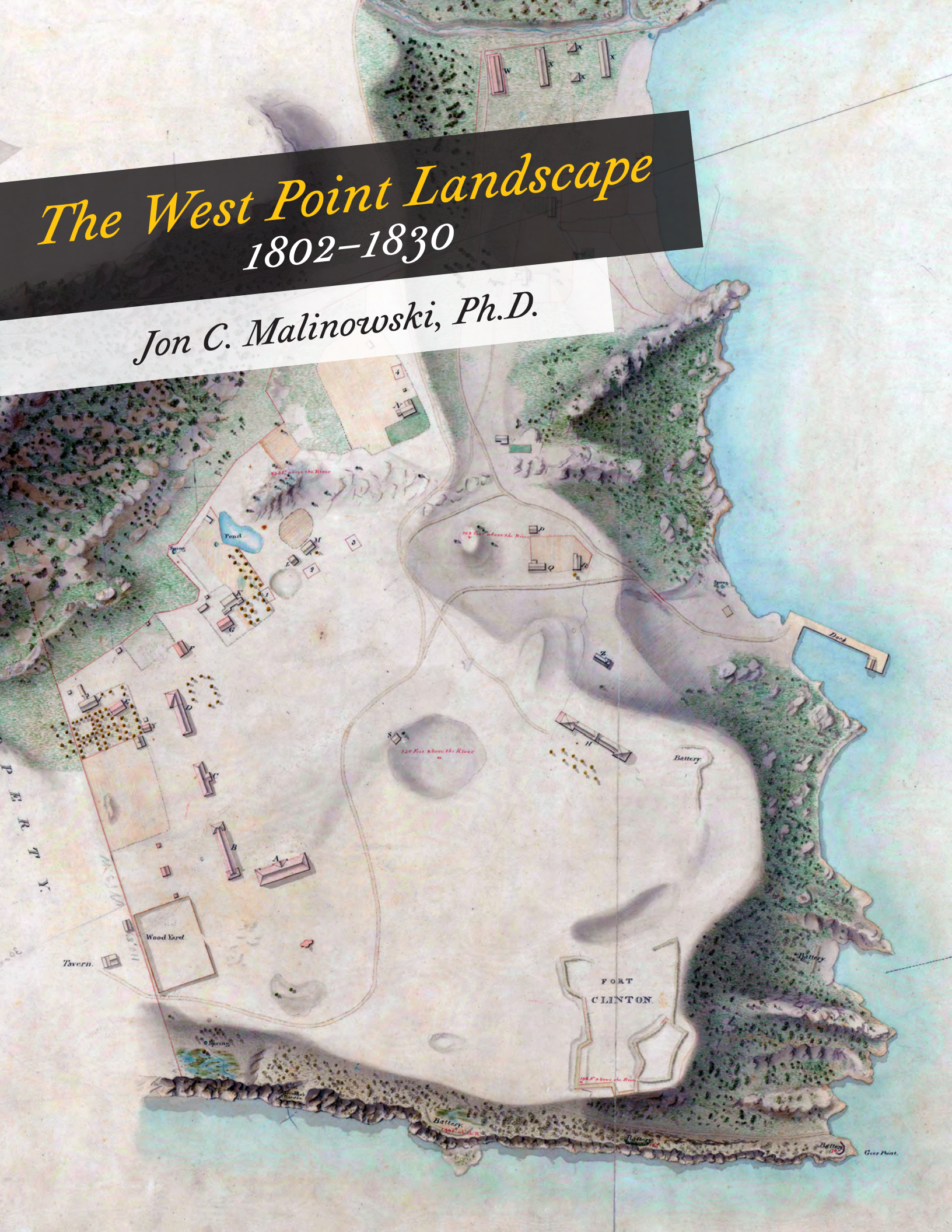


# The West Point Landscape 1802-1830

Jon C. Malinowski, Ph.D.



*The West Point Landscape*  
*1802–1830*

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*First Edition, 2022*



*West Point ca. 1830 by John Rubens Smith*  
Source: Library of Congress

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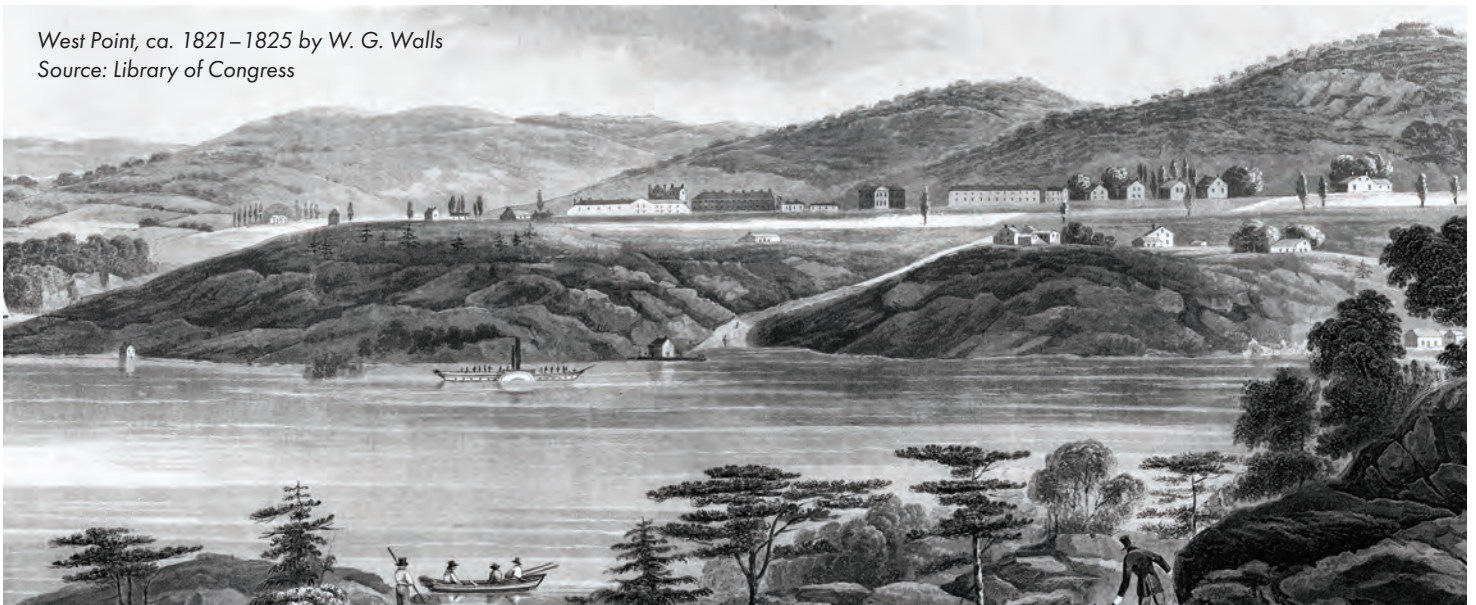
1st Edition, February 2022

Cover: *A Plan of West Point* by George Washington Whistler, ca. 1818

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West Point, ca. 1821–1825 by W. G. Walls  
Source: Library of Congress



## 1802 OVERVIEW

When Joseph Gardiner Swift, the United States Military Academy's first graduate, arrived at West Point in October of 1801, he entered a landscape shaped by both the Revolution and the eras before and after the War. While the Academy was not officially opened until July 4, 1802, military personnel had occupied the post continuously since the end of the conflict with Great Britain.

West Point was much smaller than it is today. In fact, the U.S. Government did not even own the land that Fort Putnam stood on, and the southern boundary was at about Brewerton Road (between today's Grant and Pershing Halls). South of this line was the property of Thomas North, who operated a tavern that would challenge the patience of Academy officials.

Physically, West Point in the early nineteenth century looked different than it does today. The Plain was not as level or smooth as the present manicured lawn. The eastern margins were pocked with small depressions and outcroppings of rocks. Early in the Revolution, there were small yellow pine trees on the Plain. On the western edge of Fort Clinton was a hole that served as part of its defenses. In the middle of the Plain was a larger depression known as Execution Hollow (or Gallows Hollow). This large hole, over 30' deep and 200' in diameter was probably a glacial kettle formed when ice retreated from the Hudson Valley 17,000–19,000 years ago. Kettles are created when a block of ice remains buried underground after a glacier retreats. When it eventually melts, a hole remains. Execution Hollow was located close

to the eastern end of the current metal bleachers nearest the Superintendent's House.

There were also hills that have since been leveled. The most prominent was known as Bunker's Hill. It was a small knoll that stood where Ruger Road descends from the Commandant's House towards the Firstie Club (the old Ordnance Compound). In the 1810s, this hill became the site of the flag pole and then hosted the Wood Monument, a 15' obelisk erected in 1818 but relocated to this hill in 1821. The Monument was moved to the Cemetery in 1885, where it remains to this day.

Also note that the land where Shea Stadium now resides (home of USMA's track and field team) was part of the Hudson River in 1802. There were also no fields on the eastern shores of the Academy (now called River Courts), and there was no South Dock.

West Point in 1802 had three main activity areas. The first included Fort Clinton and the Long Barracks. Fort Clinton was in ruins, but the powder magazine inside the walls was somewhat maintained and had stores of old gunpowder of an undetermined age. The Long Barracks, a two-story structure, held both cadets and soldiers. Its uncertain date of construction will be discussed.

The second main area of the 1802 Academy was at the base of Fort Putnam Hill on a line between what is now the Superintendent's House (Quarters 100) and the Mess Hall. In this area were several houses, the Academy, and administrative build-

ings. A small pond occupied an area near the current Superintendent's Garden and in front of Arvin Gymnasium.

The third built-up area was on the hillside between the Plain and the River. Most buildings here were between the present Firstie Club and the Department of Public Works building. The dock was located approximately where there is now a helipad. The main buildings in this zone included military stores housing Revolutionary War artifacts, a small hospital, several sets of quarters, and a contractor's store.

In the middle of the Plain, at the edge of Execution Hollow, were the ruins of a building known as the Old Provost. The exact location and history of this building will be discussed in a later section, but inaugural Academy graduate Joseph Gardner Swift refers to its location as being on the "west margin" of Execution Hollow.

The following pages will explore the landscape of the Academy from 1802–1830 in greater detail.

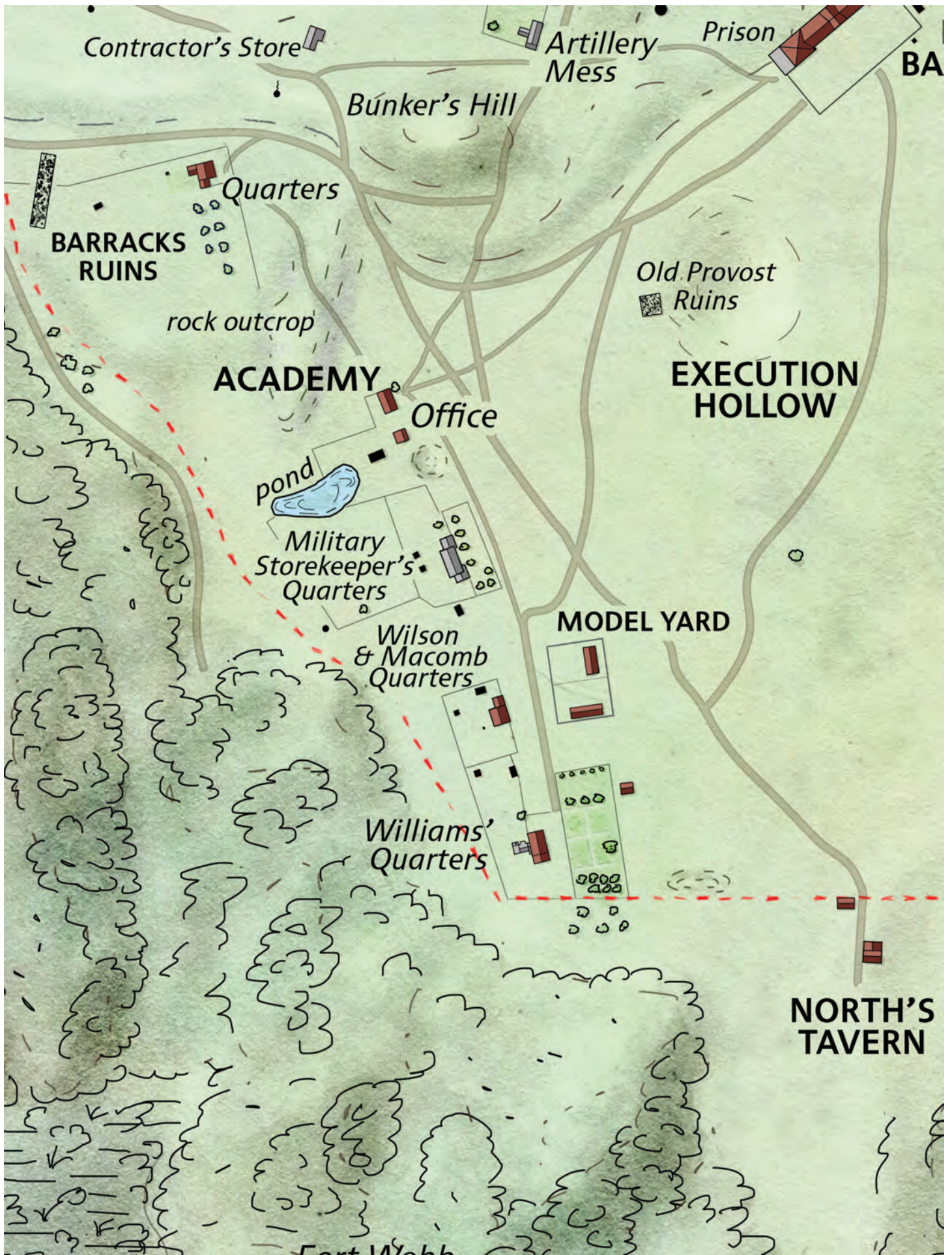
*"We reached West Point at dusk. The name of this place had raised many pictures to my imagination of Revolutionary history—the treason of Arnold; the fate of Andre. It was a calm October evening; the only sound was that of the cow bell. This sound at West Point has no doubt left a pleasant remembrance with many a cadet. To this day the sound of the cow bell re-  
vives the evening of my first landing at West Point."*

— Joseph Gardner Swift, USMA Class of 1802, Cullum #1

# HUDSON RIVER NORTH RIVER

*West Point, 1802*





## THE WESTERN PLAIN

### EXECUTION HOLLOW

Sometimes called Gallows Hollow. As mentioned above, this large depression in the Plain was likely a glacial kettle. The hole was about 32' deep and 200'–300' across. Were people executed in Execution Hollow? Graduate Albert Church, USMA Class of 1828, stated that Revolutionary War veterans told him that they had seen men hanged in Execution Hollow. The concavity was gradually filled in over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and no longer exists.

### OLD PROVOST RUINS

This stone building likely had been a prison built during the Revolution (which would make sense given its location on Execution Hollow). The term “provost” historically meant a warden or bailiff and was commonly used to denote a jail. In 1781, General John Paterson wrote to General William Heath that the “new provost” was not finished. He also refers to a “lower floor” which suggests that the building was at least two stories. Boynton, in his mid-nineteenth century history of West Point, refers to it being two-storied and stone. In 1794, this building was used as a classroom building after George Washington established a school for artillerists and engineers. It also seems to have been quarters for some officers. It burned down under suspicious circumstances in April of 1796. Alexander Hamilton implied years later to Joseph Gardner Swift that disgruntled instructors were responsible. There are no known depictions of a complete Old Provost, but Peale’s 1801 watercolor of West Point, discussed later, shows what appears to be ruins on the west side of Execution Hollow. The location depicted is an approximation.

### ACADEMY

A two-story, wood-frame building used for classes, chapel services, dances, and other events. The second floor had what Swift referred to as “the long room.” In June of 1801, this building was shown painted a yellow ocher hue in a Charles Willson Peale watercolor. Peale’s depiction suggests the build-

ing had at least two chimneys. The building was “put in order” by Major John Lillie according to his daughter Mary Ann (Gilman 1869). She is quoted as saying, “It was about as large as a country schoolhouse, and I well remember going to see it. The seats and forms were painted green.” It’s unclear if this building was built in 1801 or already existed.

### OFFICE

This small building was a saltbox house, meaning that the front of the house was two stories but the rear only one, resulting in a long, sloping back roof. It appears to have been at least partially painted yellow when Swift arrived in 1801. This building later was the quarters of Superintendent Alden Partridge (1814–1817). Next to this building was a small depression that had the remains of a mound built to honor the Dauphin of France, Louis Joseph, born in October of 1781. Because France was an ally during the Revolution, there were numerous celebrations for the French heir, including a large fête at West Point.

### MILITARY STOREKEEPER’S HOUSE

Possibly predating the Revolution, this was certainly one of the oldest houses at West Point in 1802. George Washington was said to have slept here. It was a

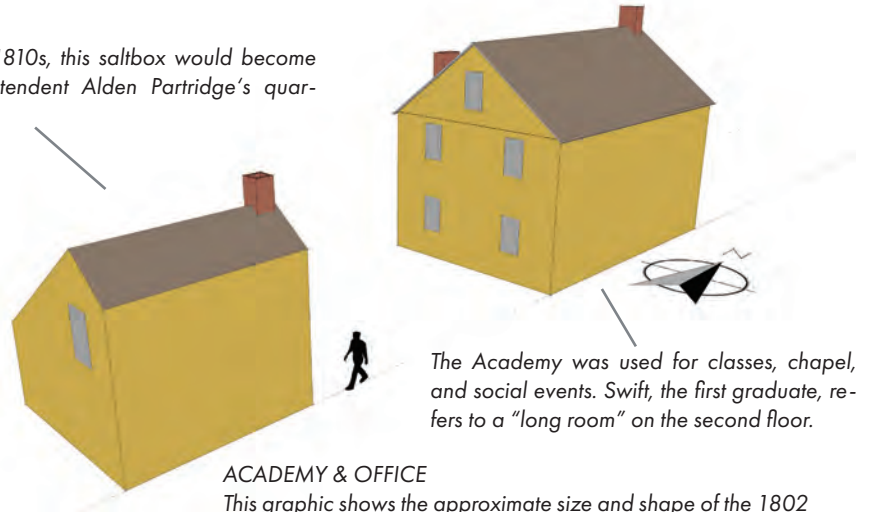
two-story building with one-story wings on each side. The second floor likely had a porch with a piazza on the ground level. In 1802, this house was occupied by Major George Fleming. A veteran of the Revolution, he had taken control of West Point when Henry Knox was made Secretary of War in 1785 and in 1802 was serving as the Military Storekeeper.

