

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **FEB 14 1986**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Fort Thomas Military Reservation District

and/or common The Post/The Fort, including Tower Park & the U.S. V. A. Hospital

2. Location

street & number Within the City of Fort Thomas, east of South Fort Thomas Avenue
(S.R. 1120) and north of River Road (S.R. 445)(see Continuation— not for publication
Sheet)

city, town Fort Thomas _____ vicinity of

state Kentucky code 021 county Campbell code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	_____ agriculture
_____ building(s)	_____ private	_____ unoccupied	_____ commercial
_____ structure	_____ both	_____ work in progress	_____ educational
_____ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	_____ entertainment
_____ object	<u>NA</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>NA</u> being considered	_____ yes: unrestricted	_____ industrial
		_____ no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military
			_____ museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			_____ religious
			_____ scientific
			_____ transportation
			_____ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple (see Attached Continuation Sheet)

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Campbell County Courthouse

street & number Fourth and York Streets

city, town Newport _____ state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Resources of Kentucky has this property been determined eligible? yes _____ no

date March 1980 _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort _____ state Kentucky

7. Description

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The former Fort Thomas Military Reservation is located in the southeast section of the City of Fort Thomas in Campbell County, Kentucky (see maps). The county lies between the Licking River on the west and the Ohio River on the north and east, as it bends around the northernmost county of Kentucky opposite the eastern portion of Cincinnati, Ohio, and its suburbs. The town of Fort Thomas lies mainly on a series of ridges several hundred feet above river level, with winding Fort Thomas Avenue as its spine and many residential culs-de-sac extending onto promontories on either side (see photo 1). The City of Fort Thomas, whose population now is over 16,000, was incorporated as the District of the Highlands in 1867 and renamed Fort Thomas in 1914. It is basically an affluent and attractive suburban "bedroom community" for the nearby metropolitan area, while retaining its own identity and civic vitality.

It was the latter that led to the acquisition of a large part of the abandoned military reservation by the City in the early 1970s and the establishment of Tower Park, which forms the basis of the present 61 acre district being nominated. This district does not, however, include the entire park, as wooded hillsides and the area to the north and east containing the more recent Army Reserve Building and the Field and Track are excluded. The proposed district also includes the southern area of the former post on which is located the 1935 Fifth Barracks Building (now the V. A. Hospital Nursing Home) and the stable (now used for storage), as well as the Alexander Circle area to the northeast overlooking the Ohio River; these sections of the former post now belong to the U.S. V.A. Hospital system, although the stable complex furthest south still belongs to the Department of the Army.

The proposed district is more specifically located east of South Fort Thomas Avenue (S.R. 1120) and the north of River Road (S.R. 445) on a plateau area (elevation above sea level 820 feet). It lies high above Mary Inglis Highway (S.R. 8) and the Ohio River at River Mile 462.5 (elevation 480). Nearby at the base of the hills along the river are pumping stations for three neighboring cities: Cincinnati, Newport, and Covington (see photos 1 and 2). The Covington Waterworks, which still supplies the City of Covington, Kenton County, Kentucky, on the west side of the Licking River south of the Ohio River, originally contracted to supply the military reservation with water by means of the stone-clad water tower that marks the entrance to Tower Park. The waterworks' main pipeline runs through the northern part of the former post to the Covington Reservoir, nearby on the west side of South Fort Thomas Avenue.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 1887 - 1935 **Builder/Architect** Henry Schriver, Col. Milville Cochran, et al.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Fort Thomas Military Reservation Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C. Established in 1887 as part of the Army shift from scattered posts and garrisons to major troop concentrations at rail heads and near population centers, the Fort is associated with the broad pattern of U.S. military history. Fort Thomas was the successor to the first and second military establishments in the central Ohio River valley. Fort Washington (Losantiville/Cincinnati, Ohio), begun in 1789, was replaced by the Newport Barracks (Newport, Kentucky) which existed from 1808 until 1887. As an infantry post and a recruitment and induction center from the Spanish-American War through the Korean Conflict, Fort Thomas was associated with events and persons important in American history. The remaining structures represent a fine concentration of various styles of military architecture in a planned community. Many were built by a prominent local builder, Henry Schriver, whose other structures included a 30 - 40 room hotel and a number of homes in the City of Fort Thomas.

Originally called Fort Crook before its formal dedication on June 20, 1890, Fort Thomas was officially named for General George H. Thomas (1816-1870), "The Rock of Chickamauga" of Civil War fame, by Secretary of War Redfield Porter. This was recorded in the Army and Navy Journal, June 9, 1890. Legend attributes to General Philip Sheridan the naming of Fort Thomas as the "West Point of the West" because it sits high above a wide bend in the Ohio River, somewhat like the New York military establishment above the Hudson River. General Thomas, a comrade-at-arms with General Sheridan, had already been honored with the naming of a small fort on the plains. When this post was abandoned, the Kentucky site was thus named Fort Thomas and the name Fort Crook was given to a post near Omaha. Local newspapers record that General Sheridan's visit occurred on May 8, 1888, as a formal inspection of the property already purchased by a Congressional appropriation of \$160,000 in May, 1887. The land was ceded by the Commonwealth of Kentucky in Legislative Session to the Federal Government, February 29, 1888.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Johnson, E. Polk, A History of Kentucky and Kentuckians, Vol. II, 1912, pp. 853 & 854.
Kentucky State Journal, Newport, Kentucky 1888 - 1891,
Kentucky Post, Covington, Kentucky 1894 - 96.
 Knapp, Paul T., Ft. Thomas. . . Its History . . . Its Heritage, 1967
 Stegeman, A. Vinton, "Personal Memoirs".

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 61 ACRES
 Quadrangle name Newport, KY - OHIO Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	D	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>
E	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	F	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>9</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
G	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	H	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betty M. Daniels

organization Ft. Thomas Heritage League date August, 1983

street & number 145 Tower Place telephone 606/441-6066

city or town Fort Thomas state Kentucky 41075

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature David L. Meyer

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date 2-5-86

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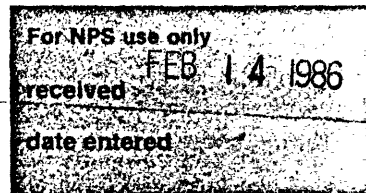
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Amy Schlager date 5/15/86
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Fort Thomas Military Reservation District (Campbell Co., Ky.) Item number 2

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Location: Fort Thomas Reservation is located within Tower Park, an eighty-six acre park and recreation facility located in the southeastern portion of the City of Fort Thomas, overlooking the Ohio River valley. The City is located in Northern Campbell County just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati and is the second largest city in Campbell County with a population of 16,000. The City was originally incorporated as the "District of the Highlands" in 1867 and was later renamed Fort Thomas in 1914.

The District nominated does not include the entire park. Wooded hillsides and the area to the south and east containing the Army Reserve Building and the Field and Track are not included.

Tower Park is more specifically located west of South Fort Thomas Avenue (S.R. 1120) and north of River Road (S.R. 445) on a plateau area (elevation 820) overlooking Mary Inglis Highway (S.R. 8) and the Ohio River at River Mile 462.5 (elevation 480).

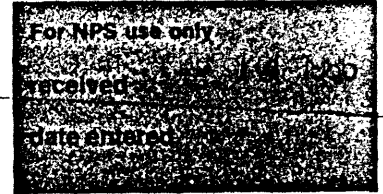
The Park is easily identified due to the existence of a large stone tower located near the main entrance to the park at Douglas Street. The adjacent properties to the park are primarily residential and woodland in nature, however, a small business district does exist along South Fort Thomas Avenue near its intersection with River Road near the southwest corner of the park.

