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World War II-Era Barracks at St. John's

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To follow up on last year's history lessons on WWI, WWII, and the Army Air Force Cadets on campus:

Army Barracks To Accommodate 80 Fall Students

...with a somewhat tenuous tie to the Lit Press

The Record June 1946 p.1

●The Federal Public Housing Association has allotted St. John's University 5 army-type barracks to alleviate the heavy influx of students. The barracks, which measure 100 by 20 feet, will provide housing for 80 students.

Situated near the prep baseball field north of the handball courts, the buildings will be partitioned to form individual rooms. Heat, light, shower and lavatory facilities will be installed.

Expected to arrive soon from Camp Grant, Illinois, the houses will be available for the fall term students.

The erection of the barracks will not relieve St. Benet Hall, however, as the high registration makes doubling up in all rooms a necessity.



<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/6309>

Aerial view ca1948 B&W looking NW

The new Power Plant has been constructed west of the original, the old Gym (Guild Hall) has been moved west, the dairy barn has been replaced, and several concrete outdoor handball courts can be seen directly north of the Auditorium, where Saint Mary Hall now stands.

According to a handwritten notation in the 1949 Sagatagan yearbook, this photo was taken in 1948 by M. Hall.



SJU Archives O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\Barracks 1947.pdf





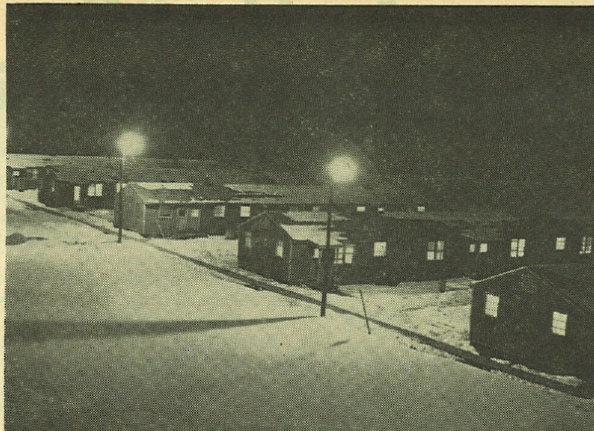
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SJU Archives O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\1949 Sag Calendar pic.pdf



SJU Archives O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\



THE FOUR-YEAR-OLD barracks which will be replaced by the new residence hall are shown in this night scene. The residence hall will occupy the area at the right of the picture.



CROWDED STUDYING and sleeping quarters are a disadvantage to barracks students. John Lange and Ray Charlton are typical of those who will appreciate the larger rooms of the new dormitory.

Condition Of Aging Barracks Shows Need For Residence Hall

By Tom McKeown

●The days of the freshman barracks are numbered.

Soon to be replaced by a modern four-story residence hall financed by the Alumni Building Fund Drive, the five temporary army

g Council ●

rouses the usually dormant in-council. Last year it was the is year it was the stir caused by ton. Although such an action is respect for council functions is

respected place among students, ee places. It could lie with the aculty, or with the members of

ulty? To some degree, yes, be d in not being allowed to deal to reduce the council to a per rd for disposing of routine mat- s views on disciplinary matters cies would increase the impor-

be expected to create as power- s is found in many universities. it is often more convenient for and deal directly with the ad- olic colleges, as well as most ore rigidly controlled than sec- cessary whenever a college aims ave been given a thorough re- dition to career training. mbers of the council? It would

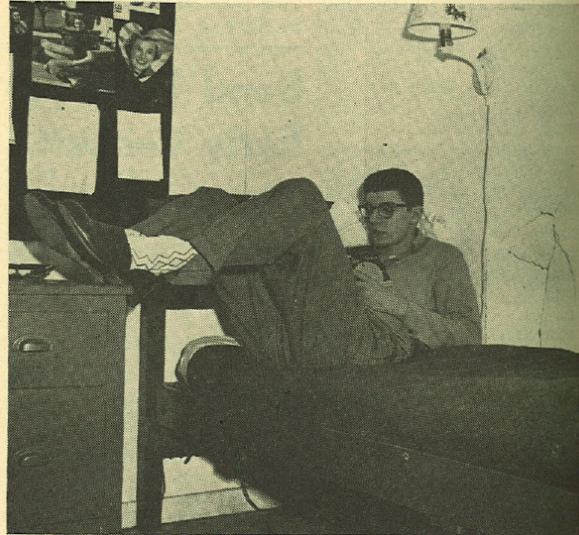
barracks, erected in 1946 to pro- vide desperately needed space for post-war GI's, are slowly but surely falling apart.