Years later, one wing was removed and used as a school. In the mid-nineteenth century, the main building became known as “Mrs. Thompson’s House.” Thompson, widow of Revolutionary War veteran and West Point Military Storekeeper Captain Alexander Thompson, had for years been allowed to provide meals to a small group of cadets as an auxiliary mess. She originally lived near where the Firstie Club now stands, but when that building was constructed (ca. 1840) as an ordnance compound, Thompson and her daughters were allowed to move to into this building. Her family provided meals to select cadets until about 1873 or 1874.

### BOUNDARY

The Academy’s property boundary is approximated by the red dashed line. Historian George Pappas indicates that there was a “tumbledown” wall on the perimeter, but his source is unclear.

*In the 1810s, this saltbox would become Superintendent Alden Partridge’s quarters.*



*The Academy was used for classes, chapel, and social events. Swift, the first graduate, refers to a “long room” on the second floor.*

### ACADEMY & OFFICE

*This graphic shows the approximate size and shape of the 1802 Academy and the small saltbox office. The windows shown in gray are seen in Charles Willson Peale’s 1801 watercolor. The number and location of other windows and doors is unknown.*



*A ca. 1870 photo of the Military Storekeeper’s House, more often called Mrs. Thompson’s House, after the left wing had been removed. It is unknown whether the windows and doors were in the same location in 1802.*

*Photo: John Pitman  
Source: USMA Archives*



## QUARTERS

Little is known about this building in 1801. Slightly later accounts describe it as wooden with dormers and six chimneys (Berard 1886). It was set up to house two families. A center hallway divided the quarters, and map layouts suggest each side of the house had a small addition presumed to be a kitchen. Swift's memoir suggests that Major John Jacob Ulrich Rivardi lived here before being sent on to Fort Niagara.

## WILSON & MACOMB QUARTERS

In 1801, this frame building was occupied by Lieutenants James Wilson, Jr. and Alexander Macomb. Wilson was the son of Declaration of Independence signer and Supreme Court Justice James Wilson. Macomb would distinguish himself at the Battle of Plattsburgh in 1814 and become Commanding General of the United States Army from 1828–1841. This building was later used as a laboratory (meaning a place to make explosives and ammunition), a library, and a post office.

## WILLIAMS' QUARTERS

Possibly predating the Revolution, these quarters had been occupied by Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Rochefontaine in the 1790s. Rochefontaine was Commandant of the Corps of Artillerists and Engineers when it was established at West Point in 1795 and remained for about

three years. In 1802, the home was occupied by Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Williams and family. Williams, the Academy's first Superintendent, was a grandnephew of Benjamin Franklin, represented the Continental Congress in France during the Revolution, and would twice serve as Chief of Engineers.

The building was two-stories with a small, one-story addition on the southern end and a long addition in the back. The home had gardens and Colonel Williams liberally distributed flowers, fruit, and vegetables to his neighbors. Peale's 1801 watercolor of this house (from the back; see pages 12–13) indicates that the main part of the structure was painted yellow and that the rest of the building may have been unfinished. There are at least four chimneys visible. The main part of the house appears to have had white (or light-colored) shutters.

## NORTH'S TAVERN

This tavern, owned and operated by Thomas North in 1802, had been in operation for years, possibly since the Revolution, and was a constant headache to Academy officials. A 1798 order banned soldiers and non-commissioned officers from frequenting the public house without permission. There was also a small riot between patrons and post troops on July 4, 1800. In terms of what the building looked like at the time, there



A ca. 1870 photo by John Pitman said to show the building that once was North's Tavern. This is likely only a portion of the structure at its largest. Source: USMA Archives

is little evidence. Decades later a section of the building was moved. A photo taken after the move shows a two-story house with a possible third floor under a gambrel roof. In 1819 (some sources say 1816), it became Gridley's Tavern ("Old Grid's") and was operated by Oliver Gridley. The Academy purchased the property in 1824, closed the tavern, and the structure briefly served as a hospital.

## MODEL YARD

Joseph Gardner Swift's memoir refers to a model yard at this location with a "miniature fortress in wood, used in lectures on fortification." Peale's June 1801 watercolor of this area (pages 12–13) shows fencing around two covered pavilions. Later, Swift and Cadet Walker K. Armistead (Class of 1803) planted elm trees around the site, some of which remained for over a century. By 1808, there appears to be no buildings on the site, but the trees planted are clearly visible on an 1808 map.

## BUNKER'S HILL

This knoll no longer exists, having been leveled in the late nineteenth century. It was a small, pointed hill that later had a flagpole and then hosted the Wood Monument after about 1821. The hill was later known as Monument Hill. The name Bunker's Hill (or Bunkers Hill) is seen on maps from 1808 until about 1820. It is not known what the hill was called, if anything, in 1802. The hill was modified in the 1840s and then leveled in the late nineteenth century to make way for the road that descends to the waterfront from the intersection by the Commandant's House.



The western Plain in 1802.

## THE EASTERN PLAIN

### FORT CLINTON

Visitors to the remains of Fort Clinton today might think that the fort was constructed of stone, but most of the original fortification, completed between 1778–1780, was dirt and wood. By 1802, the walls had decayed to the point that Joseph Gardner Swift referred to the Fort as “dilapidated” with portals reminiscent of Dante’s *Inferno*. Inside the walls was a magazine that held very old powder. Swift mentions four cannons being present. The entrance to the Fort was on the western side and bordered by a depression. Years later, upperclass cadets would attempt to push pebles into this depression while they stood guard in the vicinity. Class of 1848 graduate John C. Tidball refers to this area as Shag Hollow.



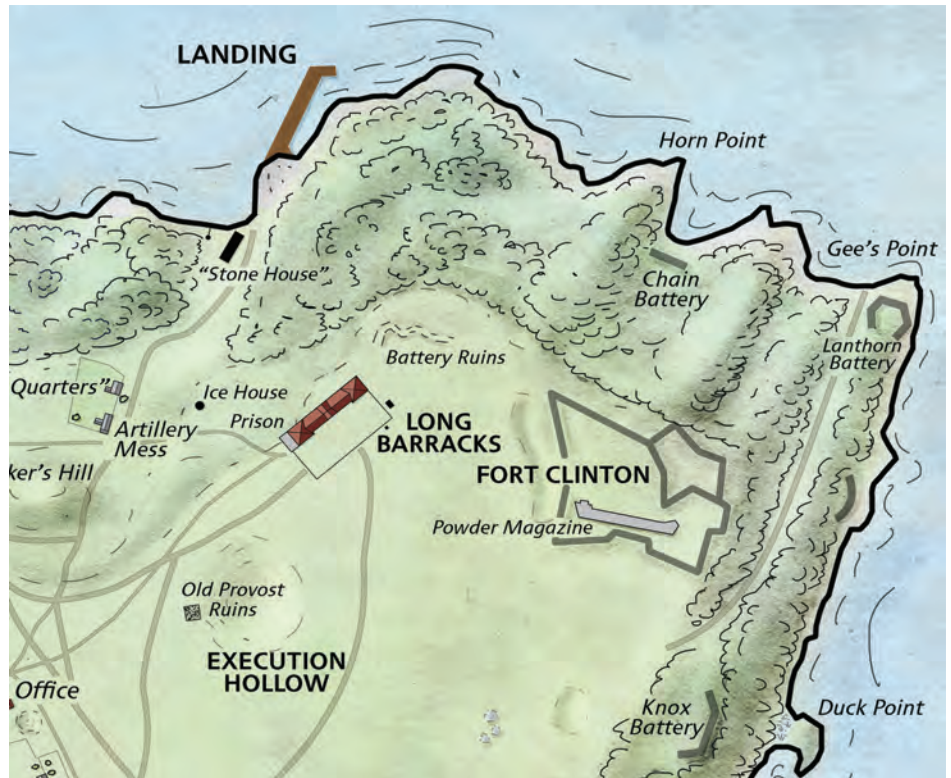
This detail from Zoeller’s 1808 map of West Point shows the sizable depression just to the west of Fort Clinton.

### LONG BARRACKS

Also known as the “Yellow Barracks” (and on one 1790s drawing, the “Blue Barracks”). From 1802–1815, this was the primary housing for West Point cadets. The building was about 250’ long with two stories, the second level reached by external stairway(s). In 1801, the building was painted yellow. On the western end, a one-story addition served as a jail. See a more detailed discussion of the Long Barracks on pages 10–11.

Charles Willson Peale’s 1801 watercolor clearly shows why the Long Barracks was sometimes called the “Yellow Barracks” by contemporary writers. There appear to be multiple staircases to reach the second story, which had piazzas (porches). It also shows one or two outbuildings and what might be a fence. The outbuilding was likely a privy. The barracks had no water or other plumbing.

Source: American Philosophical Society. Used with permission.



The eastern Plain in 1802.

### THE PLAIN

There is little doubt that the eastern side of the Plain was a less manicured landscape than it is today. Albert Church, USMA Class of 1828, writes, “The plain, at this time, was much more rough and uneven than now; especially the part just south of the present camp ground, which was nearly covered with large rocks.” The “camp ground” Church refers to is the location of the present soccer fields and baseball field near Lincoln Hall. Before Camp Buckner, cadets spent their summers on the Plain.

For years, graduating cadets would gather at a boulder in this area on their last night and have a bonfire fueled by their barracks furniture and personal possessions. In the early 1800s, furniture was not always provided and therefore cadets would buy their own. Tidball refers to this boulder as “Cremation Rock” because cadets

would burn their drawing boards here after completing their studies in this topic. An 1894 *New York Times* article implies that the bonfire boulder was eventually removed by explosion.



## THE WATERFRONT

This area of the Academy, as it is today, was comprised of functional buildings and storehouses. A handful of quarters also were found here. In terms of the physical landscape, much of the area was meadow and not forested. Low-lying areas close to the River could be wet. Vegetation would have been much younger as a whole. Because West Point was largely deforested during the Revolution, many areas near the River were covered with brush and small-to-medium sized trees. American Chestnut trees, now absent because of the chestnut blight of the early twentieth century, were common at West Point. There were likely more elms than today as well.

Notice that the area now occupied by Shea Stadium was part of the Hudson River. The historical shoreline roughly follows Tower Road in front of Gillis Field House and Townsley Road next to Shea Stadium.

### MILITARY STORES

These two long buildings were painted yellow. Inside were arms taken during the Revolution when Burgoyne surrendered, items from the Battles of Saratoga, and two “grasshoppers” taken by General Nathanael Greene in South Carolina (Swift uses “Green”). A grasshopper was a British field cannon made of brass and was a high tech item in its day. These stores were under the control of Major George Fleming.

### ARMORY & ARMORER’S QUARTERS

The Armorer in 1802, Zebina Kinsley (Swift uses “Kingsley”), was married to Anna “Annie” Duncan, daughter of James Duncan. The Duncans owned land that is now in the area of Buffalo Soldier Field at West Point. Kinsley’s son, Zebina J. D. Kinsley, USMA Class of 1819, taught

tactics at the Academy for years and later ran a preparatory school called Kinsley’s Classical and Mathematical School on the land his mother had inherited.

### HOSPITAL

This was a wooden frame house, possibly painted yellow. Joseph Gardner Swift states in his memoir that the surgeon was Dr. Nicholas Jones, brother-in-law of Lieutenant Robert W. Osborn.

### CONTRACTOR’S STORE

This building is not mentioned by Swift in his memoirs and therefore its existence is uncertain. However, the Academy’s Centennial literature states that Henry Garrison kept a store at West Point from 1795–1812 and this building is shown on an 1808 map as the “Contractor’s Store.” Later maps show it as the “Old Contractor’s Store.” Berard (1886) states that this building was later used as barracks. Subsequently, Garrison served as a judge across the Hudson River in Phillipstown.

### “WHITE QUARTERS”

Swift describes this as being on the brow of the hill above the dock. Its location is close to the current Firstie Club. In 1801, it was the residence of Lieutenant Osborn and his wife, sister of the Surgeon, Dr. Jones. It is unclear if “White Quarters” as named by Swift refers to the color or to a previous resident. White was a rare house color at the time.

### ARTILLERY MESS

This was the quarters of Lieutenants William Wilson and Lewis Howard and a mess where some cadets were invited to dine. Joseph Gardner Swift famously was invited to join this mess upon arrival in 1801, causing

an argument between him and Mr. George Baron, an English-born instructor. Baron passed along an order through a servant forbidding Swift to dine here, which angered the young man. When Baron insulted Swift, the future Superintendent attacked the professor and Baron fled, bolting himself in the Academy and exchanging “coarse epithets” with Swift from the second floor. Swift was ordered to apologize. Baron was arrested for an unknown crime in November of 1801 and left in December after being court-martialed.

### “STONE HOUSE”

It is unclear whether Swift is referring to a quarters or to a storehouse located near the dock. Later maps show storehouses here, which makes sense for holding items without carrying them up the hill or until they could be properly moved. But, there are also later accounts of houses near this dock as well.

### LANDING

This was the primary dock, although Gees Point (also Gee’s Point), now part of Flirtation Walk, to the east was also used as an unofficial landing and sometimes other docks along the waterfront are mentioned. While arriving at West Point was not particularly difficult, getting baggage up the hill generally required hiring an official or unofficial porter. If a porter was not available, a traveler’s bags might stay at the dock overnight or longer. When Class of 1828 graduate Albert E. Church arrived in the summer of 1824, the porter was a one-armed veteran with a prosthetic iron hook designed for his duties.



The waterfront in 1802.

## KOSCIUSZKO'S GARDEN, 1778

While stationed at West Point from 1778–1780, Polish military engineer Thaddeus Kosciuszko created a small retreat for himself in some rocks overlooking the Hudson River. Dr. James Thatcher's journal for July 28, 1778 recalls:

*Here I had the pleasure of being introduced to Colonel Thaddeus Kosciuszko, a gentleman of distinction from Poland, Having recently arrived in our country, he is employed in the engineer department, with the rank of colonel. He has amused himself while stationed on this point, in laying out a curious garden in a deep valley, abounding more in rocks than soil. I was gratified in viewing his curious water fountain, with spouting jets and cascades.*

This terrace retreat is discussed here because Joseph Gardner Swift, first Academy graduate, and First Lieutenant Alexander Macomb, future Commanding General of the US Army, repaired and expanded Kosciuszko's Garden. Swift wrote in his memoirs:

*Early in this summer of 1802 Lieutenant Macomb and myself repaired the dilapidated garden of Kosciuszko, relaid the stone stairway to the dell, and opened the little fountain at the base of "Kosciuszko's Rock" in the garden; planted flowers and vines and constructed several seats, which made the spot a pleasant resort for a reading party.*

Throughout the nineteenth century, there are numerous mentions of the Garden and it was certainly a required stop for any visitor of the day. In June of 1817, President James Monroe met with Academy officials in the Garden and discussed the Pole's virtues. In the late 1820s, extra funds from the construction of the Kosciuszko Monument were used to add a marble basin.

Most nineteenth century guidebooks mention this memorable spot and many include engravings or photos of the place. It seems to have gone in and out of a state of disrepair. Here is an 1834 description by Samuel L. Knapp:

*After a fatiguing walk to Fort Putnam, a ruin examined by every visitor at the Point, I sought the retreat called Kosciuszko's Garden. I had seen it in former years, when it was nearly inaccessible to all but clambering youths. It was now a different sort of place. It had been touched by the hand of taste, and afforded a pleasant nook for reading and contemplation. The garden is situated in the shelvy rocks which form the right bank of the Hudson, about fifty or sixty rods southerly from*



Kosciuszko's Garden from an 1861 article about West Point. Source: *The Art Journal*.

*the point on which the monument erected by the Cadets to the memory of Kosciuszko now stands. You descend by a well gravelled path-way, about eighty feet, not uncomfortably steep, then by flights of steps forty feet more, when you reach the garden—which is a surface of rock, through the fissures of which spring a scanty and stunted vegetation. The garden is about thirty feet in length, and in width, in its utmost extent, not more than twenty feet, and in some parts much less. Near the centre of the garden there is a beautiful marble basin, from whose bottom through a small perforation, flows upward a spring of sweet water, which is carried off by overflowing on the east side of the basin towards the river, the surface of which is about eighty feet below the garden. In the afternoon, and in fact for a greater part of the day, the retreat is sunless, and if the wind is southerly, a breeze comes up the river to make the spot delightfully cool.*

Note: Throughout the decades, Kosciuszko has been spelled many ways by writers.

A photo by John Pittman from about 1870–1871 shows cadets relaxing in the Garden. Source: USMA Archives



## THE LONG BARRACKS

As mentioned above, this old, wooden structure was also called the “Yellow Barracks” and was the primary cadet housing before 1815. It stood on Trophy Point on the ground between today’s Battle Monument and the section of the Great Chain. It was about 250’ long and two-stories high. The second level was reached by external staircases. An addition on the western end served as a jail at times.