Street addresses:

- Alexander Circle, 1-31
- Greene Street 38-69
- Cochran Avenue 32-64
- Pearson Street 17-55
- South Fort Thomas Avenue 16

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Owners:

City of Fort Thomas: 43.2 acres within Tower Park

Mayor Fred Erschell
130 North Fort Thomas Avenue
Fort Thomas, Kentucky 41075

U. S. V. A. Hospital: 17 acres

Veterans Administration
Office of Construction
Attn: Gjore Mollenhoff
Washington, D. C. 20420

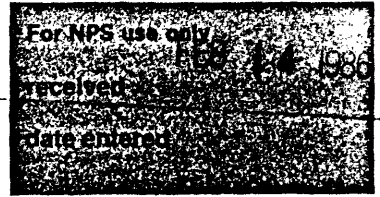
Director Raymond Sullivan
1 Alexander Circle
Fort Thomas, Kentucky 41075

U. S. ARCOM: 0.8 acres

20th ARCOM
Fort Hayes
Columbus, Ohio 43215

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Continuation sheet District (Campbell Co., Ky.) Item number

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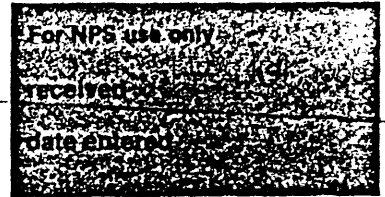
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY (continued)

<u>Owner</u>	<u>Property</u>	<u>Address</u>
U. S. Veteran's Administration	Single family	1 Alexander Circle
"	Single family	6 Alexander Circle
"	Single family	7 Alexander Circle
"	Single family	30 Alexander Circle
"	Single family	31 Alexander Circle
"	Duplex dwelling	2-3 Alexander Circle
"	Duplex dwelling	4-5 Alexander Circle
"	Duplex dwelling	8-9 Alexander Circle
"	Duplex dwelling	32-33 Cochran Avenue
"	Duplex dwelling	34-35 Cochran Avenue
"	VA Nursing Home	64 Cochran Avenue
U. S. Army (Reserve)	Stable # 65	Cochran (Army Reserve Road)
City of Fort Thomas	Water Tower # 16	South Fort Thomas Avenue
"	Mess Hall # 26	Cochran Avenue
"	Drill Hall # 56	Cochran Avenue
"	Single family	17 Pearson Avenue
"	Single family	18 Pearson Avenue
"	Single family	19 Pearson Avenue
"	Single family	25 Pearson Avenue
"	Single family	44 Pearson Avenue
"	Single family	55 Pearson Avenue
"	Single family	38 Greene Street
"	Single family	43 Greene Street
"	Single family	69 Greene Street
"	Duplex dwellings	39-40 Greene Street
"	Duplex dwellings	41-42 Greene Street
"	Duplex dwellings	50-51 Greene Street
"	Duplex dwellings	52-53 Greene Street

Note: Military practice numbers buildings as they are constructed. If a building is removed, a newer structure takes its number. At Fort Thomas, streets were named Main Street (Cochran), The Loop (Alexander Circle), Officers' Row (Greene) and Non-Commissioned Officers' Row (Pearson). Map of 1909 lists Main Entrance (now Greene) and Carriage Drive (now Cochran and Alexander Circle).

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Fort Thomas Military Reservation

Continuation sheet

District

Item number

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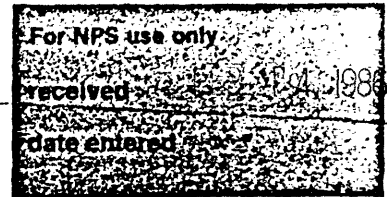
The boundaries of the proposed district are defined to include all the significant existing buildings associated directly with the former Military Reservation, with enough adjacent parklike land to protect the structures and preserve the planned landscape that was a feature of the original post. Steep wooded hillsides unlikely to be developed lie on the north, east, and much of the southern boundaries of the district. A picture taken in 1897 presents a view not unlike the present (see photos 3 and 4). With the Drill Hall in the right background, the young trees planted by Col. Cochran's soldiers almost a century ago, provide shade along the sidewalks and street of South Fort Thomas Avenue. Much of the western and southern boundary is further defined by the series of stone walls laid by crews of soldiers and even civilians in the early 1930s in a kind of informal WPA program under the direction of a Col. Croft (see Photos 25, 42, 45).

The area within the district developed as a public park includes a playground, picnic and restroom facilities with modern pavilions. It extends southeast from the Water Tower between Douglas and the rear of the dwellings along the north side of Greene Street. (Photos 5 and 6) It also includes the head of a shallow ravine on the east side of Cochran Avenue (north of 69 Greene Street, which forms a natural amphitheater (see Photo 7). This area was used by the post for sham battles, hospital drills, boxing matches, and other exercises, several of which became popular annual events enjoyed by the community, just as it now serves for summer cultural events. The well-maintained park landscape also includes the area on the plateau around Alexander Circle, the Mess Hall, Pearson, Cochran, and Greene Streets, including the V. A. Nursing Home. Although the residences, some of which belong to the City of Fort Thomas and others (on "The Loop") to the V. A. Hospital, are desirable rental property, the two large common buildings of the former post are part of the community-wide park facility. The Drill Hall (56 Cochran; see Photos 23-25 and below) is fully utilized for athletic and entertainment activities. The Mess Hall (25 Cochran; listed on the National Register separately on March 13, 1980; see Photos 17-22 and below) is currently vacant, but a \$70,000 matching grant has recently been received through the Kentucky Heritage Council for rehabilitation of the structure as a much-needed community meeting place.

The existing buildings in the district represent a considerable portion of the permanent structures erected during the posts' existence (1887-1964) and follow the

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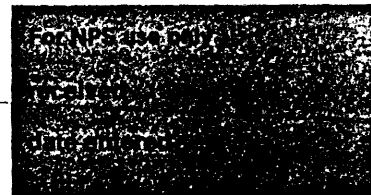
original layout, conforming to the natural advantages of the site (compare Photo 1 from the period of maximum expansion of the district). The major losses, demolished because of their deteriorated condition and lack of potential use as well as for expansion of the park site, were the series of four barracks buildings and related headquarters buildings and other facilities in their vicinity situated along the north side of the ridge between Alexander Circle and Pearson Street, as well as between Pearson or Douglas and Greene Street. Other early structures that are gone, some of them dating from the early 20th century, were part of a hospital complex east of the Drill Hall and on both sides of the present V. A. Nursing Home. Most of the other large buildings shown in the 1945 aerial view were temporary barracks from the mid-20th century with little or no architectural character.

As the map indicates, the surviving structures are arranged in an angular crescent, from the earliest (ca.1888) residences of the administrative officers, including the Commandant, around Alexander Circle (Known as "The Loop") with its spectacular river views and a short distance along the adjacent arm of Cochran Avenue; to the stable complex at the southeast extremity of the district. In between are the Mess Hall, formerly flanked by the original barracks with their attached open galleries and higher central blocks and the north service road (now called Clitz); six single modest dwellings known as "Non-Com Row" on the north side of Pearson Street at the northwest corner of the district beside the Water Tower; the former married field officers' single and double dwellings north and south of Greene Street; the Drill Hall, running east between South Fort Thomas and Cochran Avenues where they are closest together suggesting its shared military and community use almost from the start; and the V. A. Nursing Home opposite "The Midway".

