

Fort Leavenworth,  
Building #184  
629 & 631 Grant Avenue  
Leavenworth  
Leavenworth County  
Kansas

HABS No. KS-53-L

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FORT LEAVENWORTH, BUILDING # 184

HABS No. KS-53-L

Location: 629 & 631 Grant Avenue, Fort Leavenworth, Leavenworth County, Kansas  
  
USGS Leavenworth, Kansas-Missouri Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 15.334790, 4357710

Present Owner: U.S. Department of the Army

Present Occupant: Col. R. W. Garrott and family  
Col. F. J. Robitaille

Present Use: Double Officers Quarters

Significance: The importance of the Grant Avenue quarters derives from the original architectural design and from the association with the Command School at the turn of the twentieth century. The individual architectural details of the Grant Avenue quarters can be attributed to styles of American residential design. But the comprehensive design does not represent any single style. Rather, it is a synthesis of many elements. The most apparent influences are American Georgian and Romanesque as seen in such details as the front two and a half story gable projection, gable dormers, and paired arch windows. These are familiar architectural elements that would produce ordinary houses but for the original association of these diverse stylistic features within the context of a formal design on a massive scale. The result is the simultaneous fusion of familiar and traditional elements and original architectural design. The quarters were built shortly after the reorganization and expansion of the Command School at Fort Leavenworth. The changes that occurred at the School were in response to weaknesses in military instruction brought to light in the Spanish-American War in 1898. The revitalization of the School necessitated additional housing for officers attending the school and money was allocated for the erection of the Grant Avenue quarters.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: 1901 is the erection date according to the Real Property Records, 1905, Department of Engineering and Housing. Also, the date of erections is recorded as 1901 in the 1905 "Designation, Cost, Material of Buildings, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas", Records of the War Department, on microfilm at the Fort Leavenworth Museum.

2. Architect: During this period, plans were sent to the Assistant Quartermaster from the Quartermaster General's Office in Washington, D.C. In addition to this, microfilm of "Designation, Cost, Material of Buildings, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas" lists Q.M.G.O. Plan 90, the cost of construction is recorded as \$15,937.25.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Department of War, since 1947 known as the Department of the Army.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown
5. Original plans and construction: No original plans have been found. However, located at the Directorate of Engineering and Housing (DEH) are later undated plans of the first and second floors (see Supplemental Materials # 1 & 2).
6. Alterations and additions: There have been no alterations to the exterior of Building # 184. Alterations of the interior include the addition of powder rooms on the first floor of 629, where part of the butler's pantry was altered in order to install the powder room. In 631, the powder room was added underneath the main stairway.

B. Historical Context:

In 1898 the Spanish-American War necessitated the closing of the school at Fort Leavenworth for the duration of the War. Although it closed the school temporarily, the Spanish American War effected a revitalization of the school. For, despite the shortness of the war, it brought to light the inadequate training of many officers in the U.S. Army. It was clear that improvements in military instruction were needed. As soon as the war was over, the school was reopened, reorganized and expanded under a new name, the General Service and Staff School (Langelier, p. 65). As a result of the school's expansion, additional quarters for student officers were erected at Fort Leavenworth beginning about 1900. Building # 184 is representative of the quarters built directly after the Spanish-American War, at which time the School became the central focus of Fort Leavenworth and henceforth increased the importance in prestige of the post.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: One of the most significant features of the Grant Avenue duplexes is their massive size. Although doubles, the houses consist of three full floors of living space. There are seven bedrooms, including two servant's rooms and a large living room on the third floor, in addition to the bedrooms. It is interesting to note that at a time when smaller, servantless houses were coming into vogue in civilian suburbs, the military was continuing to build and even to enlarge the amount of floor space within their quarters. The imposing scale of the Grant Avenue quarters expresses permanence and prestige. Individual architectural details also contribute to the character of the Grant Avenue quarters. The details derive from American residential design, though the quarters do not represent any single style. Rather, the houses are a synthesis of various elements. The most apparent influences are American Georgian and Romanesque as seen in the architectural details such as the front two and a half story gable projection, gable dormers, wrap-around verandas and paired arch windows. These are familiar architectural elements that under normal circumstances would produce ordinary houses. Instead, the massiveness and formality of the design alters these familiar elements into a new context. The result is the creation of a design that is at the same time familiar and traditional but also original.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Building # 184 is a two and a half story, six bay brick duplex with a cross gable roof. The dimensions are 61'6" x 45'.
2. Foundations: The foundation is rock-faced, rusticated limestone, that is four feet high on the east (main) facade and a full story high on the west elevation. The top row of the ashlar foundation, functioning as a watertable, projects out over the lower portion. (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-3)
3. Walls: The brick walls are running bond with header segmental arches over the first and second story.

