

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 30 1975

DATE ENTERED NOV 7 1976

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

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC



Benicia Arsenal, Benicia Barracks

AND/OR COMMON

Benicia Arsenal

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER On Army Point at western end of Suisun Bay  
and the northeast shore of Carquinez Straits

CITY, TOWN

Benicia

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#4

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Solano

CODE

095

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

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

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE

BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

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

**PRESENT USE**

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

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

City of Benicia and Benicia Industries, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

250 East L Street Benicia Industrial Park

CITY, TOWN

(Solano County) STATE

Benicia, Calif. VICINITY OF Benicia, California

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

Solano County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Fairfield, California 94533

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

(O. S. C.)

National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings; Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1963; 1961 and 1976

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Nat'l Survey of Historic Sites & Buildings; Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

1100 L Street Northwest, Washington, D. C.

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

\*Indicates buildings owned by  
City of Benicia

## Post Hospital (Building #1)

This building was built in 1856 of hand-carved sandstone blocks. It was the first military hospital serving troops stationed on the Pacific Coast. French craftsmen were brought to the Post for construction of this and other sandstone buildings which became the first permanent structures of this military installation. The sandstone for this and other stone buildings was quarried from the hills within the post's boundaries. The building is T-shaped, 1-1/2 storied with a veranda extending across the front. Square wooden posts support the veranda which has decorated railings between the posts. The gabled roof is asbestos-cement-shingled. The walls are 2'6" thick and the building measures 34' x 74' with a wing 44' x 46' and has a usable space of 3000 square feet. It served as hospital for casualties from the Indian campaigns as far away as the Northwest Territory and during the Spanish-American War.

Presently the building has a square belfry atop the roof which was placed there during World War II when it was converted into the Post Chapel. A bell cast in 1841 was placed in the belfry. The two large interior brick fireplaces were formerly used for heating and cooking purposes.

Following the Korean Conflict the hospital was remodeled into military quarters.

The interior has undergone a series of alterations but the exterior remains much as it was in its original state.

Currently the building is being used for office purposes and it is the expressed intent of Benicia Industries to continue this practice.

## Magazine (Building #2)

This sandstone block building was constructed in 1855 to serve as a storehouse for gun powder. It is a one story building measuring 35.6' x 104' with stone foundation. The corrugated roof is hipped in form. There is 2400 square feet of usable space - ceiling is 9'6" in height. Floors are made of wood. The door opening measures 4'2" in width. The interior is similar to building #10. Presently it is used for storage. The present roof replaced the original slate roof. Location is on Fir Road near Patrol Road.

## \*Camel Barn (Building #7)

This two story sandstone structure was built in 1854. Its walls are 2'6" thick and the gabled roof is of corrugated iron. The building measures 40.6' x 100',

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\*Indicates buildings owned by the City of Benicia foundation is of stone, flooring on lower floor is concrete and wood is used for upper floor. There is 3,215 square feet of usable space in the building. The largest door opening is 7'8" and 7'9". Seven large arched double doors led to ground-floor stables on the northwest side. These are now partially bricked up with windows placed in four arches and in two of the doors which have been installed. Seven of the original semi-circular arched windows remain on the southeastern side of the building. There is an early one ton Otis elevator in this structure. The building is currently being used by the local police as a firing range.

It was originally constructed as a storehouse but was converted in 1863 to stable a herd of camels imported by the U. S. Government from the Near East in 1856 as an experiment in the transportation of military supplies across the Southwest desert states. Their use proved to be unsatisfactory. In 1863 they were driven to Benicia Arsenal for disposal at public auction on February 26, 1864. Except for removal of the stalls and installation of the elevator the interior of the building remains much as it was originally. Location is on Fir Road. It is the oldest of the permanent shops at the Post.

\*Ammunition Shop (Building #8)

This single story sandstone building was constructed in 1856. Dimensions of the structure are 28' x 35'. The walls are two feet in thickness, foundation is of stone and the gabled roof is corrugated iron. Usable space in the building is 832 square feet. The windows are semi-arched. The largest door opening is 5'9" x 6'8". Ceiling height is twelve feet. Currently it is occupied by a sculptor. Location is on Fir Road between the two Camel Barns.

\*Camel Barn (Building #9)

This two story sandstone block building was constructed in 1855. The walls are two feet thick, the foundation is of stone and the structure measures 40.6' x 100' with a wing 8' x 12'. The ceiling height is twelve feet, six inches and the gabled roof is of corrugated iron. Floor construction is of wood. There is 7,559 sq. ft. usable space in the building. The largest door opening is 7'8" x 7'9". Exterior of this building is almost identical with building #7 and similar alterations have been made. It, too, was built as a storehouse but served to stable camels as did building #7 in 1863-1864. Stalls have been removed and a one ton Otis elevator installed in the building.

Following the departure of the camels the building was again used as a storehouse. Currently it is occupied by a wallpaper manufacturing firm. Location is on Fir Road.

