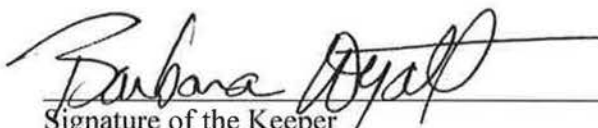
La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

4-22-16
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

La Crosse Armory
 Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
 County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DEFENSE: Arms Storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: STONE/Limestone

Walls: BRICK

STONE/Limestone

Roof: SYNTHETICS/rubber

Other: METAL

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

Narrative Description

Summary

The La Crosse Armory, located at 2219 South Avenue in La Crosse, Wisconsin, is a two story, brick, Romanesque Revival style building that was designed by local architect C.F. Struck. Constructed in 1902 as the stable for the Gund Brewery, the Wisconsin National Guard occupied the armory from 1921 to 1960. The La Crosse Armory has rectangular massing, with the long (south) elevation serving as the building's primary façade. The structure rests on a raised foundation of square-cut rusticated limestone. The walls are of red brick laid in a variation on English Garden Wall Bond, with five rows of stretchers to one row of headers. The roof is flat; the eastern portion of the roof sustained damage during a tornado in 2011. A pair of one-story standing seam metal-sided shed additions, added in the late twentieth century, are located along the rail line on the north façade and are visible from the east and west. The corners of the primary façade are highlighted with a tall parapet wall and an elaborately stepped parapet at the central bay; the east and west facades feature smaller stepped parapets. Large segmental arch window openings dominate the first story of the primary façade; the remaining window openings are rectangular with segmental, radiating, arched brick tops. Approximately half of the window openings have been infilled with brick or glass block; the remaining window openings retain their historic double-hung, divided-light, wood sash. The Wisconsin National Guard added an aluminum and glass entrance to one of the segmental arch window openings on the primary façade (which dates to the period of significance); a second aluminum and glass entrance was added in the late twentieth century by the Bakalars Sausage Company. The building features many decorative details, including brick corbeling along the roofline, a limestone water table, limestone keystones, brick and limestone voussoirs, and limestone dripstones, window sills, lintels, and belt courses.

The interior of the Armory features a wide central stair that bisects the building into eastern and western portions. The first floor of the Armory was altered by the Bakalars Sausage Company between the 1960s and 1990s to include office space and large coolers around the perimeter. Non-historic concrete masonry unit and sheetrock walls are easily identifiable. The first floor retains its historic exposed joists, column grid, and exposed masonry walls. The historic hay chute, which was used by the original stable and by the Wisconsin National Guard, remains intact. The second floor retains its large open spaces, exposed joists, exposed steel columns, exposed masonry walls, and the wood floors that were installed in the 1920s by the Wisconsin National Guard in the western portion, which functioned as both a close order drill hall and ball room. The eastern portion of the second floor includes a small jail cell used by the Wisconsin

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

National Guard and a painted shield representing the 105th Calvary Regiment of the Wisconsin National Guard (Photo 10).

Despite late twentieth century alterations by the Bakalars Sausage Company, the La Crosse Armory building retains a high degree of historic integrity and is the only extant armory building in La Crosse.

Description

Site and Massing

The La Crosse Armory (Armory), located at 2219 South Avenue in La Crosse, Wisconsin was constructed in 1902 as the stable for the John Gund Brewing Company. The Wisconsin National Guard took over the building in 1921 and used it as the La Crosse Armory until 1960. The site consists of two parcels that total 1.148 acres.¹ The Armory and a parking lot lined with mature trees (at the eastern boundary) are located on the southern parcel; the northern parcel is part of the site on which two late-twentieth century standing seam metal shed additions that are attached to the Armory are located (see Photo Key site plan). The site is bounded by South Avenue (also known as Old Highway 61 North; historically part of Mormon Coulee Road) to the south, the former Green Bay & Western rail line (which became the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy line in 1922 and is now the Burlington Northern Railroad Company) to the north, an alley to the east, and a small parking area that separates the structure from a neighboring masonry building fronting South Avenue to the west.² The building is located in a mixed-use residential and commercial area that was once part of the greater John Gund Brewing Company complex; the National Register of Historic Places-listed Gund Brewing Company Bottling Works is located across South Avenue. The site is flat, with trees in the western parking lot and volunteer plants along the rail line as the only landscaping.

The La Crosse Armory has rectangular massing, with the long south elevation serving as the building's primary façade (Photo 1). The two-story red brick Romanesque Revival structure rests on a raised foundation of square-cut, rusticated limestone. The walls are of red brick comprising the majority of each façade, laid in a variation on English Garden Wall Bond, with five rows of stretchers to one row of headers. The roof is flat; the eastern portion of the roof sustained damage

¹ The parcels, Property ID #17-50281-70 and Property ID #17-50280-80 as defined by the City of La Crosse, share the same address: 2219 South Avenue, La Crosse, Wisconsin.

² The rail line and South Avenue both run on a diagonal parallel to the Mississippi River, making the rail line the northwest boundary and South Avenue the southwest boundary. For clarity, this nomination will call South Avenue "south," the rail line "north," the alley "east," and the remaining boundary "west."

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

during a tornado in 2011. A pair of one-story standing seam metal-sided shed additions are located along the rail line on the north façade and are visible from the east and west (Photos 4 and 5).

South Façade

The primary façade of the La Crosse Armory features five distinct sections that are identified in this nomination using the letters A, B, C, D, and E (Figure 11: Primary Elevation Section Key). This façade predominantly consists of the typical red brickwork above a continuous limestone water table and base. Sections A and E, located at the east and west ends of the façade, are emphasized with tall parapet wall sections and limestone belt courses. At the first story, Section A includes a recessed rectangular window opening beneath an inset decorative brick spandrel panel on a limestone band. The window opening has been infilled with glass block and features a limestone sill above the water table. At the first story, Section E features a recessed bricked-in panel that echoes the appearance of the window opening of Section A.³ At both sections, a second story window is located above each decorative brick spandrel panel. Section A retains its historic four-over-four, double-hung, wooden sash window; the original second story window in Section E has been replaced with a jalousie window. Section A features a brick and metal tall parapet above the cornice; the tall parapet on Section E was destroyed by the 2011 tornado.

Section B features a segmental arch window opening at the first story and three rectangular window openings at the second story. The arched hood at the first story window features a limestone keystone, brick and limestone voussoirs, and a limestone dripstone; the window has a limestone sill. The opening has been infilled with a combination of aluminum-framed fixed windows and glass block. The second story windows have limestone sills and lintels. The limestone sill at the second level is continuous across Sections B through D and creates a belt course. Two of the three second story window sash are missing and the opening has been filled in; the remaining center window is an original four-over-four, double-hung, wood sash window. At the first story, Section B also contains a large stable door opening; the opening is framed by engaged brick columns with limestone trim and topped by brick corbeling beneath a sloped, projecting, limestone lintel. Flared bottom steel bollards are attached to each side of the opening. The opening now features a non-historic overhead garage door.

Section C, the prominent central portion of the primary façade, is topped by an elaborate stepped masonry and metal parapet (Photo 2). There is a limestone belt course below the brick corbeling at the cornice that serves as the lintels above the second story windows; a second limestone belt

³ Historic photographs of the Gund Brewing Company Stables suggest that this panel has always been bricked in; see Figure 3.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

course separates the first and second stories and acts as the second story window sills. The first story features four, segmentally-arched window openings with limestone sills, keystones, and dripstones, and brick and limestone voussoirs. The window openings are of equal size and are regularly spaced. Three of the window openings have been infilled with a combination of non-historic aluminum-framed windows and glass block. The fourth window opening was converted to an entrance by the Wisconsin National Guard, and dates to the period of significance. The modified entrance includes a glass and aluminum door with aluminum-framed sidelights beneath a transom consisting of a pair of aluminum-framed, two-over-four, fixed-light windows. At the second story, one window sash is missing and the opening has been filled in; two windows have been replaced with aluminum-framed jalousie windows. The remaining second story window is an original four-over-four, double-hung, wood sash window. Historically, a medallion that featured a horse head was located at the center of the second story of Section C. Portions of the medallion have since been damaged or removed, but its frame remains.

Section D includes a recessed entrance and three windows at the first story and two window openings at the second story. The entrance has a non-historic aluminum-framed glass door and transom and was installed in the 1980s by the Bakalars Sausage Company, the most recent owner of the building. Two small semi-circular arched window openings with limestone details feature fixed windows; historic photographs indicate that these windows have replaced a larger segmental arch window opening (Figure 3). The remaining historic segmental arch window opening at the first floor features a limestone sill, keystone, and dripstone, and brick and limestone voussoirs; the window has been infilled with two aluminum-framed fixed windows and glass block. The second story rectangular window openings have limestone sills, in the form of a continuous belt course, and lintels; one window is missing, the opening covered with sheet plywood, and the other has been replaced with an aluminum-framed jalousie window. A non-historic, painted, wood-framed sign and is attached to the façade of the building is located between the first and second stories. The roof and cornice on this section of the building was severely damaged during the 2011 tornado.

West Façade

The west façade has a limestone water table and rusticated base, a limestone belt course detail at each corner, and limestone window sills (Photo 3). The corner features the same inset decorative panels at the first story as has already been described for Section E on the south façade. The second story window opening retains its original four-over-four double-hung wooden sash window. Moving to the north, there are twenty rectangular window openings—ten at each story—that feature limestone sills and segmental radiating arch tops. Many of the windows have been infilled with non-historic materials, including fixed aluminum-framed windows, glass block, louver vents, or plywood. Two openings have been infilled with brick.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

The conditions of the central bay are unique. The central bay is taller than the bays on either side and features a raised parapet with pointed metal caps on each end. The historic first story opening has been infilled with a metal security door, red brick, and plywood; the radiating arched brick top remains. Metal conduit that serves the power box for the security door is affixed to the masonry. The door opening is sheltered by a non-historic metal-framed canopy with a corrugated metal roof suspended from the masonry above. A metal exhaust pipe rises along the south side of the bay and extends beyond the parapet. The second story window opening retains its limestone sill and red brick arched top; the opening has been infilled with plywood.

This façade has been extended with a single-story standing-seam, metal-sided, shed addition along the north façade. The west side of the addition has a metal service door.

North Façade

The historic first story of the north façade is obscured by the addition of two non-historic, single-story, standing-seam metal-sided shed additions constructed in the late twentieth century by the Bakalars Sausage Company. The larger addition has been painted brown; the smaller addition, which is attached to the larger metal shed, is cream in color (Photos 4 and 5). The historic exterior masonry is visible from the interior of the shed addition.

The rusticated limestone water table, red brickwork, brick corbelling, engaged columns at the corners, two brick parapets, and a chimney are visible above the shed additions (Photo 5). The eastern side of the roof was damaged by the 2011 tornado. Historic window openings retain their segmental, radiating, arched brick tops, and limestone sills. The first story window openings have been infilled with brick. At the second story, the two-over-two, double hung historic window sashes remain in the majority of the openings; a few window openings above the shed addition have been infilled with brick. A pair of large second story openings has been infilled with concrete masonry unit blocks.

East Façade

The east façade maintains the same rhythm of window openings as the west façade. It features a rusticated limestone water table and central raised parapet with pointed metal caps at each end. The south corner is emphasized with limestone belt courses and an inset decorative brick panel. All of the first story window openings have limestone sills and arched brick tops; these openings have been infilled with brick. The northernmost first story window opening has been modified to an entrance that is fit with a metal security door (Photos 5, 6, and 7).

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

The second story windows have limestone sills, segmental, radiating, arched brick tops, and retain their original two-over-two, double-hung, wood sash windows. The original wood window frames have a rounded edge to fit into the arch, but a flat bottom for rectangular-shaped windows.

The central bay has unique conditions, with door openings at the first and second story. The second story door has a limestone threshold and retains its original set of wood panel doors. The first story opening has been infilled with a metal door and the transom has been infilled with an aluminum-framed window and plywood.

The southern portion of this façade was damaged during the 2011 tornado.

Interior

The interior of the Armory features a wide central stair that bisects the building into eastern and western portions. The first floor of the Armory was altered by the Bakalars Sausage Company between the 1960s and 1990s. The alterations required the removal of historic stable stalls and modifications to the large open drill hall in the western portion to create office space; the volume of the historic space was altered to accommodate large coolers around the perimeter. Non-historic concrete masonry unit and sheetrock walls used to subdivide the spaces are easily identifiable; the coolers have since been removed. The Bakalars Sausage Company added tile floors to the eastern portion of the first floor in the late 1960s. The first floor retains its historic exposed joists, column grid, and exposed masonry walls. The historic hay chute, which was used by the original stable and by the Wisconsin National Guard, remains intact.

The second floor retains a high degree of integrity with its large open spaces, exposed joists, exposed steel columns, and exposed masonry walls. The western portion of the second floor retains the wood floors that were installed in the 1920s by the Wisconsin National Guard (Photo 8). This space functioned as both a close order drill hall and ball room. In the 1920s this was the largest hall in the city and the wood floors were installed specifically to facilitate balls and other large public gatherings in the armory.⁴⁴ The eastern portion of the second floor includes a large open space on the north end and smaller subdivided spaces to the south. A small jail cell used by the Wisconsin National Guard (Photo 9) separates these spaces. The eastern portion has concrete floors. The southeastern corner sustained damage during the 2011 tornado.