4. Structural system, framing: Building # 184 has masonry load bearing exterior walls, surmounted by a wood roof structure. Inspection of the attic reveals that the brick partition wall between the two duplex sections extends to the ridge board of the north-south gable roof. The configuration of the roof structure consists of common rafters of the north and south gable that are tied into the ridge board. Across the top of the rafters are approximately ten inch roof boards. The attic floor joists are not covered and are approximately twelve to fourteen inches wide. The attic is approached through a hole in the ceiling of a third story room.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Porches are identical on both sides of Building # 184. At the east (main) elevations there are wood verandas that wrap around the outside corners of the house. The porch consist of round Tuscan columns, that are placed in single fashion at the sides of the porch but are grouped in threes at the corners of the porch. Columns rest on three foot high pedestals, the same height as the balustrade. The pedestals at the corners are larger rectangular ones to accomodate the grouped columns above. The pedestals have a cornice top followed by a dado with recessed center panel and chamfered corners resting on a rectangular plinth. The balustrade consists of upper and lower rails with square balusters. The tongue and groove floor has wood steps that descend to a concrete step and walkway. The handrail consists of two posts with two horizontal rails. The porch rests on brick piers with a lattice screen in between the piers (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-2). The back porches on the west elevation are wood entry porches, but are a story high as the land slopes to form a full basement above grade. The porches have square posts with chamfered corners, which support a plain frieze with dentils and a metal standing seam hipped roof. The balustrade contains simple square balusters between upper and lower rails; the square newel posts have tapered tops. Wood steps descend a full story to a concrete walk. The porches rest on two, one-story tall wood square supports submerged in concrete on the west side. On the east the porches are tied into the structure of the house (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-3).

6. Chimneys: There are two brick chimneys with running bond located just to the side of the east/west ridge. The chimneys vary slightly; the front chimney is square and the chimney to the rear of the house is slightly taller and rectangular.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways & doors: Each house has three doors. A door on the front elevation and two doors at the rear west elevation, a kitchen door and a basement door located underneath the kitchen porch. Both back doors consist of two vertical lights over two horizontal panels. The basement door has a wood screen. The front door that leads into the vestibule consists of one large glass two foot, seven and a quarter inch square over a horizontal rectangular panel and then two smaller rectangular panels; the panels have raised interior panels.
  - b. Windows: There are varying sizes of double hung sash windows on the first and second floors, although all are of the same design consisting of segmental arches and projecting limestone sills. At the attic story there are small paired arched windows. The arches are formed by three rows of headers, whose projection decreases from the top to the window head where the segmental headers are flush to the wall. These windows have a continuous limestone sill. Windows are six over two sash, the top six pane section is arched; on the front facade the glass arch as been partially covered (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-2). The side elevations have large windows, which light the main interior stairway. These eight foot tall windows are two over two sash with a horizontal transom (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-5). At the rear elevation of the 'U' shaped lightwell, there are four windows on the west facade. They are four large rectangular double hung sash windows, three over two, approximately 5' x 4'2" (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-3).
8. Roof: Building # 184 has an asphalt shingle cross gable roof. The gables are brick with paired arch windows on the east elevation and single arch windows on the other elevations. Each gable also contains a single louvered, arched attic window near its apex. Gables have wood raking

cornices with returns. There is also a horizontal cornice at the same level of the gable returns. The returns project, however, making them distinct from the horizontal cornice, which extends the length of the facade (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-2). The horizontal cornice has dentils. There are paired brackets underneath the gable returns. Below the horizontal cornice there is a brick corbeled table (KS-53-L-5). The east elevation follows the same gable design as the north and south elevations with the exception of the gable returns. Instead of these, the two and a half story gable extends forward two feet, to produce a central gable pavillion. To either side of the east gable projection, there are gable dormers that have paired six over two double hung sash windows (KS-53-L-2).