Almost all of the roadways were apparently laid out by the first Commandant, Col. Melville A. Cochran. A map of 1909 (see Map #4) shows the Main Entrance, opening from South Fort Thomas Avenue between a row of dwellings, often referred to as Officers Row and now as Greene Street. The early Carriage Drive was to become Main Street and the Loop, and later Cochran Street and Alexander Circle. Freight roads ran behind dwellings and most service buildings. The Freight Road in front of the Non-com Row was later designated Pearson Street. The right-of-way maintained in the southern area of the fort

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was first named Boone Drive as it led to a point above the Ohio River where Daniel Boone had made a campsite, (see map #3). This property was later owned by Eli Kinney who built a large home there. After the sale of the property to S.S.Bloom, the stone mansion was known as Bloom's Castle and the road led to it. At another time, it was referred to as Army Reserve Road, as the Brook-Lawler Reserve Center is adjacent to it. More recently the Carmelite Sisters have taken over the Bloom mansion to incorporate it into a nursing home so that the road now is referred to as Carmel Drive or Carmel Manor Drive.

The following descriptions of the existing buildings within the district are based on Survey forms compiled by Mrs. Betty Daniels, as well as several 1979 Heritage Commission forms. War Department Quartermaster records and contemporary newspaper articles provide an unusual amount of detailed information on the dates of construction, cost, size, materials, systems, and original use of most of the structures on the post. Although stylistic categories are somewhat nebulous and the actual design process may have been handled by a series or team of draftsmen at the War Department offices in Washington, D.C., there is an overall consistency of design in the late 19th-century buildings on the post that suggests a trained designer, particularly adept at varied massing and the creative use of brick (see 8.).

The descriptions here are arranged alphabetically by road or street name. Individual buildings were originally numbered in the sequence of construction, and most of the current addresses correspond to that numbering system. The present street names were not applied, however, until the regular post office began to serve the area after World War II.

The first permanent building erected at Fort Thomas was the COMMANDANT'S QUARTERS (1 ALEXANDER CIRCLE); (Photos 8 - 10). Built, like most of the earliest buildings, by local contractor Henry Schriver, it cost \$9,803.53 (then a generous outlay) and was occupied by 1888. Col. Melville A. Cochran, first commandant of the post, lived here while still in command of the Newport Barracks during the construction of the early buildings at what is now Fort Thomas. Like its neighbors and near contemporaries, 1 Alexander Circle has a somewhat complex massing, related to the site and approach. It is perched on the end of the promontory at its most northeastward point, almost 500 feet above the Ohio River, with views in three directions along the Ohio River and the

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Little Miami River basin opposite. (See also Photo 2.) The two-and-a-half story brick residence has a long gable-ended main block, broken on the front by a flattened semi-circular tower which is crowned by an open loggia with stubby columns above the main cornice line and an almost conical roof. This abuts a modest entrance porch that originally extended around the east side. Like others on the post, it has lost its original spindled frieze, although many still have their original turned posts and some railings. A tall round-arched window with three "keystones" in the face of the tower indicates the placement of the main staircase of the Commandant's Quarters; just as the small high windows left of the tower indicated service rooms; such exterior expression of internal functions occurs throughout the dwellings on the post, although without exaggeration. Ample chimneys punctuate the skyline, while a shed-roof dormer here as on other buildings varies the roofscape.

Some of the single and double administrative officers' quarters on Alexander Circle and the adjacent 32-33* and 34-35 COCHRAN AVENUE have even more adventurous compositions, with jerkinheaded or clipped gables, corbelled brick chimneys, varied window shapes and disposition, projecting bays and oriels, well-defined gables in different directions and some ornamental brick work. (See Photos 8-9, 11-15). The two most elaborate, 6 and 7 Alexander, are single dwellings that face each other across the Loop, and accent the entire complex with their tall cylindrical corner towers capped by inverted cones emerging from polygonal first-floor porches, with flanking curved or octagonal bays. Houses 6 and 7 also have frame upper stories, now re-sided, that gave a more "Queen Anne" quality. The double dwellings are somewhat more restrained, with less conspicuous polygonal bays and towers, although 32-33 and 34-35 Cochran have oriels perched within the gables that link their units (Photo 16). 2-3, 4-5, 6, 7, and 8-9 Alexander Circle, as their low numbers indicate, were constructed by Schriver about 1888, but 30 and 31 Alexander Circle and the Cochran Avenue pairs were erected in 1891. The porches have been somewhat simplified, the stone and wood trim -- including horizontal stone bands linking some of the openings--has been painted white, and slate roofs have been replaced with asphalt shingles, but these houses, like nearly all the other buildings in the district (except the Mess Hall) are well-maintained and essentially intact, both inside and out.

* Hyphenated numbers indicate double houses, sharing a common wall.

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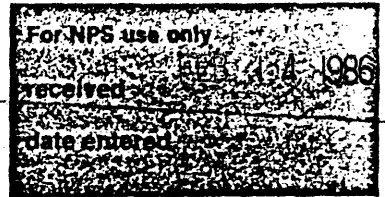
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The interior spaces, and especially the staircases of the residences, are varied, with segmental arches and perpendicular landings. The diversified bays and towers and the wide openings between rooms also provide spatial interest, especially in these large houses. Woodwork is of the usual late 19th-century type with concentric cornerblocks, turned spindles, solid stringers, panelled newel posts with some sunburst carvings, and chamfered edges, giving a restrained "Eastlake" or "Queen Anne" flavor to the interiors. The mantels, many of which remain, have turned pilasters and incised or grooved trim. Several of the quarters retain art-glass windows on staircases and elsewhere, such as the amber panel with the letters "U.S.A." intertwined in 7 Alexander Circle (Photo 4; see also photos 34-35).

The former MESS HALL at 26 COCHRAN AVENUE was built in 1891 at a cost of \$20,407.05 (See Photos 17-20; and the National Register nomination form for more detailed description and extensive photographs, although some of the background information is corrected here). In spite of the low, broad main entrance arch on short brick pilasters in a gabled central pavilion, which has a Richardsonian Romanesque flavor, this building has a classical Roman or Renaissance character. The dining room is contained in a long one-story rectangular block (approximately 50 x 150') under a low-hipped roof (still the original slate in adequate condition) broken only by the central gable and hipped-roof dormers. Regularly-spaced round-arched large windows with the arches barely defined by raised brick courses contribute to the monumental effect of the whole. Its horizontality is offset by the tall square chimney of the t-shaped kitchen wing on the north, which also housed the heating facility for the entire post. It has segmental-arched openings and brick corbelling in the gables, like that on the main entrance. On the north side of Clitz Road there are still ledges recessed into the brow of the hill for trash disposal, not only for the Mess Hall, but also some of the residences on the Loop. The interior of the Mess Hall (Photos 21-22) retains the original bare brick walls (now painted), compartmented pressed-metal ceiling, and red tile floor of the single uninterrupted main space, although internally the structure is somewhat deteriorated. Wide span trusses of steel support the roof of the main "Mess Room."

The DRILL HALL or GYMNASIUM at 56 COCHRAN AVENUE (Photos 23-25) was completed in 1896 at a cost of \$50,235.22. It was used for drill in inclement weather and for

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athletic and social events for the surrounding community as well as the military. It is a single great vessel of two levels with vast slate roofs and broad gables at the ends facing Fort Thomas and Cochran Avenues. The gables descend quite low to the ground, with simple stone pinnacles and squared ends. The latter reflect the square brick buttresses that articulate each side into eight bays. Because the ground level has no windows -- probably for security -- the large casemented openings of the side bays, resting on a continuous stone sill course, contribute to the monumental scale of the whole structure. The over-scaled round-arched entrances centered on the ends, whose lunettes rise above the second-story floor level, have deep brick voussoirs, as do the graduated groups of smaller arched openings punched out of the wall surface and fitted within the gables and flanking the entrances. The metal grid of the "portcullis" onto South Fort Thomas Avenue evokes medieval military association still more explicitly.