Integrity

The La Crosse Armory retains good integrity and all seven aspects of integrity are present. The location of the Armory building is unchanged from the building's period of significance. The

⁴⁴ "La Crosse's New Army Housed in Fine Big Armory," *La Crosse Tribune and Leader Press*, April 30, 1922.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

design of the building reflects many of the historic changes over time, including wood floors in the western portion of the second story, a small jail cell, and a modified entrance on the primary façade that were implemented by the Wisconsin National Guard. The setting of the Armory has changed since the period of significance, as many of the buildings related to the John Gund Brewing Company (of which the Armory building, as the brewer's stables, was once part) were destroyed between the 1930s and 1992; however, the transportation corridors of South Avenue (historically Mormon Coulee Road) and the former Green Bay & Western rail line (which became the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy line in 1922) remain.

The majority of the Armory's key exterior materials and features from the period of significance remain intact; however, the east portion of the roof and roofline were damaged by a tornado in 2011. Many of the Armory's interior finishes and circulation patterns remain intact; including the wide central stair, the exposed joists, exposed steel columns, exposed masonry walls, hay chute, second floor jail cell, and wood floors installed by the Wisconsin National Guard in the second floor close order drill hall/ballroom. The first floor was been modified to include office spaces and accommodate coolers (which have since been removed) to serve the needs of the Bakalars Sausage Company and, as such, retains a lower degree of design and material integrity than the second floor. The decorative elements of the exterior—including the brick corbeling and the details of the elaborate raised and stepped parapets—reflect the workmanship of the Armory. The presence of the aspects of integrity noted above contributes to the integrity of feeling of the La Crosse Armory. Finally, this building is the only extant armory in the City of La Crosse, and retains integrity to this historic use.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Military

Period of Significance

1921-1960

Significant Dates

1921

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Struck, Carl Johan Frederick (C.F.)

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The La Crosse Armory at 2219 South Avenue in La Crosse, Wisconsin, is locally significant under Criterion A for its 40 year association with the Wisconsin Army National Guard (WIARG). Specifically, the building is significant as a reflection of the United States' reorganization of the National Guard after World War I, of the Guard's increasing importance in the national defense of the country, and of the WIARG's local contribution and presence within the La Crosse community during that time period. The building reflects regional and national trends in the development of the National Guard, the establishment of National Guard armories in urban areas across Wisconsin, and Wisconsin's use of National Guard armories as community centers. The Armory's period of significance begins in 1921, when the Wisconsin National Guard leased the stable building at 2219 South Avenue in La Crosse, and ends in 1960, when the Wisconsin National Guard moved out of the building and into a new purpose-built Armory in Onalaska, Wisconsin.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The La Crosse Armory, located at 2219 South Avenue (historically part of Mormon Coulee Road) in La Crosse, Wisconsin, is locally significant under Criterion A for its 40 year long association with the Wisconsin Army National Guard. Specifically, the building is significant as a reflection of the reorganization of the National Guard after World War I, of the Guard's increasing importance in the national defense of the country, and of the Guard's local contribution and presence within the La Crosse community during that time period. The building reflects regional and national trends in both the development of the National Guard, the establishment of National Guard armories in urban areas across Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin National Guard's practice of renting armories to local community groups as a means of recruitment and fundraising. The National Guard units stationed at the La Crosse Armory served in both World War I (prior to occupying the Armory) and World War II, as well as in numerous other conflicts. The La Crosse Armory was also a significant gathering place for the community in both military and non-military activities, including balls, National Defense programs, food and clothing drives, holiday parcel post, shooting contests, roller-skating, and other recreational activities.

The property's area of significance is Military and the related Wisconsin context studies are "Government: State Militia, 1818 to present" and "Federal Military Installations, 1813 to

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

present.”⁵ The period of significance of the La Crosse Armory extends from 1921 to 1960. In 1921, the John Gund Brewing Company leased the stable building at 2219 South Avenue to the Adjutant General of the Wisconsin Army National Guard (WIARNG).⁶ The period of significance ends in 1960 when the WIARNG moved to a new armory building in Onalaska. During the period of significance, 1921 to 1960, the military units of the WIARNG housed in the Armory actively trained in times of peace and in times of conflict. As was typical of armories around the country, the La Crosse Armory building was also a center of civic and social activity, supporting both military and civic functions during this time. The La Crosse Armory is the only extant building used as an armory in the City of La Crosse.

Development of the United States National Guard

The United States National Guard, a descendent of the English volunteer militia concept that the first colonists transported to America, is the oldest arm of the nation’s military. The colonists disdained the standing armies that the British used to enforce the king’s monarchical authority. This sentiment was further expressed by the Continental Congress, which declared that standing armies were “inconsistent with the principles of republican governments, dangerous to the liberties of a free people, and generally converted into destructive engines for establishing despotism.”⁷ To provide for adequate defense, citizens preferred to rely on regular or enrolled militia as “the proper, natural, and safe defense of a free state.”⁸ Further, since the close of the Revolution, American citizens have generally believed that a large volunteer army was one of the hallmarks of the United States. This belief stands in contrast to the burden of compulsory service practiced by the “old world’s” great military powers.⁹

Militia units formed a substantial portion of American forces during international conflicts such as the War of 1812 and the U.S.-Mexican War. The Civil War marked the transition to a conscripted regular army during times of war, as President Abraham Lincoln used the draft to raise a sufficient number of soldiers in the war’s later years; however, state militia units

⁵ Wyatt, Barbara, ed. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Historic Preservation Division, 1986.

⁶ The terms “WIARNG,” “National Guard,” and “Guard” are used interchangeably throughout the text. Since the United States National Guard’s inception, each state’s Guard has been recognized as a separate organization, but is under the dual control of the state and the federal government. WIARNG is used to specifically describe the Wisconsin units, although it should be recognized that the Wisconsin units can be mobilized by both the state and federal government.

⁷ Robert M. Fogelson, *America’s Armories* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3-8.

⁸ *Ibid*, 212.

⁹ Colbron, *The Wisconsin National Guard*, 9.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

comprised of volunteers did supply the vast majority of the war's soldiers and those soldiers fought in every major battle of the war, maintaining a tradition of national defense that has continued to be significant.¹⁰ In 1879, the name "National Guard" was adopted in favor of "militia," and by the close of the 19th century, the National Guard system was embedded as one "of the most valuable institutions of our country."¹¹

The National Guard after the Civil War

Comprised of 112,000 men by the mid-1890s, the volunteer militia was approximately four times larger than the United States Army. This commanding strength bolstered efforts to establish armories for the volunteers. Until 1865, few specialized facilities existed, as militia units often relied on renting public halls and taverns for conducting meetings while drilling at the town square or common. The militia's increasing numbers necessitated a separate facility to provide adequate training and a proper place for members to store weapons and ammunition. A building campaign ensued, resulting in armory construction throughout the country. Philadelphia's First Troop Armory, built in 1874, and New York's Seventh Regiment Armory, completed in 1879, resembled medieval fortresses and featured towers with battlements. This distinctive design became the standard for purpose-built armories for the remainder of the nineteenth century. The fortress-like armories of this time period, with their large open volumes for interior drilling, gave way to more accessible facilities in the early part of the twentieth century when the focus of the militia—increasingly referred to as the National Guard—again shifted.

The Dick Act of 1903 federalized the National Guard; the militia became accountable at both the state and national levels, and was commissioned as a supplemental force for the regular army.¹² Up until the passage of the Dick Act of 1903, it was the responsibility of the National Guard "to aid the civil authorities in the execution of laws, when its power fails;"¹³ from then on, states divided their militia into two sections: the National Guard, known as the organized militia, and reserve militia. Throughout the twentieth century, the National Guard maintained three roles: to participate in global security of the United States, to provide emergency response at the state level, and to give support to local community needs.

¹⁰ R. Ernest Dupuy, *The National Guard: A Compact History* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1971), 31.

¹¹ Colbron, *The Wisconsin National Guard*, 9.

¹² James B. McCabe, "Patriots of the Heartland: The History of the Illinois National Guard and Naval Militia from 1712-1977," 8, 11, 41, 45, 59, 123-30, 206-08, 213-19; Jerry Cooper, *The Rise of the National Guard: The Evolution of the American Militia, 1865-1920* (Lincoln, NE: The University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 38, 41, 51.

¹³ Colbron, *The Wisconsin National Guard*, 27.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

In 1916, the National Guard was activated for service along the Mexican border and, a year later, United States National Guard units provided 450,000 soldiers for service in World War I. After the war, the role of the National Guard as a permanent part of the military establishment was codified with the National Defense Act of 1920. This act rejected a large regular army and, instead, favored a smaller active force reinforced by standing units of the National Guard and Organized Reserves. This “Army of the United States” was designed to mobilize and expand in wartime around a cadre of regular and trained citizen-soldiers. The Defense Act designated the National Guard as the first federal reserve force and set guard strength at a maximum of 435,000 soldiers.¹⁴ In La Crosse, enactment of the National Defense Act led to the growth of the La Crosse branch of the National Guard, and the organization’s occupation of the La Crosse Armory at 2219 South Avenue.

During the interwar years, the National Guard became better equipped by the federal government. State appropriations significantly increased, providing better pay for reservists, and supplying armories with new technologies and uniforms. While federal aid increased during this time period, it did not provide for purpose-built armory construction until the era of New Deal programs, and it became common to adapt existing buildings for use as armories, as the Wisconsin National Guard did in La Crosse. Due to the crisis in Europe in 1940, President Franklin Roosevelt activated the entire National Guard for one year of training and these soldiers were inducted into the regular army after the attack on Pearl Harbor.¹⁵

During World War II, nineteen National Guard divisions, including units based in La Crosse, were deployed to the Pacific and European theaters. After the war, 95% of the National Guard’s budget was provided by federal funding, and one-third of all guardsmen served as replacement troops to active army units during the Korean War. Although they did not take prominent roles, National Guard units also served during the Berlin Airlift and the Vietnam War. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the National Guard was controversially called upon during the turbulent era of the Civil Rights Movement and anti-war demonstrations, as well as to provide assistance

¹⁴ Michael D. Doubler and John W. Listman, Jr., *The National Guard: An Illustrated History of America’s Citizen-Soldiers* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 2007), 67-68; Cooper, 156-58, 177-78.

¹⁵ During the 1930s, the federal government provided approximately 33% of the National Guard’s budget—Cooper, 183.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

during natural disasters. More recently, National Guard troops served as peacekeeping forces in the Balkans, as well as in military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.¹⁶

Establishment of the Wisconsin Army National Guard (WIARNG) Units

In 1858, a state law officially permitted groups of forty or more to form a uniform company in the areas of artillery, light infantry, riflemen, or cavalry. These groups were known as the Wisconsin Militia. The Wisconsin Militia disbanded during the Civil War, although many of the state's militiamen took part in the conflict. When President Lincoln called for troops in 1861, the state's militia was essentially reorganized into the federal militia. Wisconsin's militia reformed after the war and, in 1873, Wisconsin started providing the militia with \$100 per unit per year to help pay for rent, armor, and repairs. In August of the same year, the National Guard of La Crosse was established with the formation of the Governor's Guard. A year later, the award per unit was increased to \$300. In 1879, the term "national guard" was adopted and a year later the battalion method of organizing the Wisconsin Army National Guard (WIARNG) was first implemented.¹⁷ The 3rd Battalion of the WIARNG included units in La Crosse, namely, the Governor's Guard of La Crosse and the La Crosse Light Guard and Unit Guard. The WIARNG reorganized in 1899 after the Spanish-American War. State strength was authorized at forty companies of infantry (divided between regiments and battalions), as well as a troop and battery of light infantry. By 1903, the annual state appropriation for the WIARNG was \$125,000.

At WIARNG's inception, the Adjutant General stated the organization's objectives as follows: "1) To provide an organized, instructed, disciplined and equipped force, available in national emergencies while a volunteer army is forming; 2) To spread some military knowledge among the mass of the people; 3) To furnish a guarantee of peace, or at least an approximate preparation to resist a domestic or foreign foe."¹⁸ These three objectives frame the duties and obligations of

¹⁶ John K. Mahon, *History of the National Guard* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983), 188, 194, 209, 225; Roger Allen Brown, William Fedorochik, Jr., and John F. Schank, *Accessing the State and Federal Missions of the National Guard* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1995), 38-53.

¹⁷ The operational unit structure of the National Guard from largest entity to smallest entity is: corps, divisions, brigades, battalions, companies/batteries/troops, platoons, and squads and sections. There are additional unit types that don't fall cleanly into this hierarchical structure. A battalion is made up of 3-5 companies for a total of 300-1000 soldiers; it is a unit that is both tactically and administratively self-sufficient. A company/battery/troop has 60-200 soldiers and is a cohesive tactical sized unit that can perform a battlefield function on its own. Because terminology changed multiple times during the time period covered in this text, the word *unit* is used to describe an organized group of National Guard soldiers, independent of size. Information was accessed July 2015 at <http://www.army.mil/info/organization/unitsandcommands/oud/>

¹⁸ Colbron, 28.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

the Wisconsin National Guard, including throughout the La Crosse Armory's period of significance.