When the temporary buildings were set up after the war, they were expected to last for five years. Normal wear and tear have taken their toll, and the buildings are not expected to be serviceable for more than another year.

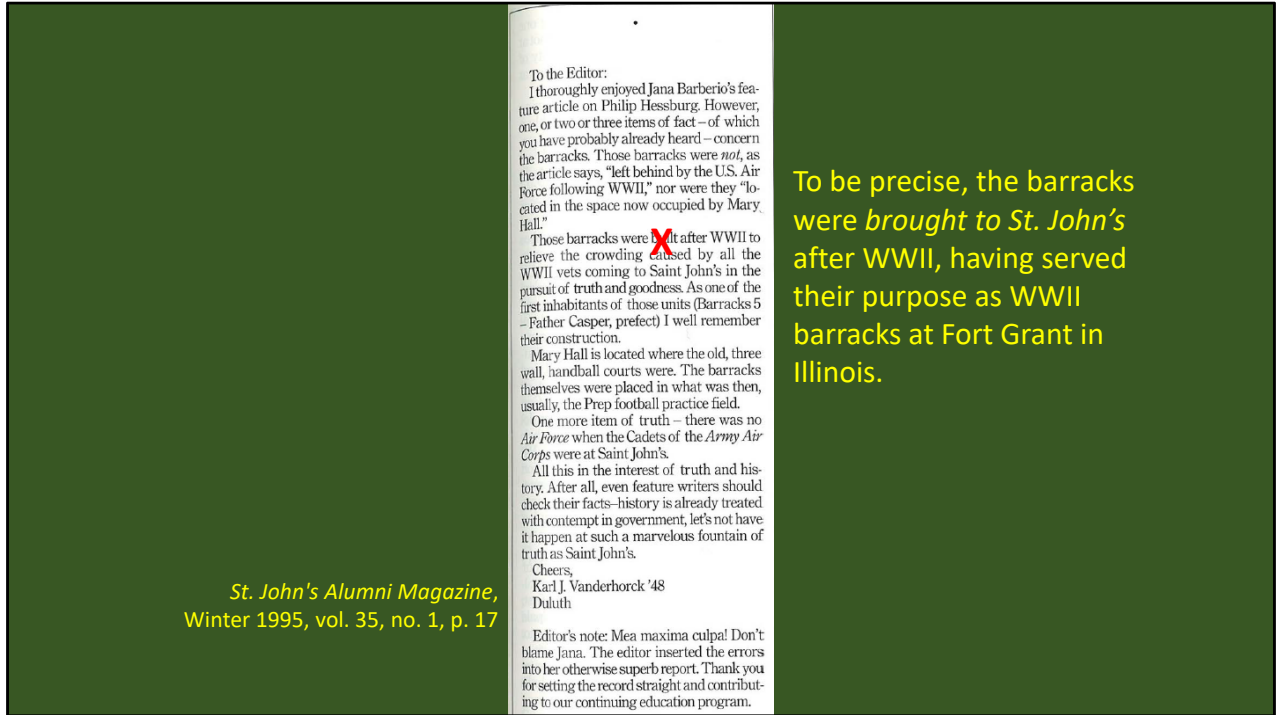
Although the barracks are comfortably warm, maintenance and repair costs in recent years have steadily mounted. Each year walls have to be patched and windows replaced. The board walks between buildings have required constant repair.

Most Johnnies now in school have spent at least a few months in the barracks and are familiar with their disadvantages—the porous walls, the undependable hot-water heaters, the ice-jammed doors, and the lack of privacy in the six-man apartments and twelve-man bathrooms.