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\*Powder Magazine (Building #10)      \*Indicates buildings owned by the City of Benicia

This one story sandstone block building was erected in 1857. The walls are 2'6" thick, foundation is of stone and the building measures 35.5' x 104'7". Ceiling height is 9'4" and has 3000 square feet usable space. The hipped roof is slate. The 4'2" x 7'6" door is copper covered. Above the doorway is a hand-carved eagle resting on a cannon barrel. The floors are heavy wooden planking. The interior is partitionless. The ceiling is supported by Corinthian pillars made of hand-hewn blocks flaring into a graceful vaulted pattern, unique in design. The original purpose of the building was for storage of gun powder. Currently it stands vacant. There are no records of alterations. Location is at the junction of Fir and Patrol Roads.

Noncommissioned Officers Quarters (Building #24)

This two story wood frame house was constructed in 1868 for non-commissioned officers. Foundation is concrete and roof is of composition shingles. Usable space is 1,505 sq. ft. Ceiling height is 9'6". There is a full veranda across the front of the house and two dormer windows on the upper story at front. Presently the house is occupied by Benicia Industries employees. Other than the removal of some decorative trim, the structure is much as it was at the time it was built. No decision for preservation has been made known as of this writing. Location is on Jefferson Street.

Officers Quarters Duplex (Buildings #25, #26)

This three story T-shaped duplex was constructed in 1874 for officers quarters. Walls are made of brick and are 12" thick. The foundation is also of brick. Dimensions for building #25 are 30' x 36' -- 18' x 54' and usable space is 3100 square feet. Ceilings are 12'10" in height and the largest door opening is 4'5" x 10'3". The exterior walls are now white stucco-covered.

The half of the duplex designated as building #26 is identical to #25 except that it has a bay window and usable space of 2,876 square feet.

A one story portico supported by three fluted Corinthian columns and decorative railing extends across the two front doorways. Like decorative railing borders the steps which lead from both the eastern and western ends of the porch. On the eastern side of the house is a long veranda, a portion of which is enclosed for additional interior space. Fluted Corinthian columns and a decorative balustrade add to its attractiveness. Both quarters are occupied by Benicia Industries personnel. Location is on Jefferson Street.

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Officers Quarters (Building #27)

This three story T-shaped house was constructed in 1861 for use as officers quarters. Dimensions are 48.5' x 38.4' -- 20.5' x 5' -- 29.1' x 25.2' and usable space is 3,142 square feet. Foundation is brick as are the 12" thick walls, Ceiling height is 12'9". The bricks have been covered with white stucco. The house is gable-roofed with composition shingles. A fluted Corinthian-columned veranda with steps leading from both the east and west sides runs across the front of the house. The door opening measures 3'6" x 7'9". The house is well cared for and occupied by personnel at the Benicia Industrial Park. Location is on Jefferson Street.

\*Commanding Officers Home (Building #28)

This two story stucco-covered brick residence was erected in 1860. The hipped roof is asbestos shingled. Walls of this house are 24" thick. The foundation is made of brick and the building dimensions are 59.65' x 43.9' -- 53.9' x 28.1'. Usable space is 5,293 square feet. Ceilings are 13' and 10' in height. Originally, the home measured about 45' x 45' until in the late 1800's, when a wing was added to the north. A veranda extends across the front of the house, part of which has been enclosed to provide additional interior space. A second-story front bay and two rear double-tiered bays were added.

This imposing 20 room mansion of classic Georgian-style architecture contains wainscoting, parquet floors, stair rails and balustrades made of wood brought "around the horn". Each room contained a shallow fireplace since this was the only means of heating the house -- most remain today. The basement housed the laundry. A brick tunnel leads from the basement to the near-by storehouse (Clock Tower or Fortress), but there is no record of its having been used as the result of an attack. An adjacent hothouse and spacious gardens with large cisterns still remain.

During the last half of the 19th Century, the house was the scene of much social activity for society in the Bay area. Col. Julian McAllister was the brother of society figure Ward McAllister of the New York "Four Hundred" and of Hall McAllister, prominent San Francisco lawyer, who were frequent guests of the Colonel.

From 1905-1911 the poet Stephen Vincent Benet and his brother William Rose Benet lived here with their parents while their father, Lt. Col. James W. Benet was Commanding Officer of the Post.

The dwelling is now vacant, hopefully not for long! Location is on Jefferson Street.

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\*Storehouse (Clock Tower) (Building #29)

This sandstone building was constructed in 1859 and was the first military fortress built in the West. The walls are 2'6" thick and the ceiling height is 14'. Building dimensions are 61' x 177.3' with 18,600 square feet of usable space. The lower floor is concrete and the upper is of wood. The roof is gabled and the roofing is asbestos-cement-shingled. Originally, the fortress had three stories with a crenelated roof, two look-out towers, one at the southwestern corner and one at the northwest corner. Two small decorative towers graced the remaining corners. Apertures on the west and east sides of the building were designed for howitzers and the long loophole windows for musketry. The structure was gutted by fire and explosion in 1912 and was restored as a two story building. The front tower was undamaged. A large American-made Seth Thomas clock was installed on it as a memorial to Col. Julian McAllister who commanded the Arsenal from 1860-1864 and 1867-1886. The clock was operated by a heavy metal weight on a cable that slowly unwound on a windlass. A crank was used to wind the cable weekly. It was operative as late as June 14, 1967.