Wisconsin National Guard units were called to active duty in 1916 to patrol the Mexican border and again a year later as the country entered World War I. The WIARNG received accolades for their able training and service leading up to these wars, and "at the outbreak of war [the WIARNG] stood at the forefront of the states in perfection of military discipline and organization."¹⁹ The La Crosse units had a "splendid record" in the Spanish-American War and World War I, and were lauded in the *La Crosse Tribune and Leader-Press* for their successful campaigns in Puerto Rico and France, respectively.²⁰

The Wisconsin Army National Guard was again reorganized at the conclusion of World War I, in accordance with the National Defense Act Amendments of 1920. As part of this reorganization, La Crosse swung from the infantry to the artillery with the establishment of the Headquarters Battery, 120th Field Artillery in 1921 (re-designated Battery A, 120th Field Artillery on 1 July 1923). The WIARNG's state appropriation had grown to \$300,000 per year by 1923, when the First Battalion, Battery B, 120th Field Artillery was established in La Crosse. An additional \$300,000 from the State of Wisconsin was also made available to the WIARNG for the construction of, or repair to, armories as authorized by the governor. Often, as was the case in La Crosse, existing buildings were adapted to armory use.

A loss of funding occurred thereafter, which led to the elimination of twenty units around the state. One of the funding problems encountered was the Great Depression; however, as relief programs were developed and implemented, Wisconsin's National Guard benefitted. A substantial amount of Depression-era relief program funds were used to build nine new armories for the WIARNG.²¹ Relief program funds from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and

¹⁹ Milo Milton Quaife, *Wisconsin, Its History and Its People, 1634-1924* (Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1924): 86.

²⁰ "Review of Splendid Record of La Crosse in National Guard," *La Crosse Tribune and Leader-Press*, 17 October 1920, 1.

²¹ "Brief History of [the] Wisconsin National Guard," *Guard Review* 24(5): 12; "History of the Wisconsin National Guard," *Wisconsin National Guard Review* 15(6) (November 1938): 4; *Historical and Pictorial Review, National Guard and Naval Militia, State of Wisconsin*, 161.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

the Public Works Administration (PWA) led to the construction of over 750 armories nationwide.²²

The onset of World War II initiated increased training and eventual deployment of the WIARNG. In October of 1940, Wisconsin Governor Julius Heil established the State Council of Defense to coordinate with the federal and local defense programs. The University of Wisconsin and other colleges introduced military training classes for students and shared facilities with branches of the armed services.²³ By 1941, with U.S involvement in World War II on the horizon, Wisconsin's National Guard's strength was again increased. Approximately 320,000 Wisconsin soldiers served in the armed forces during the war. Wisconsin's National Guard formed a substantial part of the new Red Arrow Division and helped maintain the respected reputation of its World War I predecessor by remaining undefeated in the Pacific theater. La Crosse-based units, Batteries A and B, served in the Pacific theater with combat in Moroti, the East Indies, the Leyte Gulf, Luzon, and Japan.²⁴

After 1945, the federal government's Cold War policies dictated a doubling of the size of National Guard units throughout the United States, which led to the founding of the service company of the 426th infantry regiment, 32nd division in La Crosse in 1947. La Crosse National Guard Head, William Jefferson, emphasized that this period of reorganizing the Guard nationwide was necessary to keep the country prepared for any emergency: "A strong and active National Guard can help the country achieve its goal of a lasting peace. If the country is strong and prepared it will not serve as an invitation for attack as in 1941."²⁵

National Guard Armories – 1863 through 1920

For more than 150 years, National Guard armories have symbolized the dedication of American citizens to defend their state and nation. Armories stored arms, ammunition, and equipment, and played a key role in the training of volunteer soldiers. Prior to the Civil War, few structures were

²² "Armory Construction Over Until After Duration," *Wisconsin National Guard Review* 19:4 (July 1942): 7.

²³ Wisconsin Historical Society, Turning Points in Wisconsin History: The World War II Military and Home Fronts, http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/tp-038/?action=more_essay

²⁴ *Historical and Pictorial Review, National Guard and Naval Militia, State of Wisconsin* (Baton Rouge, LA: Army and Navy Publishing Company, 1939), 160-163, 176, 239; "National Guard Began Activities in La Crosse Nearly 86 Years Ago," 1959 newspaper clipping in possession of the La Crosse Public Library, Archives Department.

²⁵ "National Guard Infantry Unit to be Founded in La Crosse, *La Crosse Tribune*, 25 March 1947, 1.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

constructed strictly for military purposes. Most individual militia units met in buildings that shared military and non-military uses. Typically, volunteer companies rented rooms or entire upper levels of extant commercial buildings. The few armories that did exist were not built with the aspect of fortification in mind; rather, they served as “combination drill halls, club houses, banquet halls and convention sites.”²⁶ In 1863, Congress enacted the Armory Law, directing individual states to outfit their militia units with appropriate facilities to store weaponry and equipment.²⁷ From the 1860s to the 1920s, armory design configuration was established to include two primary elements: an administrative head house and drill hall. The head house typically included spaces for offices, classrooms, kitchen/dining, club and/or recreation rooms, a weapons vault and locker rooms.

La Crosse Armory—1877 through 1921

In La Crosse, several buildings housed the military and the Wisconsin Army National Guard between 1877 and 1921. In 1877, the Governor’s Guard Association built Armory Hall at 707 South Sixth Street, which replaced an earlier facility that existed closer to the downtown commercial district. Armory Hall (non-extant) was used for social gatherings, including balls and dances, as well as military drilling. In later years, the Governor's Guard became a social organization and a society for military veterans, and Armory Hall was replaced with an American Legion post.²⁸ Military operations also occurred in the Giles Block Building (non-extant) on the northeast corner of Fourth and State streets. Designed by C.F. Struck in 1879 for Abner Giles, the three-story gothic brick building housed several other enterprises. The ground floor was occupied by the post office and the John Smith & Co. dry goods store; the second floor was shared by the dry goods store and leased offices, and the La Crosse Light Guards used the third story as an armory.²⁹ The Giles Block building was replaced with a federal building, which housed the United States Post Office and offices for the Naval Reserve, Navy recruiting, National Guard, Army Organized Reserve, Air Force Reserve, and Marine recruiting.³⁰

²⁶ Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, Vol. 1,4-2 (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Historic Preservation Division, 1986), 446.

²⁷ “Light Horse Squadron Armory Complex,” *Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)* WI-378 (2008). <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/wi/wi0700/wi0727/data/wi0727data.pdf>.

²⁸ “National Guard Began Activities in La Crosse Nearly 86 Years Ago,” *La Crosse Tribune*, 1 March 1959, 11.

²⁹ *History of La Crosse County*, 628.

³⁰ “Federal Building Hub of Activity For Many Reserve, Other Military Agencies In Area,” *La Crosse Tribune*, 11 April 1948, 20.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

National Guard Armories—1920 through Present

By the 1920s, approximately five-sixths of America's military strength lay in citizen soldiers—National Guard and Army Reserve divisions—and the need for purpose-built facilities became critical.³¹ On a state level, Wisconsin passed the Armory Aid Act in 1919 to assist in the construction of armories throughout the state. The act called for the local municipality to furnish the site and at least one-half of the construction cost, while the state would cover the remaining half not to exceed \$20,000. The armory and land were to be in the state's name and the state was also to receive the income from rentals. The local municipality, however, could use the drill hall for free for public-oriented functions, except for the cost of heat and light. Due to the high cost of material and labor, no construction occurred until 1921. By the end of 1922, the State Armory Board had assisted in the construction of three armories in Oconomowoc, Clintonville and Abbotsford, as well as reconstructing old armories in five other locations.³²

La Crosse Armory—1921 through 1960

In La Crosse, the 1920s saw the reorganization of the National Guard, Battery D, and 2nd Field Artillery of the WIARNG. As a consequence of this reorganization, the unit sought a permanent location for training, storage, and recreation. Battery D temporarily found accommodations at 413 State Street, in the former Palmer Livery Stable. A *La Crosse Tribune* news article from October 1920 identified that these new quarters would likely not support all of the functions of Battery D or the three other local units:

That building has been thoroughly rebuilt inside for the proper accommodation of the outfit... The building is held by a lease, not a long one, by the way, and the battery thinks it ought to have public support for the erection of an armory for itself and other national guard units which might also be a community auditorium—but that's another story, not to be told here.³³

The "story" would be addressed within the year. With the growth of new units in the WIARNG, the Adjutant General Orlando Holway needed to secure a new location with larger facilities, including a horse corral and outdoor drill field.

³¹ Oklahoma Historical Society, "National Guard Armories," accessed July 2015.
<http://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=NA009>

³² *AG Reports*, [1922], 25, 31; [1924], 32; "Armories of the Wisconsin National Guard," *Wisconsin National Guard Review* 1:1 (January 1924): 33.

³³ "New National Guard Battery Brings \$30,000 Yearly to La Crosse," *La Crosse Tribune and Leader-Press*, 17 October 1920, 1.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

Recruitment officers in La Crosse noted that enlistments were “disappointingly slow” and attributed the low recruiting numbers to “the fact that the men are anxious to know what provisions are to be made for them in the way of pay and proper housing.” Present facilities were adequate for drill purposes, but did not offer “any of the other advantages that the men should have in the way of club facilities, athletic provisions and other forms of entertainment that can be had in a regularly designed armory.” The authors of the article urged the public to furnish a site for an armory, particularly since state law would provide \$20,000 in community assistance towards the erection of an armory.³⁴ Other articles emphasized that an armory would benefit the community by providing rentable space and recreational activities for public use, and that Battery D was a profitable business, bringing \$30,000 a year to bolster the local economy.

The vacant John Gund Brewing Company stables were soon after identified as an accommodating building for the necessary facilities of the WIARNG units (Figures 1-6).³⁵

Early History of the Building

John Gund, a German immigrant, arrived in the United States during 1848. In 1858, Gund entered the brewery partnership of Gottlieb Heileman, establishing the City Brewery at Third and Mississippi Street in La Crosse. Gund withdrew from the partnership in 1872 to establish his own Empire Brewery (later renamed Gund Brewing Company) on Mormon Coulee Road (later renamed South Avenue). Gund’s product became popular and the business prospered. By 1880, six, large, two-story limestone buildings occupied the site. The brewery and the ice houses were designed by architect C.F. Struck. In 1897, a disastrous fire destroyed \$200,000 worth of Gund’s property. Chicago architect Louis Lehle designed Gund’s new brewery buildings in 1898, including buildings, or “houses,” for washing, fermenting, malting, and bottling, and ancillary buildings for coal, lumber, ice, and stock storage (Figures 1 and 2). In 1902-03, contractor Ed Wallace built the 75 by 120 foot wagon and livery stable, which was designed by architect C.F. Struck; the building would ultimately become the La Crosse Armory.

As the brickwork on the brewery’s stables was completed, the *La Crosse Daily Press* touted, “the building is said to be one of the finest stables in the northwest.”¹ The building used “modern” iron and brick construction, and exhibits battlements associated with the Romanesque Revival style. The stable building was located on the northeast edge of the original five-acre Gund establishment. It is considered to be architecturally representative of the late 19th century

³⁴ “Better Conditions in Guard Service to be Still Finer,” *La Crosse Tribune and Leader-Press*, 18 January 1920, 1.

³⁵ See also: Rausch and Zeitlin, *City of La Crosse Intensive Survey Report*, 321.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

industrial boom in La Crosse, and the stable building is one of few remaining architecturally and historically significant buildings in La Crosse remaining from this period.

The establishment of the John Gund Brewing Company is illustrative of the industrial progress in La Crosse between 1880 and 1905. In the last two decades of the 19th century, when La Crosse became the second largest city in Wisconsin, thirty new industries were founded in La Crosse.¹ During this time period, there were two distinct trends: the establishment of plants for processing of local natural resources and the provision of articles most in demand by local consumers. The brewery falls in the latter category. Small enterprises, such as Gund Brewing Company, either shifted to retailing or expanding their business into factories to match their product demand to a regional and national level. Local breweries added to the economic base of the communities they were part of, but they also represent German ethnic culture, the most significant ethnic culture in Wisconsin during this time period. The Gund Brewing Company was one of the largest of La Crosse's breweries and one of the most important in the nineteenth century.

The Guard occupied the building until 1960, after which it became the offices and manufacturing facility of the Bakalars Sausage Company (Figure 10). The meat manufacturer occupied 2219 South Avenue from 1962 to 2013. The building is now vacant.

Reuse of the Stables as an Armory

The John Gund Brewing Company had not reopened after Prohibition, and was pleased to lease the stables to the WIARNG for use as their armory.³⁶ The John Gund Brewing Company started leasing the building to the 120th Field Artillery of the National Guard on December 1, 1921 under Adjutant General Holway. The change in ownership likely occurred in 1922, and by 1923

³⁶ Carl Johan Frederick Struck (C.F. Struck) was born in Christiania, Norway in 1842. Struck immigrated to the United States in 1864, and in 1873 went to Marquette, Michigan to superintend the erection of a bank building. Soon after, he established an office and business for himself in Marquette. He designed and built several brownstone buildings, including a schoolhouse, church, opera house, and several houses. Struck came to La Crosse in 1877, where he designed Germania Hall, the First National Bank building, the Giles Building, the Vernon County courthouse and jail, multiple buildings for John Gund Brewing Company (including the subject building), and remodeled the International Hotel. None of Struck's Wisconsin buildings generally designed in the Victorian Gothic mode are extant. In 1881, Struck moved to Minneapolis where he designed residences, including the Bardwell-Ferrant House (NRHP no. 84001416) and the E.H. Hobe House-Solheim (NRHP no. 83000933), and other buildings including Dania Hall (NRHP no. 74001020) and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church parsonage (NRHP no. 771000438). He moved to Seattle at the turn of the century, and died in Spokane, Washington in 1912 at the age of 70.