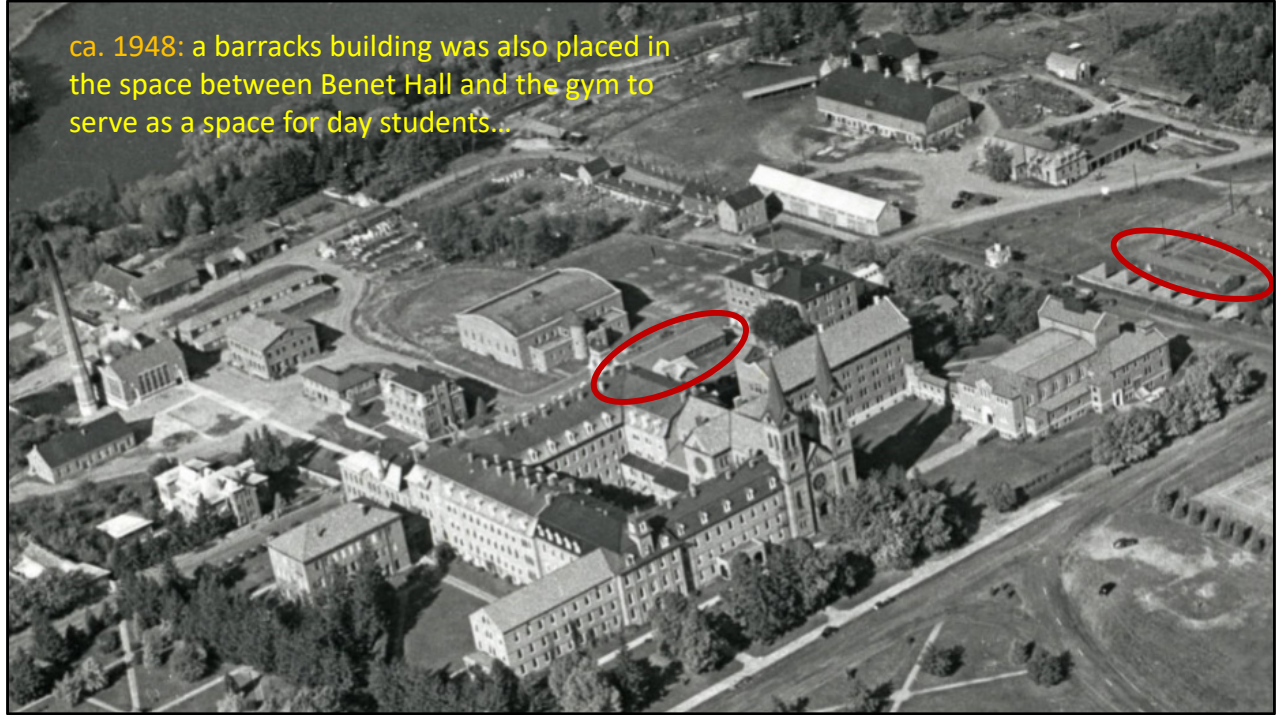
The inconveniences both to students and the administration have mounted with each succeeding class of freshmen. Alcuin Hall will be a welcome replacement, and when the new building is ready in 1951 there won't be any complaints from the students who now call the barracks home.



MAINTENANCE COSTS are high as the composition walls of the buildings must be frequently replaced. Although the barracks provide comfortable living quarters, it will not be practical to use them much longer.



Vanderhorck Letter, *St. John's Alumni Magazine*, Winter 1995, vol. 35, no. 1, p. 17



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...as seen
in these
still shots
from an
old video

SJU Archives: Still from ca1950 video - barracks in front of Engel-Simons Hall from SW 2



Still from ca1950 video - barracks in front of Engel-Simons Hall from SW



SJU Archives: Still from ca1950 video - barracks in front of Engel-Simons Hall from NW

This photo also shows the day students' barracks building, from a different angle – an angle from which this view is no longer visible today.