The interior of the Drill Hall (photo 26) reveals the impressive engineering of the open-span structure, basically a cambered Fink-truss roof, which leaves clear a hardwood floor-space of 90' x 100'. The method of construction, according to Engineer David R. Whitacre * was labor-intensive but ingenious compared to today's typical structures fabricated from light-weight, mass-produced welded systems; man-hours and creativity were relied upon when technological resources were still relatively limited.

The roof trusses were constructed by bolting or riveting together a series of individually-made unique sections of both compression and tension members. The compression members consist of Z-sections bolted together in opposing pairs for lateral rigidity. Tension members were constructed of 3/4" to 1" plates with a large-section modulus about the horizontal axis in order to prevent sag. Internal connections between the compression and tension members of the truss are made with single three inch diameter bolts. Cross-bracing of the trusses was fabricated from steel sections ranging from 1/2" diameter rods with threaded ends to 2" square bars with forged eyes and turnbuckles. Visually, the overall effect is extraordinarily light and graceful, with the seemingly endless repetition of delicate members lending a spider-web-like quality.

* Assistant Zoning Administrator and Director of Building Services, City of Fort Thomas

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The ground-level of the building, which is floored with red tile in the eastern half and concrete on the west, is subdivided to provide space for a variety of activities. From the west entrance on South Fort Thomas Avenue, a wide stairway leads directly to the main floor. Raised sections at either end provide for band stand and reviewing platforms. From the east entrance, stairs lead to the southeast corner of the main floor.

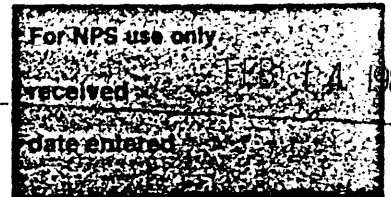
The present VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION NURSING HOME at 64 COCHRAN AVENUE (Photos 28-29) was constructed in 1935 as the fifth barracks building needed to complement the four original barracks, in response to new Army requirements for infantry. This was a short-lived attempt to keep military operations at Fort Thomas (although the available space had already been outgrown) and was made possible by Federal Recovery Program funding and some political pressures. Nevertheless, this newer structure, maintained in excellent condition by the V.A., is still in use.

Set at a slight angle to South Fort Thomas Avenue, the red pressed-brick building faces Cochran Avenue to the east. It is shaped like a tall, narrow letter E in plan, with three projecting pavilions (which may have been intended to be expandable, as they have relatively bare ends) facing west and two shorter projections near the ends of the Cochran facade. Between the latter are three one-story, bold but shallow stone entrance features consisting of "correct" Doric columns supporting plain architraves. They are set against horizontally-rusticated brick first-floor surfaces above the stone foundations of the slightly raised basement. The first stories are also defined by stone courses above and below, further evoking the classical "basement" of Palladian buildings. On this east front most of the windows are paired and so plain as to seem cut out of the walls. All this conforms to the "stripped classicism" often employed for public buildings in the 1930s.

The west or rear side of the Nursing Home facing Fort Thomas Avenue has a plain but even more monumental treatment. Its three two-bay-deep projections are articulated by wide plain two-story brick pilasters above the unrusticated first-floor base; the pilasters have stone bases and caps below a flat brick parapet. They support porches that were the counterparts of the double (or triple) frame galleries on the original barracks. Some of these porches have been tactfully enclosed to supply more usable space for the Nursing Home.

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At the farthest end of the district, beyond where Cochran Avenue ends at Carmel Manor Drive* is the former stable complex. Aside from several modest outbuildings, one of which is of stone, of indeterminate age, and a small brick former gas and weigh station, the main structure here is the former STABLE (Building 65; Photo 27). It was erected between 1889 and 1892 to house 40 animals (mules and horses) for the infantry, as well as for the cavalry attached to the infantry. Each officer above the rank of Second Lieutenant was entitled to a horse, and many also had their own private mounts. At one time there was even a polo team at the post!

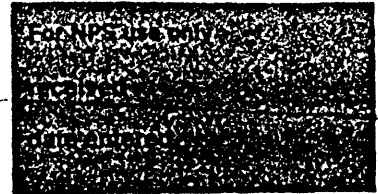
The stable, a long, narrow brick building, has fairly steep roofs above the low ground level, with a clerestory along the ridge, creating a sloping stepped profile at the ends. The openings of the main level are segmental-arched, with wider doors in the centers of the horizontal wall-surface. A small brick addition has been made at one end and a few openings altered or blocked up, but the stable, now used for storage, seems to retain much of its original appearance. Such serviceable structures are often rarer survivors than the major buildings.

GREENE STREET, known as OFFICERS ROW, curves between South Fort Thomas and Cochran Avenues. It is lined with closely-spaced single and double dwellings that originally housed field (as opposed to administrative) officers and their families. (Photos 32-36.) Like the larger, more picturesquely and generously sited "suburban" dwellings on Alexander Circle, the houses on Greene Street were built by Henry Schriver: 38, 39-40, 41-42, and 43 by 1892, and 50-51 and 52-53 by 1892. The units are arranged symmetrically, with the double dwellings facing each other across the street and the single houses, with inverted plans, at the ends of the north side. As can be seen in the 1897 view of the "Officers' Quarters," the paired gables of the double houses, echoed by the angled bays and the dormers of the single dwellings, made a vigorous rhythmic pattern. This effect was emphasized by the strong cornices and flush stone lintels of the large windows on the north side, contrasting with the brick segmental arches and round-arched openings on the south side. In spite of some semi-octagonal bays, varied openings, some geometric brick trim, and overall massiveness, these brick buildings have a more colonial revival flavor than those on the Loop. Aside from the loss of porch friezes and the replacement of the slate roofs with asphalt in the 1940s,

* Originally Boone Drive, now listed as both Carmel and Carmel Manor Drive as it serves Carmel Manor Nursing Home, owned and operated by the Carmelite Sisters.

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the exteriors of Officers' Row remain basically intact. The interiors also retain many of their original features with "Queen Anne" details (Photos 33 and 34).

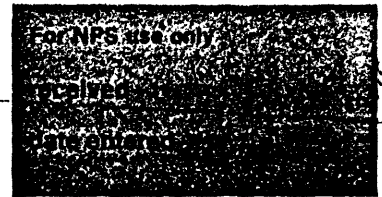
69 GREENE STREET (Photo 37) on a separate spur to the east, is a smaller rectangular house with bold returned cornice on the forward gable and Tuscan porches. It was constructed in 1910 at a cost of \$5,104 for non-commissioned staff quarters.

PEARSON STREET, known as "NON-COM ROW", extends eastward from Fort Thomas Avenue in a gentle curve, with six single non-commissioned officers' family dwellings on the north side, and continues eastward as Clitz Road. The modest two-story brick L-shaped houses, which cost about \$2,000 each, were built between 1890 and 1894. (See Photos 38 and 39). They are varied by segmental-arched or stone-lintelled single and double windows. Some retain simplified entrance porches; others have been enclosed, including that of 44, the home of Sgt. Samuel Woodfill, an outstanding non-commissioned soldier recognized for service in World War I. After retiring from the service he had a home built on U. S. 27 near the present Woodfill Elementary School in the City of Fort Thomas (see Survey forms).