See also: *La Crosse Daily Republican and Leader*, 21 November 1902, 7; *La Crosse Daily Press*, 17 April 1903, 8. A number of the John Gund Brewing Company brewery buildings were razed in 1992.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

the 120th Field Artillery was the proprietor of the tax-exempt property.³⁷ Battery D of the La Crosse area National Guard likely utilized funds from the Wisconsin Armory Aid Act in the rehabilitation of the brewery stables. The Wisconsin Armory Aid Act was then abolished in 1923.³⁸

The brewery stables were an ideal fit as an armory for the Guard. The larger property included space that could be used as an outdoor drill field and horse corral. The two story brick structure featured first floor horse stalls (Figure 5), a blacksmith shop, and space to drill with—and store—large artillery guns (Figure 7). The second floor offered large open areas that were used for close order drills and social functions and club rooms for members of the military units.³⁹ As a *La Crosse Tribune* news article attested, the Armory was fitted with the latest technology:

Considerable, new equipment will shortly be received by the local outfits, including a high-power radio outfit for receiving and broadcasting, which will be installed at the armory, some large “x-ray” lights which are to be put in the corral at the armory permitting night riding practice in the big yard, and sixteen new “light single mounts”—otherwise good-looking saddle horses—for the use of the men.⁴⁰

Indeed, inspecting officers of the United States Army indicated that La Crosse had the best armory for the training of field artillery troops in Wisconsin and the best quarters for National Guard troops found outside of Milwaukee (Figure 8). News articles lauded the revamped Gund brewery building: “With four units of the National Guard located here...with club rooms, immense drill room and other splendid facilities, La Crosse’s citizen-soldiery is attracting widespread attention in its handsome new quarters on the Mormon Coulee Road.”⁴¹ (Figure 9) Furthermore, “citizens visiting the new armory are amazed at the size of the building and the splendid facilities afforded for the housing of the guns, horses, and equipment.”⁴²

³⁷ Historic La Crosse tax records for 1922 are lost, but a historian from the La Crosse Public Library reasons that change in ownership occurred in 1922. Historic newspaper articles support this reasoning. The 120th Field Artillery also purchased the Gund Brewing Company stone bottling house. It was torn down in 1934 as a state CWA project. Source: *La Crosse Tribune*, 2 January 1934, 3.

³⁸ “Light Horse Squadron Armory Complex.”

³⁹ “Gund Stables to Furnish Armory for the Military: Handsome Commodious Building Leased by State for Four Units of National Guard,” *La Crosse Tribune*, 10 December 1921, p. 1.

⁴⁰ “Captain Rupp’s New Outfit to Complete 120th F.A. Regiment,” *La Crosse Tribune and Leader-Press*, 7 May 1922, 7.

⁴¹ “La Crosse’s New Army Housed in Fine Big Armory,” *La Crosse Tribune and Leader-Press*, 30 April 1922, 11.

⁴² *Ibid.*

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

Positive public feedback was important to the National Guard, since, during the early part of its history, this part of the military force received “little glory and much criticism.” The National Guard hoped to amend its tarnished reputation after the Act of Congress on June 4th, 1920 when the United States Army was reorganized into the regular Army, the National Guard, and the Organized Reserve:

Our present National Guard is about as far removed from that force as an oak tree is from the corn, yet many persons fail to grasp this fact. They fail to observe the wonderful growth and development of this branch of the service. Since 1898 when state forces or organized militia were accepted in to the United States Army as volunteers, new laws have steadily removed objectionable features of delay and confusion in the process of converting state forces into federal forces until commencing with the act of June 3rd, 1916, the state has the force which is now known as the National Guard.⁴³

By allowing the citizens of La Crosse to use the Armory as a social center, the WIARG was accomplishing two important goals. First, it garnered community support for the local troops which, according to historian Robert Fogelson, often translated to fundraising and rental income and, second, it facilitated recruitment.⁴⁴ An article in the December 10, 1921 edition of the *La Crosse Tribune* stated that “the military building will in effect offer a big social center for the south end of the city, and incidentally, will enhance interest in the activities the 120th Field artillery units there...enlistment is invited in any of the four local units, depending on the preference of the individual.”⁴⁵

The use of the subject building as an armory occurred at a time when the National Guard served an increasingly important role in the defense of the country. Guard units had provided 450,000 soldiers in World War I. Following the war, there was debate as to whether the United States should feature a large standing army to support the country’s role as an international power. The National Defense Act of 1920 rejected this notion, favoring a smaller active force supported by the National Guard and Organized Reserves. As such, the WIARNG was entrenched as a permanent part of the military establishment. The role of the Guard in the nation’s defense is reflected in local newspaper accounts on the Armory’s opening, which indicated “with this well-equipped armory at La Crosse, the members of the various units are able to get all the training

⁴³ “La Crosse’s New Army Housed in Fine Big Armory,” *La Crosse Tribune and Leader-Press*, 30 April 1922, 11.

⁴⁴ Robert M. Fogelson, *America’s Armories: Architecture, Society, and Public Order* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 209.

⁴⁵ “Gund Stables to Furnish Armory for the Military: Handsome Commodious Building Leased by State for Four Units of National Guard,” *La Crosse Tribune*, 10 December 1921, p. 1.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

necessary to make them real soldiers in time of war.”⁴⁶ Major Stanley S. Gordon, commanding officer of the Second Battalion Headquarters and Combat Train, 120th Field Artillery, based at the Armory, expanded upon this sentiment:

The men interested in the local units feel that the National Guard is a form of insurance. Insurance to the people of the community, as well as insurance to the country. Most people now realize that a million men springing to arms have a lot of high jumping to do before they spring anything on the other fellow. They must know their business, before they invest any lives and equipment in the venture.⁴⁷

Officers of the WIARNG stated that use of the building as their armory marked a turning point in the history of the National Guard in La Crosse, allowing for the largest number of units in the history of the city. At its inception, the building served four units of the 120th Field Artillery: the Second Battalion Headquarters and Combat Train; Regimental Headquarters Battery; Battery “D”; and the Regimental Medical Detachment. Membership in these units comprised four hundred soldiers at full strength and the units drilled weekly. Approximately half of the WIARNG troops in La Crosse had served in World War I. In addition to its military purposes, the La Crosse Armory was cited as the location of military balls and speeches, serving as a “big social center for the south end of the city.”⁴⁸

After World War II, the WIARNG sought to end its long-standing practice of renting armory space in cities lacking a state-owned facility. The impetus for this new phase of armory development was the National Defense Facilities Act of 1950, which represented the first time the federal government took a direct role in armory construction.⁴⁹ Part of this armory building program was for national security requirements that dictated the building of more—and more modern—facilities during the Korean War and the Cold War.⁵⁰ The National Guard Bureau Major General, Kenneth F. Cramer, pushed for state-owned facilities, and provided “definitive drawings for low-cost, semi-permanent type single-unit and two-unit armories which would

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “La Crosse’s New Army Housed in Fine Big Armory,” *The La Crosse Tribune and Leader-Press*, 30 April 1922, 11; “Gund Stables to Furnish Armory for the Military,” *The La Crosse Tribune*, 10 December 1921, 1.

⁴⁹ Robert P. Wieggers, *Missouri Armories: The Guard’s Home in Architecture and History* (Truman State University Press, 2012): 111.

⁵⁰ “National Guard Armories,” <http://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=NA009>; John K. Mahon, *History of the National Guard* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983), 239, 258.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

provide minimum facilities for classroom, storage and administrative purposes.”⁵¹ It was during this period that the La Crosse armory was replaced with a new \$317,000 facility in Onalaska in 1960, designed in much the way Cramer describes above.⁵²

Community Functions at the La Crosse Armory

The La Crosse Armory functioned as much more than a home to the 120th Field Artillery of the Wisconsin Army National Guard. Armory drill halls were often the largest halls in small communities, which placed them in high demand by “commercial, social, cultural, fraternal, and political groups which wanted to rent the armories for nonmilitary functions.”⁵³ During the first half of the twentieth century, armories served a variety of functions to local communities. In addition to hosting military balls, they served as concert venues and sites for political conventions. According to Robert Fogelson, “the campaign to turn the armory into a community center was highly successful... [in an effort to keep them off the streets] New York State allowed children to play in its armories. Wisconsin rented them to community groups for social and recreational activities. California turned its armories over to local recreation departments.”⁵⁴ The WIARNG typically used the La Crosse Armory for military training and drilling one evening a week, allowing adequate time and space for the building to operate as civic center.

The La Crosse Armory hosted many military speakers, promotion and award ceremonies, and was the site for several National Defense Week programs prior to World War II. Non-military activities ranged from shooting clubs, roller-skating, food and clothing drives, and holiday postal service.

The La Crosse Armory compound had shooting ranges for military and recreational uses. A historic news advertisement announced that the La Crosse Armory was the site of fall turkey shoots, hosted by the Battery B rifle club.⁵⁵ Community archery and gun clubs also solicited WIARNG members to join their clubs, since, as Ezra Hartl, head of the La Crosse recreation department stated, “Soldiers are...urged to participate in social center activities.”⁵⁶

⁵¹ US Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee No. 3, *Hearings on H.R. 2824,...and H.R. 4570...*, 16 March, 1949, 4526-32.

⁵² “State Projects Included in Military Bill,” *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune*, 18 March 1959, 15.

⁵³ Fogelson, *America’s Armories*, 210.

⁵⁴ Fogelson, *America’s Armories*, 210.

⁵⁵ *La Crosse Tribune*, 1 November 1931, 11.

⁵⁶ *La Crosse Tribune*, 28 October 1950, 8.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

The La Crosse Armory sponsored activities during several pre-World War II National Defense Week programs. The purpose of this program, in the shadow of impending crisis, was intended to inform the American people of the present world conditions. The program coordinators assured that, in accordance with National Guard objectives, “what will be said this week here in La Crosse is not based on the theory that we want war, but rather that we want peace and security.” Further, the program “stresses the indispensability of adequate facilities for defense against any potential enemies.”⁵⁷ As such, the National Defense Week programs included presentations and demonstrations to assure the public of its personal security in the event of a world conflict. In 1940, the program at the La Crosse Armory included a demonstration by the Sons of Legion drum corps, an infantry drill, a demonstration and display of 120th Field Artillery medical detachment equipment, and a demonstration on operating communication equipment. The La Crosse Armory also housed a La Crosse County Red Cross display on its service to the Army and a demonstration of Salvation Army basics serving food in the trenches.⁵⁸

The La Crosse Armory also housed patriotic activities after World War II. It was the collection site for a citywide clothing drive: as event coordinators proclaimed:

You would hardly suspect as you pass this Wisconsin National Guard armory that some day many victims of Nazi pillaging will bless the people who volunteered their time and energy to pack, tie, weigh and label the boxes and crates which contain the fruits of the La Crosse Victory clothing drive.⁵⁹

Volunteer members of local civic and church organizations, including the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, the Knights of Columbus, and the YMCA headed the drive. Another event at the La Crosse Armory was a countywide emergency food drive on behalf of the national emergency food committee.

During the Christmas holiday season, the La Crosse Armory was set up as an annex to handle parcel post from the central post office on State and Fourth streets. In addition, several army trucks were added to the post office fleet of delivery vehicles. As stated by the postmaster in

⁵⁷ “Study of National Defense, *La Crosse Tribune and Leader-Press*, 12 February 1939, 4.

⁵⁸ “Major Holmes Talks Tonight at Legion Club,” *La Crosse Tribune*, 14 February 1940, 9.

⁵⁹ “Groups Bundle Clothing at National Guard Armory Here for Shipment to Other Nations,” *La Crosse Tribune*, 13 February 1946, 11.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

1951, "From now until Dec. 31, all incoming parcel post will be handled [at the La Crosse Armory] and all city deliveries of parcels will be made from that point."⁶⁰

The civilian uses of the La Crosse Armory are equally important in establishing historical significance as the WIARNG's 40-year use of the facility. This was a unique period in armory and National Guard history—civilians were permitted use of these federally subsidized military buildings. In the process of doing so, they became more knowledgeable about military needs, issues, and affairs, which built a broad public constituency for the National Guard in particular, and the military in general. The Armory functioned as a unique interface between the public and the National Guard that translated into enhanced recruitment and support for WIARNG's objectives at home and abroad. When Cold War national security requirements increased in the 1950s, new and more modern facilities began replacing these shared military and civic centers and civilian use of the armories was no longer permitted.

Conclusion

The La Crosse Armory is locally significant under Criterion A for its 40 year long association with the Wisconsin Army National Guard. Specifically, the building is significant as a reflection of the reorganization of the National Guard after World War I, of the Guard's increasing importance in the national defense of the country, and of the Guard's local contribution and presence within the La Crosse community from 1921 to 1960, when a new armory was built in nearby Onalaska, Wisconsin. Armories such as this one in La Crosse played an important role in the continued training and preparation of military reservists. In addition, this armory relates to the reorganization, growth, and expansion of the National Guard in Wisconsin during its period of significance, 1921 to 1960. Finally, the Armory served as a community center, hosting military and non-military functions as varied as dances, National Defense programs, shooting competitions, roller-skating, food and clothing drives, and as a holiday parcel annex. The period of significance, 1921 to 1960, encompasses the unique function the armory had in La Crosse, as well as the increasing importance of the National Guard in local and national security.