The tunnel leading from the Commandants' house connected with this fortress.

During its long history the fortress served as a storehouse, a munitions depot, quarters for enlisted men during the Civil War, a chapel and a National Guard Armory.

Location is on a point at the eastern end of Washington Street.

Non-Commissioned Officers Quarters (Building #33)

This wood frame 1-1/2 story residence was constructed in 1870. The building measures 40.2' x 15' x 40', and has a usable space of 2,093 square feet. Ceilings are 9' high. A full veranda extends across the front with a simple balustrade. The gabled roof is composition shingles. It appears to be in good condition and is currently occupied by Benicia Industries personnel. Little change has been made in the building since its construction.

Location is on Jefferson Street.

Non-Commissioned Officers Quarters (Building #34)

This building is almost identical to #33 except that its usable floor space is 2,061 square feet. Built in 1870, it, too, is occupied by personnel at Benicia Industries.

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Non-Commissioned Officers Quarters (Building #35)

Like quarters #33 and #34, this frame building was constructed in 1870. Usable space is 2,093 square feet. It is occupied by Benicia Industries personnel.

Guardhouse (Building #39)

This one story T-shaped building was constructed in 1872. Walls are made of brick, 12" in thickness. The dimensions are 48 x 48 -- 27.4' x 32.2' and has 1,750 square feet of usable space. The largest door opening measures 10' x 10' and ceiling height is 15'10". An "engine house" is located in the rear. In the Guardhouse proper, there was a small sanitary facilities cell, a dark cell, solitary cell, regular cell and general prison. A copy of the plans dated May 22, 1871 and signed by Julian McAllister is the property of a local citizen. The exterior, now stucco-covered, appears to be in good condition and is presently used for storage.

Location is on Grant Street.

Barracks (Building #45)

This building was constructed in 1872. It measures 31' x 129' on the main floor and has a 31' x 72' basement. Walls are made of brick and measure 18" in thickness. Usable space is 8,568 square feet. The structure has three stories and ceilings are 14'11" high. The largest door opening is 3'6" and 7'6". A full length veranda with denticulated cornice runs across the front of the building and is supported by eighteen fluted Corinthian columns. Windows have stone lintels and sills and are six over six sash. The gabled roof has slate roofing. Concrete now covers the brick walls. The building is not now occupied but there are some plans in progress for interior remodeling, perhaps for office space.

~~Shop (Building #49) [This building has been demolished.]~~

~~This two story structure was built in 1862 to serve as a storehouse. Foundation and walls are made of brick. It measures 145'9" x 50'2" with wings 53'5" x 50'8" and provides 22,000 square feet of usable space. Ceilings are 18' and 12' high, respectively. The largest door opening is 8' x 13'. The hipped roof is asbestos-cement shingled. Following the Civil War, quantities of military material was reconditioned here and returned to service for U. S. armed forces included were weapons and horse equipment. A one ton Otis elevator has been installed in the~~

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~~building. In 1949 wood frame additions were added. The shop housed the Optical and Fire Control Instruments Repair Department in its later years. It continued to be used until the deactivation in 1963. The building is now leased out and no plans for future use have been indicated.~~

Headquarters Building (Building #47)

This three story building was an early Headquarters Building and was erected in 1870. The foundation and walls are made of brick and the hip roof is made of slate. The structure measures 44'7" x 63' with 6,631 square feet of usable space. Ceiling heights are 9'6". During World War II temporary frame buildings were added. These have now been demolished and the original structure appears to be in only fair condition. The building originally had a portico supported by eight round fluted columns. There is effective use of stone trim at the four corners. Presently the structure is unoccupied.

Blacksmith Shop (Building #55)

This one story brick building was erected in 1876. The foundation is made of stone and the brick walls are 21" thick. It measures 55' x 105' — 30' x 105' and provides 8,214 square feet of usable space. The gabled roof is asbestos-cement shingled. Sandstone blocks provide a decorative trim for the arched windows and doorways. This was the first permanent building at the Arsenal to be used as a blacksmith and carpenter shop. Following the Civil War, the Arsenal continued its mission of principal ordnance distribution to military posts west of the Rockies. In addition, repairs of weapons and horse equipment were carried on. It remained in use until the closure in 1964. While it is presently utilized by Benicia Industries, it may eventually be demolished.

This is the first of three permanent shops (buildings 55, 56 and 57 which served the installation through the remainder of its existence.