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Building # 184 is a duplex consisting of a central 'four-square' block of four parlors back-to-back and side-to-side with a rectangular circulation and service area on each side. Each duplex is formed by the insertion of a vertical partition wall that divides the central block in two, resulting in a front living room and then dining room behind it flanked by a vestibule, stairhall, butler's pantry and finally the kitchen, which projects to the west. The second floor follows the same configuration as the first floor, with two large bedrooms that are back to back with smaller bedrooms over the first floor vesibile and kitchen; these rooms are connected by a long hallway. At the rear of the second floor is the back stairway which leads to the attic level. The latter is large open room with two small bedrooms on the west side. The basement is one large room flanked by three rooms. The center room is an old bathroom with the original fixtures still in place.
2. Stairways: The stairways in both duplexes are approximately the same. From the first floor in # 631 heading north there are three steps before the first landing and the starting newel post. Turning west at the landing there are seven steps until the second landing and second newel post; turning south at the second landing there are nine steps to the second floor and third newel post. The newels are similar; the second and third ones are slender versions of the starting newel post, which consists of a decorative cap, square hand rest, series of rectangular bands, square section with consecutive

recessing squares and finally a square shaft and a square base with a beveled top edge. The treads of both main stairways are single pine board. The balustrades of # 629 and # 631 are different. In # 629 the balustrade consists of spindle balusters with square ends. In # 631 the balusters are plain square ones. The sides of the risers are bracketed and there is a ramp railing before the second and third newel posts (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-6). In there is a powder room located underneath the stairway. The stairway in 629 shows the original design of rectangular panels in the stairway soffit. In both duplexes, there is a rear service stairwell that extends from the attic to the basement and connects with the kitchen on the first floor and the second floor. Treads are three inch pine boards, which in #629 are painted. The newels of both stairways match the starting newel post of the main stairway, but are slender versions of it. The balustrades consists of an upper railing with square baluster.

3. Flooring: The floors of Building # 184 on the first and second levels consist of narrow oak boards. The kitchen and butler's pantry on the first floor have vinyl sheeting in 631 and linoleum tile in 629. Both attic floors have three inch wide older pine board; the floor is painted in 629. The basement has a poured concrete floor in one section and in the three rooms that flank this area there is a raised wood floor of four and a half inch boards.
4. Walls & ceiling finish: The majority of the walls in Building # 184 appear to be wall board. 629 has picture railing throughout the first floor. Baseboards in both duplexes are seven and a half inches high and consist of a flat projecting narrow strip whose, lower edge splays towards the wall; this is followed by a flat section which has a cyma recta bottom edge (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-7).
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways & doors: The door and doorway moldings are the same in both duplexes of Building # 184. The front door leading into the vestibule and the door from the vestibule into the stairhall are the same and consist of one large light over one horizontal rectangular panel and two smaller rectangular panels. The panels have raised



interior panels. The rectangular doorways that connect the living room with the stairhall and the living room with the dining room are eight and a half feet wide. A drawing of the floor plans from 1968 indicate sliding doors for these rectangular doorways. The molding of these doorways, similar to molding throughout the house, consists of (from the outside) a one and a quarter inch raised flat section with a beveled edge, then a wider rectangular flat section then a recessed but flat strip, followed by a rounded edge, then cyma recta to finally a sharp edge that angles back ninety degrees to the door reveal. The center of the door reveal has a raised flat six inch strip, which apparently covers the opening where the sliding door slid into the wall (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-7). Most of the rest of the doors are five panel including two top vertical rectangular panels, a middle horizontal rectangular panel, and two smaller bottom panels similar to the top panels. On the second floor, the doors follow the same design as the doors on the first floor but with a single light transom. There is a five panel swinging door with large brass hinges that connects the dining room and the butler's pantry. The molding of the architrave of the first floor doorways is uniform throughout the house but with varying widths and sizes of cornice moldings, which is surmounted on the lintel of the architrave. The second floor doorways do not have an architrave cornice.

b. Windows: Most windows are two over two double hung sash, each pane dimension is approximately 2'6" x 2'1". The window molding matches that of the doorways. One of the most unusual windows, previously described from the exterior, is the large window that lights the main stairway. Including architrave, it is approximately eight feet tall. The other unusual window lights the dining room and is a large rectangular one, approximately 5' x 4'2". The arched windows in the rooms on the attic floor as well as the doorways have simpler molding than the first and second floors. The architraves consist of two consecutive sections of flat rectangular molding, the outside section is more narrow and is raised. The corner of the door jamb is round; at the center of the door reveal is a raised flat rectangular strip.

6. Decorative features & trim: There are three built-in cabinets in each duplex that appear original. In the dining room there is a sideboard that has shelves with glass doors above, a counter, work space, and a window at

the back that connects to the butler's pantry on the other side. Mirrors flank the window. Below the counter there are drawers. In the butler's pantry there are two built-in wood cupboards; shelves with glass doors above and drawers with metal pulls below.