There is great confusion about when these barracks were built and misinformation about its destruction. Joseph Gardner Swift refers to the barracks as having been built by Major John Jacob Ulrich Rivardi. Rivardi, a French-born engineer, arrived at West Point in 1795.

However, an ink wash painting of West Point showing the Barracks (with only one set of external stairs) has a label on the back indicating a house occupied by “Capt Howe.” This is very likely Bezaleel Howe, who was stationed at West Point as a recruiter from 1791 until early 1795. Howe held the rank of Captain from about 1792 until early 1795. Thus, the Barracks seem to have existed before Rivardi’s arrival. There is official correspondence between West Point and the War Department in 1795 about the need for barracks repairs rather than a call for new barracks. As a side note, the Robertson inkwash has these barracks labeled as the “Blue Barracks.”

Furthermore, a panorama of West Point by Pierre L’Enfant that may be from the Revolution (perhaps 1782–1783) shows a long building of similar shape on the same site. Therefore, it is unclear if the barracks were constructed during the Revolution and renovated by Rivardi or torn down and rebuilt.

The most likely scenario is that the barracks date from the Revolution and were significantly repaired and altered by Rivardi. Additional stairways on the front are one likely addition. Inconsistencies in the shape of the building between the Robertson inkwash and later de-

*This is a portion of an 1828 engraving by Jacques-Gérard Milbert titled “West Point at the Moment of Exercise.” By the publication date of this engraving, the building had burned to the ground (1826). The artist clearly shows six separate stairs to the second floor and a distinct central section. The extension on the left (west) side is the jail. Source: New York Public Library*



*This ink wash of the Long Barracks, likely by Archibald Robertson, was probably painted around 1792–1795 based on the labeling of buildings on the back. Note that only one staircase is shown. Some later engravings show multiple stairs. The barracks are referred to as the “Blue Barracks” on the back of this work. Source: West Point Museum*

pictions do not rule out the possibility of an extensive rebuild.

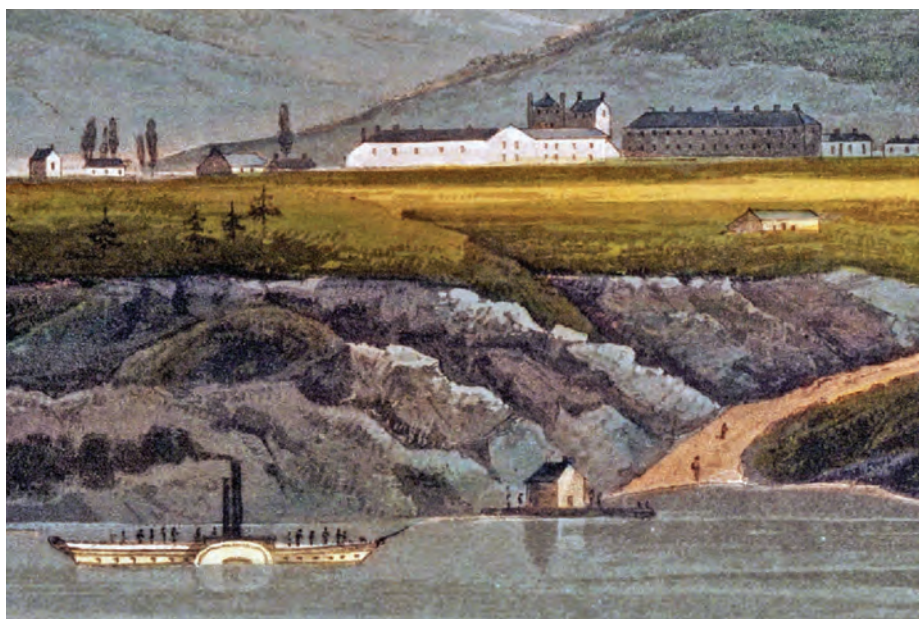
As described on the following page, the Long Barracks was consumed in a conflagration on February 20, 1826. There was no effort to rebuild and just a few years later the West Point Hotel was constructed near the site.

### CADET LIFE IN THE LONG BARRACKS

*The barracks of 1814–15 stood upon the site of the present hotel,—a building in length about two hundred and fifty feet,—and was known as the Yellow Barracks, although, at the time, all the buildings on the Point were painted yellow. It consisted of two stories with wings, with corresponding centre of intermediate proportions. The upper floor was reached by a high flight of steps with “stoops.” The rooms were large, but without any conveniences. There were no wells or pumps, and the water for drinking and washing was derived from the natural springs flowing from the hillside, and I well remember how slippery and dangerous these hillsides were in the cold winter mornings, when creeping down, “jug” in hand, it was difficult to maintain one’s foothold. The duty of water-carrier generally devolved upon me by virtue of my juvenility, as did the privilege of making the fires, sweeping the room, shoveling the snow, and all other small “chores,” as they were called round about us, necessary to my complete military education, and which from my inaptitude, it was thought, had been neglected. In time, I became an earnest worker, and after having been taught how by a Vermont room-mate, I found it quite a pleasure to make in early morning a rousing wood-fire, and I would often get up before reveille for this purpose. There were no furnaces or stoves, and wood was burned in open fireplaces—sawed and split and brought to the barrack rooms by their respective occupants; a “saw and buck” in each room was indispensable.*

George Ramsay, USMA Class of 1820

This 1828 etching by Frenchman Jacques-Gérard Milbert must be based on an early sketch because the Long Barracks had burned by this time. Based on the buildings shown, this represents 1818–1825.  
Source: New York Public Library



This is section from an early 1820s etching by John Hill from a painting by W. G. Wall. The artist was on the shore of the Hudson near the West Point Cemetery. The Long Barracks dramatic location on the edge of the Plain is clear. The wind in the winter must have been tremendous! The West Point dock (now North Dock) is visible along with an early steamboat. The white color of the building is a mystery but is probably due to a colorist working from an etching and not an original painting.  
Source: Spencer Collection, New York Public Library

## THE LONG BARRACKS FIRE

On February 20, 1826, the Long Barracks burned to the ground. Aeneas Mackay, the Academy's Quartermaster, sent the following letter to Quartermaster General Thomas Jesup:

*I have the honor to report to you that about 5 O'clock this morning the Barracks occupied by Company A of the 2<sup>d</sup> Reg of Artillery stationed at this post and the Military Academy Band, took fire and in the course of two hours was burnt to the ground.*

*The fire was communicated by a stove pipes and it being a very old and an entirely wooden building it was impossible with the means present to save it.*

*I have made temporary provision for quartering the Troops in an old store house and other out buildings about West Point.*

USMA Graduate Albert Church recalled the fire in his memoirs, and it is among my favorite anecdote about this era. His recollection of the date being 1827 is completely wrong, but he writes:

*On a cold winter's morning in 1827 [sic], about 2 o'clock, this building took fire, and before many cadets could get there, was burned to the ground. Those of us who were in time, did excellent service in carrying families of women and children in their beds, as they had slept, to the lawn in front of the burning mass. Before a line could be formed to the pump in front of the North barrack and I think before a single pail of water was thrown upon it, the whole building was in flames, and with nearly all its contents, save the men, their families, and the largest and most confused collection of large rats that I ever saw, was consumed, even the guns of the soldiers in the guard-room.*

Samuel Heintzelman, Class of 1826, recorded in his diary the following for February 20, 1826:

*This morning, a short time before day, we were alarmed by the cry of fire. The Artillery Barracks was on fire. It had just commenced at the guard room; for the want of water we were not able to extinguish it, and it burnt to the ground by 8 o'clock. The guard was asleep. It snowed a little during the day.*

Newspaper reports trickled out around the country after the fire. Many of them misidentify the fire's date by quite a few days, but Mackay's letter is quite clear that the fire happened early on the morning of Monday, February 20, 1826. Note that some histories mention the fire as happening on December 26, 1827, but this date is unsupported by the evidence and likely comes from Church's bad memory.

# WEST POINT FROM THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

CHARLES WILLSON PEALE, 1801

Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827) was a renowned painter, entrepreneur, and a naturalist. He took up painting after a failed career as a saddle maker and had the opportunity to study in England under Benjamin West for three years. During the American Revolution, he completed portraits of Founding Fathers such as Franklin, Jefferson, and Hamilton.

In addition to art, Peale had a passion for natural history and science. In June of 1801, he came to the Hudson Valley to purchase a mastodon skeleton found on a farm near Newburgh. Peale was friends with Major George Fleming, the longtime Military Storekeeper at West Point, and stayed with Fleming's family for a night. During his visit, Peale made several watercolors of his surroundings. Crucially, he climbed to an area behind what is now the Cadet Chapel and painted the Plain. This two-panel work, now in the collection of the

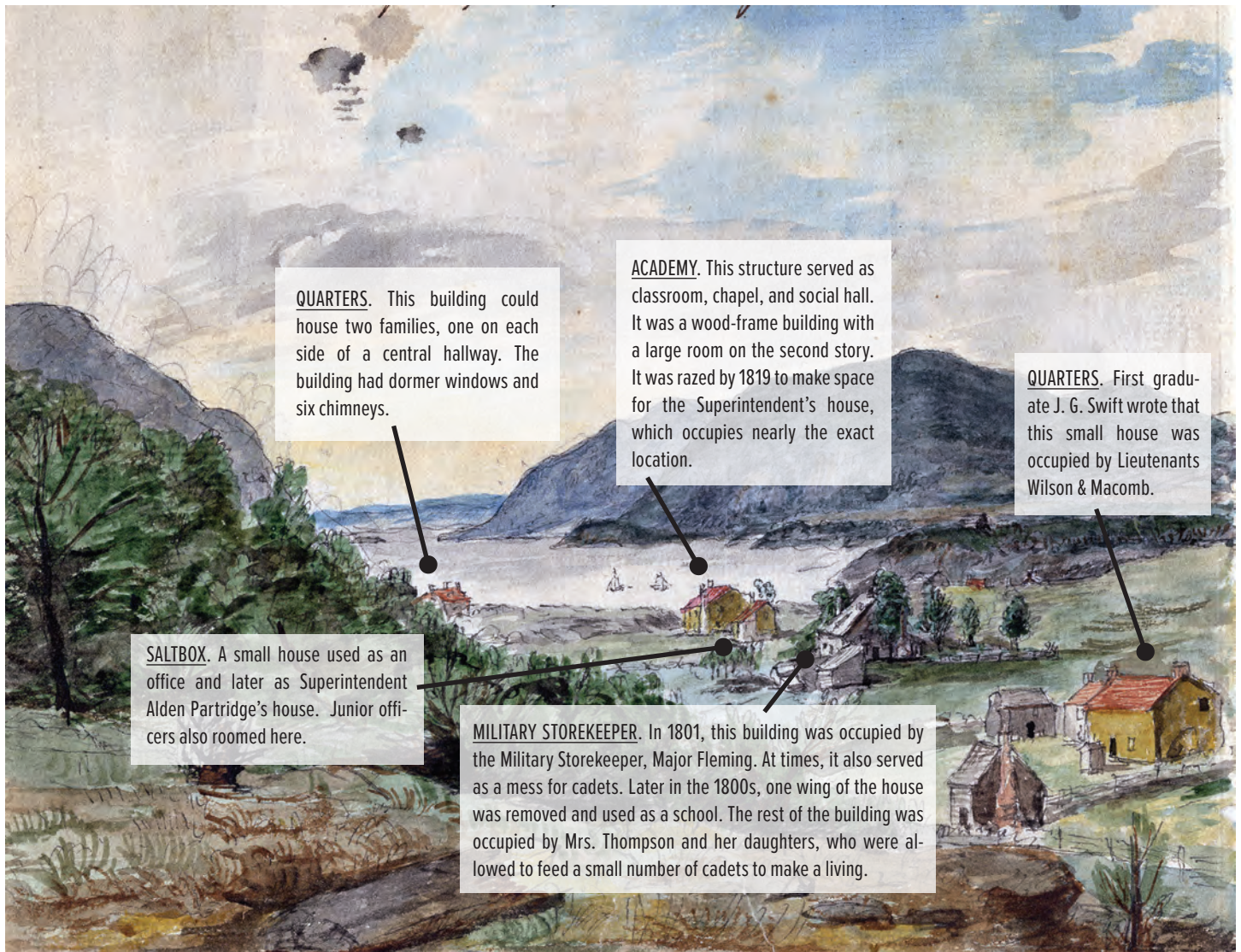
American Philosophical Society and shown on this page and the next, is a priceless record of West Point on the eve of its formal beginnings as the United States Military Academy for several reasons:

- 1) The painting is one of the only non-map depictions of the structures on the western margin of the Plain (except Major Fleming's quarters, which lasted, in pieces, to the photography era). The rest of these buildings were torn down in the 1810s and 1820s.
- 2) It shows us the colors of the buildings. Clearly, yellow was a popular choice. Yellow ochre was an inexpensive paint color because it was made with common clay. White was relatively rare in early America because the common white paint, lead white, had to be made by a complicated process of corroding strips of lead to collect white pigments. Yellow remained a common

West Point color for another 20–30 years. At least six buildings in the Peale painting are painted in a yellow ochre hue. The Military Storekeeper's House and several outbuildings appear to be unpainted, which would not be uncommon.

3) It shows a number of outbuildings, many with chimneys. These were likely occupied by servants and single military personnel or served as functional buildings such as kitchens and workshops. It also shows a structure near Execution Hollow that may be the only depiction in existence of the Old Provost, which burned down in 1796. Alternatively, it may be an ice house known to be in this location for decades.

Image Source: American Philosophical Society. Used with permission.



**QUARTERS.** This building could house two families, one on each side of a central hallway. The building had dormer windows and six chimneys.

**ACADEMY.** This structure served as classroom, chapel, and social hall. It was a wood-frame building with a large room on the second story. It was razed by 1819 to make space for the Superintendent's house, which occupies nearly the exact location.

**QUARTERS.** First graduate J. G. Swift wrote that this small house was occupied by Lieutenants Wilson & Macomb.

**SALTBOX.** A small house used as an office and later as Superintendent Alden Partridge's house. Junior officers also roomed here.

**MILITARY STOREKEEPER.** In 1801, this building was occupied by the Military Storekeeper, Major Fleming. At times, it also served as a mess for cadets. Later in the 1800s, one wing of the house was removed and used as a school. The rest of the building was occupied by Mrs. Thompson and her daughters, who were allowed to feed a small number of cadets to make a living.

## GETTING TO WEST POINT

How exactly did a cadet get to West Point in the Academy's first decade? Nearly all cadets came by way of the North River, a.k.a. the Hudson River. Typically, the young man would get to either New York City or a Hudson port such as Poughkeepsie or Albany, and then find passage on a sloop, the single-masted sailing vessels that carried nearly all cargo on the Hudson for over a century. Based on earlier Dutch ships, sloops were typically about 65'–75' long and could carry one hundred tons.

When approaching West Point by the River, it would have been typical for the sloop to approach the dock but not stop. Passengers disembarking would be placed in a rowboat tied by rope to the sloop and rowed to the dock, where passengers would jump out and throw their luggage ashore before the rope lost slack. It could be a dangerous and harrowing process.

Presumably, people also came to West Point by road. On the West Point side of the Hudson, roads were not

great and were often walked. Joseph Gardner Swift, after temporarily taking over West Point in 1807, mentions going on foot over the Highlands to New Windsor. If roads were used on the east side of the Hudson, travelers would hire or find a boat to cross to West Point.

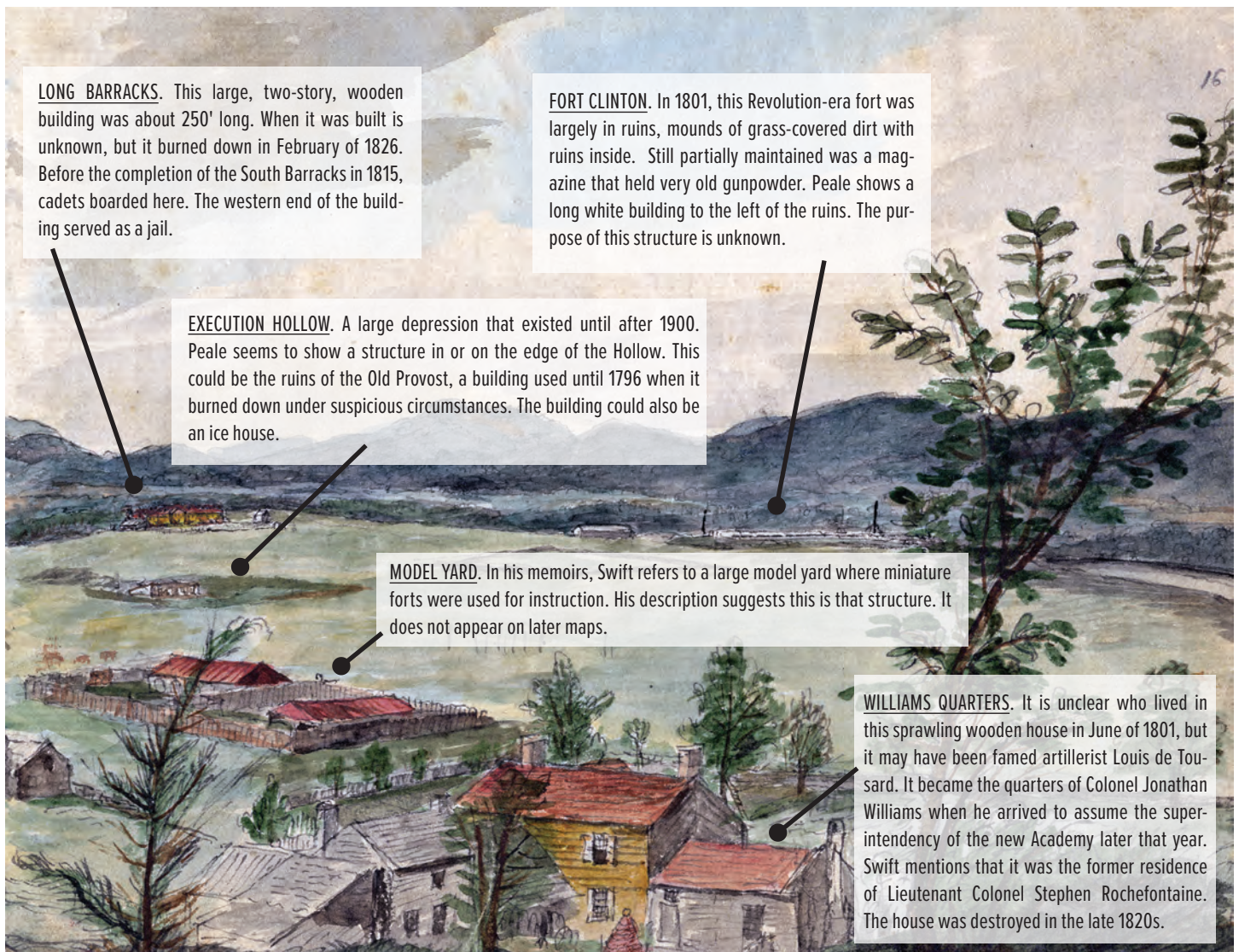
The east side of the River had active stagecoach routes between New York City and Albany from 1785–1850, when the railroad put many stages out of business. Some visiting West Point most certainly took stages to towns on the east side of the River and then found a boat to complete the journey. In the winter, stages often replaced wheels with skids and traveled right up the Hudson. In the right conditions, it was possible to walk across the ice from Garrison or Cold Spring. Stagecoach travel was faster than walking but quite grueling as the vehicles had no shock absorbers of any kind and the roads were often in horrible shape.