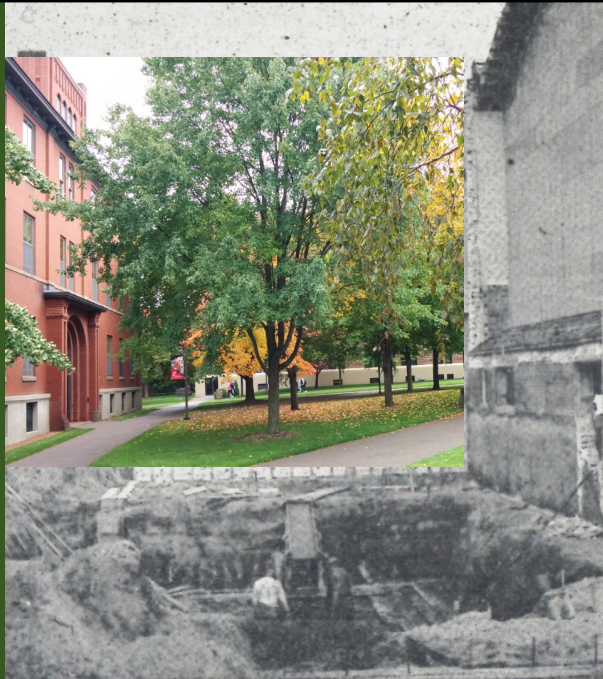


EXCAVATION for the new addition to the gymnasium.

1949

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/30295>
1949-08-25, The Record, p.3

This photo also shows the day students' barracks building, from a different angle – an angle from which this view is no longer visible today...thanks to the addition to the gym and the growth of trees.



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Inset photo by the archivist 2018 1003, SJU Archives

O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\Former barracks & sites PLR photos 20181003\Where barracks used to be

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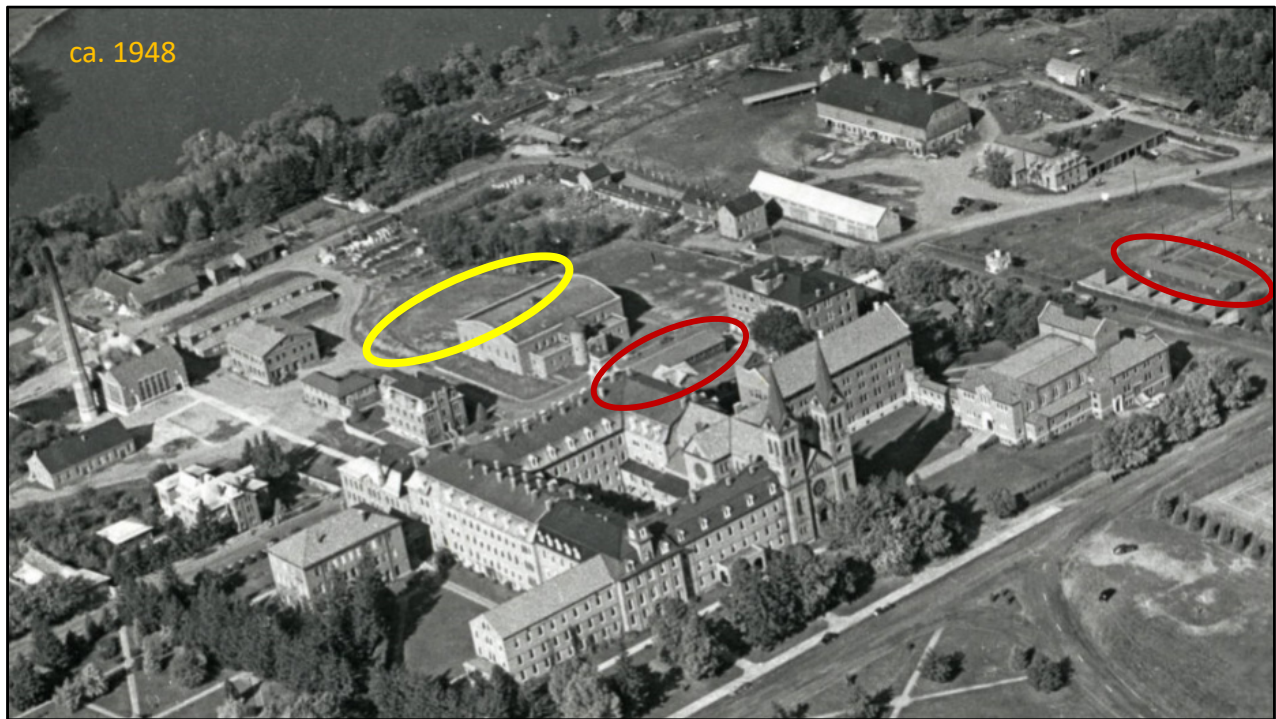
From a
different
angle today,
looking west
from Benet
Hall:



1949

Inset photo by the archivist 2018 1003, SJU Archives

O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\Former barracks & sites PLR photos
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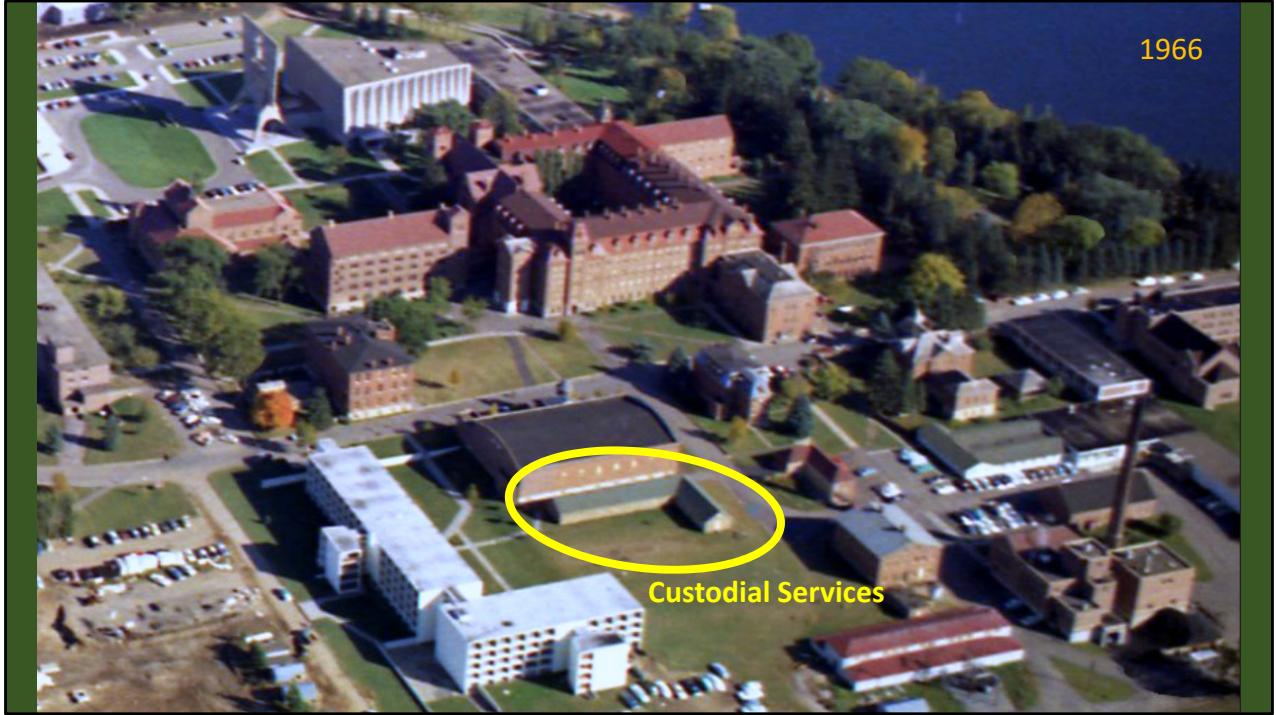