⁶⁰ "Yule Season Means Hard Work At City Office; Early Mailings Requested," *La Crosse Tribune*, 2 December 1951, 24.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

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La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.148 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15T | Easting: 641478.94mE | Northing: 4850319.11mN |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary corresponds to the legal parcels associated with the building: City of La Crosse Parcel 17-50281-70 and City of La Crosse Parcel 17-50280-80.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Parcel 17-50281-70 is the historic parcel; Parcel 17-80280-80 is an adjacent parcel occupied by portions of the shed additions that attach to the historic building.

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Tamara Halvorsen Ludt and Marisa Koivisto
organization: Preservation Design Works
street & number: 575 SE 9th Street
city or town: Minneapolis state: Minnesota zip code: 55414
e-mail ludt@pvnworks.com
telephone: 612-843-4140
date: 7/29/2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

Photographs

Name of Property: La Crosse Armory

City or Vicinity: La Crosse

County: La Crosse

State: Wisconsin

Photographer: Tamara Halvorsen Ludt

Date Photographed: June 25, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo # 1 (WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0001)
Southwest façade, looking northeast across South Avenue

Photo #2 (WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0002)
Southwest façade, close-up of stepped parapet, looking northeast across South Avenue

Photo #3 (WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0003)
Northwest façade, looking east

Photo #4 (WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0004)
Northeast façade, addition, looking southeast

Photo #5 (WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0005)
Northeast and southeast facades, looking west

Photo #6 (WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0006)
Southeast façade, looking northwest

Photo #7 (WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0007)
Southeast façade, looking west

Photo #8 (WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0008)
General view of the northwestern portion of the second floor (historically the “close order drill hall”), looking south

Photo #9 (WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0009)
Armory cell, southeastern portion of the second floor, looking southeast

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

Photo #10 (WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0010)
Painted shield for the 105th Calvary Regiment, Wisconsin National Guard, southeastern portion
of the second floor, facing southwest

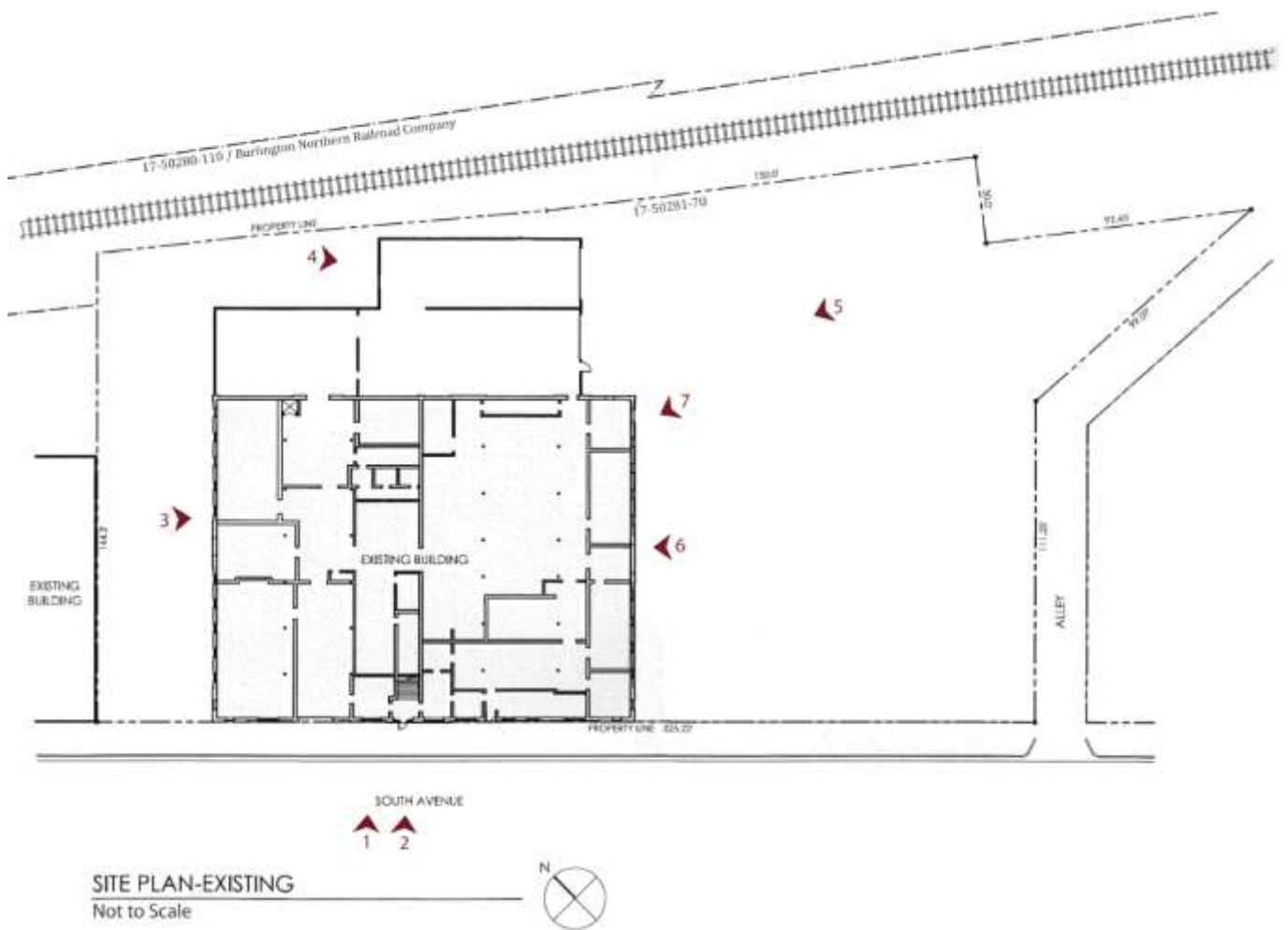
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, D.C

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property
La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photo Keys Page 38



**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photo Keys Page 39



SECOND FLOOR PLAN-EXISTING

Not to Scale



**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 40



WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0001

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 41



WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0002

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 42



WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0003

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 43



WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0004

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 44



WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0005

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property
La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)
--

Section number Photographs Page 45



WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0006

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 46



WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0007

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property
La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)
--

Section number Photographs Page 47



WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0008

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 48



WI_La Crosse County_La Crosse Armory_0009

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property
La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)
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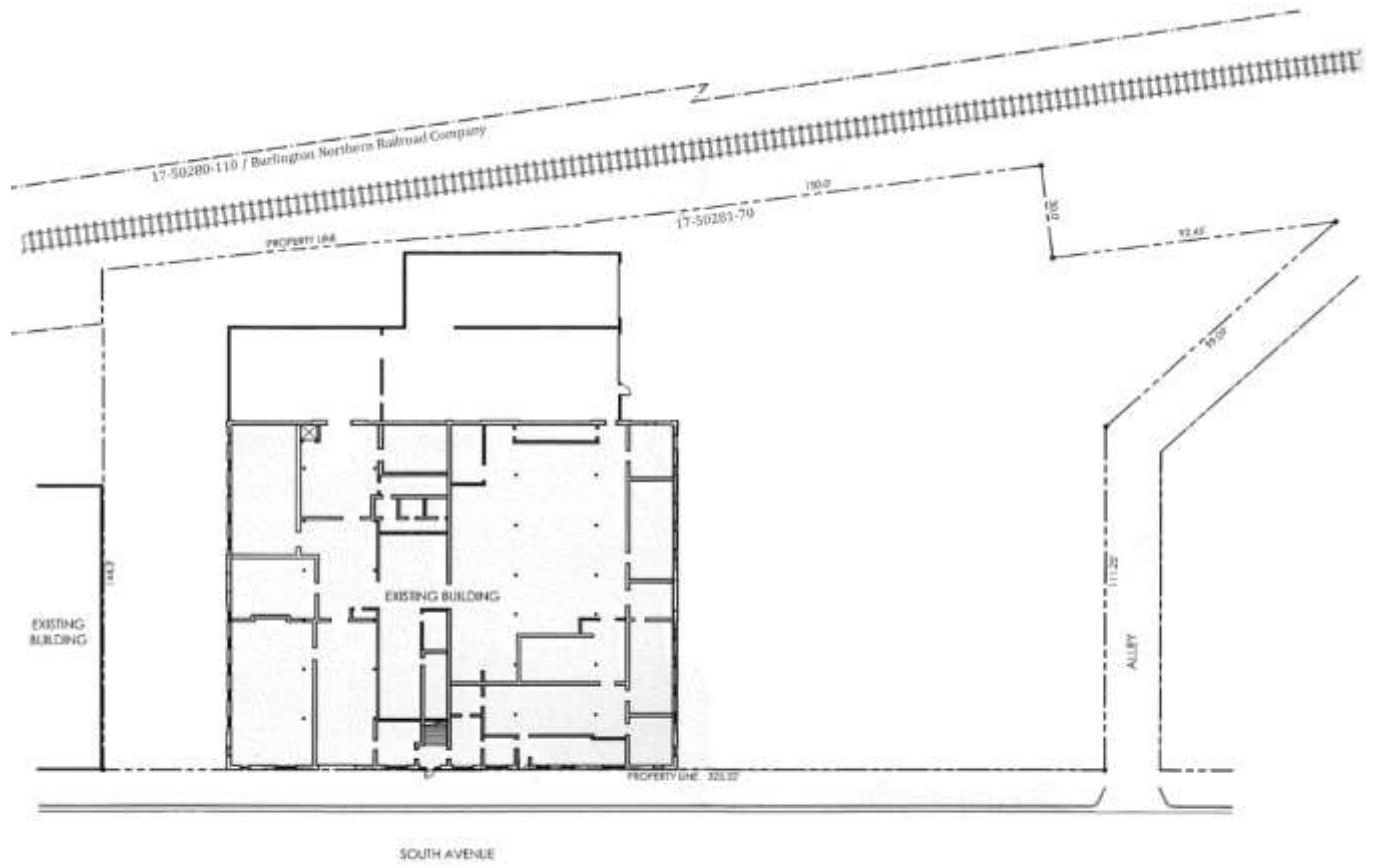
Section number Photographs Page 49



**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property
La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Floor Plans Page 50



SITE PLAN-EXISTING
Not to Scale



La Crosse Armory, 2219 South Avenue, La Crosse, Wisconsin

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Floor Plans Page 51



FIRST FLOOR PLAN-EXISTING

SCALE: $\frac{1}{8}$ " = 1'-0"

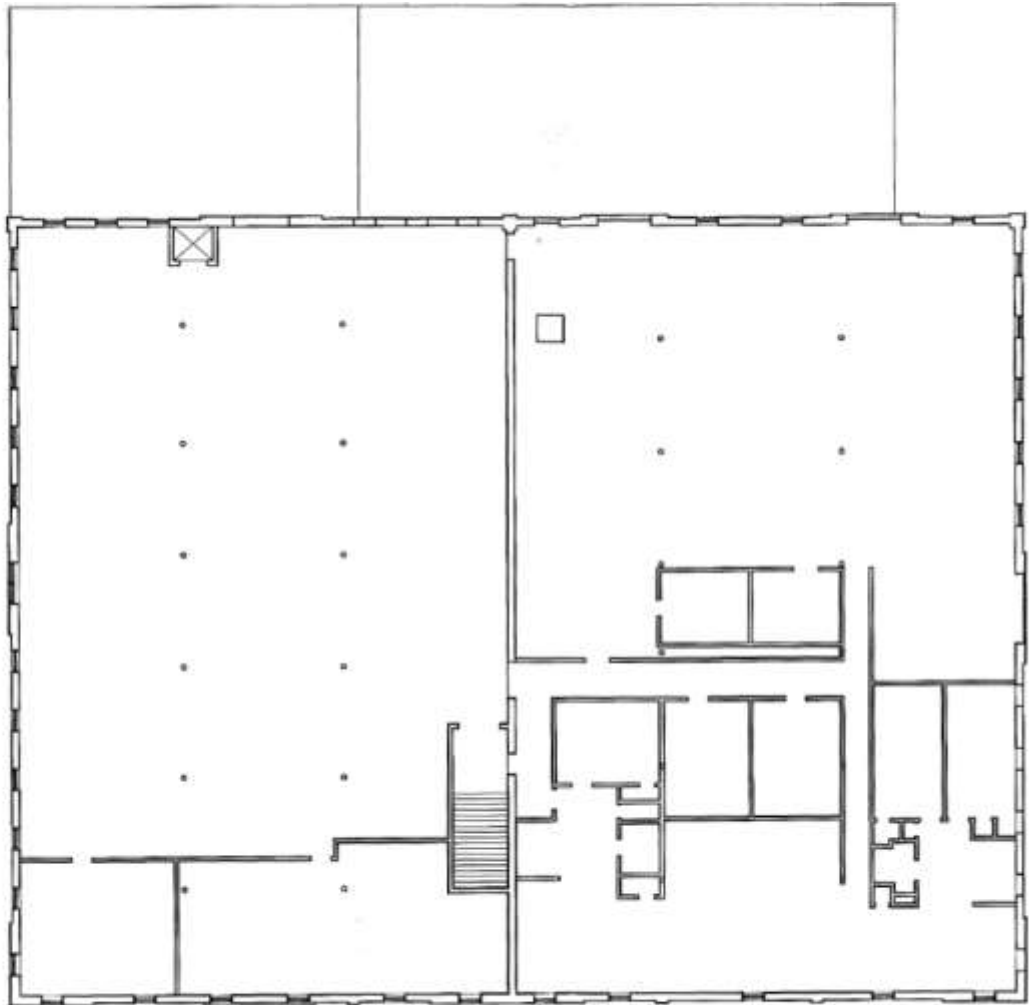


La Crosse Armory, 2219 South Avenue, La Crosse, Wisconsin

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property
La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Floor Plans Page 52



SECOND FLOOR PLAN-EXISTING
Not to Scale



La Crosse Armory, 2219 South Avenue, La Crosse, Wisconsin

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

La Crosse Armory
----- Name of Property
La Crosse, Wisconsin
----- County and State
N/A
----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Figures Page 53

Figure 1. John Gund Brewing Company postcard, showing brewery stables (2219 South Avenue) at bottom left, undated. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.