In 1807, inventor Robert Fulton and politician and financier Robert Livingston built and launched the *North River Steamboat*, known now as the *Clermont*. The successful maiden voyage departed from New York City on August 17, 1807 and by September of the same year,

STEAM BOAT.			
<i>For the Information of Passengers.</i>			
The Steam Boat will leave New-York for Albany every Saturday afternoon, exactly at 5 o'clock, and will pass			
West-Point about 4 o'clock Sunday morning.			
Newburgh at	7	do	do
Poughkeepsie at	11	do	do
Esopus at 2 do in the afternoon.			
Red-Hook at	4	do	do
Catskill at	7	do	do
Hudson at	9	do	do

An 1808 ad from the *New York Evening Post* showing a 5 p.m. departure from New York City and a 4 a.m. arrival at West Point.

commercial passenger service began. West Point was a regular stop for the *Steamboat*. In 1808, the fare was \$2.50 from New York and took 11 hours, arriving at 4 a.m. From Albany, the passage took 23 hours, arrived at 7 a.m., and cost \$4.50, about \$93 in 2021 dollars. Because of the high cost, passenger sloop travel persisted for a couple more decades on the River. Eventually, steamboats were cheap and fast and sloops operated as cargo vessels almost exclusively. West Point relied on sloops for delivery of bulk items, such as building materials.



**LONG BARRACKS.** This large, two-story, wooden building was about 250' long. When it was built is unknown, but it burned down in February of 1826. Before the completion of the South Barracks in 1815, cadets boarded here. The western end of the building served as a jail.

**FORT CLINTON.** In 1801, this Revolution-era fort was largely in ruins, mounds of grass-covered dirt with ruins inside. Still partially maintained was a magazine that held very old gunpowder. Peale shows a long white building to the left of the ruins. The purpose of this structure is unknown.

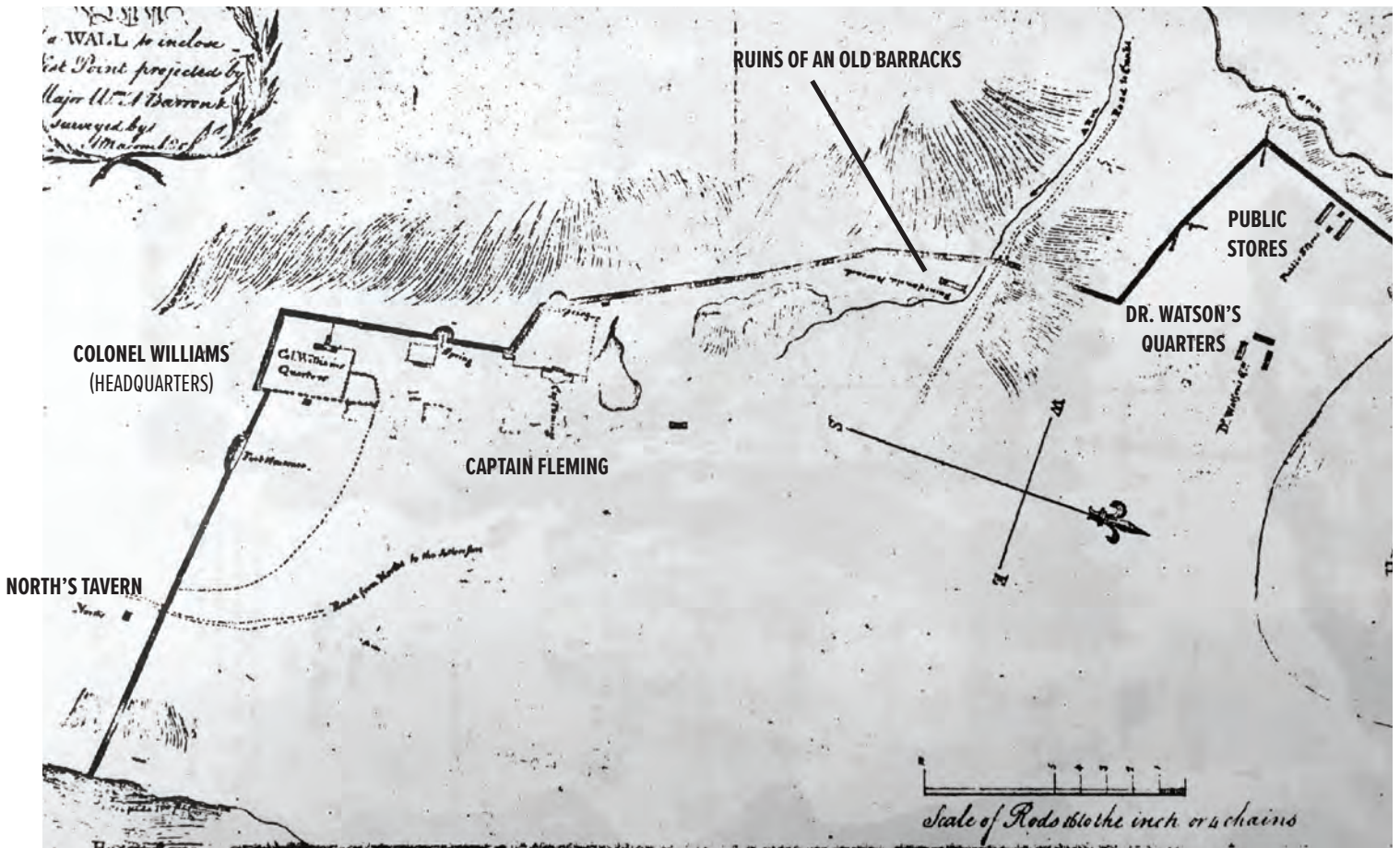
**EXECUTION HOLLOW.** A large depression that existed until after 1900. Peale seems to show a structure in or on the edge of the Hollow. This could be the ruins of the Old Provost, a building used until 1796 when it burned down under suspicious circumstances. The building could also be an ice house.

**MODEL YARD.** In his memoirs, Swift refers to a large model yard where miniature forts were used for instruction. His description suggests this is that structure. It does not appear on later maps.

**WILLIAMS QUARTERS.** It is unclear who lived in this sprawling wooden house in June of 1801, but it may have been famed artilleryist Louis de Tousard. It became the quarters of Colonel Jonathan Williams when he arrived to assume the superintendency of the new Academy later that year. Swift mentions that it was the former residence of Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Rochefontaine. The house was destroyed in the late 1820s.



## PROPOSED WALL, 1805



A map of a proposed wall to enclose the United States Military Academy, ca. 1805, by Major William A. Barron. Source: USMA Archives

The map above, believed to be from 1805–1807, by Major William A. Barron, shows a proposed boundary wall for the young Academy. In July of 1805, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn asked Colonel Jonathan Williams, USMA Superintendent, for an estimate of a five-foot high dry stone wall. In September of 1805, the Secretary issued an order for the construction of the wall. It was completed, with minor deviations from this plan, over the following few years.

This map is notable because it shows ruins of barracks in the area of the current houses along Professors Row. Barracks in this area are clearly indicated on more than one Revolutionary War map, but after the War, there is little evidence of them. An ink wash from the 1790s shows a barrack in this area, but there is no indication that the building was used after the founding of the Academy.

This enlargement from a 1790s inkwash believed to be by Archibald Robertson shows the barracks near the present site of Professors Row and close to where the above 1805 map shows barracks ruins.

Source: West Point Museum



## A PLAN OF WEST POINT CHRISTIAN E. ZOELLER, 1808

The earliest known detailed map of West Point buildings after the formal establishment of the Academy is an 1808 map by the Teacher of Drawing Christian E. Zoeller. Zoeller, who was Swiss or German, taught from 1808–1810 and 1812–1819. He died in 1821 in Little Rock, Arkansas. The map is in the collection of the USMA Library.

### HEADQUARTERS

As in 1802, in 1808 this was the home of Benjamin Franklin's grandnephew Jonathan Williams (1751–

1815). Williams had been the Academy's first Superintendent, serving from 1801–1803. He vacated the position in 1803 and was reappointed in 1805, overseeing the Academy until 1812. During his second superintendency, he also oversaw the development and construction of New York City's defenses. The Williamsburgh section of Brooklyn is named for Williams.

One of the interesting aspects of the building is the addition on the back. It is rarely depicted on early maps with the same shape. The inset on the next page shows the building as drawn on 1808, 1815, 1817, and 1826 maps. It is not known if the building

changed shape or whether the cartography is imprecise.

Between 1808 and about 1820, the house is consistently shown with trees and/or gardens in the front. This was, of course, not uncommon with early American homes. Gardens at this time were for aesthetics, for food, and for growing herbs and flowers used in medicines or for household cleaning. Zoeller's map clearly shows a fence or wall around both the house and the garden areas.





### LABORATORY

This building, alluded to by Joseph Gardner Swift when discussing West Point in 1801, was used as a laboratory. Given its proximity to the “Artillery Butt” and accounts by Swift, the Laboratory was a place to make rockets, mortar bombs, etc.:

*Soon after his appointment he made good progress at his books, and became our principal in the laboratory, in which place [George] Bomford and myself had a narrow escape. A rocket had taken fire while in the mould and driving, the flame from which reached the floor above, upon which, on cartridge paper, was a mass of gun powder. Both of us sprang to the window and became jammed for want of space for both, and there struggled until the rocket was exhausted.*

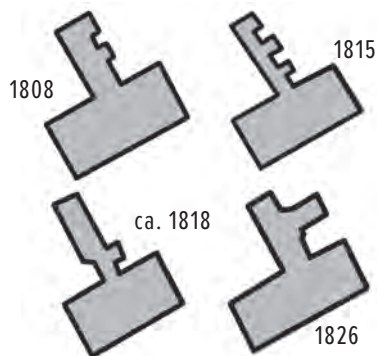
### LIBRARY

In 1802, this had been quarters for officers. By 1808, it was the Library. This change likely occurred in 1807 given Swift’s statement that, “I commenced the formation of a library for the Academy, and employed Samuel Campbell, of New York, to import the books...” Campbell was a prominent bookseller and paper merchant in New York City. Technical books were almost entirely from Europe at the time and cadets were expected to be proficient in French.

Note that the model yard that was in front of this building in 1802 is gone in 1808, replaced by a ring of elm trees that Swift claims to have planted with Cadet Walker K. Armistead (Class of 1803). If they were planted while Armistead was a cadet, these trees were planted before March of 1803, but Armistead was stationed at West Point after graduation until 1806.

### ACADEMY

This building, as in 1802, was a multipurpose facility used for diverse activities, including instruction and chapel. It is not clear what the small saltbox next to it was used for at the time. The small depression between the saltbox and the Military Storekeeper’s Quarters is visible. Labels on a map from the late 1810s indicate that the building next to the pond was a workshop.



The shape of the Headquarters building on four different West Point maps.

### MILITARY STOREKEEPER’S QUARTERS

In 1808, this would have been the quarters of Captain Alexander Thompson, a veteran of the Revolution, who succeeded George Fleming in 1806. He served until his death at West Point in 1809. His son, Alexander Ramsay Thompson graduated in 1812, served in the War of 1812, and was killed in 1837 at the Battle of Lake Okeechobee during the Second Seminole War.

This building is consistently shown with trees in front. The spring behind the house at the base of steep terrain was located near the southern most entrance of today’s Arvin Gymnasium.

## SOUTHERN BOUNDARY

The Academy's southern boundary in 1808 continued to border the property of Thomas North. The boundary wall was approximately on a line running through today's Pershing and Bartlett Halls.

## ARTILLERY BUTT

A butt is a mound of earth, and sometimes wood or other material, into which artillery pieces can be fired. This allows cannon and other pieces to be fired without fear of an errant projectile. If the butt is of a consistent material, it can be used to calculate a shell's velocity.

## NORTH'S TAVERN

This combination tavern, restaurant, and inn was still operated by Thomas North in 1808.

## KOSCIUSKO'S GARDEN

This small retreat, created by Thaddeus Kosciuszko (often, as here, spelled "Kosciuszko"), was repaired by Joseph Gardner Swift and Lieutenant Alexander Macomb in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The Garden still exists today and is discussed in a previous section.

## THE PLAIN

Today, the Plain is relatively flat, but Zoeller's map highlights that the eastern margin of the Plain was more hummocky than it is now. At least two depressions are showing (one being near the "Burying Place") as well as the boulders previously discussed.

## EXECUTION HOLLOW

The square feature in the bottom of Execution Hollow cannot be definitively identified. Later accounts mention an ice house in the depression, but an 1818 map also by Zoeller shows the ice house on the slope of the depression rather than at the bottom. A cadet memoir recalling in the 1820s mentions skating here, so perhaps the bottom was walled to encourage pooling of water. There is no indication of the Old Provost present in 1802.

## BATTERY

The battery above Duck Point is what is now known as Knox Battery or Battery Knox and was originally built in 1778.

## DUCK POINT

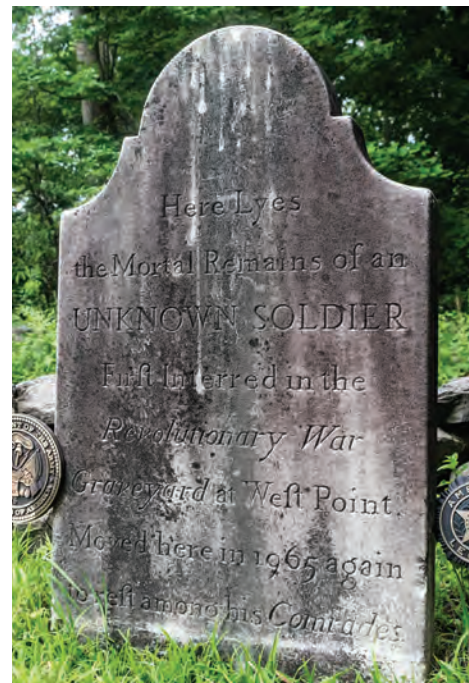
This small, rocky outcrop still exists, but has been minimized by land reclamation along the shore. Duck Point today is where the modern road along the shore ends in a small loop. None of the fields that now hug the shoreline were present in 1808.

## BURYING PLACE

Because of the large number of soldiers stationed at West Point during the Revolution, and the presence of smallpox and other diseases among troops, graves were common on Academy grounds. But the place indicated here seems to have been a common gravesite as it is labeled the same way on maps even a decade later. A body found in this area was buried at the New Windsor Cantonment in 1965.