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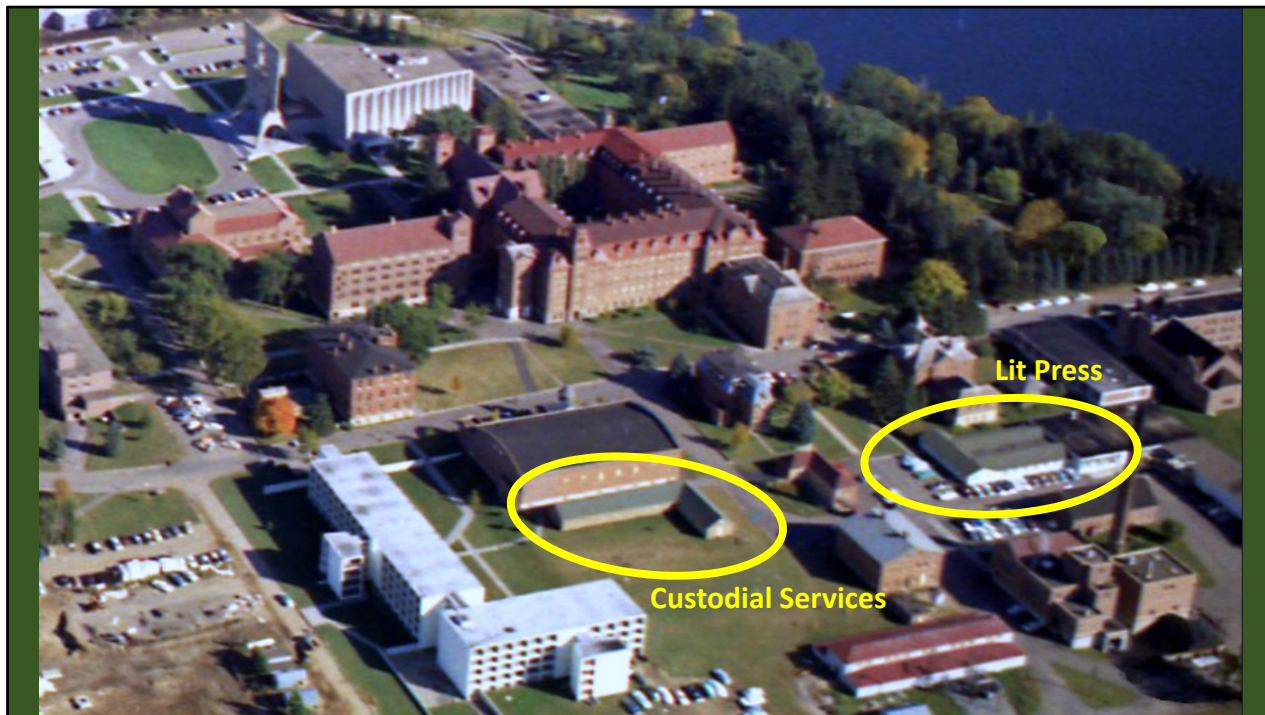


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Photos by the archivist 2018 1003, SJU Archives

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From <https://www.csbsju.edu/sju-archives/sjuhistory/sjubuildings/barracks>:

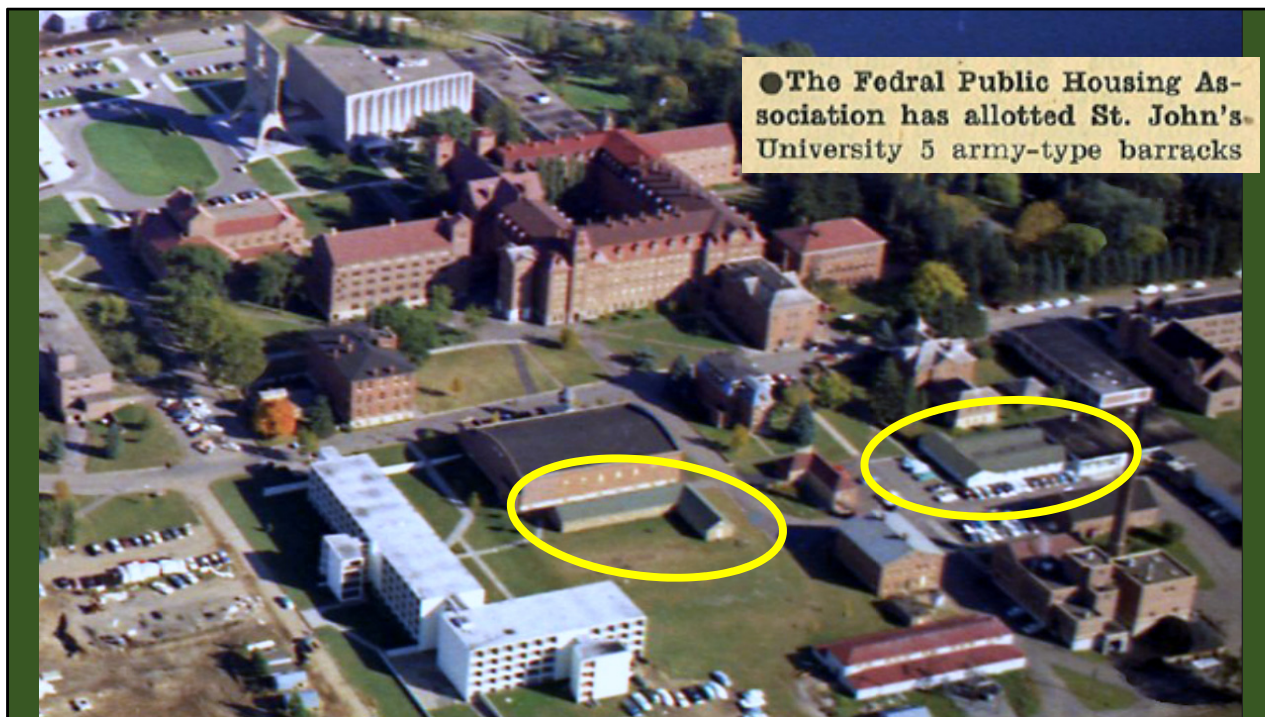
After World War II, when many returning veterans headed to college on the GI bill, St. John's didn't have enough dormitory space to accommodate them all. Up until that time, most students lived in Benet Hall.