The FORT THOMAS WATER TOWER (Building 16: Photos 40-42) is located on SOUTH FORT THOMAS AVENUE between Pearson and Douglas Streets at the present main entrance to Tower Park. The tower was constructed in 1890-92 for \$10,995 by builder Henry Schriver to the design of Cincinnati civil engineer Patrick Rooney to supply the needs of the military base by contract with the Covington Waterworks. The handsome tower, just over one hundred feet high and about 24 feet square at the base, was built around the metal standpipe, which had a capacity of 100,000 gallons. The battered base of regular courses of rock-faced limestone is pierced on the west side by a small round-arched opening with overscaled Richardsonian voussoirs. The untapering shaft and the slightly projecting crown of the tower are clad in somewhat darker stone that suggests fieldstone. The raised corners make the sides appear like recessed panels, with corbelled machicolations above. The stone parapet at the top has three narrow crenellations on each side. The sides are pierced only by very narrow slits with big voussoirs of the lighter-colored stone; they are centered on the sides but follow the vertical path of the interior staircase. The overall effect of the tower, achieved by minimal ornamental means, is strikingly military, as well as medieval.

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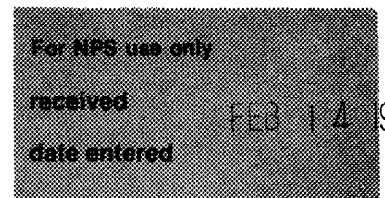
Two cannons captured in Cuba at the turn of the century rest on stone platforms set diagonally beside stone walls. (Photo 42). They are inscribed "Barcelona, 1 de Junio 1768" and "Barcelona, 2 Julio de 1769," indicating that they are 18th-century Spanish or Catalanian weapons.

On the west side of the tower above the base is a large (approximately 8 x 10') bronze commemorative plaque (Photo 43) "In Honor of the Sixth Regiment United States Infantry" for its service in the Spanish-American War. A movement began in 1898, immediately after the war, among citizens of Cincinnati and the Northern Kentucky communities to honor those officers and soldiers who had been stationed at the post and later lost their lives in the conflict. The artist was Clement John Barnhorn (1857-1935; the plaque is inscribed "C.J. Barnhorn Sc.") a significant Cincinnati-area sculptor. Trained in Cincinnati and Paris, Barnhorn shared the naturalism of many of his contemporaries, such as Augustus St. Gaudens, yet was also like him inspired by the Italian Renaissance. Barnhorn had many major commissions in the area, including over-door carving on the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in Covington (listed on the National Register) where he collaborated on the decorative scheme with his local contemporary, Frank Duveneck.

The Fort Thomas plaque is in quite low relief with a raised egg-and-dart border. Furlled flags (the national flag and regimental standard) with fringes and tassels, wrapped in appropriate military apparatus, stand on either side of a dynamic eagle in higher relief, astride a shield with the stars and stripes against a laurel wreath. Above is a ribbon inscribed "Patriotism, Courage, Discipline," and below is a panel with the names of those being honored. This panel is smooth-surfaced and contrasts with the seemingly casual, almost flickering textures of the surrounding elements that lend vitality to the surface and composition as a whole. By contrast, the smaller bronze plaque set against the south side of the base (Photo 44) has a hard-edged quality, although the design is centered on a vivid three-quarters-view portrait bust of Colonel Harry Clay Egbert. His death in battle on Luzon in 1899 is commemorated by a broken sword against a laurel wreath ribbon inscribed "Ad Mortem Fidelis," and a pair of almost flat eagles with outspread wings on shields. This plaque was executed by J. D. Meyenberg, a little-known sculptor who worked at the turn of the century in Covington.

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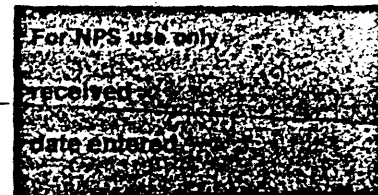
During the early 1930s a clean-up campaign was directed by Commandant Colonel Croft. One project put troops to work digging field stones from the unused areas. A four-foot high wall was built around the grounds along South Fort Thomas Avenue from the western edge to River Road and along the eastern boundary. Pillasters, benches and decorative walls are scattered throughout the area and on the northern border hillsides. Various supervisors directed the variety of masonry work (photo 45).

Intrusions in the district include carports or garages on service roads behind the dwellings, as well as the playground and picnic area shelters and restroom facilities mentioned earlier.

The nominated area contains **29** contributing buildings and **six** non-contributing buildings and structures.

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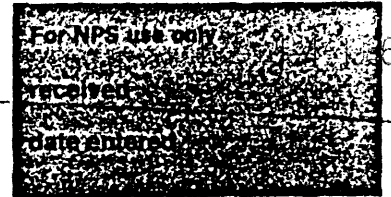


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The Army Infantry Divisions, in whole or in part, which were stationed at Fort Thomas began with Companies E and G, Sixth Infantry, from the Newport Barracks under Colonel Melville A. Cochran. Next were Companies from Fort Sheridan, Illinois, and from the posts in New York State of Fort Wood, Fort Porter, Fort Ontario, New York Barracks, and Plattsburg. Later Infantry Divisions were the Second, Third, Fourth, Ninth, and Tenth. A battalion of native Phillipine soldiers also served here. The last of the "regulars", the Tenth Infantry, stationed at Fort Thomas, came in 1922 and left for Iceland in 1940. During both World Wars, Fort Thomas was very active as an induction and recruitment center. Temporary buildings covered the grounds to provide for the men coming from southern Ohio, southern Indiana, western West Virginia, and northern, central, and eastern Kentucky. This service diminished after WWII but continued to be operated by a medical staff and non-coms in building 11 (now razed) and building 26, Mess Hall, which included two jail cells for AWOLS. This induction service was supplied by the 478th Engineering Battalion, Army Reserve Unit. (Presently Brook-Lawler Army Reserve Center is located adjacent to the district in Tower Park and operates the Stable (Building 65) included in this district). The last inductee processed here marked the close of the service on April 11, 1964.

Other Federal agencies to use the fort were the Army Air Force for rehabilitation purposes in 1944-46 and the V. A. Hospital which took over the entire area in 1947. Currently the V. A. operates a Nursing Home in the former fifth barracks (Building 56,) as a branch of its hospital service in Cincinnati, Ohio. The dwellings on Alexander Circle and Cochran Avenue are used for V. A. personnel. The remaining land, no longer needed for military purposes, excepting the parcel retained for the Army Reserve unit, was awarded to the City of Fort Thomas through the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, December 20, 1972. The city created Tower Park in this 86 acre area, of which the city owns 43.2 acres of the 61 acres included in this nomination.

Of the many Army men who served at Fort Thomas, one of the best remembered is Samuel Woodfill, who as a sergeant, lived at 44 Non-com Row (Pearson Street) before WW I. As a First Lieutenant, 60th Infantry, 5th Division, he received the Congressional Medal of Honor for Action at Cunel, France, October 12, 1918. After retirement, he and

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his wife lived in a home only a short distance from the fort at 1334 Alexandria Pike, Fort Thomas. The elementary school at 1025 Alexandria Pike is named in his honor. During WW II, Woodfill was called back into service for recruitment purposes and promoted to the position of Major.

Colonel Melville A. Cochran, the first commandant of Fort Thomas, moved his command from the Newport Barracks. His home was the first structure on the post and he moved in immediately to supervise the buildings and the ground development. His scheme for the arrangement of the new post was designed to take advantage of the natural contour of the land. Rather than using a grid pattern of streets, Col. Cochran chose the ridges for the main roadways and left the steep hillsides and valleys for trees and military exercises. The development took on the appearance of a busy small town with the military buildings grouped in the center and the dwellings in three distinct side areas. By conserving the hillsides and view of the Ohio River and by overseeing the planting of hundreds of trees and shrubs throughout the entire area, Col. Cochran created the atmosphere of a college campus. Accounts of early days note that the Colonel wanted to keep the "brig" full so that he could have gardeners and ground maintenance crews at all times. Interested in keeping the soldiers active, he encouraged various sporting events, challenging teams and individuals from the civilian population to encounters at Fort Thomas. As had been the tradition at both Fort Washington and Newport Barracks, Col. Cochran continued at Fort Thomas, the peace time tradition of providing activities for citizens of the Greater Cincinnati and northern Kentucky areas with receptions for visiting dignitaries, regular musical and field demonstration programs, and athletic events.