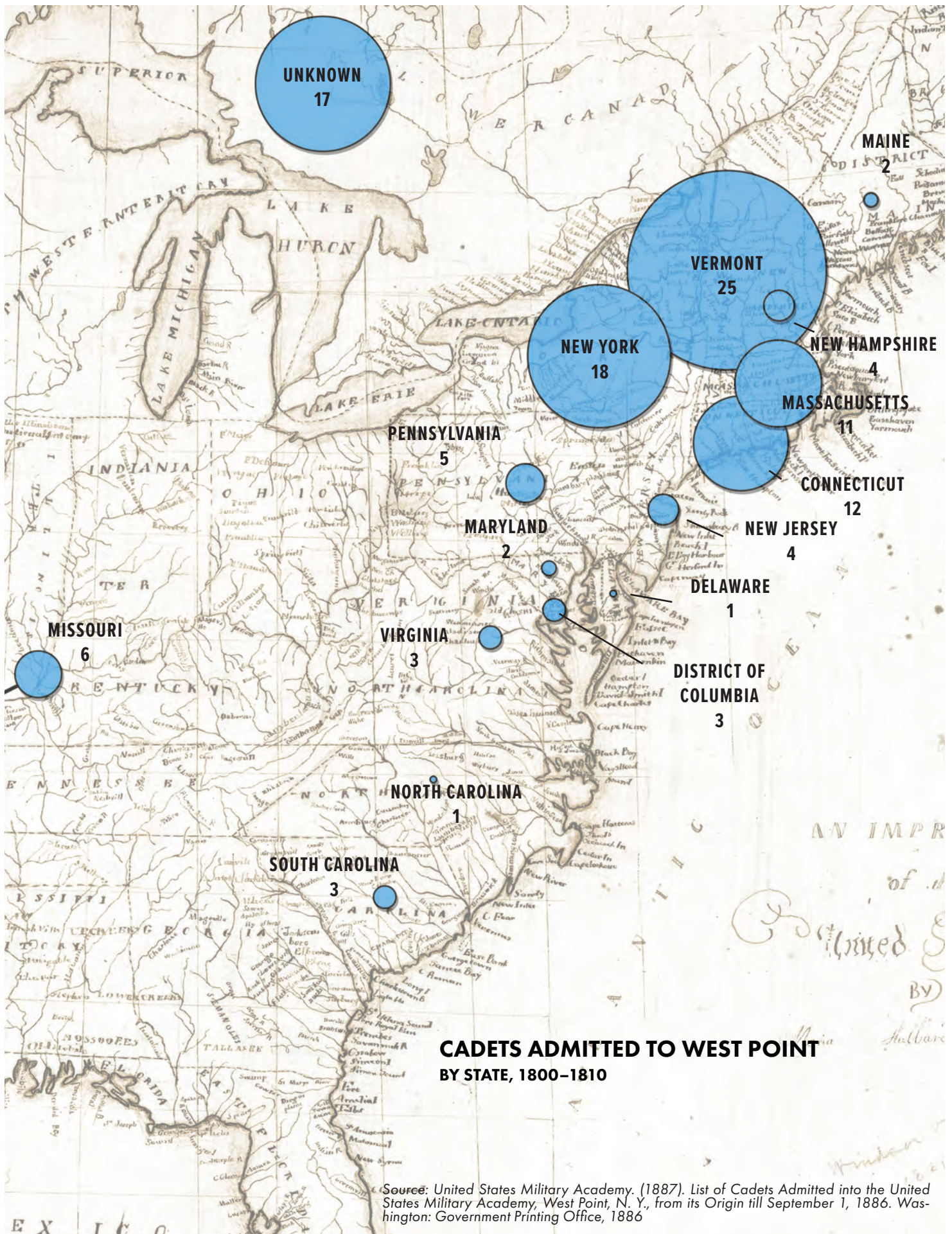
## PLOUGHED LAND

It is unclear if this area was plowed for cultivation or just cleared. It is shown with a fence or wall around it. Maps from 1815–1818 show the area in a very similar way. By about 1818, this area transitioned into a functional space with a woodyard and support buildings.



Grave of a Revolutionary War soldier found at West Point and reinterred at the New Windsor Cantonment site in 1965. Photo by author.

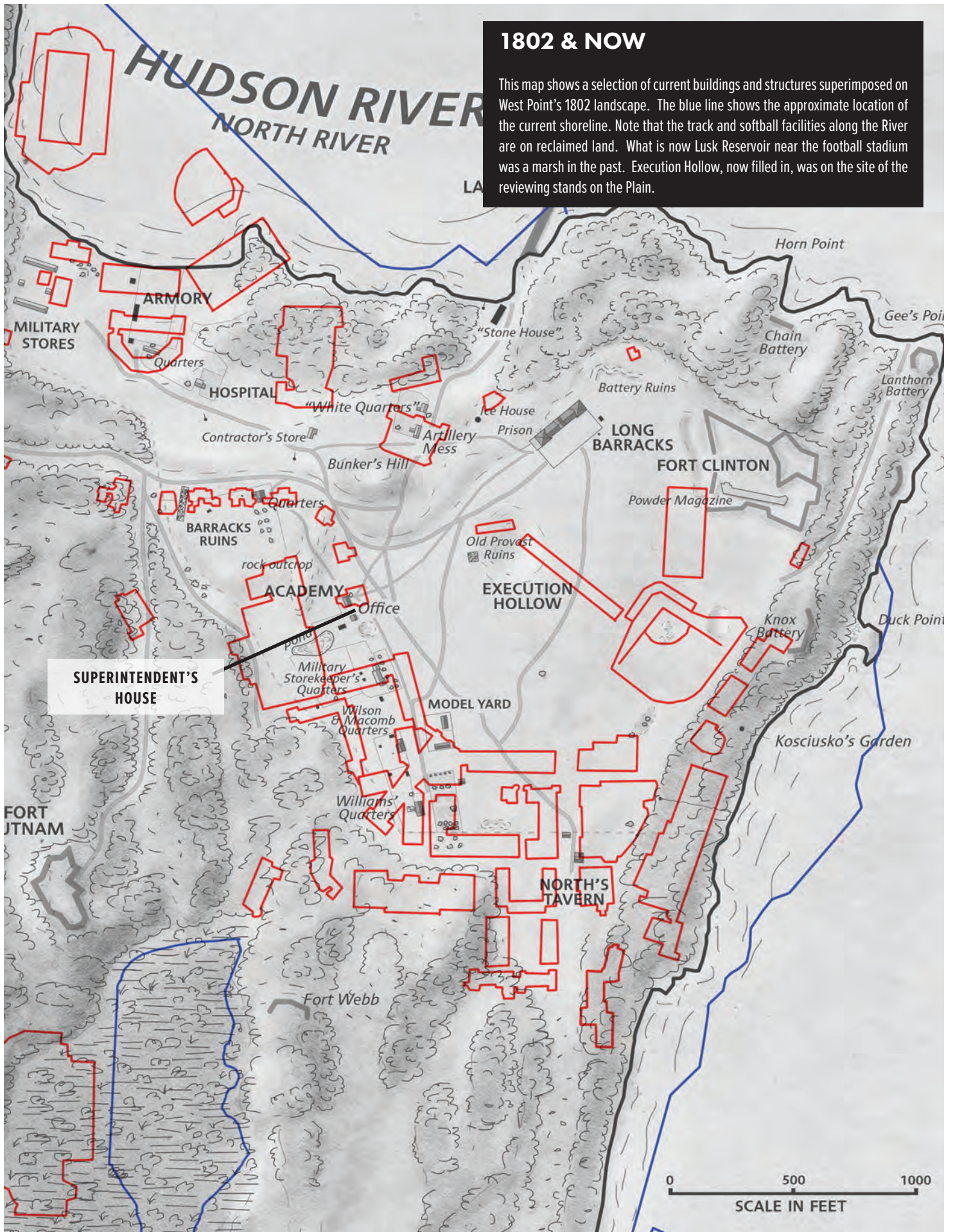




Source: United States Military Academy. (1887). List of Cadets Admitted into the United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y., from its Origin till September 1, 1886. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886

## 1802 & NOW

This map shows a selection of current buildings and structures superimposed on West Point's 1802 landscape. The blue line shows the approximate location of the current shoreline. Note that the track and softball facilities along the River are on reclaimed land. What is now Lusk Reservoir near the football stadium was a marsh in the past. Execution Hollow, now filled in, was on the site of the reviewing stands on the Plain.

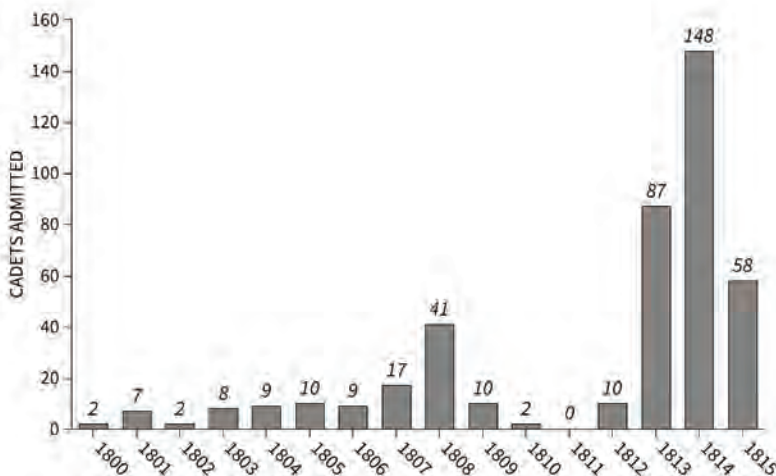
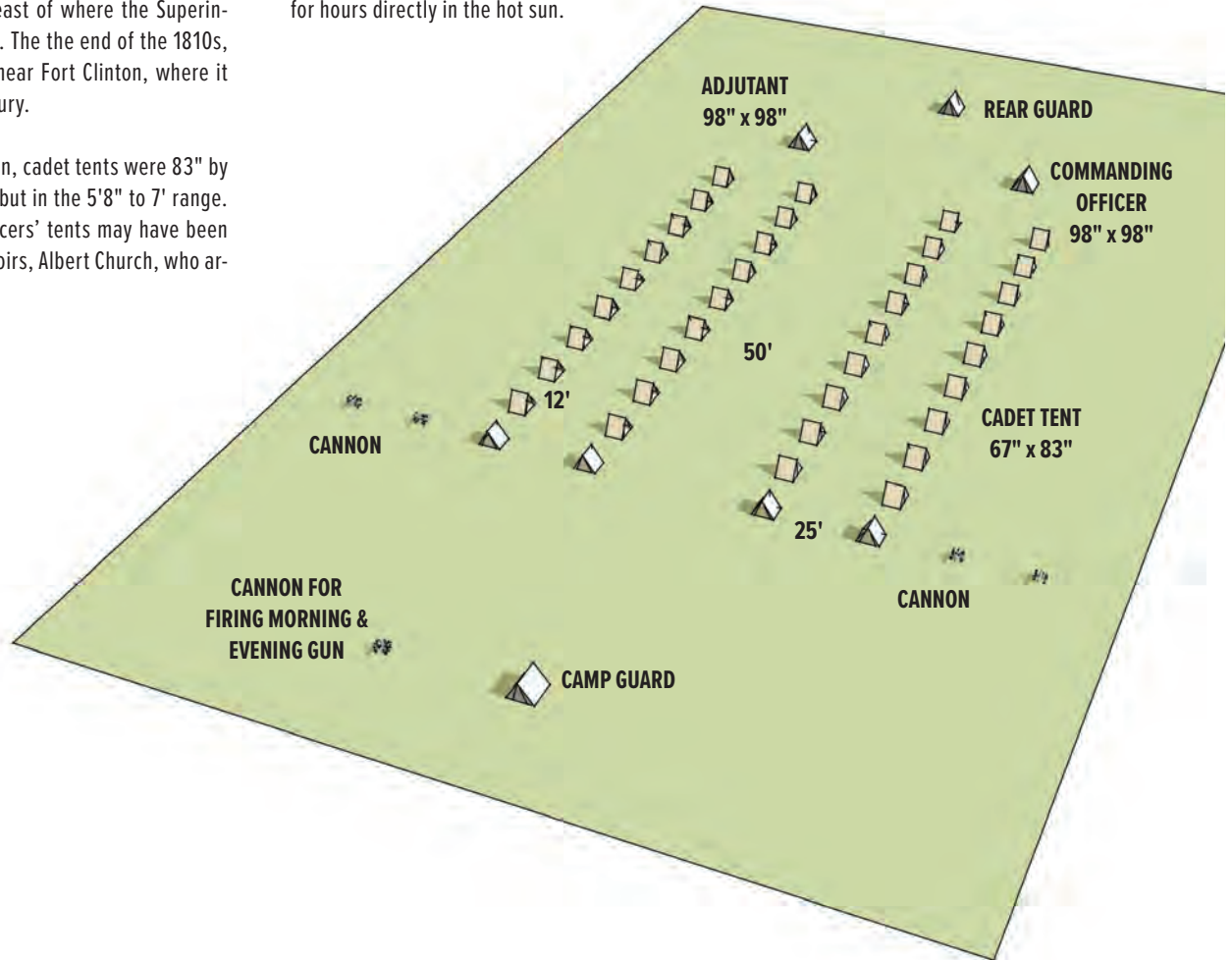


## SUMMER CAMP, 1814

In 1812, Congress prescribed that cadets were to be encamped for three months a year. The graphic on this page shows the arrangement of the camp in 1814 based on a plan in the holdings of the New York Historical Society. At this time, the camp was likely on the Plain just east of where the Superintendent's House is today. The the end of the 1810s, it had moved to a area near Fort Clinton, where it remained for over a century.

According to the 1814 plan, cadet tents were 83" by 67". Height is unknown, but in the 5'8" to 7' range. The large guard and officers' tents may have been walled tents. In his memoirs, Albert Church, who ar-

rived at West Point in 1824, recalls that they had no tent platform or tent fly. The ground was covered with a simple oil cloth and a ditch was dug around the tent to aid drainage. There were no sentry boxes for guards, so cadets had to stand for hours directly in the hot sun.



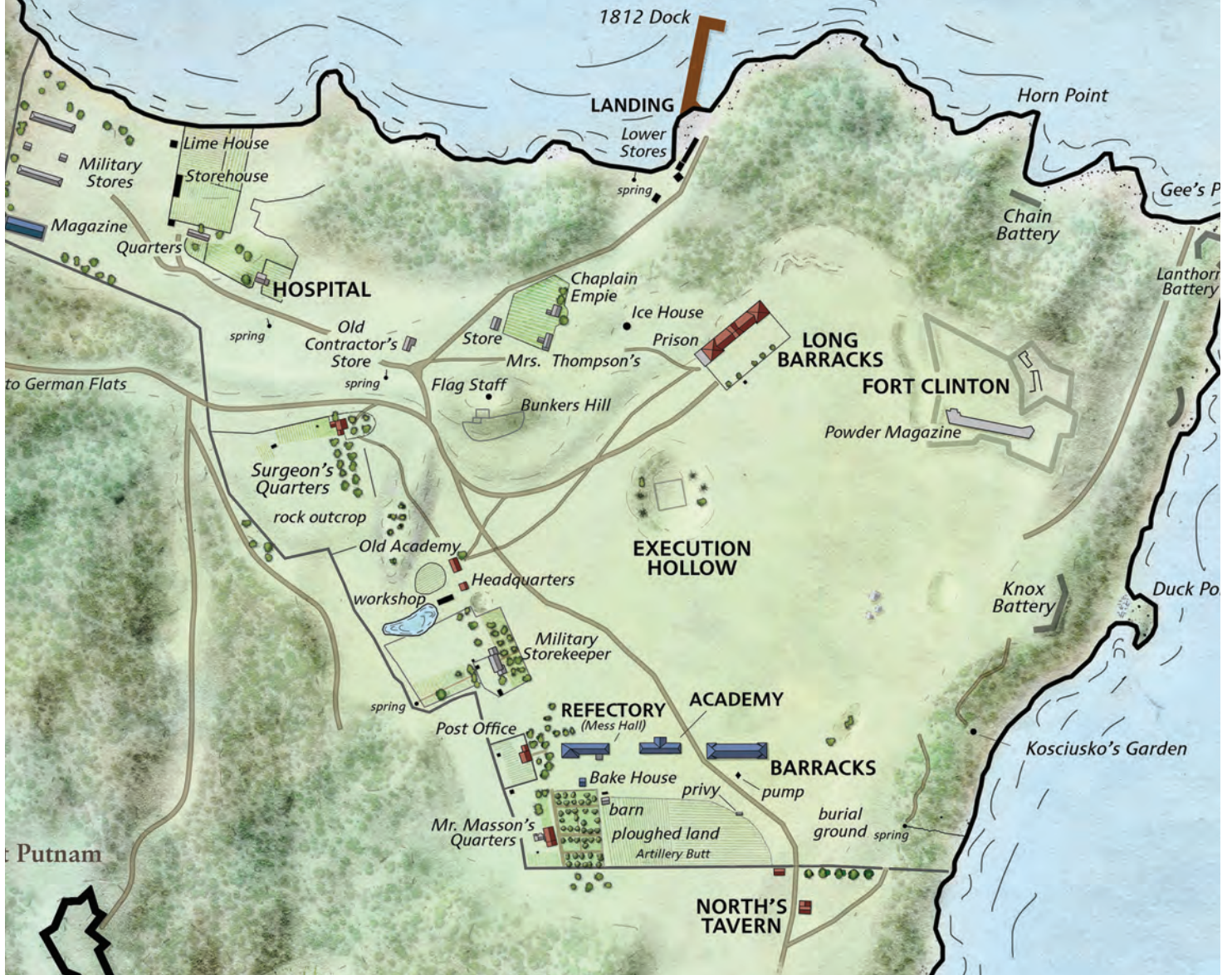
**Cadets Admitted by Year, 1800-1815.** A rapid increase in the size of the Corps of Cadets during the War of 1812 necessitated an increase in barracks space.

## 1815 MAP

The War of 1812 ushered in the first real era of construction for the young Academy. In April 29, 1812 Congress passed laws that formalized the structure and size of the Academy (250 cadets) and authorized funds for building construction. The map on the next page shows three major buildings built in 1815 which are detailed in the following sections. The chart to the left shows the explosion in the size of the Corps of Cadets in 1813 and 1814.