Each duplex has four fireplaces; two on the first floor in the living and dining room and two on the second floor one in each of the large bedrooms. In 629, each of the four wood fireplaces is different. In 631 there are only two different styles. The fireplaces in the two front parlors of both 631 and 629 are the same; and consist of a rectangular cornice mantel shelf, which is supported by two full, free-standing Doric columns. The fluted columns rest on square bases which, like the mantel shelf, extend from the rectangular mantel. The firebox and the hearth are both faced with small multi-color tile, 1" x 5". The tile area around the firebox has convex molding around its perimeters. The firebox is lined with smooth faced stone ashlar and has a cast-iron cover of raised floral design (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-7). The fireplace in the dining room of 629 has the most elaborate wood mantelpiece. The fireplace has two tall free standing Doric columns, each supporting individual small display shelves. Approximately ten inches below these two shelves is the bowed mantel shelf supported by a single, central solid bracket. Above the mantle shelf there is a mirror which is framed by the display shelves to either side that rest on the Doric columns and above the mirror a bowed shelf supported by brackets. The very top of the chimney piece imitates the scroll design characteristic of Chippendale furniture. The hearth and firebox are faced with small multi-color tile. The firebox has a cast-iron cover (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-7). On the second floor, of 629, one of the fireplaces has fluted Doric columns that support a cornice. Below this a centrally placed mirror framed by rectangular panels that contain floral ornamentation. Below the mirror is the mantel shelf supported by two brackets and then the firebox. The firebox and hearth are both covered with green, blue and white glazed tile; the firebox is covered with a cast-iron hood. In the other bedroom the wood fireplace consists of double fluted columns to either side. A tall column supporting the mantel is surmounted by another shorter Doric column which supports a top shelf. The cast-iron hood and tile match that of the other bedroom. In 631, the fireplace in the

front parlor matches that of 629. In the dining room and in the bedrooms on the second floor the fireplaces have fluted Doric columns that support plain rectangular mantle shelves supported in turn by two solid brackets. The firebox and hearths are faced with blue and green glazed tile.

7. Hardware: The hardware throughout Building # 184 is uniform. The door plates are twelve inches long and is made of brass with a raised floral ornamentation. The brass handles have a raised swirling floral decoration. The hardware in the kitchen consists of plain brass knob and plate.
8. Mechanical equipment: Building # 184 has a steam heating system, with American Radiator Co. cast-iron radiators in every room. The furnace is manufactured by National. The house is air-conditioned with window units. Lighting fixtures are post-World War II.

C. Site:

Building # 184 is one of eight duplicate houses sited on the west side of Grant Avenue as the Avenue approaches the parade ground just to the north (see HABS photos # KS-53-7, 8 & 9). Across Grant Avenue is a triangular park, which adds to the formal residential setting. There are many shade trees along the west side of Grant Avenue and the houses are set back from the road to allow ample, informally landscaped lawns (see HABS photo # KS-53-L-1). The side yards are small and are shared; they are not conducive to outside activity, but allow additional privacy between houses. At the rear elevation, there is a concrete access alley, which is also used for parking. This elevation faces a recreational area, which includes tennis courts and a swimming pool (see HABS photo # KS-53-10).

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

"Building # 184, floor plans: basement, first, second and third floors, July 1946, Department of Engineering and Housing, Fort Leavenworth.

"Rehabilitation of 50 Officers Family Housing Units, electrical and mechanical systems," Nov. 1968, DEH, Fort Leavenworth.

"Rehabilitation of 50 Officers Family Housing Units", Door, Base and Wainscoat Details, Nov. 1968, DEH, Fort Leavenworth.

B. Early Views:

Photograph: "Fort Leavenworth, Kansas," Brooklyn, NY: Albertype Co., c. 1908. (Shows Grant Avenue looking south; located at the Fort Leavenworth Museum).

Photograph: Real Property Records, c. 1921, DEH, Fort Leavenworth (shows east elevation).

C. Bibliography:

a. Primary & unpublished sources:

Real Property Records, 1905, DEH.

"Designation, Cost, Material of Buildings, Fort Leavenworth, KS", Records of the War Department, Army Commands, Records of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1905, On microfilm under "Buildings Fort Leavenworth", at the Fort Leavenworth Museum.

b. Secondary & published sources:

Langellier, John P. "Fort Leavenworth Historic Preservation Overview", (unpublished manuscript), March, 1985, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

Hunt, Elvid. History of Fort Leavenworth, 1827-1927, Fort Leavenworth, KS: The General Service School Press, 1926.

Risch, Erna. Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps 1775-1939, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Quartermaster General, 1962.

Shindler, Henry. "History of Fort Leavenworth", (an unpublished manuscript), Command and General Staff College Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1913.