According to *The Record*, the Federal Public Housing Association allotted five army barracks to SJU, which were sent to Collegetown from Camp Grant, Illinois in 1946. Each of the five 100x20 foot barracks housed 80 students. The barracks were placed in what was at the time a practice field for Prep athletics, north of the outdoor handball courts. Later the handball courts were demolished to make room for Mary Hall.

With Mary Hall under construction to house students by fall 1951, the barracks were moved and put to other uses. Some were sold (in sections) and removed from campus altogether, to places like Avon and Big Fish Lake. Others stayed on campus, and were used to form parts of buildings used by the Liturgical Press and Custodial Services, as shown below in this 1966 aerial photo.

Having undergone significant renovations over the years, their initial use as barracks was almost totally obscured over time.

The barracks next to the Liturgical Press were initially used by the Press, but were gradually put to other purposes. They were razed on June 18, 2018, after serving as space for the Abbey's artisans and Abbey Woodworking's laser studio and storage space.



O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Aerial views\1966 Sju Airview 1966018

Inset from https://www.csbsju.edu/Documents/SJU%20Archives/Record_1946-06-46_p1.pdf.

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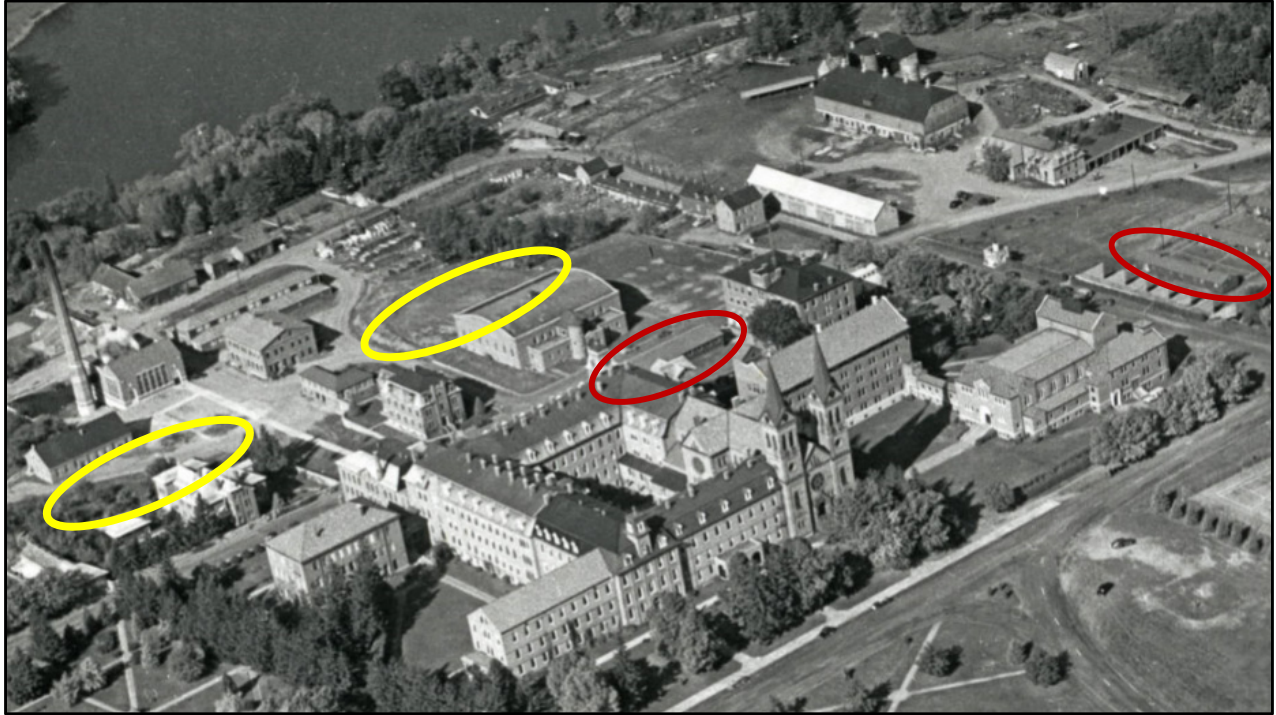
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October
2018: the
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O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\Former barracks & sites PLR photos
20181003\Where barracks used to be