# Hudson or North River

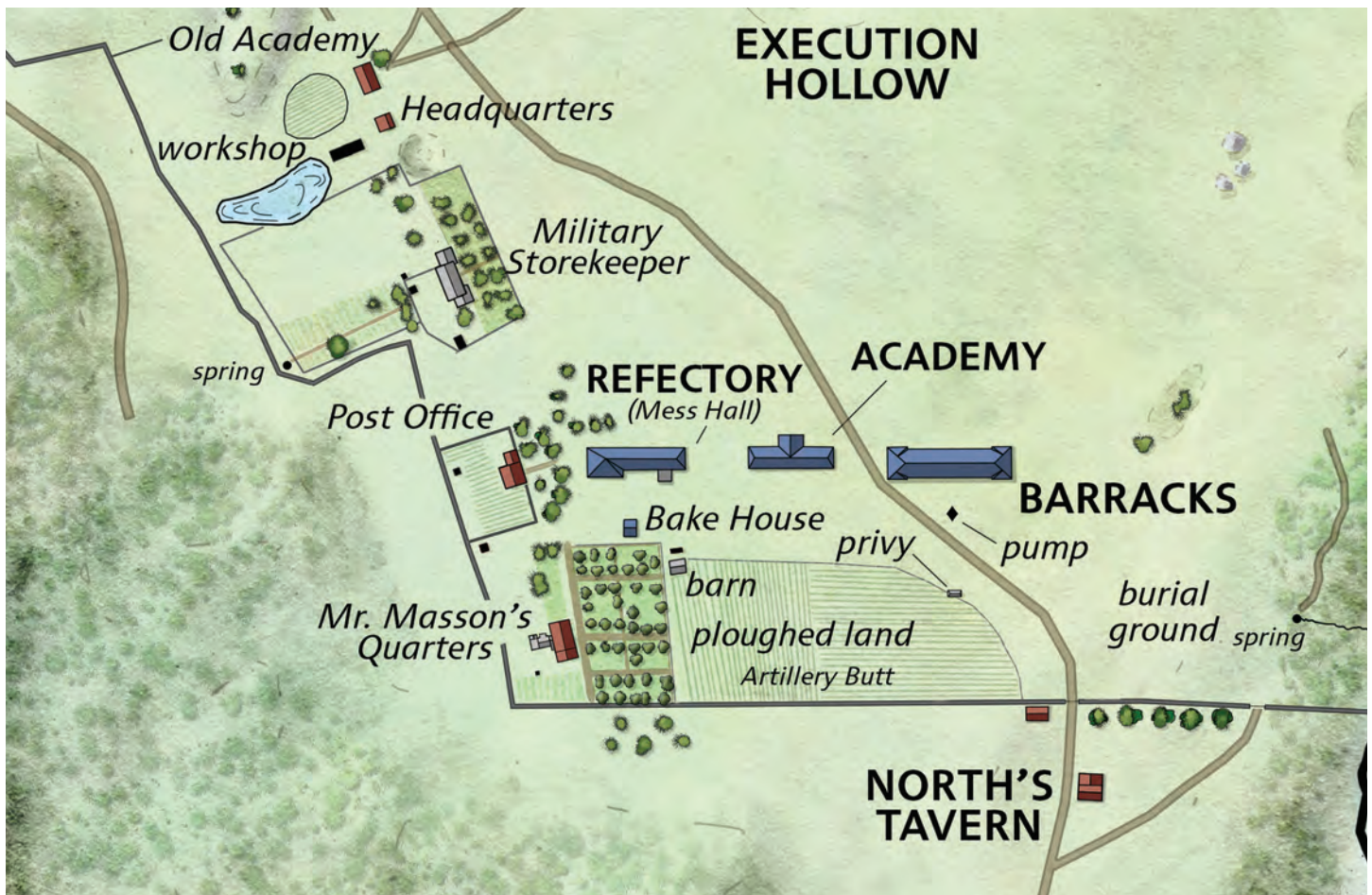
*West Point, 1815*



A digital recreation of the Academy, built in 1815 and destroyed by fire on February 19, 1838.

0 500 1000  
SCALE





The year 1815 saw the completion of three large stone buildings in West Point's core area.

### REFECTORY (aka COMMONS / MESS)

This building was finished in 1815 and will be discussed in detail on the following pages. It is often referred to as the Commons in addition to the Mess or The Refectory. The structure served as a mess for cadets as well as quarters for the Steward and a makeshift hotel for Academy visitors. The western section of the building had a cellar. In 1815, cadets would have eaten on both the first and second story.

### BAKE HOUSE

Completed with the Refectory in 1815, this brick building had a large oven and boiler. It also had prep space separate from the oven with a baker's table, a kneading trough, and a "meal box." The foundation was stone and mortar and the roof was slate. The size of the building is a bit unclear because of discrepancies between the builder's and mason's notes, but the evidence suggests 25' by 20'.

Some of the dimensions were:

- Meal-box: 8.5' long by 3.5' wide by 2.5' deep. No bottom.
- Bakers Table: 11' by 3' with a backboard; all made of clear plank.
- Kneading trough: 6.5' long by 2' wide by 1'8" deep.

### BARRACKS

Soon to be known as the South Barracks, this large, three-story building was 180' by 44'. It had officer quarters and some offices in the east and west ends with forty-eight cadet rooms in-between. Twenty-four rooms faced south and twenty-four had northern exposure. Each floor of cadet rooms had a porch ("piazza") with the upper floors accessible by a central staircase. The wings had cellars. The building was constructed of stone and had a slate roof. The building will be discussed in detail on following pages.

### ACADEMY

Constructed in 1815, but after the Barracks and Refectory and perhaps finished in 1816, this building housed laboratory space, offices, a chapel, and the library at various times. It was 124'6" long and 47'5" at its widest. See the following pages for more details. The building was destroyed, along with many official USMA records, in February of 1838.

### PRIVY ("NECESSARY")

Perhaps because it was considered distasteful, no maps from the period identify the location of the privies, so this is an educated guess given its location near the pump and the barracks. The records are clear that two "necessaries" were built in 1815. One was wood and its dimensions were 19' by 9'. It had four stalls with double

seats, so eight seats in total. The structure had a pine frame with "plain weather" siding painted yellow and resting on a stone and oak foundation. The hipped roof had 18" shingles that were "lead" colored (probably wood). The building was heated and had a chimney. Records also indicate a second stone and brick privy, possibly closer to the Refectory, was also built in 1815. Digging for this privy is listed in the mason's notes under the section for the Mess.

### POST OFFICE

Previously quarters and a library, this building was, for a short time, the post office. It would soon be torn down.

### MILITARY STOREKEEPER

Until the Refectory opened, Isaac Partridge (the Superintendent's uncle) fed cadets in this building (1814–1815). The perceived nepotism in this relationship was a stain on the Superintendent. Alden Partridge was court-martialed on several charges in 1817.

### MR. MASSON'S QUARTERS

François Désiré Masson had been the first teacher of French, serving 1803–1810. He also taught drawing. When he left in 1810, his brother Florimond Masson took his position as French instructor. It is Florimond who presumably inhabited this house, although sources say he left the Academy in January of 1815.

## HEADQUARTERS

The small saltbox now served as both the main office as well as the Superintendent's quarters. The Superintendent at this time was Captain Alden Partridge. He served from 1814 until his removal in 1817. Some cadets may have boarded here as well.

## OLD ACADEMY

With the opening of the large, new Academy building, the old Academy seems to have been used as a public space, for chapel, and for cadet recitations. Berard (1886) says dance classes were held here in 1816. Already old and in disrepair, it would only survive a few more years. Sylvanus Thayer lived here as Superintendent from 1817–1820.

## PLOUGHED LAND

As in Zoeller's 1808 map, this area is referred to as plowed land in 1815, but there is no discussion of whether it was cultivated or what was grown. Accounts from about a decade later refer to a cadet garden in this location, so it is very possible that this was a garden for the Refectory.

## NORTH'S TAVERN

With the opening of the new Barracks, North's was only 100 yards from over a hundred teens and young adults. It was easy for them to sneak out at night for a drink or a meal. But, North's remained a necessary evil because new cadets and other guests had very limited lodging choices, and thus the beds available there were vital. With the size of the Corps increasing and West Point's fame growing, visitor space at North's or in the Refectory was scarce.

## DOCK

The Academy's Centennial notes that a new dock was installed in 1812.

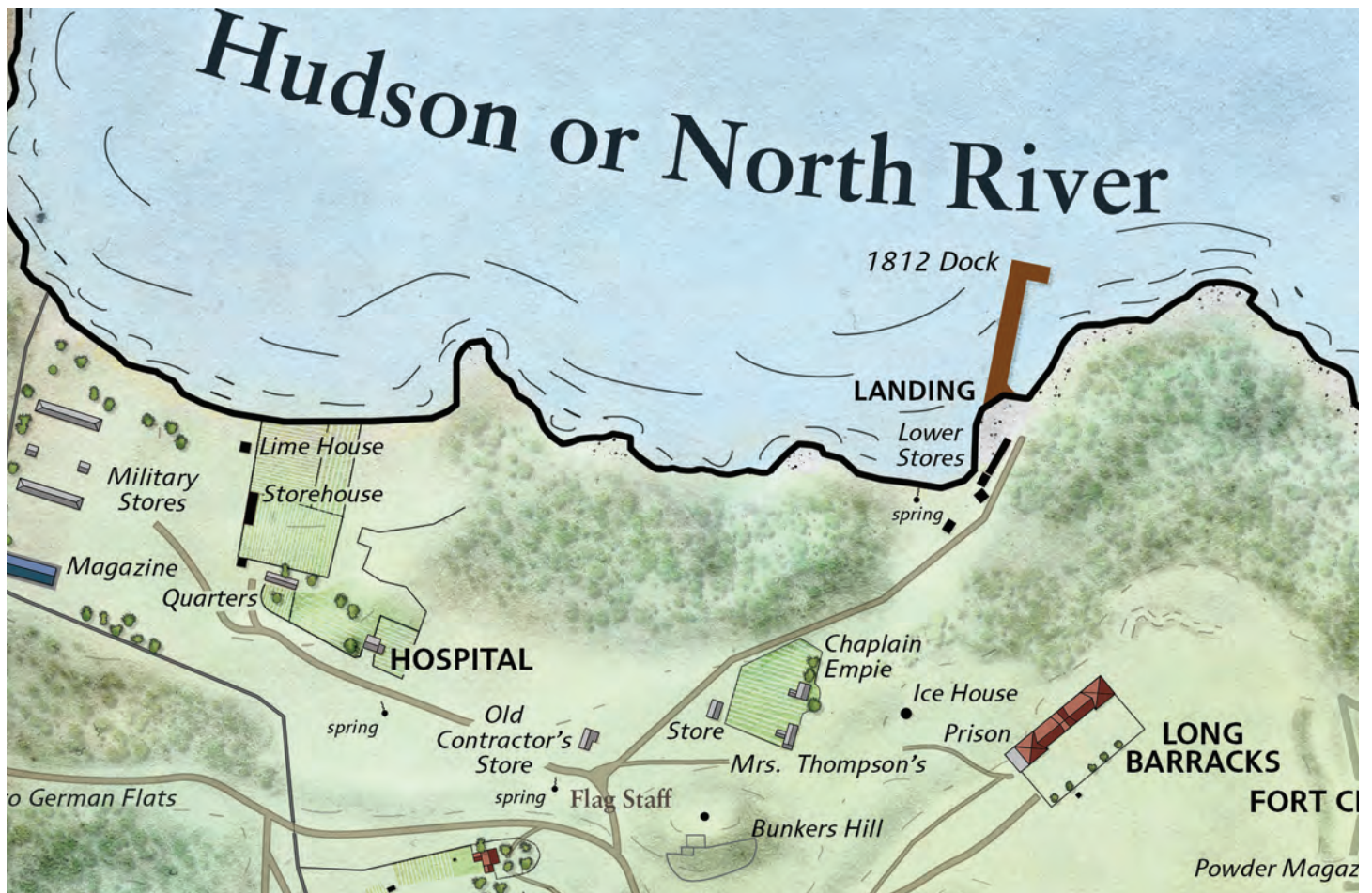
## MAGAZINE

This powder magazine does not exist on Zoeller's 1808 map. Berard (1886) states that the stones were brought to West Point for the magazine in 1807 or 1808 by an Alexander Mearns, grandfather of famed ornithologist Edgar Alexander Mearns, but biographies of the elder Mearns generally report his settlement in the West Point area around 1815. War Department records have several letters discussing the construction of a new powder magazine at West Point in 1812, so this building is likely from that year. It was torn down mid-century.

## MILITARY STORES

The two long storehouses near the River were controlled by the Government and not local authorities, but in 1815 the two smaller buildings between the larger stores were transferred to Academy for its use.

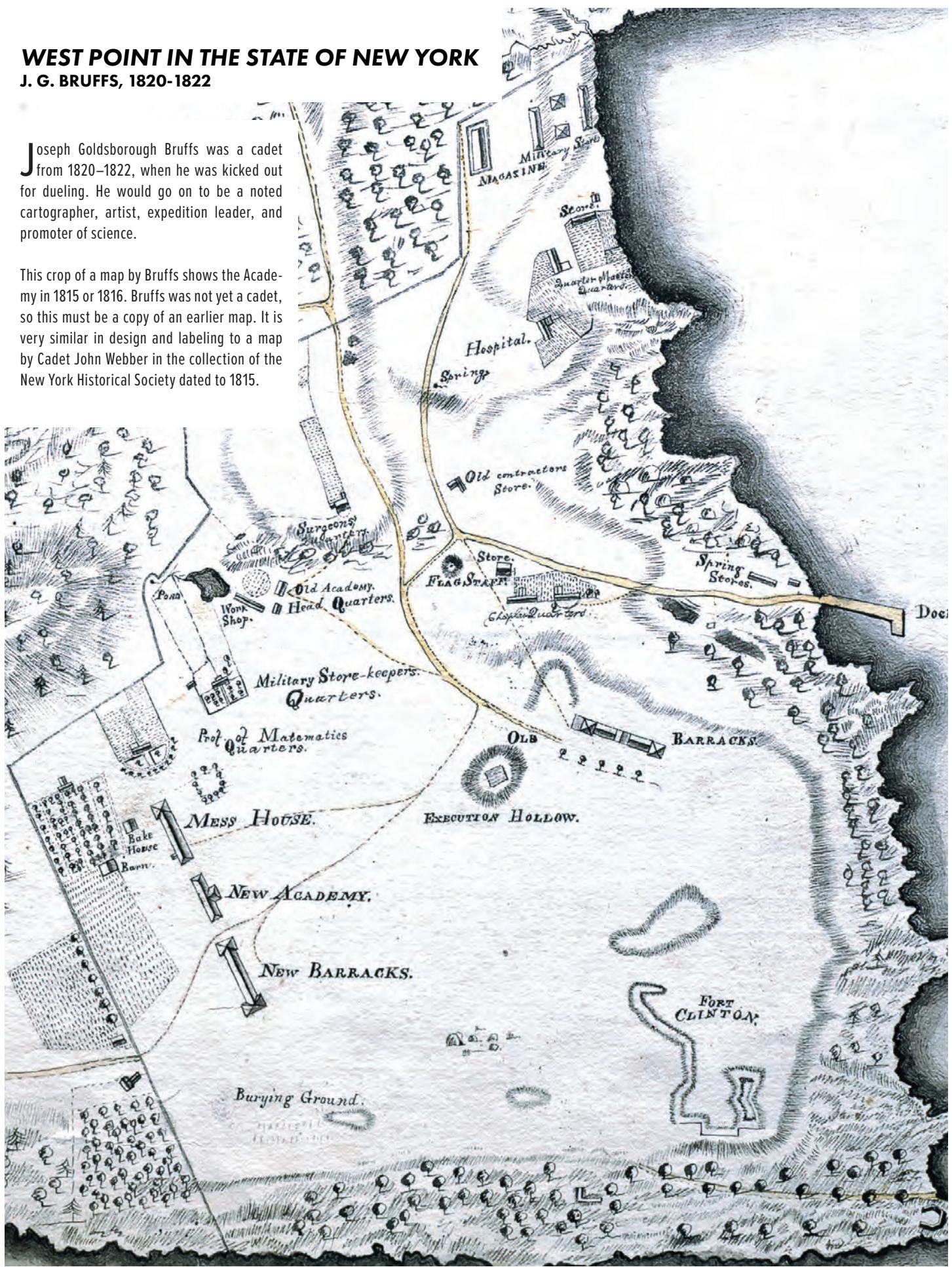
*West Point's northern slope changed little in the Academy's second decade with the exception of a new dock and a large powder magazine.*



**WEST POINT IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK**  
**J. G. BRUFFS, 1820-1822**

Joseph Goldsbrough Bruffs was a cadet from 1820-1822, when he was kicked out for dueling. He would go on to be a noted cartographer, artist, expedition leader, and promoter of science.

This crop of a map by Bruffs shows the Academy in 1815 or 1816. Bruffs was not yet a cadet, so this must be a copy of an earlier map. It is very similar in design and labeling to a map by Cadet John Webber in the collection of the New York Historical Society dated to 1815.



## SOUTH BARRACKS, 1815

Although contracted for in 1812, the War complicated funding and it was not until 1814 that adequate funding allowed construction to go forward. The builder was Jacob Halsey and the mason was Thomas T. Woodruff, both operating out of New York City. The structure was demolished in between 1849-1851 depending on sources.

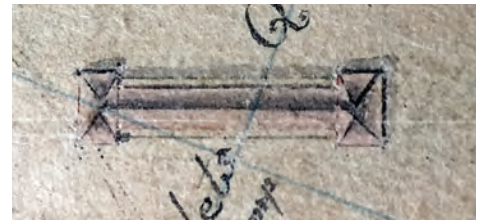
The building was built of gray/blue stone with wood floors and a blue slate roof, a rarity at the time in the United States. The shape of the roof was complicated and is not always depicted exactly the same way on early maps. The structure was shaped somewhat like a barbell with two wings connected by a skinnier middle section. The wings were three stories with cellars and the middle section was also three stories but lacked a basement. The wings were each 25' by 44' and the middle section 130' by 25' (plus piazzas). Therefore, the entire structure was 130' long and 44' deep.

Forty-eight cadets rooms occupied the middle section, sixteen to a floor. Half of the rooms faced north and half of the rooms faced south. Rooms were about 14' by 11' and typically held three cadets. Each level of the

middle wing had a piazza (porch) extending from wing to wing. The only way to get to the opposite side of the building was through a center passage where the only cadet staircase was found. The wings, occupied by officers or used for offices, had their own stairs. The wings had two apartments per floor. The stairs were lit by skylights. Later, spiral staircases seem to have been added to the outside.