Shop (Building #56)

Constructed in 1884, this handsome two story brick building served as a machine shop for a variety of repair services as needed for ordnance. It measured 53' x 205' and provided 21,000 square feet of usable space including the wings (which connected buildings #55 and #57). Walls are 21" thick, foundation is stone and the gabled roof is slate. It, too, has beautifully arched windows with stone trim as does the doorway which measures 10' x 14'. Ceiling height is 16'. It remained in use until the closing of the Arsenal in 1964.



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This is the first of three permanent shops (buildings 55, 56 and 57) which served the installation through the remainder of its existence.

Shop (Building #56)

Constructed in 1884, this handsome two story brick building served as a machine shop for a variety of repair services as needed for ordnance. It measured 53' x 205' and provided 21,000 square feet of usable space including the wings (which connected buildings #55 and #57). Walls are 21" thick, foundation is stone and the gabled roof is slate. It, too, has beautifully arched windows with stone trim as does the doorway which measures 10' x 14'. Ceiling height is 16'. It remained in use until the closing of the Arsenal in 1964.

The structure is currently being utilized by Benicia Industries but has not been deemed suitable for heavy industry and may possibly be demolished.

Shop (Building #57)

The third of this trio of shops was constructed in 1877 to be used variously as a carpenter shop, machine shop and armor shop. It is a two story building, each floor measuring 55' x 105' providing 12,000 square feet of usable space. The foundation is stone and the brick walls are 21" thick. The gabled roof is slate. Windows are arched with stone trim. The door has a 10' x 14' opening and the doorway is bordered with a decorative stone pattern. This building, as #55 and #56, remained in use from the date of construction until the deactivation of the Arsenal in 1963 and its closure in 1964.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

1849-1963

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The U. S. Benicia Arsenal, in the 112 years of its existence, played a major role in U. S. military installations and in the development of the Western frontier. In 1847 a 252 acre parcel of land adjoining Benicia city limits on the east was acquired for a military reserve.

First occupation of the post was on April 9, 1849, when two companies of the 2nd Infantry, under the command of Brevet Lt. Silas Casey, set up camp to establish Benicia Barracks. Urgent need for supplies of army material for U. S. Army troops riding the Pacific frontier from San Diego to Vancouver, in search of marauding Indians, prompted Major General Percifer F. Smith, Commanding General of the Pacific Division, to recommend to Army chiefs in Washington, D. C., that Benicia Barracks be utilized as headquarters for supply operations for this division.

Proper warehouse facilities were unavailable in San Francisco and the bulk of Army supplies was scattered about along the coast unprotected from weather and depredation.

General Smith's recommendation was accepted in Washington, D. C., and in 1851 the first Ordnance Supply Depot in the West was established in Benicia. In 1852 it was designated Benicia Arsenal. The installation remained a garrisoned post until 1898 when troops were assigned to duty in the Philippine Islands during the Spanish-American War. The Post was a staging area during the Civil War for troops from the West.

During World War I Benicia Arsenal gave ordnance support to all large Army installations in the Western States as well as supplying Ordnance material to American expeditionary forces in Siberia.

World War II resulted in the Arsenal's becoming the principal supply point for "shooting" ordnance for American troops in the Pacific campaign areas.

During the Korean action, the Arsenal reached its peak of production.

Many notable military personages highlight the story of Benicia Arsenal. General William Tecumseh Sherman and General Ulysses S. Grant both were at the Arsenal while serving as young Army Lieutenants. General John Charles Fremont drew stores from the depot to supply survey expeditions into California mountains. Col. James W. Benet was a commanding officer of the post, and the father of poets William Rose Benet and Stephen Vincent Benet. The family occupied the Commanding Officer's quarters. General James

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Attachment

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 1 1/4

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	57,63,8,0	4,21,210,8,0	B	1,0	57,63,3,0	4,21,109,4,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,0	57,55,0,0	4,21,07,9,0	D	1,0	57,52,2,0	4,21,120,5,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Attachment

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mrs. Gladys B. Wold

June 16, 1975

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

1330 East Third Street

TELEPHONE

(707) 745-0944

CITY OR TOWN

Benicia, California

STATE

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

SIGNATURE

*Robert M. ...*

AUG 20 1975

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Acting

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11/9/96

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6/4/76

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Doolittle carried 500 pound bombs from Benicia Arsenal on his electrifying "thirty seconds over Tokyo".

During the Indian campaigns and the Gold Rush days the Arsenal provided a strong force in the economic and defense posture of the San Francisco Bay area. Because of its strategic location the Benicia Arsenal became a way-station to and from the mines. The rush for gold in California created innumerable political, social and economic problems. Thousands of prospectors, opportunists and hopeful businessmen generated problems among the white men and some of the Indians who had never before seen white men. The Post was a viable force for establishing peace and security in California.

At times arms were issued by the Arsenal to citizens for their protection as in 1854 when guns and ammunition were provided to quell an Indian uprising in the Rogue River area.