D. Likely Sources not yet investigated: There is additional material that could be investigated in the Consolidated Correspondence File of Record Group 77 at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

E. Supplemental Material: see attached.

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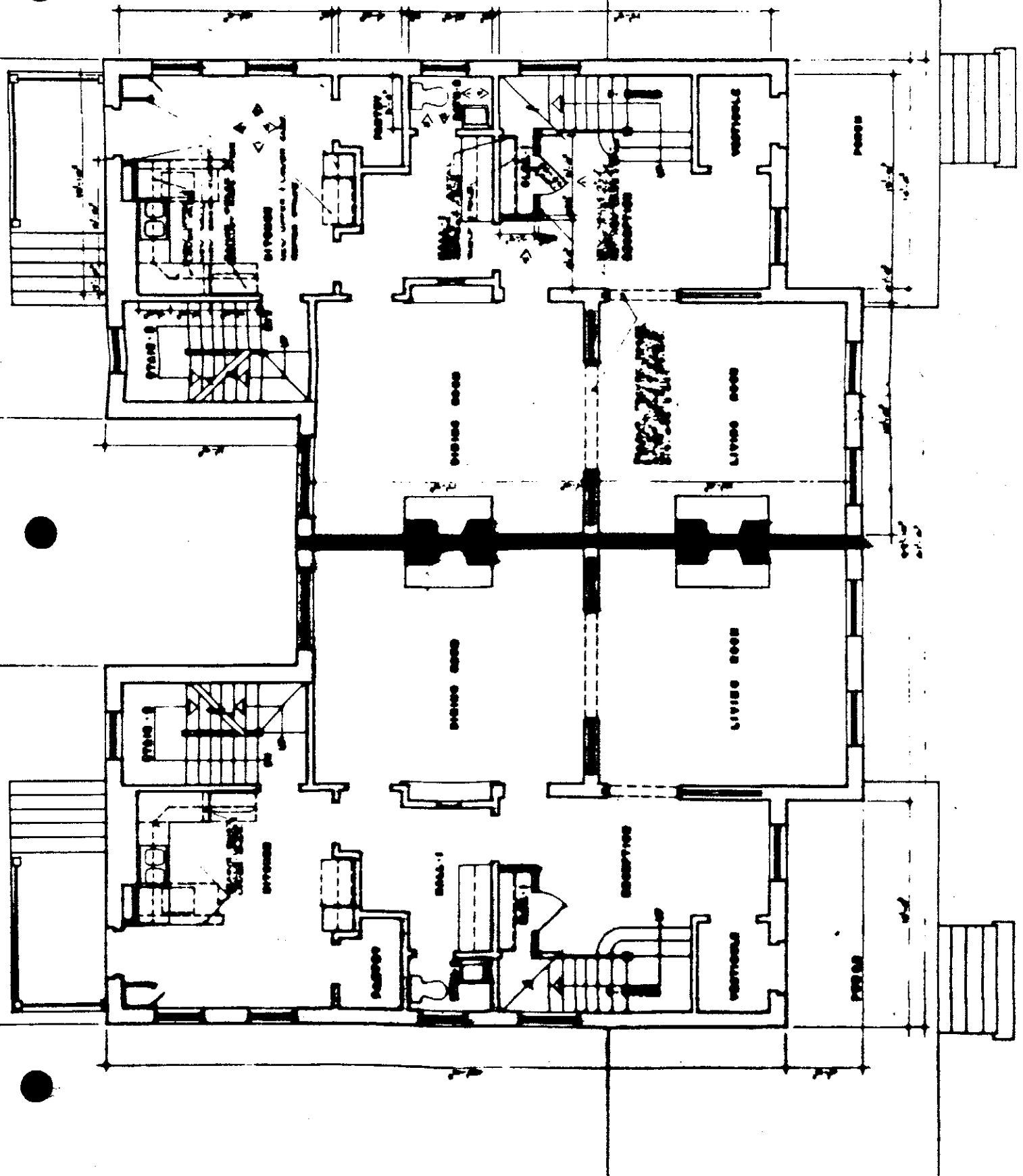
Prepared By: Kristie Struble  
Project Historian  
Historic American Buildings Survey  
Summer 1985

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Park Service in agreement with the post command at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and the headquarters of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, D.C. The project was completed under the general supervision of Robert J. Kapsch, Chief of the HABS/HAER Division. Sally Kress Tompkins, Deputy Chief of HABS/HAER, served as Program Coordinator and Robie S. Lange, HABS Historian, as Project Leader. The Field Supervisor was James A. Glass (historian, Cornell University); the project historians were Judith E. Hunt (University of Missouri, St. Louis) and Kristie D. Struble (University of Virginia).

E. Supplemental Material  
1. First floor plan, undated

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2. Second floor plan, undated

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