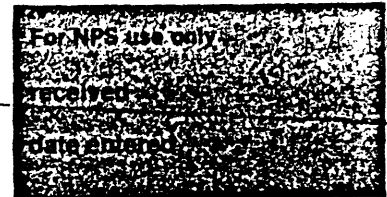
Colonel Harry Clay Egbert served in the Civil War with the Union forces and was twice wounded at Bethesda Church, Virginia, in 1864. Stationed at Fort Thomas and housed in 38 Officers' Row (Greene Street), Col. Egbert was sent to Cuba in 1898 to command the Sixth Regiment, U. S. Infantry. He was wounded at San Juan Hill and returned to Fort Thomas. Egbert was quite popular with the business community in Cincinnati and was to be honored by having a five-cent cigar named for him which sold for many years in the area. After his death which came while serving with the Twenty

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Second U. S. Infantry in Maltinta, Luzon, March 25, 1899, this officer of the regular army for thirty-seven years was honored by friends from his Fort Thomas days with a bronze memorial placque, placed on the south side of the Water Tower.

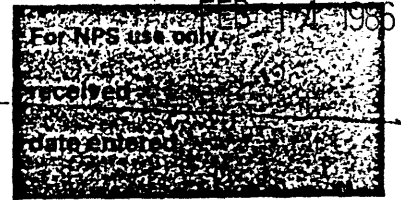
Colonel Edward Croft, commandant 1932-34, had a great influence on morale and the physical property of the Fort. Strongly believing that cleanliness is health, he took charge of a run-down military post in the depression years and put everyone to work to improve personal conduct and the appearance of the grounds and buildings. Col. Croft was responsible for reforestation, even requesting neighboring citizens to make gifts of small trees, shrubs, and plants to improve the appearance of the fort. Using a crew of local young men of the Civil Military Training Corps along with new lieutenants, fresh from West Point, the colonel also directed that field stones be dug from the unused areas of the grounds and made into the four-foot high walls which outline one-third of the fort's boundary (south and west sides.) Various stone benches, decorative walls, planters and three substantial guard posts were also built. His order that no soldier was to be off base in less than full dress uniform caused the civilians in nearby communities to recognize and respect both the soldiers and the colonel. Well liked and appreciated by officials in Frankfort, Kentucky's state capital, and in Ohio, as well as by many local citizens, Col. Croft received much favorable attention. He left Fort Thomas to become a Major General and Chief of the Infantry.

Frequent flooding of the lowlands along the Ohio and Licking Rivers in the spring and fall presented opportunities for the military to be called upon for help. The provision of emergency shelter, cots, blankets and kitchens was always welcomed. No greater service was rendered than that during the disastrous 80 foot flood of January, 1937, when all personnel was activated by the Commanding Officer, Colonel Roland Lemley. A separate duty was issued to guard inmates of the flooded Reformatory in Frankfort and to move them to the LaGrange Reformatory. From there, soldiers were sent to Louisville to prevent looting and to stay until businesses could resume operation. Many small towns along the Ohio River were aided by the soldiers working double shifts.

Kentucky Governor Simon Bolivar Buckner signed the document granting the land for Fort Thomas in 1888. His son and name-sake served here during WW II and lost his life in service in the Pacific Theater in 1944.

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Colonel Ben Lear became commandant in 1940 and went with his troops to Iceland that year. General Dana T. Merrill preceded Colonel Arthur Underwood as one of the last commanding officers. As with their predecessors, these men took active parts in local civic improvement organizations. Throughout the periods of activity at the fort, there existed among the citizens of Cincinnati, Covington, Newport, and the vicinity of Fort Thomas Military Reservation, a cordial feeling toward and a great pride in, the personnel of the fort. Social contacts among the individuals lasted long after military tours of duty took officers and soldiers from the area. Upon retirement, a number of Army officers and families returned to the City of Fort Thomas to enjoy friendships and the small town life within a short distance of the urban area of Cincinnati. In addition to Major Woodfill, General Dana T. Merrill, Colonel Arthur Underwood, and Colonel Leighton Smith made permanent homes near their old post.

The architectural style of the dwellings within the district reflect the Queen Anne style with cylindrical and polygonal bays and towers. All are constructed of red brick made in the area and display many chimneys that serve the fireplaces in each of the main rooms. Window sizes vary in shape and some are made of art-glass. All buildings were furnished with porches in order to enjoy the outside air. Many porches were embellished with a spinkled frieze. On two of the double houses are jerkinheaded or clipped gables. Interior features of the late 19th century style exhibit staircases with landings, woodwork with concentric corner blocks, turned spindles, solid stringers, and panelled newel posts. Mantels made of a variety of woods are incised grooved. A few houses in the surrounding residential community and many houses in the Mansion Hill and Gateway National Register districts in Newport, and in Covington, Kentucky and Cincinnati, Ohio, show a similar style. A house built by Henry Schriver, recognized as the builder of Fort Thomas military structures, stands at the corner of South Fort Thomas Avenue and West Villa Place, City of Fort Thomas, made of similar red brick and displaying the cylindrical tower.

The Mess Hall, building 26, is apparently a standard plan for an Army mess hall, as a similar design, but constructed of stone rather than the red brick of Fort Thomas, stands in Fort Reiley, Kansas. This style is Roman or Renaissance in character. The main dining room is 150 X 50' with regularly spaced round-arched large windows, a slate roof, and a pressed tin-ceiling.

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The Drill Hall stands apart from the other buildings in its architectural style. The exterior of the same red brick used elsewhere has a broad gable end at each entrance, one facing South Fort Thomas Avenue and one facing Cochran Street. The other two sides are reinforced with square brick buttresses separating the eight bays per side and large blocks of windows on the second floor level. Lunettes above both entrances extend to the second floor level. The large hardwood floor covering the entire second floor replaces the original floor that served for indoor drill activities, athletic events, and social affairs. The size of the building is somewhat obscured by the large trees surrounding it. No other building of this size was built in the surrounding area until the three public schools were built in the City of Fort Thomas after World War I.

The most recently built structure in this district is the V. A. Nursing Home (1935). Of red brick, the building is shaped like an elongated letter "E". Doric columns flank the three entrances on Cochran Street. The main floor is a half-flight of steps above ground level and its horizontal lines are defined by stone courses above and below. Base-ment treatment is akin to that of the palladian style. The entire appearance is a bit more detailed than that of other 1930's public buildings in the surrounding area.

The long and narrow brick stable building is of like construction to other Army stables of the same period. It has a clerestory along the roof ridge and fairly steep sloping roof above the low ground level. The openings of the main level are segmental-arched, with wider doors in the center of the sides.

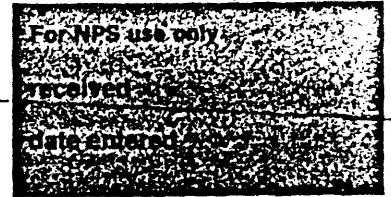
The dwellings, the Mess Hall, Drill Hall, Stable, and the later Barracks (V. A. Nursing Home) retain the appearances of their original use. Open spaces created as the unused service buildings were removed, lend the opportunity to better appreciate the construction and style of the remaining structures. The retention of the many landscaping features and the blending of new plantings only enhance the original land use plan. The widening of the new main entrance near the Water Tower, the addition of parking spaces, a children's playground, and the picnic shelter and comfort stations have made little change in the district.