The first military hospital built in the West cared for casualties from skirmishes with Indian marauders as far away as the Northwest Territory and continued treatment of the military through the Korean Conflict.

Commodore Matthew Perry and his squadron of about 300 men and officers visited the Post in 1854 after a trip around the world.

The architecture of the early wood and hand carved stone buildings is most outstanding for the period in which they were erected.

The stabling of the herd of camels at Benicia Arsenal, 1863 and 1864, prior to their sale at public auction in 1864, is in itself a unique story in the chapters of military history.

Many famous persons visited Benicia Arsenal, among them General John J. Pershing and the late Chief Justice Earl Warren, who as Governor, participated in the 1949 Centennial ceremonies.

With the deactivation in 1963, Benicia Arsenal's chapter in U. S. history came to a close. The nation's archives, however, hold for historians and writers a vast treasure of drama and records of great accomplishments of the U. S. Benicia Arsenal.

HISTORY

Foundation for the Benicia Arsenal complex began following possession of California by the American forces. Thomas O. Larkin, one of the founders of the City of Benicia, journeyed to Washington, D. C., to urge the Secretary of War to purchase land adjoining

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the eastern city limits of Benicia for a Military Reserve, His mission was successful and the U. S. Government acquired a 252 acre parcel of land on Carquinez Strait in 1847.

The first troop occupation took place on June 30, 1849, when the U. S. Second Infantry, under the command of Brevet Lt. Col. Silas Casey, landed at the Benicia Reservation with approximately 135 officers and men. Camp was set up in the northwest portion of the reserve on approximately 100 acres. Col. Casey, his family and some officers lived aboard the French sailing vessel, Julie, until quarters were built.

In August, 1851, Brevet Capt. Charles P. Stone, with a small crew of enlisted men and ordnance supplies, after a trip "around the Horn", arrived at the Benicia Military Reservation. In 1852 the Benicia depot was changed to Benicia Arsenal to serve as one of four permanent arsenals and general supply depots for the Pacific Coast. On October 10, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed an executive order designating the site for military purposes following an 1861 decision by the Supreme Court of the United States declaring the lands part of the public domain. Later, in 1897, the State of California relinquished jurisdiction over the site by a legislative act.

By 1859 seven hand-hewn sandstone buildings had been constructed - the Post Hospital, two powder magazines, two shops (now called the Camel Barns), a three-story storehouse and fortress (now referred to as the "Clock Tower") and a shop building.

During the Civil War all small arms, siege and field guns, etc., were moved into the Fortress for protection. A portion of the lower floor was partitioned off for men of the Sixth Infantry Regiment. Benicia Arsenal supplied weapons and military gear to the western troops dispatched to the East for duty in the War. Heavy shipments of arms to the Atlantic Coast arsenals were also dispatched.

The Arsenal remained a garrisoned post until 1898 when the last of the troops were moved out under assignment to the Philippine Islands during the Spanish-American War. Approximately 20,000 National Guardsmen mustered into the Regular Army for service in this conflict were equipped at this post.

During World War I, Benicia Arsenal provided ordnance support to the American troops in the Western states as well as to the U. S. Expeditionary Forces in Siberia.

Benicia Arsenal became the principal supply point for "shooting" ordnance for American forces in the Pacific Theatre in World War II, particularly following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor when the civilian labor force numbered 4,545 persons.

During the Korean action, the number of civilian employees reached an all-time high of 6700 workers.

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May 3, 1924, General John J. Pershing signed an Executive Order combining the sites of Benicia Barracks and Benicia Arsenal to be known as "Benicia Arsenal Reservation".

Area of the installation at the time of deactivation in 1963 was 2,192.49 acres.

The long and proud history of Benicia Arsenal is reflected in the development of weapons and transportation -- from horse equipment to the most sophisticated missiles and mechanized equipment.

The City of Benicia and Benicia Industries have recently reached an agreement on ownership of various parcels of Arsenal property.

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  - c. Plat of U. S. Reservation at Benicia 1862 for U. S. Survey General
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Supplemental Description - Benicia Arsenal

The Benicia Arsenal was nominated to the National Register in August 1975. The application was subsequently returned to the California Historic Preservation Officer requesting additional information about intrusions in the district and justification of boundaries. After discussing the nature and extent of intrusions by phone with the National Register staff, it was decided to resubmit the Benicia Arsenal as a non-contiguous district, with clusters of buildings outlined, individual sites identified, and intrusions described.

As intrusions have been substantial, the significant values which have retained integrity appear fragmented on the sketch map. Boundaries were carefully studied based upon integrity of setting. Only three significant clusters remain; all other sites have lost the integrity of their historic setting, and are identified individually.

The cluster comprised of buildings 24, 33, 34, and 35 represents a grouping of wooden frame residences of the late 19th century which served as officers quarters. The boundaries were drawn to include the buildings, their grounds, and street trees which add to the setting. These buildings are isolated from their surrounding environment by World War II era housing on the west, a relatively modern wood and brick building on the east, the 1941 administration building on the south, and the freeway on the north.