The barracks were heated by fireplaces connected to twelve chimneys. The consensus seems to be that the building was very cold. In the early years, cadets had to carry firewood to the floors and cut it themselves. Woodboxes on each piazza were utilized. Fires in the building were common and a bucket brigade was always at the ready. Later, the fireplaces may have been converted to burn coal. All the windows and the doors of cadet rooms had shutters to help keep the cold out in the winter and the heat out in the summer. Water was available at a pump several yards to the south of the building. Whiskey barrels were used in the 1820s to store water for cleaning.

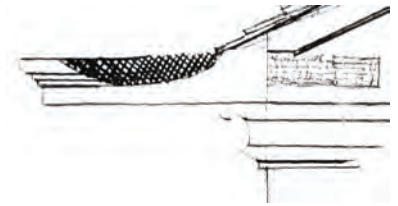
There were no privies in the building. A 19' by 9' "necessary" was completed with the barracks and was likely about a couple hundred feet south of the site. A building in that vicinity is nearly always unlabeled, indicating it might be the privy.



This 1818 drawing of the South Barracks by Zoeller shows the location of the water pump. It was used for decades after the Barracks were demolished. Also note that there appears to be no paving stones around the building yet. Source: West Point Museum

The area in front of the South Barracks on the north side was low and prone to becoming waterlogged. Cadets sometimes skated here. In 1825-1826, a zone around the building was paved with flagstone to make it more useful for formations. Much of this stone came from the Brainerd Quarry in Haddam, CT and was transported to West Point by sloop.

Gutter cornices were lined with lead and drained through tin leaders to lead pipes. This sketch is taken from builder Halsey's notes.



The was covered in the "best blue slate."

Skylights in the middle and two wings of the building provided light to the stairwells.

Fireplaces burned wood cut by cadets on each floor and stored in a woodbox.

The east and west wings had cellars. There was no basement in the middle section.

The cut stone details were likely pinkish brownstone such as the type found on the earliest stone buildings at West Point. The oldest Professors Row house, built just six years after South Barracks, has similar stone.

The floors were likely constructed of yellow pine based on later quartermaster records for repairs.

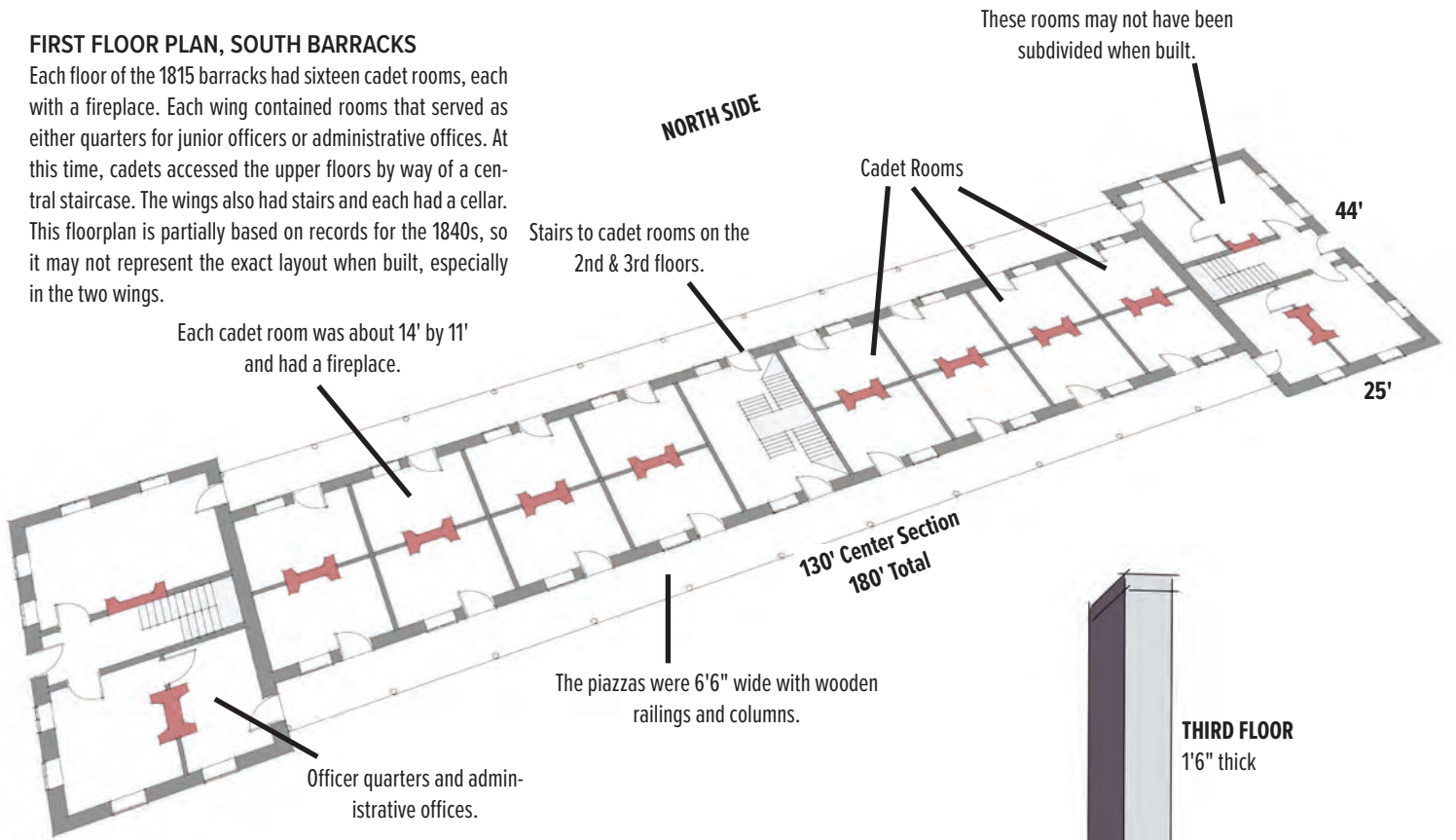
The walls of the barracks were gray/blue stone with lime and sand mortar. The stone color was likely very similar to the houses on Professors Row.

Although not shown here, all windows and the cadet room doors had shutters. The shutter color is not known.

**SOUTH BARRACKS**  
This undated drawing of the 1815 barracks, the South Barracks, is in the collection of the National Archives.

**FIRST FLOOR PLAN, SOUTH BARRACKS**

Each floor of the 1815 barracks had sixteen cadet rooms, each with a fireplace. Each wing contained rooms that served as either quarters for junior officers or administrative offices. At this time, cadets accessed the upper floors by way of a central staircase. The wings also had stairs and each had a cellar. This floorplan is partially based on records for the 1840s, so it may not represent the exact layout when built, especially in the two wings.

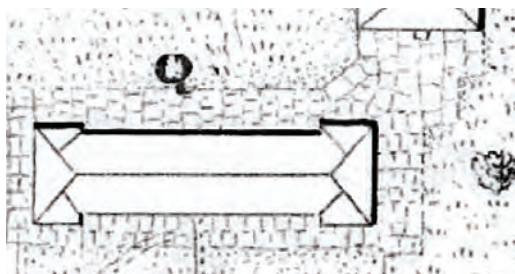


**BOYNTON'S SOUTH BARRACKS**

This off-reproduced drawing of South Barracks that appears in Boynton's History of West Point (1863) clearly shows spiral staircases from the ground to the piazzas. There is no evidence that these stairs existed in the building's early years. Also notable is that the artist has not shown skylights, indicating that they may have been removed.

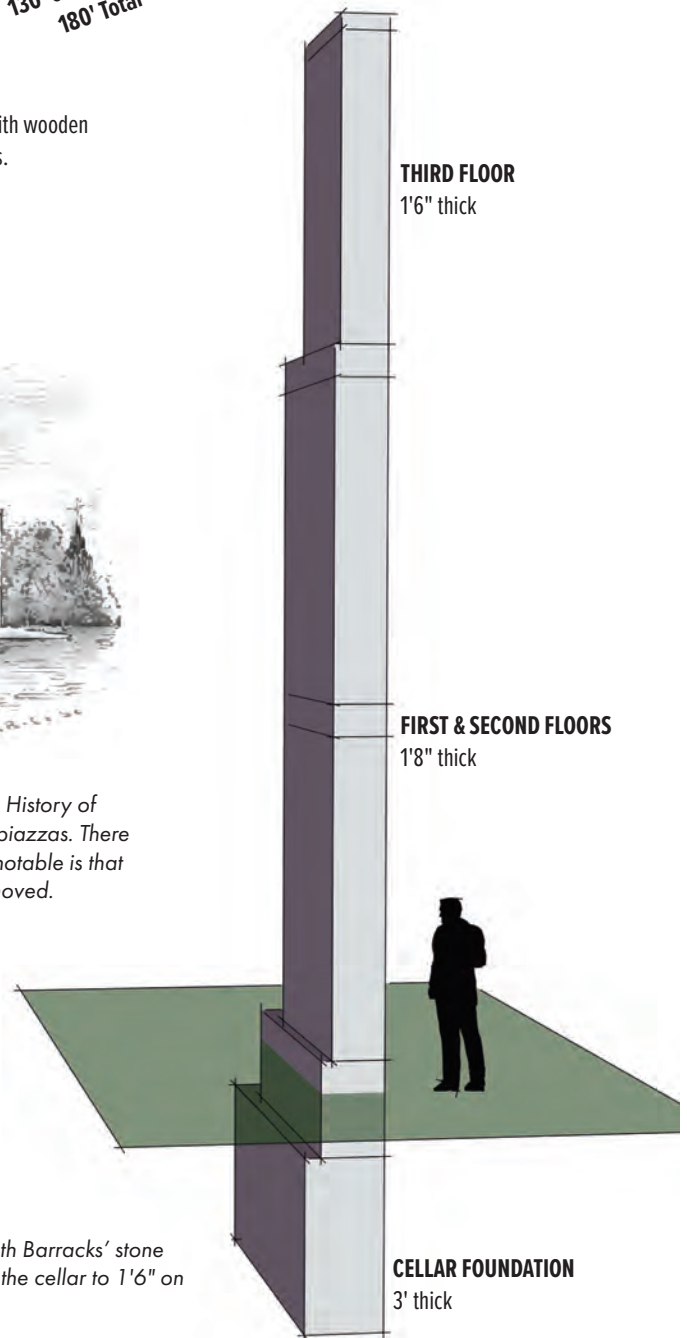
**PAVING STONES**

This detail from T. B. Brown's 1826 map shows extensive paved areas around the barracks. Quartermaster records confirm flagging stone purchases in 1825 and 1826. Source: Library of Congress

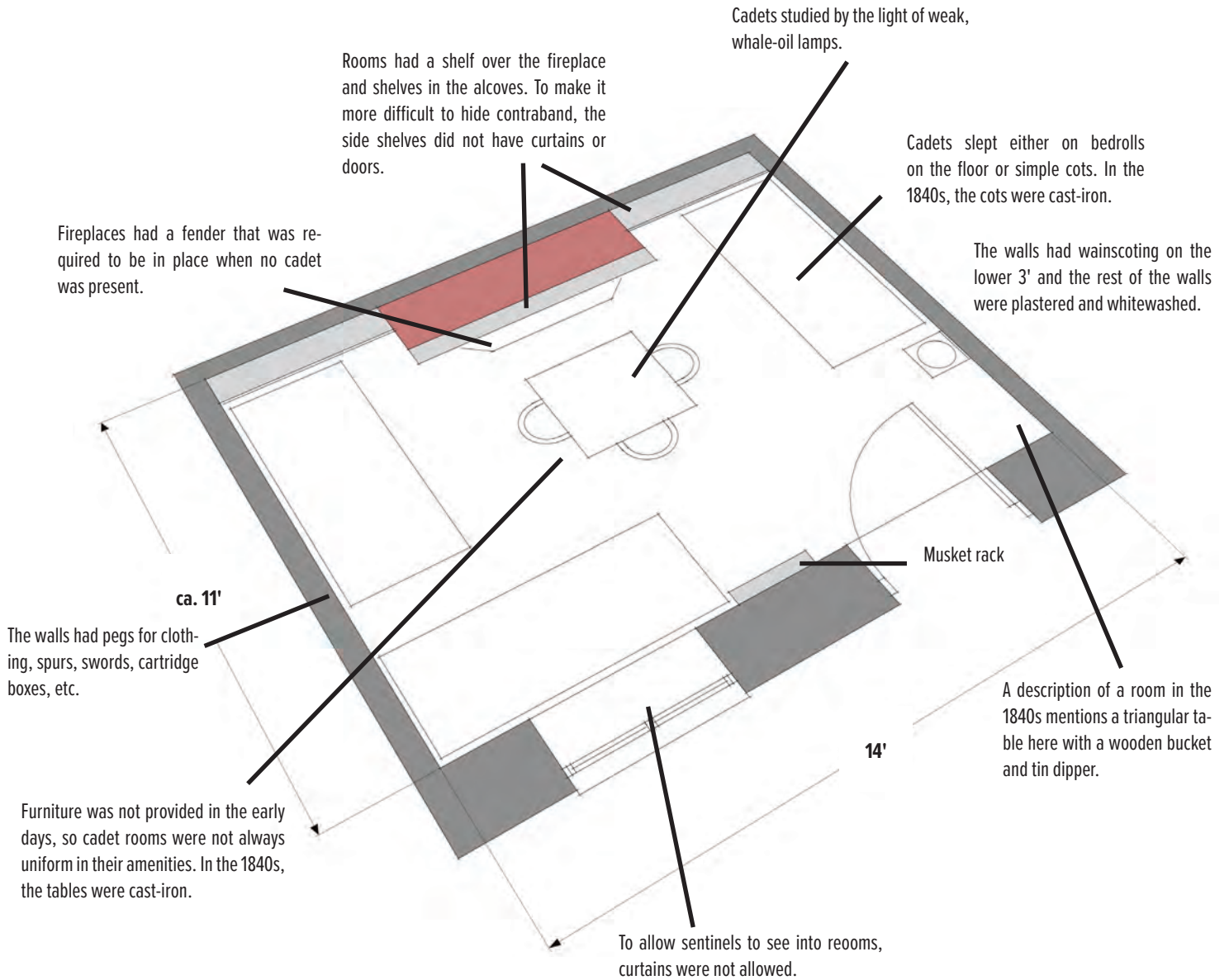


**WALL THICKNESS**

The thickness of the South Barracks' stone walls ranged from 3' in the cellar to 1'6" on the top floor



## A CADET ROOM IN THE SOUTH BARRACKS



The South Barracks is the second building from the left in this 1830s painting by John Ruibens Smith. The 1817 North Barracks is on the far left, and to the right of the South Barracks are the 1815 Academy and the 1815 Refectory (Mess Hall). Source: Library of Congress





*The Refectory by Alfred Sully, Class of 1841. The date is presumed to be 1837–1841. The trees may be the elms planted by Joseph Gardner Swift in the Academy's first years. Source: Frick Collection*

## THE REFECTORY, 1815

The 1815 dining facility is referred to in the builder's notes as the Steward's House, Kitchen, and Refectory, and this title summarizes the structure's use well. The east end of the building, the "Refectory," was the cadet dining area and it spanned two floors. Cadets ate at simple tables and sat on benches.

In the middle of the building was a kitchen, and the west end of the building was designed as housing for the Steward, the person contracted to feed the Academy's young men. This building was alternately called the Mess or the Commons. In fact, the stone mason Woodruff uses the term "mess" instead of "refectory."

The two-story building was made of gray/blue stone with walls 1'8" thick above ground. A description of the Mess in the 1840s says the exterior was stuccoed. It is unclear if this was the case when built. Some inte-

rior walls were brick. According to an 1815 sketch, the building was 146' long with a 30' deep east wing and a 41'6" deep western wing (with an attic). An 1840 plan of the building shows the length as 146'10" with depths of 30'2" and 40'9" for the east and west wings.

The first floor was 10' high and the second level 9'6", making the height from the ground to the roofline about 21'6". To the top of the highest chimney was 39'. There was a finished bedroom in the attic. Walls throughout the Refectory were lathed and plastered. The building had a cesspool and sink, but the location of these is uncertain.

The west end of the building had a cellar with exterior walls 2'–3' thick. Some of the cellar rooms had wood plank or pebble pavement floors. Parts of the cellar were window-lit. The eastern wing had no cellar but

rested on 6'6" deep foundation walls 2'6"–3' thick. The roof was blue slate with lead flashing. Three skylights, each with twenty, 8"x10" pieces of glass, helped light the interior.