The first military establishment in the central Ohio River valley occurred in the Northwest Territory opposite the mouth of the Licking River. In 1787, John Cleves Symmes owned the land and as a settlement grew there, it was named Losantiville by

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pioneer John Filson. To provide protection from Indian attacks, General Arthur St. Clair sent soldiers into the area in 1789 and declared the post, Fort Washington, to honor the President and then changed Losantiville's name to Cincinnati to honor the Society of Cincinnatus. By 1803, the military post had fallen into disrepair and the space was desired for the growth of the village, no longer needing protection from the Indians. The military post was moved to the eastern bank of the Licking River in Campbell County, Kentucky. The site of five acres and six square poles was purchased from the large land holder, Colonel James Taylor for one dollar. Newport Barracks was the second most important recruiting barracks in the country, sending troops northward during the War of 1812 and later to the Union forces in the Civil War. Plagued by frequent floods as the Ohio and Licking Rivers rose seasonally, by 1884, a new location was mandatory.

Samuel Bigstaff, a Newport and Cincinnati businessman, promoter, lawyer, and agent for the vast holdings of the James Taylor estate, visited General Scholfield in Washington D. C. in 1887 to discuss a parcel of available land for a new post in the area of the District of the Highlands, south of the city of Newport. He explained the advantages of the site: high above the flood plain, soon to be supplied with water by the new Covington Waterworks just across the Jamestown Pike, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad at the base of the hillside near the river, and the development of an electric car line to provide transportation to Cincinnati, Covington, and Newport for only 5¢ a ride. Congress appropriated the total sum of \$160,000 in 1887. One hundred-eleven acres were purchased for \$43,100; the rest being used for construction with later additional appropriations. Another small amount of land was later purchased to bring the total to 116.63 acres, the amount transferred to the V. A. in 1946. On December 20, 1972, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation granted to the City of Fort Thomas for a park, 86 acres of the former reservation and sold the houses on that property for \$160,000 to the city.

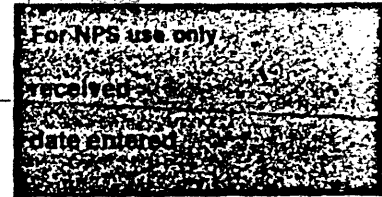
The District of the Highlands which stretched along the ridges above and parallel to the Ohio River was seven miles long and less than a half mile wide in most areas. Incorporated in 1867, it had fewer than 100 homes as shown on the 1883 map. There were no shops or businesses and only a few small schools and churches. The coming of the

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military changed only the southern section of the town where small shops and taverns clustered at the intersection of River, or Twelve Mile, Road and Jamestown Pike (later Highland and then South Fort Thomas Avenue). After the growth of the fort had begun, various land companies were successful in developing parcels all along the street car line (Green Line) which passed the post and made a turn around just a short distance beyond. The trolleys proved useful in transporting invalid soldiers to the door of the Drill Hall when they returned to Newport via train after the Spanish American War. This mode of transportation was vital to all of the later recruiting and induction activities. Having reached the size of sixth class city and seeking its own post office substation, the District of Highlands, by popular vote in 1914, chose the name Fort Thomas. For outsiders, particularly when the military post was active, it was often difficult to understand the ambiguity in that name Fort Thomas: City or Military.

Even with the addition of a Rifle Range on the Licking River not too far away from the fort, after World War I, it was obvious that the area was too small for the training of divisions such as could be done at Fort Knox in Kentucky, Fort Benning in Georgia, or Fort Bragg in North Carolina. For a number of summers, the entire operation was moved to Camp Knox to train with the Cavalry. As the local residents had done in the past when any threat of removal of the post loomed, contacts were made in Washington and the fort held. It proved its value in its location for the induction and recruiting for World War II but the end of the military presence in the greater Cincinnati area came at the end of World War II.

Companies of the Second, Third, Fourth, Sixth, Ninth, and Tenth Infantry Divisions were stationed from 1888 until 1940 at Fort Thomas. The Army Air Force used the fort for rehabilitation in 1944 and 1945, but as there was no other Army Air Force installation nearby, this was abandoned. A small induction force continued on in two buildings until 1964. On July 10, 1946 the Federal Board of Hospitalization approved a resolution that since the post "has been declared surplus for Army use" that Fort Thomas be transferred to the V. A. and 750 beds be authorized for those with incurable or chronic diseases. President Truman approved the resolution in July, 1946, and transfer by the Administrator of the War Assets Board was made on April 2, 1947. The V. A. presently

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controls 17 acres and maintains 120 beds in the Nursing Home.

Conservation of the natural features of the site is evident. Most of the buildings were situated on the ridges and the deep valleys were undisturbed except for the roadway to the C. & O. R. R. line on the eastern side. It has been overgrown by vegetation so poses no threat to the houses on the Loop. As this south bank of the Ohio River has been prone to slide because of hillside construction and the removal of trees in nearby areas, it is important to the district that these parts of Fort Thomas are relatively undisturbed.

Unique engineering skills for the roof structure of the Drill Hall are described David R. Whitacre, asistant zoning administrator and director of building services of the City of Fort Thomas as follows:

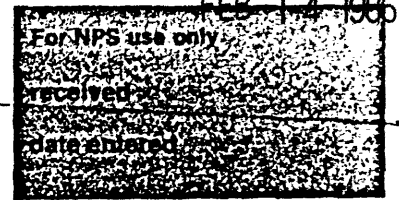
The Drill Hall roof structure was constructed by bolting or riveting together a variety of individually constructed and unique sections into a cambered fink truss roof structure. The truss compression members were constructed from Z sections that were bolted together in opposing pairs for lateral rigidity. Tension members were constructed from 3/4" to 1" plate with a large section modulus about the horizontal axis in order to prevent sag. Internal connections between the compression and tension members of the truss are made with a single three (3) inch diameter bolt. Cross bracing of the trusses was fabricated from steel sections ranging from 1/2" diameter rods with threaded ends to 2" square bars with forged eyes and turnbuckles.

With today's structures being fabricated from light-weight, mass-produced, welded structures, it becomes evident that the Drill Hall was constructed in a time (1896) when man hours and creativity were used where a lack of technology existed.

Two pieces of sculpture grace the Water Tower and recall persons and events of the early years of the fort. The larger bronze plaque on the west side facing South Fort Thomas Avenue was designed and sculpted by C. J. Barnhorn (1857-1935).

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A native of nearby Covington, the artist completed training at the Cincinnati Art Academy before studying for a year in Europe. Upon his return, he was commissioned to undertake this artistic monument to the memory of those Infantrymen and Officers from Fort Thomas who lost their lives in the Spanish American War. Local newspapers stimulated a drive for funding the project. As Barnhorn had studied under Frank Duveneck, a well recognized Cincinnati painter, the choice of Barnhorn for this work was praised. The artist later designed and sculpted the bronze doors of the Cathedral Basilica in Covington. The furled flags on the plaque are perhaps most eye catching. They depict the national and the regimental flags with fringes and tassels. Between the two flags is an eagle in deeper relief, placed above a shield of stars and stripes. (see photo 43). On the south side of the Water Tower is a smaller bronze work by local artist, John Carlisle Meyenberg, to honor Col. Harry Clay Egbert. (see photo 44). Smaller in size, this plaque features a 3/4 view of the Colonel's head. Two low relief eagles are shown with widespread wings. The heavy border is of oak leaves.