The cluster comprised of buildings 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29 has a unity of period and setting of the mid 19th century and represents the more impressive homes of the major personnel of the post, and includes the clock tower building situated on the point overlooking the Carquinez Straits. The boundaries include the buildings, their grounds, and street trees, including the bluff upon which the clock tower is situated. This area is isolated from the remainder of its historic environment by a major exposed pipeline and extensive imported auto storage lots on the north, the Port of Benicia and the freeway on the east, demolition of associated buildings and large asphalt parking areas and modern buildings on the south, and by a relatively modern wood and brick building on the west.

The cluster comprised of buildings 2, 7, 8, and 9 and 10 has a unity of materials, period and setting. All buildings date from the 1850's, and represent a rare concentration of original arsenal buildings. All are built of sandstone and are unified by the open, pastoral setting which has seen few changes within the area outlines. These are buildings of major importance to the early arsenal; powder

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magazines and shops, the latter which were later used as camel barns. The area is isolated from the remainder of its historic environment by the freeway on the east, World War II buildings and the freeway on the south, a large reservoir of recent vintage on the southwest, several 1930's arsenal buildings and large areas paved over with asphalt on the west, and new industrial development associated with the oil refinery on the north.

The remainder of the sites are listed individually since they have been isolated from their historic environment by demolition of associated structures or construction of modern elements which create intrusions, as described below:

**Cemetery:** Dating from 1849, and spanning both World Wars, the Cemetery is totally isolated from its surroundings by the freeway on the south, a new, high capacity pipeline associated with the nearby refinery on the east and north, and by the arsenal boundary fence on the west. It still remains as a small landscaped enclave surrounded by modern development.

**Building #1:** The old post hospital is isolated from its historic environment on the west by a new, large pipeline from the nearby refinery, on the north by industrial development associated with the refinery, on the east by several large World War II era buildings now converted for industrial uses, and by a huge expanse of asphalt paving on the south.

**Building #39:** This 1872 guardhouse is isolated from its historic environment by a large expanse of asphalt paving on the north, a relatively recent fire station complex on the west, and the foundations of demolished buildings on the south and east.

**Buildings #45:** This building is isolated from its historic environment by construction of an underpass and World War II mess hall on the west, a relatively recent fire station complex on the north, and the foundations of demolished buildings on the east. It is bordered on the south by Building #52, which is of World War I vintage, and listed below.

**Building #47:** This building is virtually surrounded by the remains of recently demolished buildings, and is not located in close enough proximity to other significant structures to be included in a cluster.

**Building #48:** This building dates from 1911, and is bounded by the foundations of recently demolished Building #49 on the east, more modern construction on the west, Building #63 of World War I vintage on the south, and by the realigned roadway on the north.

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Building #52: This building of World War I vintage is bounded by Building #45 (see above) on the north, the foundations of demolished buildings on the northeast, a small simple building dated at 1921 on the east, an underpass on the west, and World War II era construction on the south.

Building #51: This building is bounded by an extensively remodeled World War I structure on the north which is being used for industrial purposes, the World War II era mess hall on the northeast, a corporation yard on the east, relatively modern construction on the south, and the foundations of demolished buildings on the west.

Buildings 55, 56, and 57: These late 19th century shops are a handsome set of buildings which are now joined by an unfortunate addition across the rear (south). Other elements which isolate these buildings from their historic environment are the construction of more modern buildings and the demolition of adjacent structures; these elements form the setting of the building on all other sides.

Building #63: This World War I vintage building is bounded by relatively modern construction on the west and south, by the port of Benicia on the southeast and east, and by Building #48 on the north.

Several buildings were added to this resubmitted nomination (48, 51, 52, 63) to represent the 20th century history of the arsenal up through the First World War. Additional buildings of this period exist, but have been extensively remodeled during conversion for industrial use. Numerous structures from the Second World War also exist, but have been altered for present industrial use or are generally undistinguished. The buildings listed in this nomination are those which have retained sufficient integrity to be representative of the Benicia Arsenal's growth and development in the 19th century through the First World War.

Extensive photodocumentation of intrusions has been made and is included in this resubmission. The change in boundaries have been approved by the state's review board. The previous application was recommended at the national level of significance based upon historical and architectural content; these values have not changed, and the boundaries have been more carefully studied and clarified by several on site inspections.