Figure 2. 1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, John Gund Brewing Company complex. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.

Figure 3. John Gund Brewing Company stables, undated photo. Source: Heritage Research Limited, “John Gund Brewing Company Stables/La Crosse Armory,” NPS Part 1—Evaluation of Significance, approved 20 December 2013.

Figure 4. First floor of John Gund Brewing Company stables, undated photo. Source: Heritage Research Limited, “John Gund Brewing Company Stables/La Crosse Armory,” NPS Part 1—Evaluation of Significance, approved 20 December 2013.

Figure 5. John Gund Brewing Company Stables first floor, undated photo. Source: Heritage Research Limited, “John Gund Brewing Company Stables/La Crosse Armory,” NPS Part 1—Evaluation of Significance, approved 20 December 2013.

Figure 6. 1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, John Gund Brewing Company stables. Source: Heritage Research Limited, “John Gund Brewing Company Stables/La Crosse Armory,” NPS Part 1—Evaluation of Significance, approved 20 December 2013.

Figure 7. 1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map updated to 1944, Wisconsin National Guard Armory. Source: Heritage Research Limited, “John Gund Brewing Company Stables/La Crosse Armory,” NPS Part 1—Evaluation of Significance, approved 20 December 2013.

Figure 8. La Crosse Armory, 1922. Source: “La Crosse’s New Army Housed in Fine Big Armory,” *La Crosse Tribune and Leader Press*, 30 April 1922, 11.

Figure 9. La Crosse Armory, 1939. Source: Heritage Research Limited, “John Gund Brewing Company Stables/La Crosse Armory,” NPS Part 1—Evaluation of Significance, approved 20 December 2013. Originally from *Historical and Pictorial Review, National Guard and Naval Militia, State of Wisconsin* (Baton Rouge, LA: Army and Navy Publishing Company, 1939).

Figure 10. Bakalars Sausage Company, circa 1990. Source: Heritage Research Limited, “John Gund Brewing Company Stables/La Crosse Armory,” NPS Part 1—Evaluation of Significance, approved 20 December 2013. Originally located in Special Collections Department, Murphy Library, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

Figure 11. Primary Elevation Key. Prepared by Marisa Koivisto of Preservation Design Works, LLC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 54

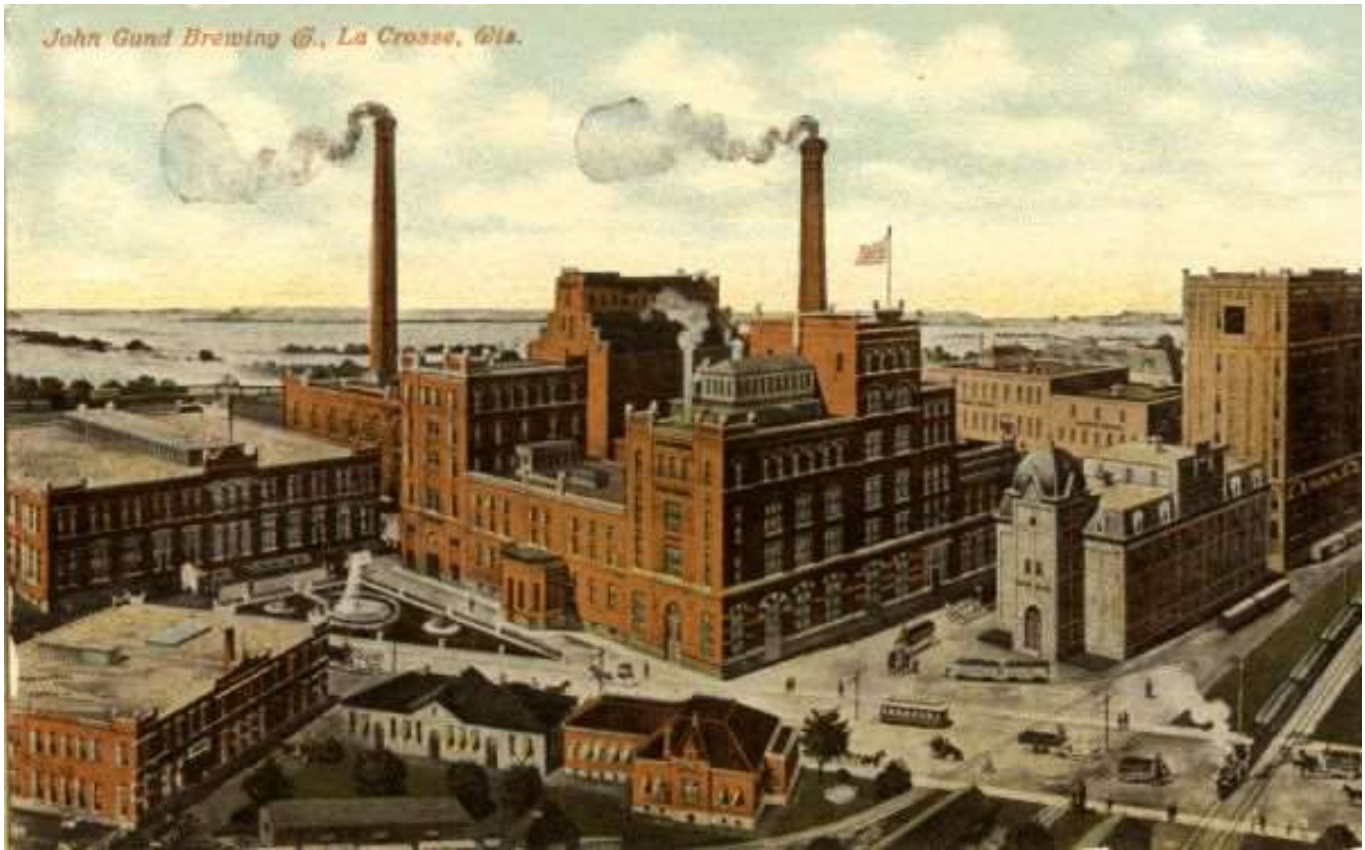


Figure 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

La Crosse Army
Name of Property
La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 55

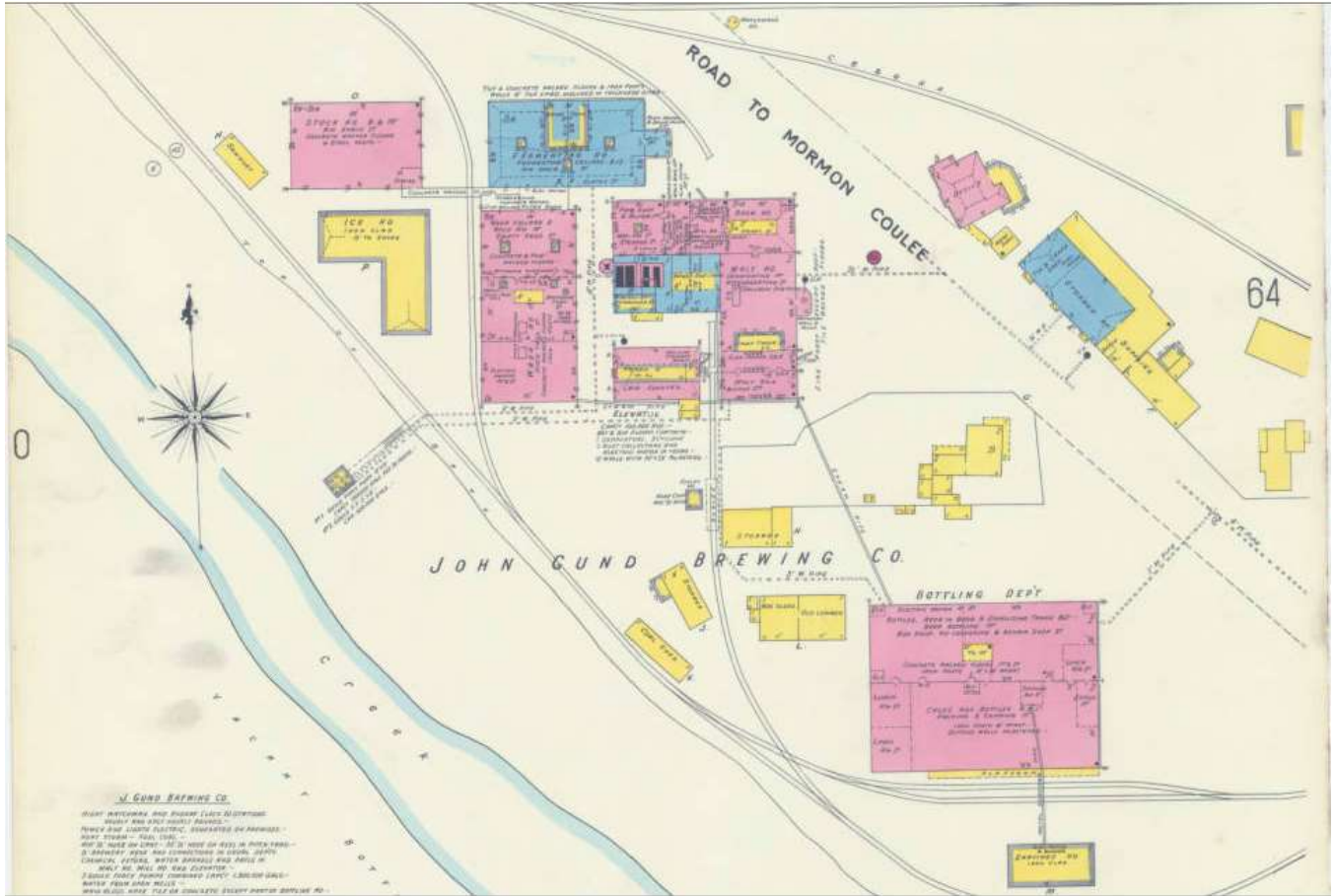


Figure 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 56



Figure 3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 57

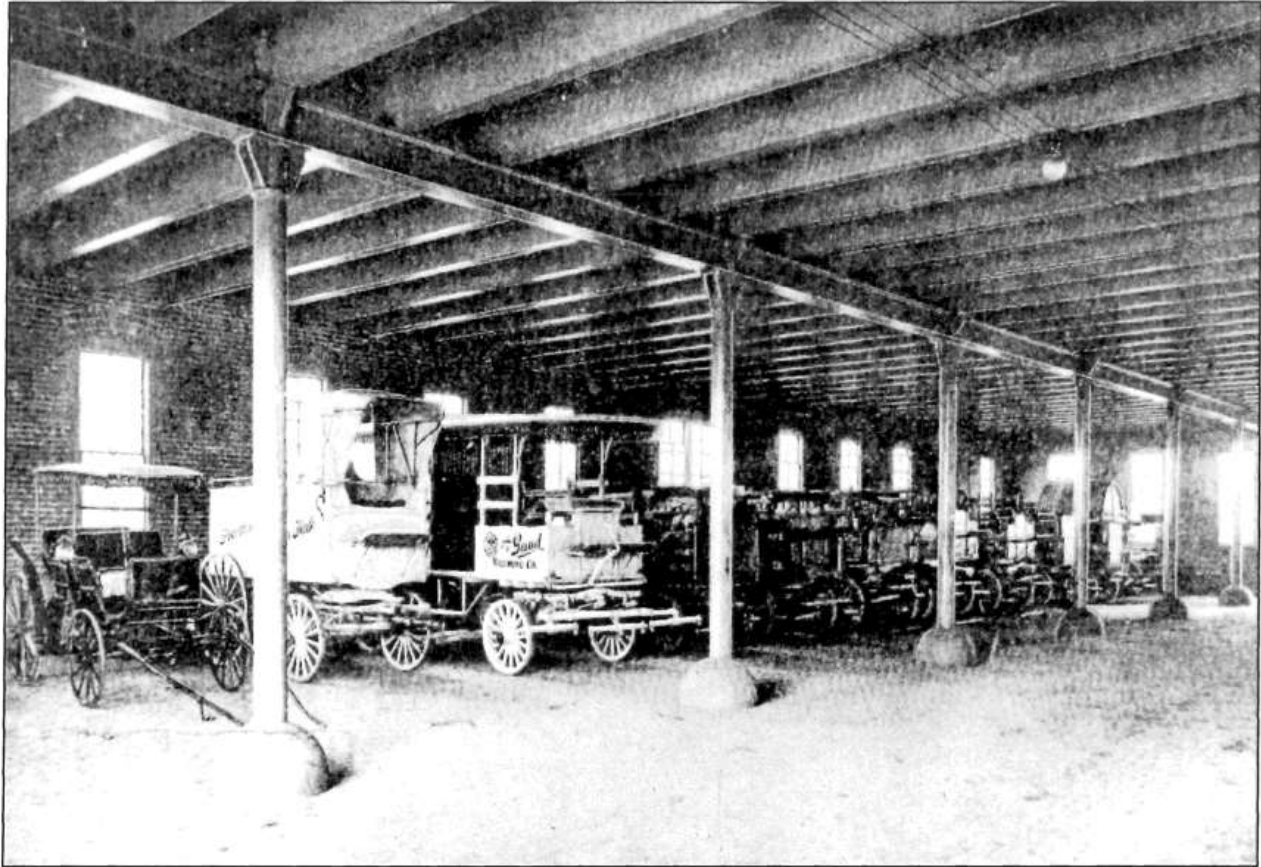


Figure 4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property
La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 58