Landscaping is an important and valuable asset to the district. Col. Melville Cochran began ordering the planting of trees and shrubs along with the construction of buildings in 1888. Greenery native to the area included ash, elm, maple, catalpa, linden, birch, sweet gum, red bud, and pine trees. Garden plots were developed in the residential areas to include peonies, annuals, and a large rose garden in front of the Commandant's home. The heavily wooded, steep hillsides were undisturbed except for the early roadway on the northside which lead to an unloading station on the C. & O. Railroad, running close to the bank of the Ohio River. This was necessary for the transportation of building materials. While few of the trees were bothered by neglect, when there was a shortage of manpower, a number of the flower beds disappeared, but each spring a row of peonies blooms at the intersection of Cochran and Greene Streets as a testimony to the past.

Today the beauty and shade provided by the old trees is enjoyed by visitors to Tower Park, the patients in the V. A. Nursing Home, and the residents of the three areas of dwellings. Since the V. A. Hospital has taken over the grounds around the

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Hospital, Alexander Circle, and a portion of Cochran Street, there are new plantings of trees and flower beds with continuing maintenance. For the Tower Park area, owned by the city, many citizens have joined in a tree planting project to provide dogwood, magnolia, oak, maple, pine, hawthorne, crabapple, and thornless locust trees, as well as spring flowering bushes. A class of handicapped children plant and tend an annual flower garden each summer. Colonel Cochran's legacy lives on in fact and in imitation.

While the presence of the military is no longer visible in the metropolitan area of Cincinnati, the stately dwellings high above the Ohio River recall the days of parades, band concerts, mock battles, military receptions and "hops" to the older residents of the area. While boxing matches, polo matches, baseball games and other athletic events no longer include the soldiers of the fort, their former parade grounds and Drill Hall resound to the excitement of thousands of younger athletes, both men and women who regularly play baseball, football, soccer, basketball, and volley ball in the fort. The stately oaks planted by Col. Cochran and nurtured by Col. Croft shade the playground of the youngest generation of Campbell Countians. Each Fourth of July, a parade wends its way through the streets of the city, ending at Tower Park. After hours of games, picnics and visiting with friends, the crowd of approximately 10,000 persons awaits the darkness and the half-hour fireworks display, set off from the old parade ground of Fort Thomas. Ohioans from observation points across the river join in the blazing show. A local effort to recondition the Mess Hall to make it a community center is underway. Soon meals will again be served for private and public affairs.

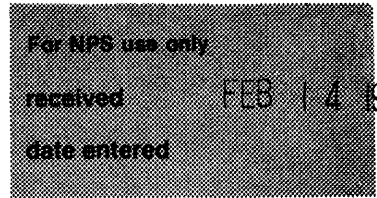
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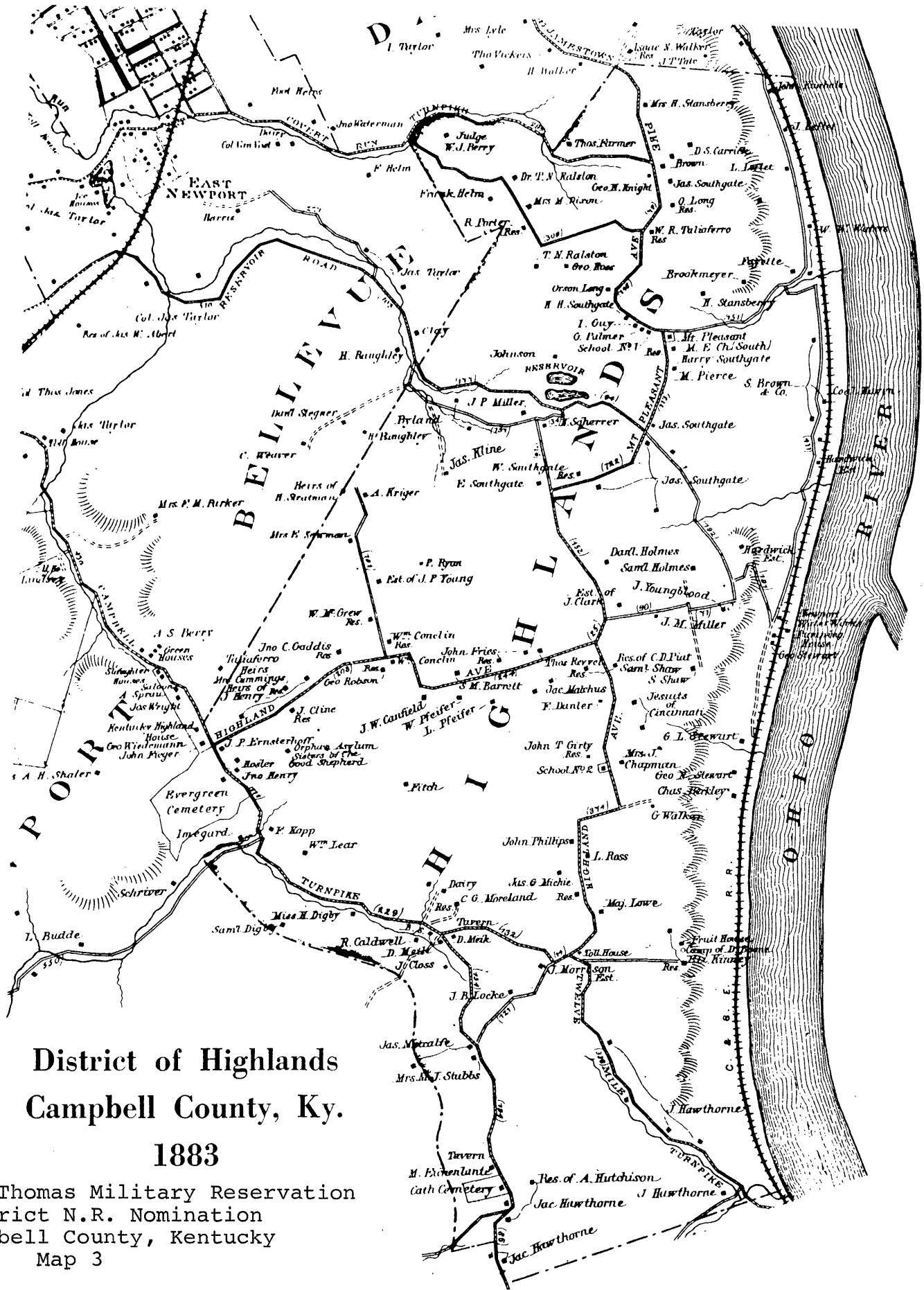
Starting at a point (H on the property boundary map) 50 M north of the intersection of Fort Thomas Avenue and Pearson Avenue; then east northeast 320 M along the Military Reservation boundary; then 10 M south; thence 170 M east northeast; thence 280 M northeast to point G; thence 140 M east to Point A; thence 360 M south to Point B; thence 200 M west southwest; thence 180 M west; thence 270 M west southwest to Point C; thence 240 M south; thence 50 M east to the intersection of Carmel Manor Drive and Army Reserve Road; thence following Army Reserve Road 880 M to its intersection with Fort Thomas Avenue (Point E); thence northward along Fort Thomas Avenue 200 M to a point (Point E); thence 220 M southwest along the rear of the Army Reserve Building to River Road (Point F); thence 280 M along the east side of River Road to the intersection of Fort Thomas Avenue (Point G); thence along the east side of Fort Thomas Avenue 500 M to the point of origin.

The boundaries follow the property line of the military reservation north of Pearson Avenue and on the east of Alexander Avenue and follow the ravine south of Cochran Avenue, and continue behind the V. A. Hospital and along Army Reserve Road and Fort Thomas Avenue in order to exclude the recent military reserve and hospital buildings which were not part of the Fort Thomas Military Reservation prior to 1934.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Page 2

Wadsworth, Randolph L., Bulletin of Cincinnati, Historical Society, Vol. 25, No. 3.



District of Highlands
Campbell County, Ky.

1883

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District N.R. Nomination
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Map 3