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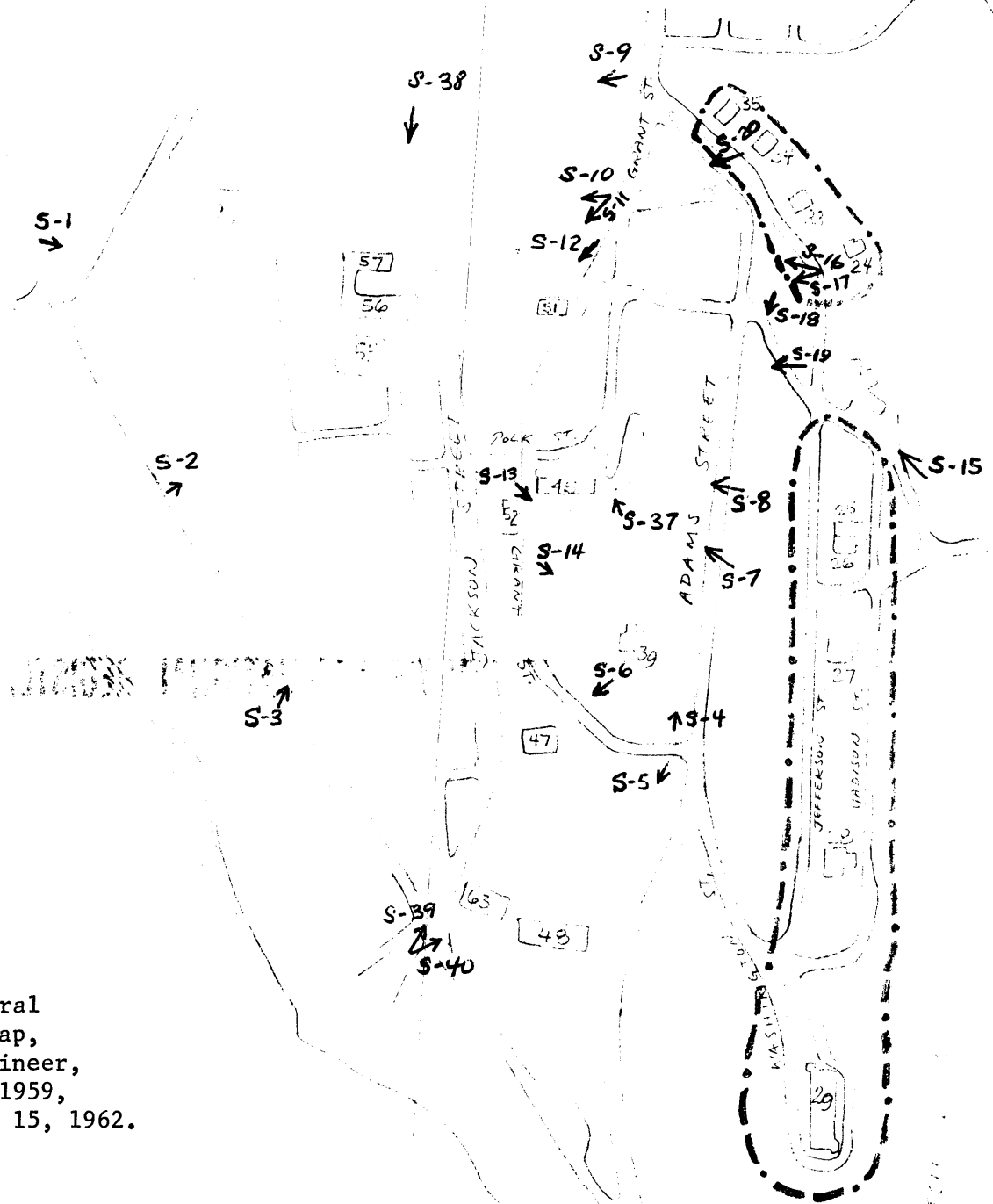
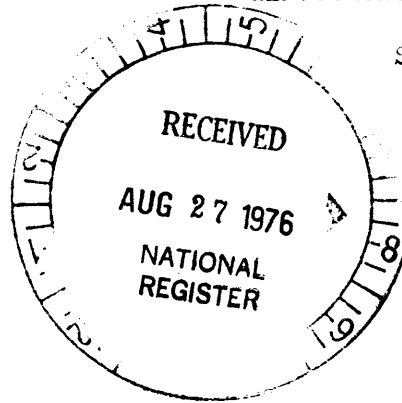
Verbal Boundary Description

From a point on Jefferson Street approximately 100 feet northeast of the intersection of Grant and Jefferson Streets, the boundary proceeds east just downslope from Jefferson Street to include street trees for approximately 500 feet, then north about 200 feet to a point about 80 feet east of Building 24, then west approximately 600 feet to a point about 40 feet northwest of Building 35, then southeast approximately 150 feet to point of origin, enclosing Buildings 24, 33, 34, and 35, their grounds and associated street trees for a total of approximately 2.6 acres.

From a point at the intersection of Washington and Jefferson Streets, the boundary proceeds southeast just downslope from and parallel to Washington Street around the promontory upon which Building 29 is situated, then northwesterly approximately 1600 feet just downslope from and parallel to Madison Street, then west along road approximately 200 feet, crossing Jefferson Street, then southeastward just downslope from and parallel to Jefferson Street approximately 1300 feet to point of origin, encompassing Buildings 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29, their grounds and associated street trees and landscaping for a total of approximately 14 acres.