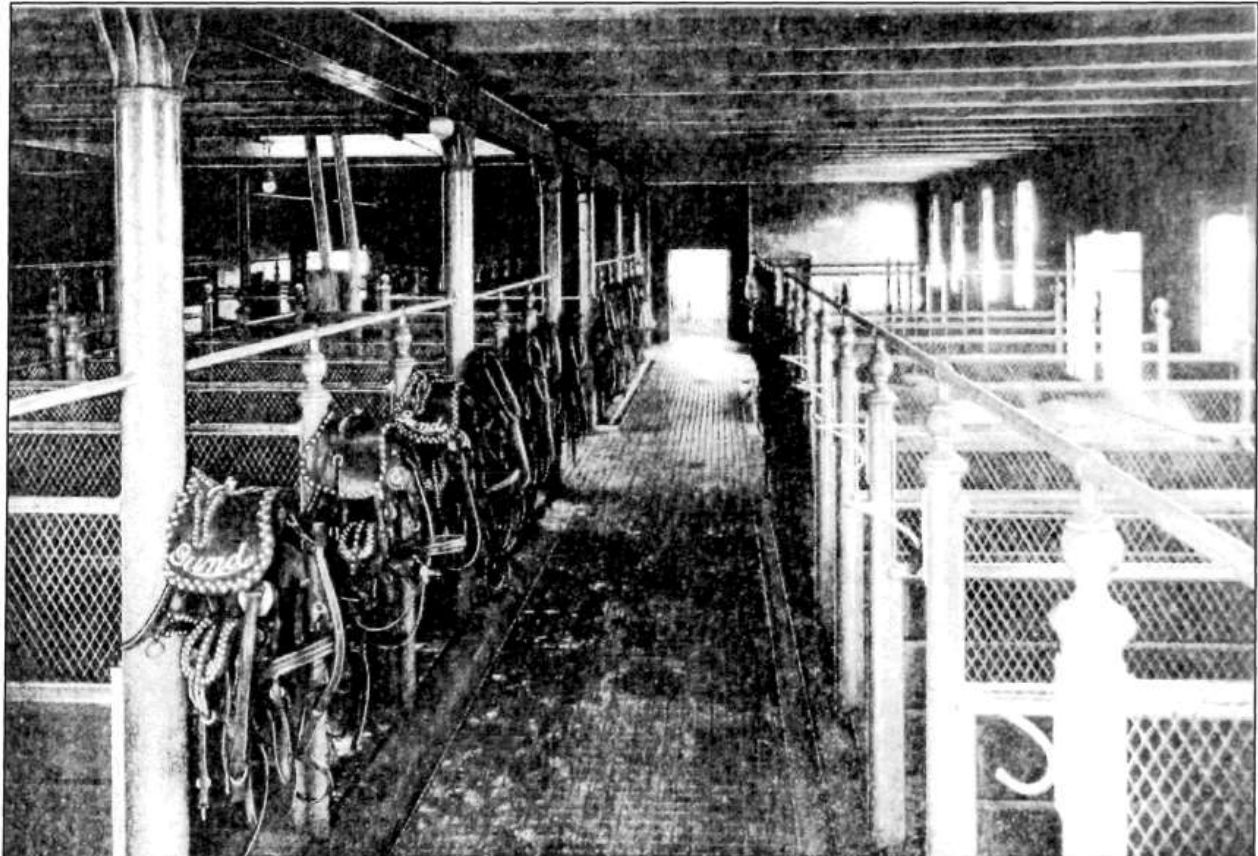


Figure 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property
La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 59

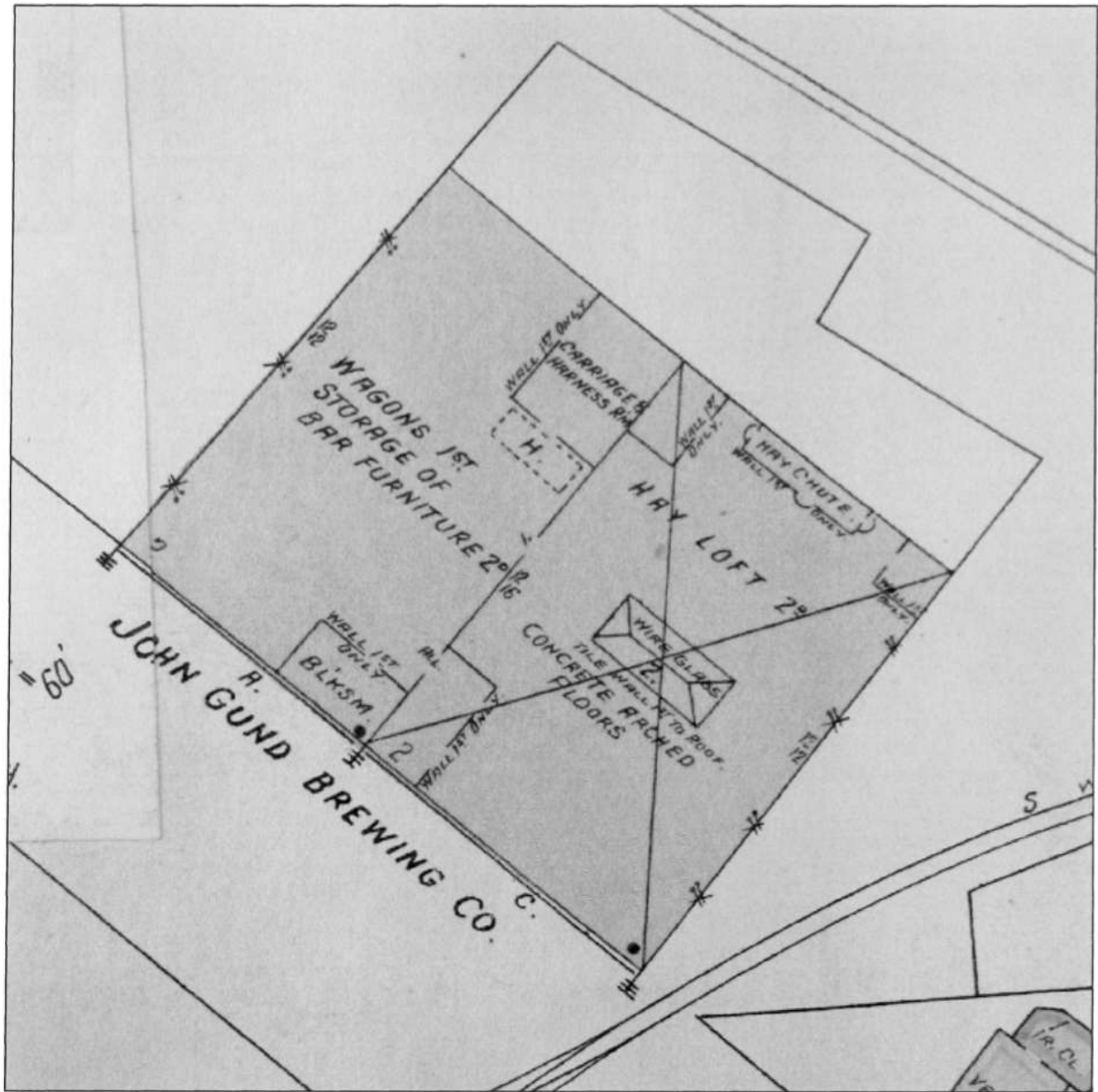


Figure 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property
La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 60