October
2018: the
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the years
are razed...

...and
replaced with
a parking lot.



O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\Former barracks & sites PLR photos
20181003\Where barracks used to be

One still
exists in
Avon, MN



2006

SJU Archives O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\Avon house ren. front view full uncropped.jpg
2006 renovation photo of a house that was once one of the barracks

"I bought the house from my grandparents...back in 1999 on a Contract for Deed. In 2005 we bought the house outright. My Grandparents had bought the house in 1954 and lived in it until 1999...

Prior to 1954 the abstract lists a few other owners but no real history of where the house came from. The abstract dates back to 1938. This is where my elderly neighbors and relatives come in to play, because according to them, the house was not here in Avon at that time.

My grandparents had told me that the house was dragged down here to Avon, and their neighbors have told me that this was one of the old barracks from St. John's University."

--in an email to the Archivist in 2007 from an Avon homeowner asking about the history of the barracks

Avon, MN



SJU Archives O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\Avon house\Avon house ren. front view full uncropped.jpg (and IMG_20181019B by PLR.jpg)
2006 renovation photo of a house that was once one of the barracks and 2018 photo of it

Avon



SJU Archives O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\Avon house\Avon house ren. front view full uncropped.jpg (and IMG_20181019B by PLR.jpg)
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One section of one of the barracks was purchased and moved to the shore of Big Fish Lake



O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\Big Fish Lake



Four generations of Roske men in front of the Roske cabin on Big Fish Lake:
Joseph, Harold Joseph, Michael Joseph, and Joel Joseph,
all of whom worked or work at St. John's

O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\Big Fish Lake

O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Flynntown\Roske+Tholl homes 2012



Compiled in October 2018
from resources in the
St. John's Abbey, SJU and Roske Family Archives
by Peggy Landwehr Roske, CSB/SJU Archivist.
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O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Barracks\Big Fish Lake

O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Buildings\Flynntown\Roske+Tholl homes 2012

For fun: Exactly 120 years ago today:

1897, April 24. The station agent from St Joe "exhibited a phonograph and made it play for the boys. That was the first live phonograph that was ever on our premises. Slowly but surely we were learning of the march of improvement and of inventions for the delight and instruction of men."

1903, Sept 20. The first automobile is seen on the grounds. There is an accompanying sketch of it.

1898, Oct 10. The electric lights were turned on for the first time.

1910, Dec 11. All the fathers were assembled to take the anti-Modernist oath prescribed by Pius X. A very solemn affair. Alexis did the public reading and all swore the last lines, "Sic spondeo, sic juro, etc."

The electric lights were turned on!

Scriptorium Dec. 1986 p. 112 "Alfred's Alexis Hoffmann"

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/28051>

Scriptorium Dec. 1986 p. 112. Deutsch, Alfred, OSB. "ALEXIUS HOFFMAN OSB. PIONEER: archivist, chronicler, librarian, professor, etc., A Character Study and Portrait."

And (decidedly less fun):
100 years ago (in August)

1918. "On August 8 my diary tearfully observes" and he continues with a few lines in Latin that this was the last day that beer was served at table, for the law now prohibited the sale and production of drinks which produce intoxication. "Ita quod Benedictus suasit, leges jubent." (What Benedict dissuades us from, the law now prohibits.)

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/28051>
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