From a point where Walnut Street and Larch Roads meet, the boundary follows Larch Road eastward approximately 700 feet, then turns southwest to parallel the freeway for approximately 1200 feet to a point about 80 feet south of Building 10, then northwest approximately 800 feet to a point about 40 feet west of Building 9 then northeasterly approximately 920 feet to point of origin encompassing Buildings 2, 7, 8, 9, and 10 and associated open space for a total of approximately 23 acres.

The remaining historic features are dispersed throughout the arsenal and are listed individually since they no longer retain sufficient integrity of setting to form contiguous areas within the district. The locations of the cemetery, and Buildings 1, 39, 45, 47, 48, 51, 52, 55, 56, 57, and 63 are shown on the attached sketch map of the district.

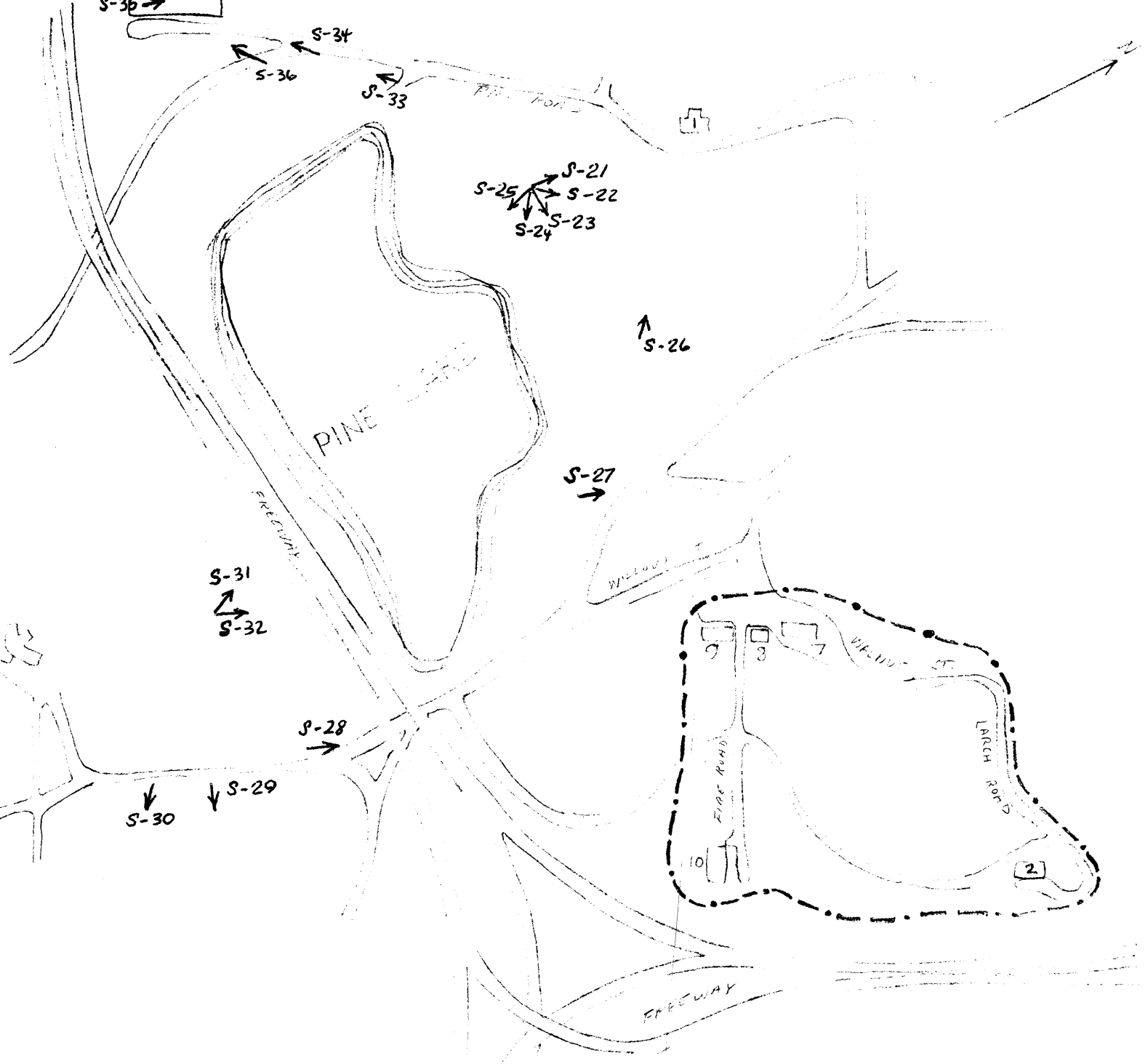


Sketch based upon General Signal Communication Map, Office of the Post Engineer, Benicia Arsenal, Dec. 1959, with revisions of June 15, 1962.



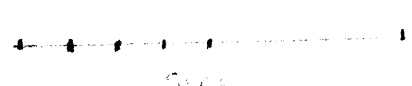
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