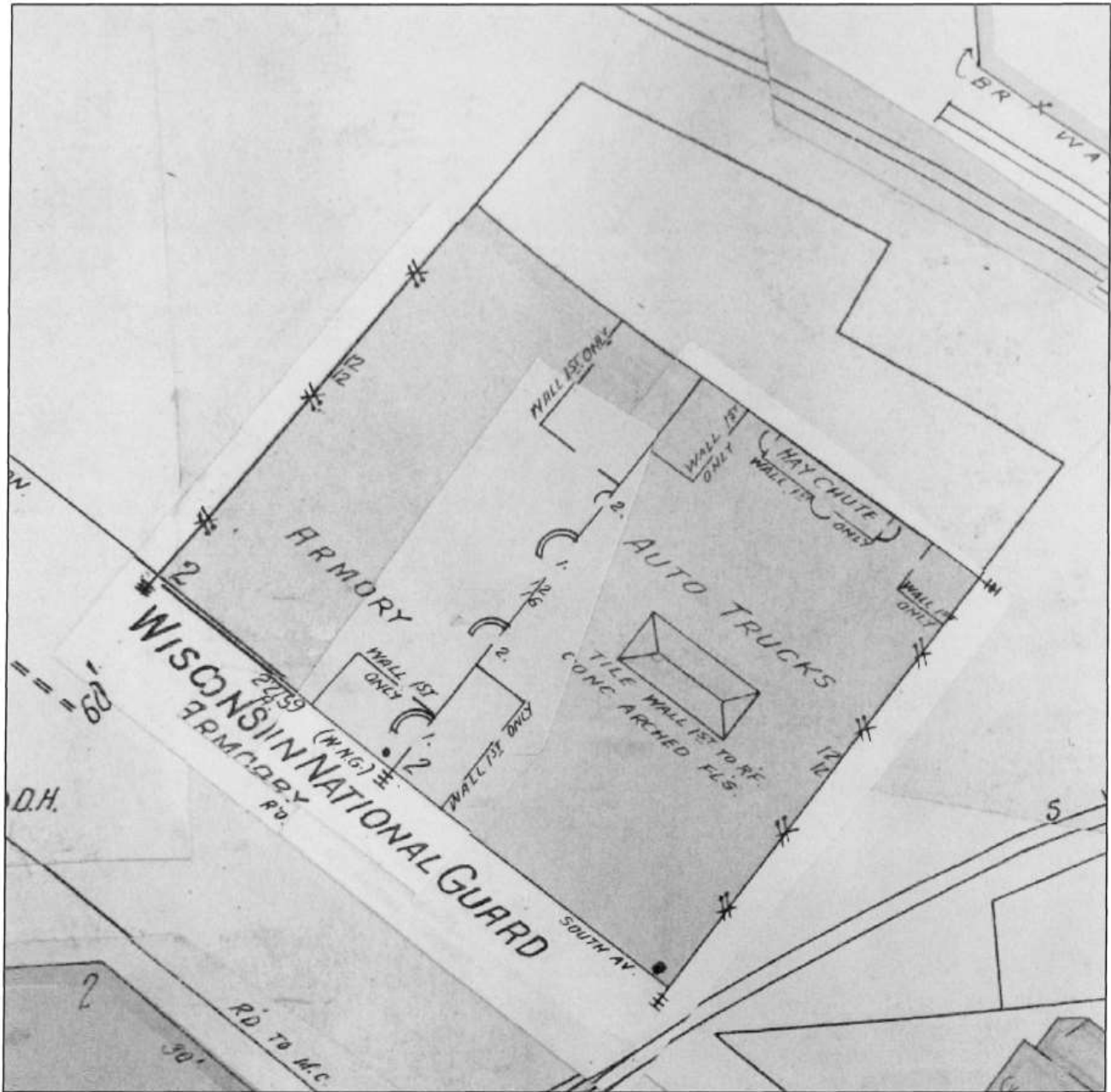


Figure 7.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 61

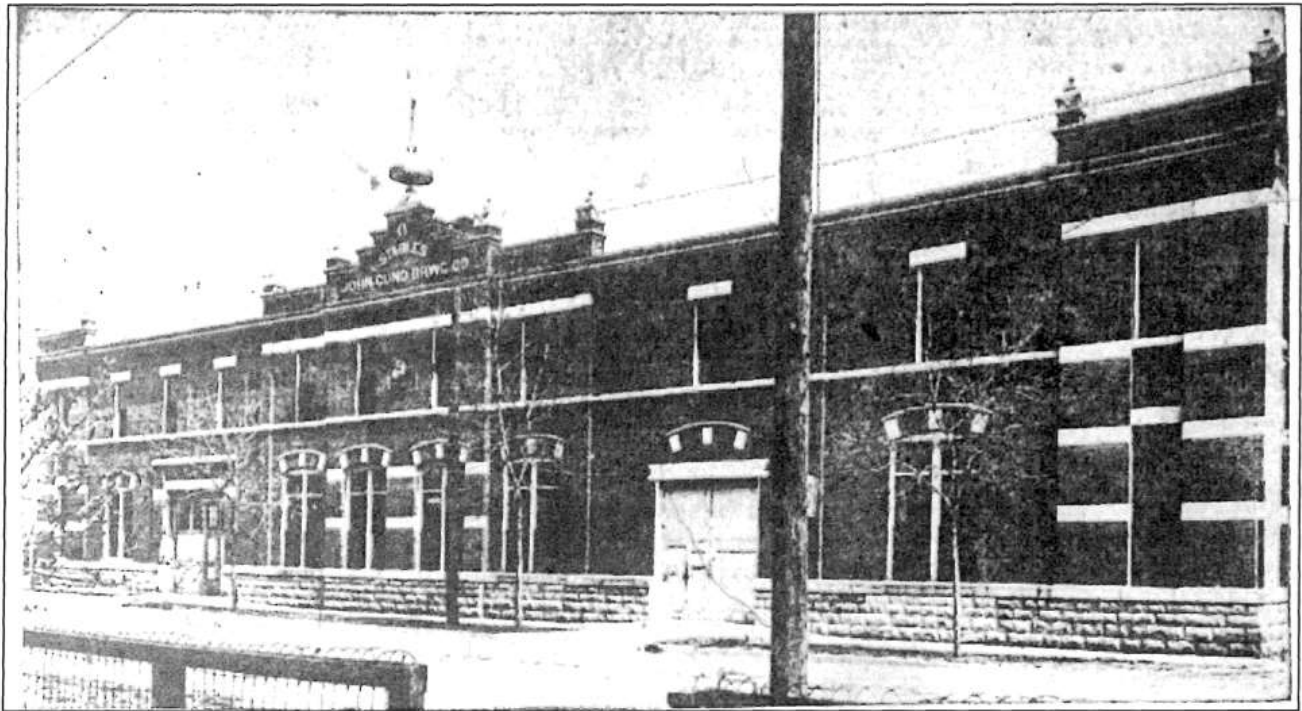


Figure 8.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 62

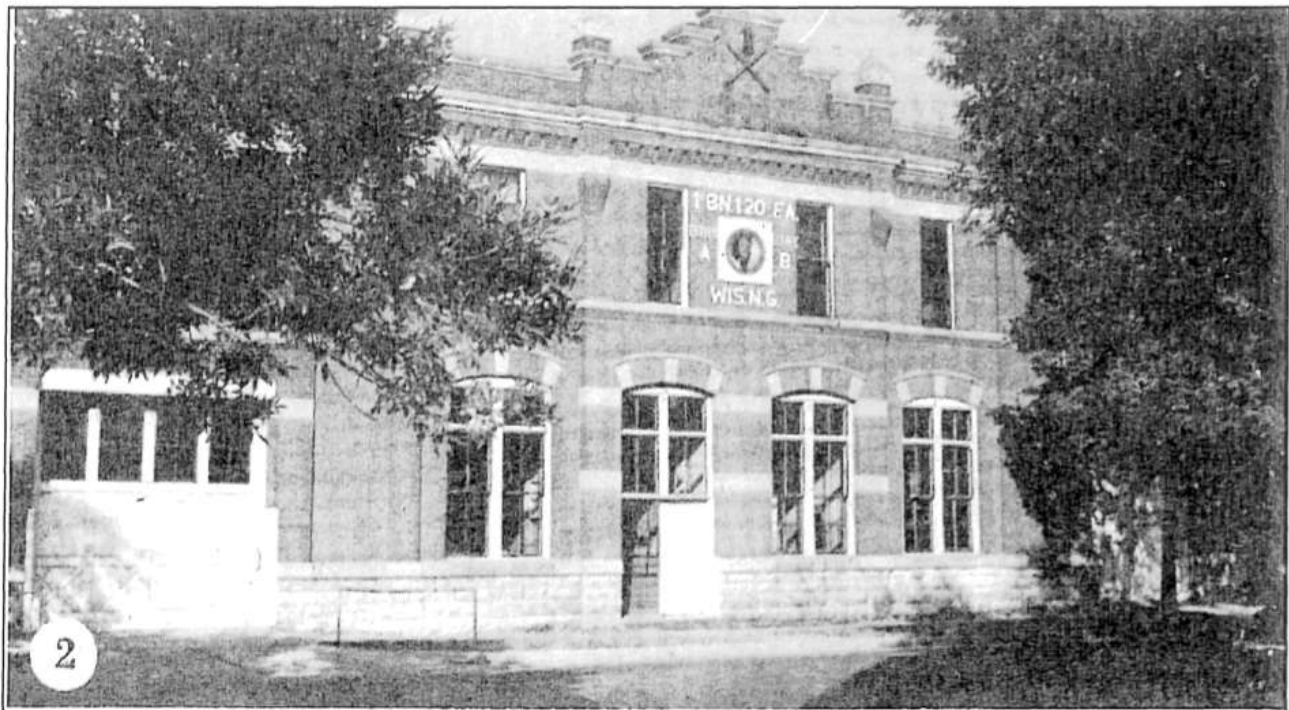


Figure 9.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory

Name of Property

La Crosse, Wisconsin

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Figures Page 63



Figure 10

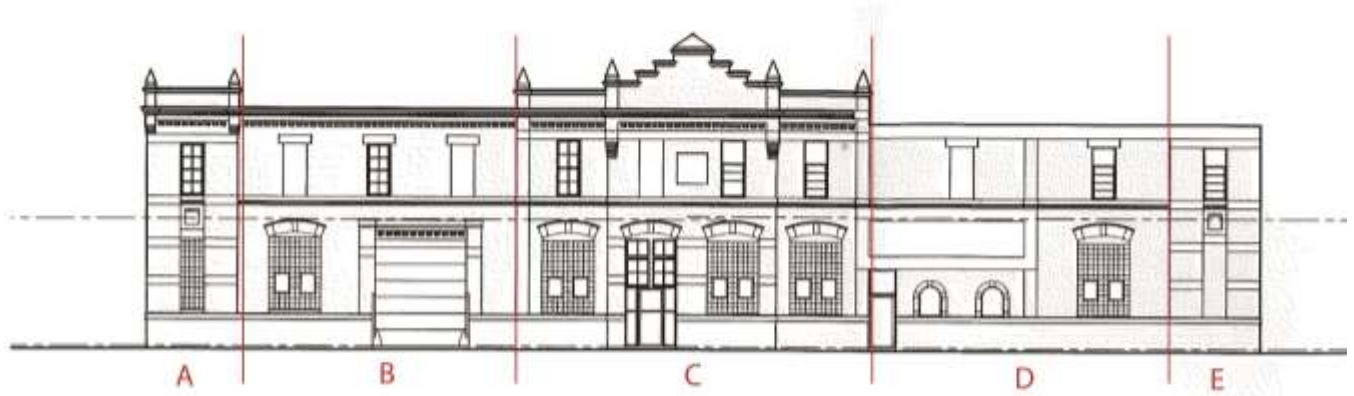
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

La Crosse Armory
Name of Property La Crosse, Wisconsin
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

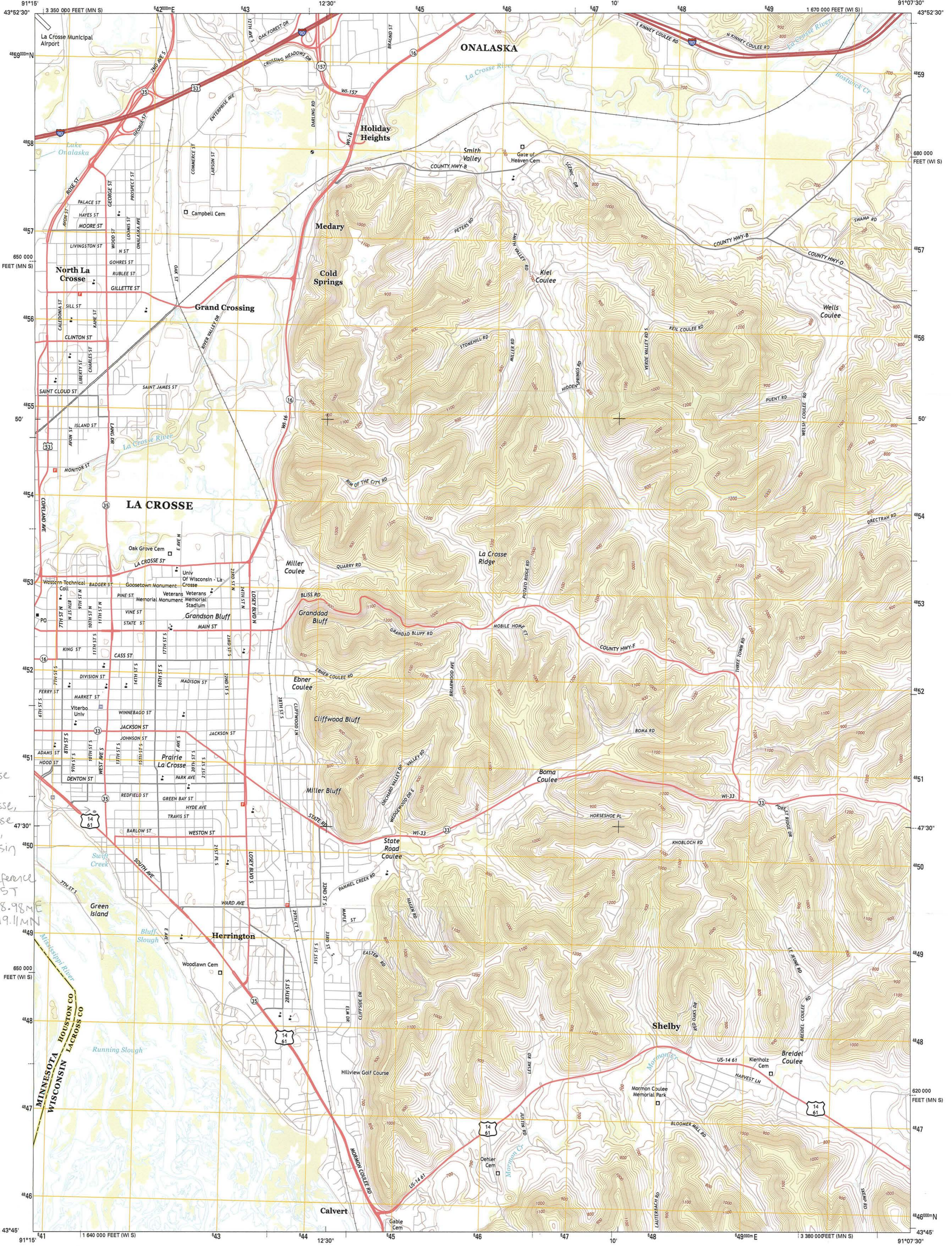
Section number Figures Page 64

Figure 11



SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

Not to Scale



La Crosse
Armory,
La Crosse,
La Crosse
County,
Wisconsin

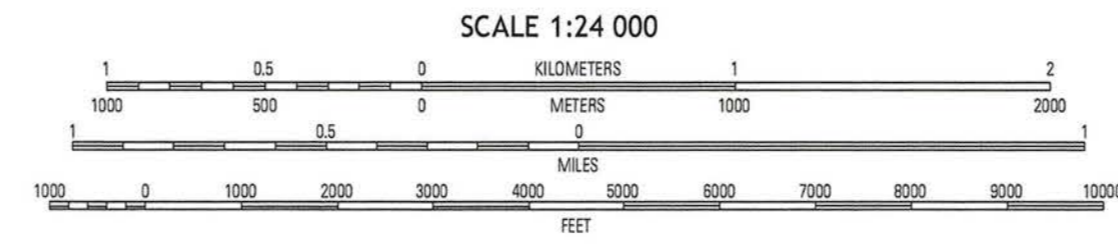
UTM Reference
Zone 15T
691478.98E
4850319.11MN

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 15T
10 000-foot ticks: Wisconsin Coordinate System of 1983 (south
zone), Minnesota Coordinate System of 1983 (south zone)

Imagery.....NAIP, August 2010
Roads.....©2006-2012 TomTom
Names.....©GNIS, 2013
Hydrography.....National Hydrography Dataset, 2010
Contours.....National Elevation Dataset, 1999
Boundaries.....Census, IBWC, IBC, USGS, 1972 - 2012

UTM GRID AND 2013 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

U.S. National Grid
100,000-m Square ID
XJ
Grid Zone Designation
15T



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988

This map was produced to conform with the
National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standard, 2011.
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.6.12

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Expressway	Local Connector
Secondary Hwy	Local Road
Ramp	4WD
Interstate Route	US Route
	State Route

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Holmen	Onalaska	West Salem
La Crescent	La Crosse	Saint Joseph
Brownsville	Stoddard	Coon Valley

ADJOINING 7.5 QUADRANGLES



STOP





NO PARKING
ALL VEHICLES MUST BE
REMOVED FROM THIS
AREA IMMEDIATELY



BNSF

ComProducts

CCC 1791













UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: La Crosse Armory

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: WISCONSIN, La Crosse

DATE RECEIVED: 3/11/16 &pw DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/06/16
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/21/16 &pw DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/26/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000206

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT _____ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

&a4L

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER

DISCIPLINE

TELEPHONE

DATE

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**TO: Keeper
National Register of Historic Places**

FROM: Peggy Veregin

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

**The following materials are submitted on this 4th day of March 2016,
for the nomination of the La Crosse Armory to the National Register of Historic Places:**

1 Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

1 CD with NRHP Nomination Form PDF Document

Multiple Property Nomination form

10 Photograph(s)

1 CD with electronic images

1 USGS map(s)

16 Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)

Piece(s) of correspondence

Other: _____

COMMENTS:

_____ Please insure that this nomination is reviewed

X This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
_____ The enclosed owner objection(s) do _____ do not _____
constitute a majority of property owners.

Other: _____
_____ **D**