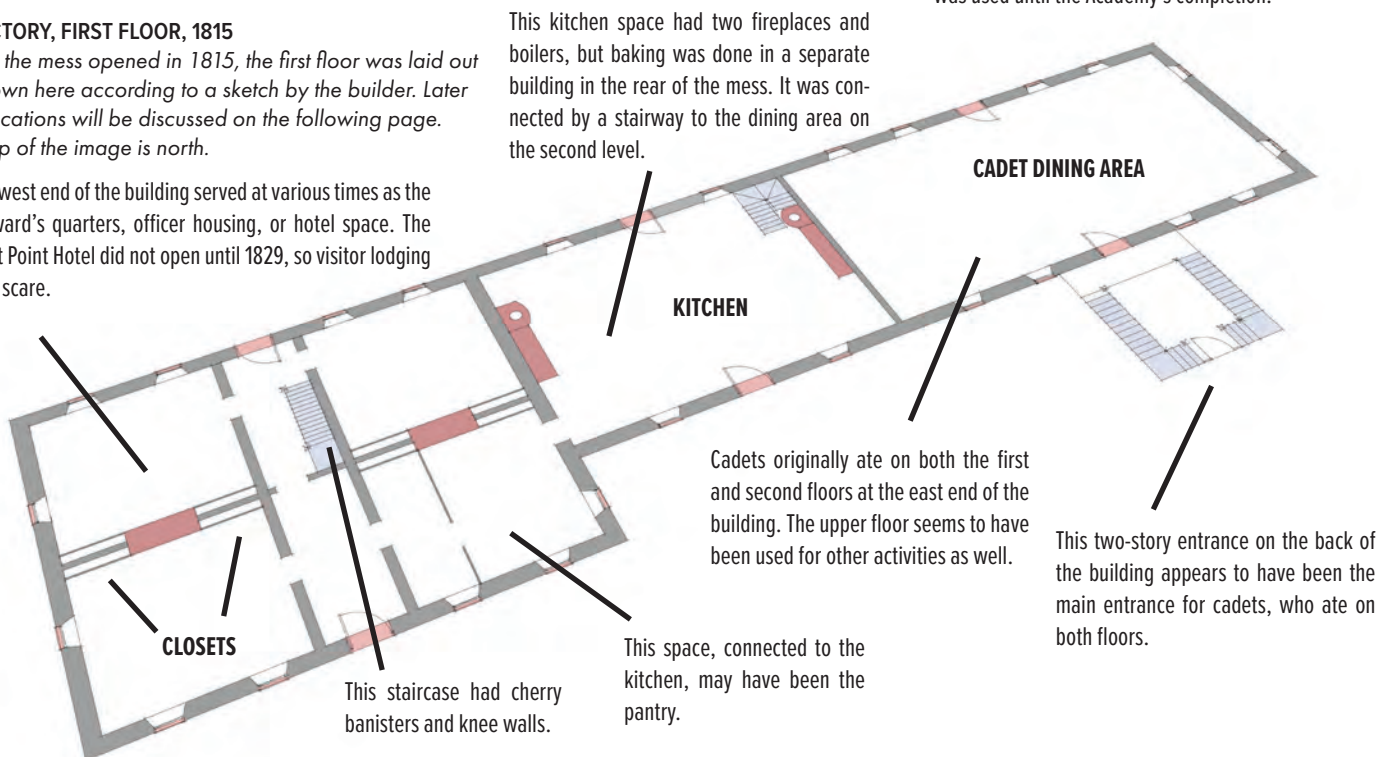
Historian Thomas Fleming (1969) writes that there was a fire on the roof of this building in December of 1821 during a cadet uprising. His source is unclear.

The staircase on the back of the building allowed cadets access to the second floor. This painted feature was made of wood with a shingled roof. Plans from later decades do not show this feature, the stairs having been moved inside along the eastern wall. The builder refers to these stairs as accessing the Refectory and Chapel. Religious services are thought to have been held in the Academy next door, but it was not finished when the Refectory opened, so perhaps the upstairs eating area was used until the Academy's completion.

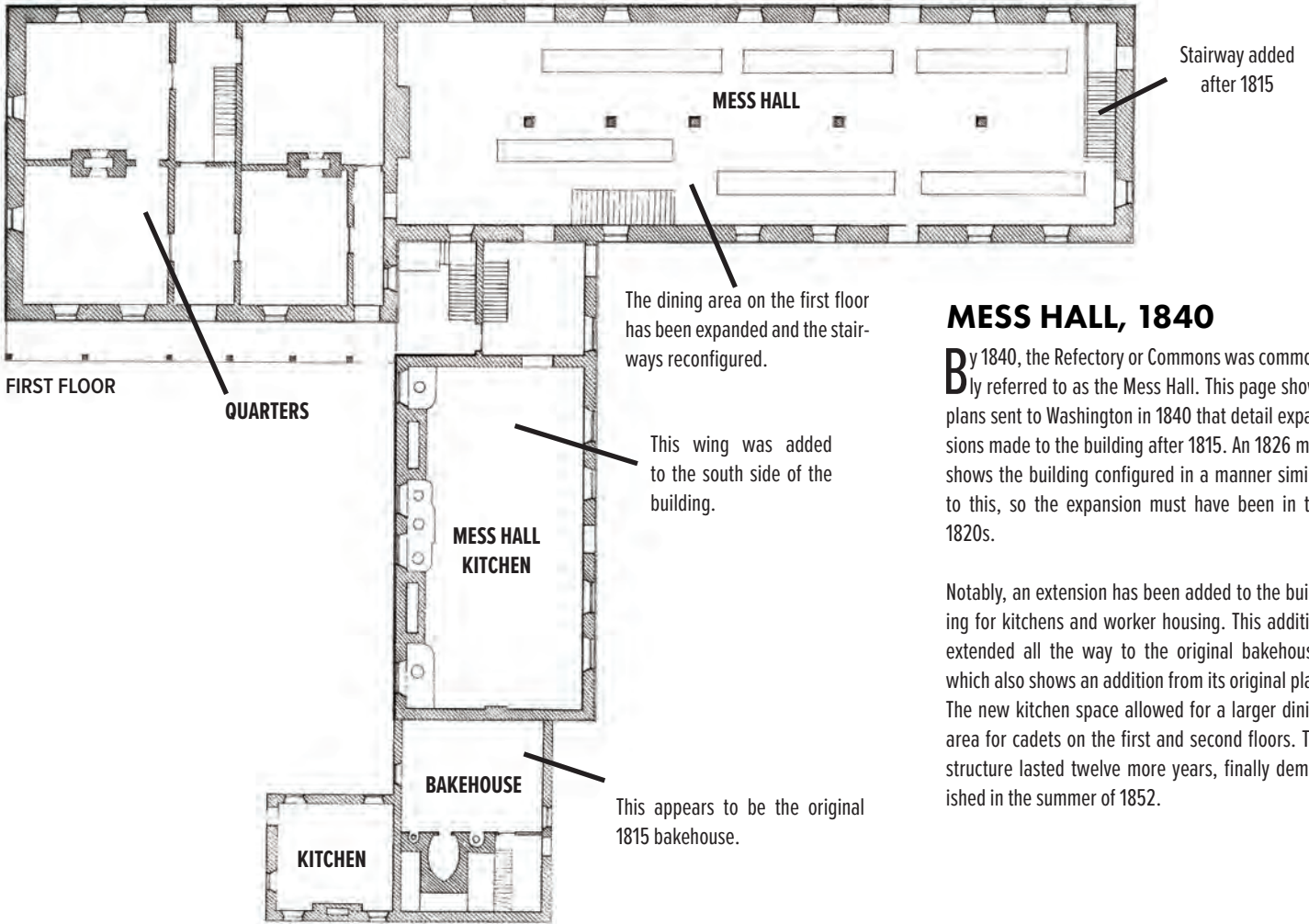
### REFECTORY, FIRST FLOOR, 1815

When the mess opened in 1815, the first floor was laid out as shown here according to a sketch by the builder. Later modifications will be discussed on the following page. The top of the image is north.

The west end of the building served at various times as the Steward's quarters, officer housing, or hotel space. The West Point Hotel did not open until 1829, so visitor lodging was scarce.



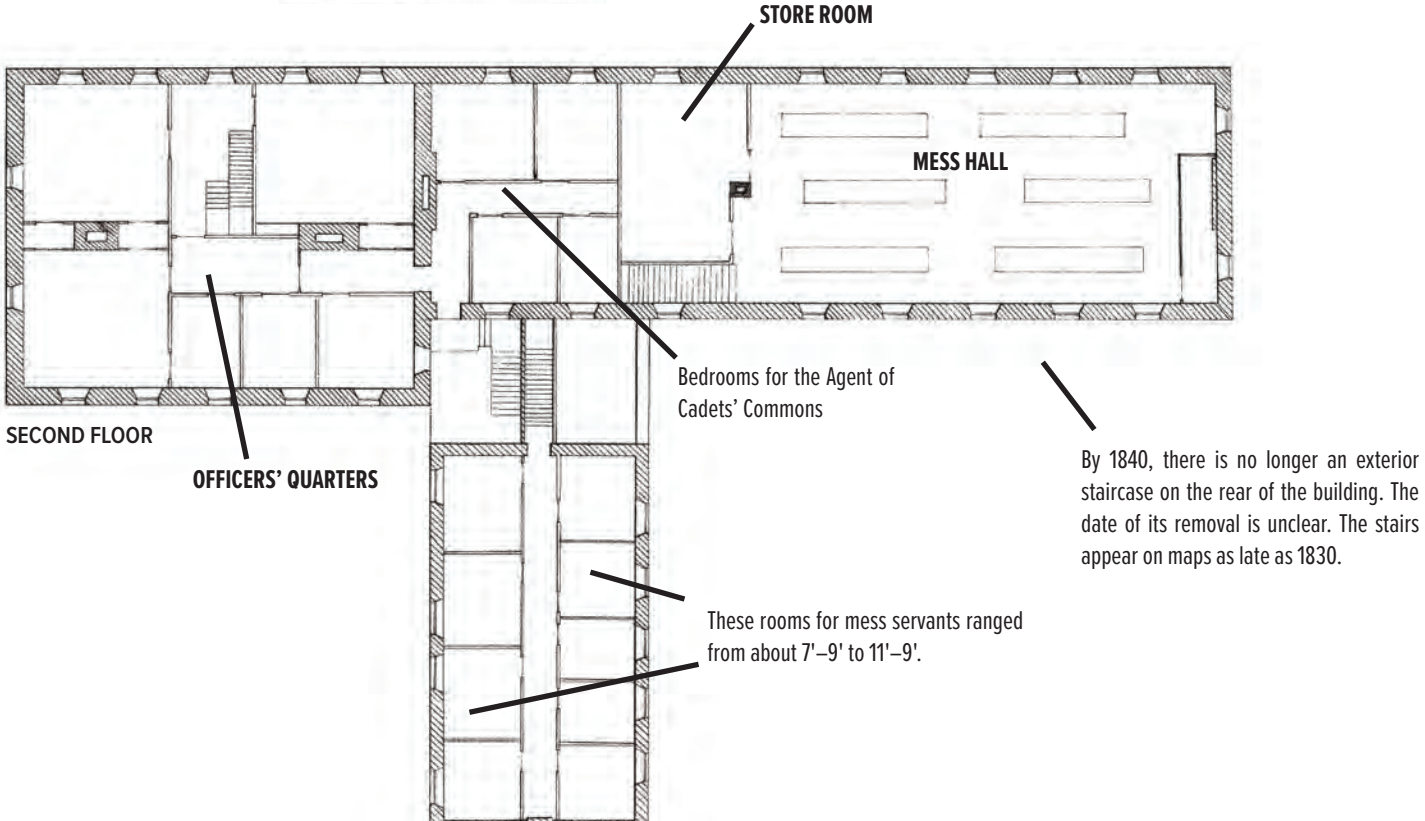
**THE PLAIN**



**MESS HALL, 1840**

By 1840, the Refectory or Commons was commonly referred to as the Mess Hall. This page shows plans sent to Washington in 1840 that detail expansions made to the building after 1815. An 1826 map shows the building configured in a manner similar to this, so the expansion must have been in the 1820s.

Notably, an extension has been added to the building for kitchens and worker housing. This addition extended all the way to the original bakehouse, which also shows an addition from its original plan. The new kitchen space allowed for a larger dining area for cadets on the first and second floors. The structure lasted twelve more years, finally demolished in the summer of 1852.



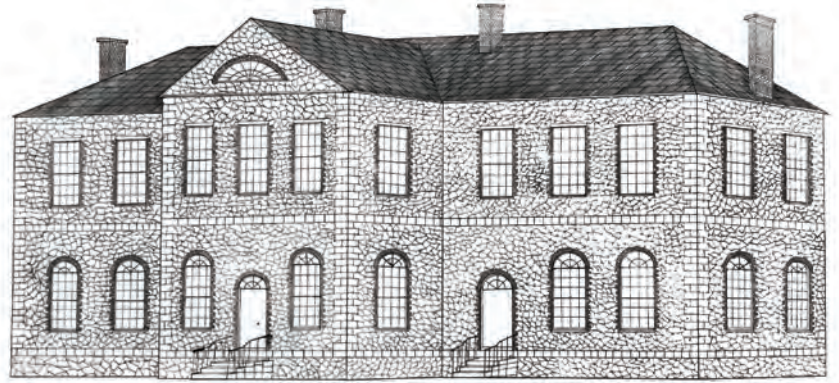


## THE ACADEMY, 1815

The third large stone building to be completed, the Academy was a multi-purpose structure that soon became too small for the growing institution. Most histories say the building was finished in 1815, but it was not complete as of September of that year according to building records. It is a bit uncertain if the building was occupied in the last quarter of 1815 or early in 1816.

Like the 1815 barrack and mess, the Academy was blue-gray stone with a blue slate roof. The drawing of the building on this page suggests that the stones were laid out in rubblestone pattern rather than cut, brick-like blocks. Cut stone ornamentation, such the rustication on the corners, the water table, and door jambs were likely the same red-brown sandstone (“brownstone”) seen in many early academy buildings. Interior walls and chimneys were brick. The building was 124'6" long by 30'3" wide in the wings. The middle extended another 17'2" to the front.

Unlike the other two, it had slightly more ornamentation. Specifically, the large, 10' high first floor windows had rounded arches, and this design feature was mirrored in a semicircular fanlight in the building's prominent pediment. Federal-style architecture, popular in the early 1800s, emphasized ancient Roman architecture. Semi-circular fanlights, especially over main doors, are a very common feature of the era, as we will see on the following pages.



The Academy as depicted in an 1840 sketch by Second Lieutenant Thomas B. Arden, Class of 1835. Source: National Archives

Each floor of the building had three large rooms (see below and next page). Overall, this was an academic building. Three of the rooms were permanent academic rooms and the Adjutant's Office on the second floor was often used for examinations. The middle room on the first floor was a common room used for Chapel on Sundays and a variety of uses other days of the week. With the mess, it was one of the only rooms where the whole Academy could gather as a whole. The room above the chapel was the library. By the mid-1830s, this room's walls were adorned with portraits of Presidents and Academy leaders by Thomas Sully (Jefferson, Monroe, Williams, and Swift). Sully's son Alfred was an 1841 graduate and reported to his father after the 1838 fire, discussed below, that the Monroe portrait was lightly damaged.

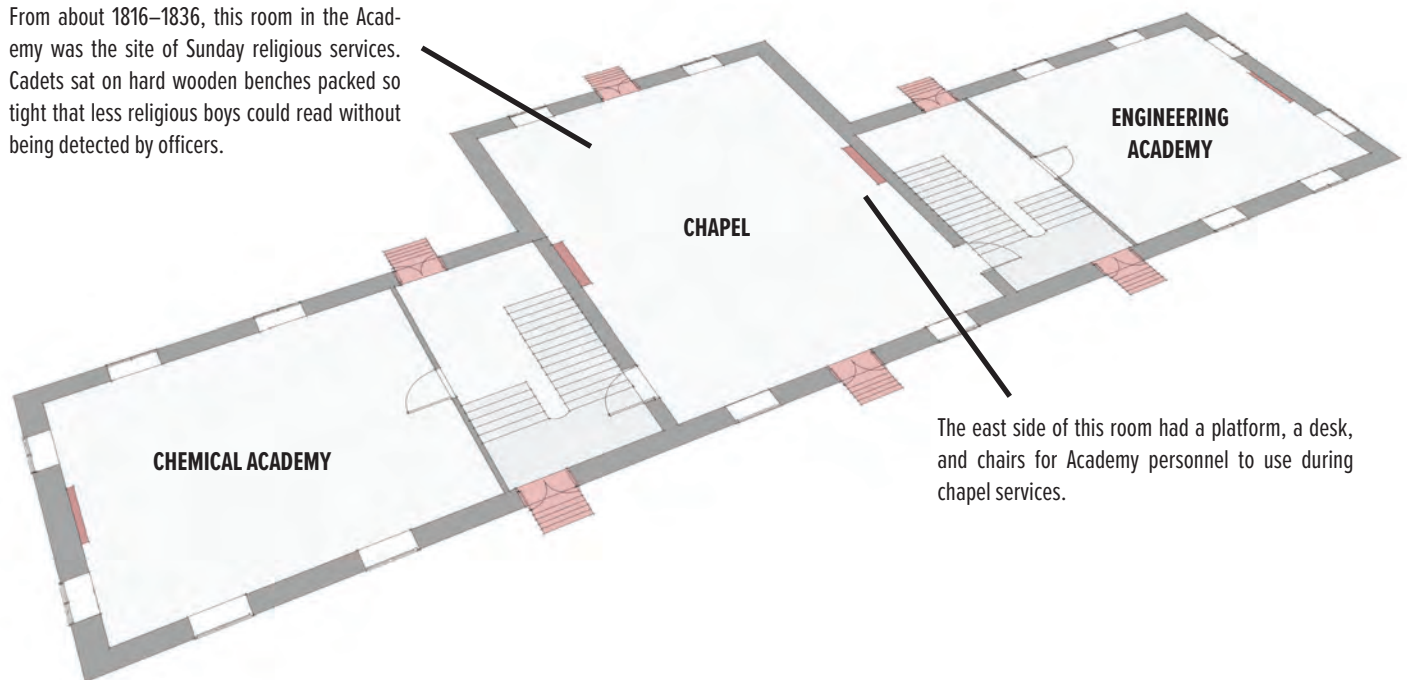


This 1832 portrait of James Monroe by Thomas Sully hung in the 1815 Academy. Source: West Point Museum

### THE ACADEMY, FIRST FLOOR

Both floors of the 1815 Academy were essentially the same (see next page).

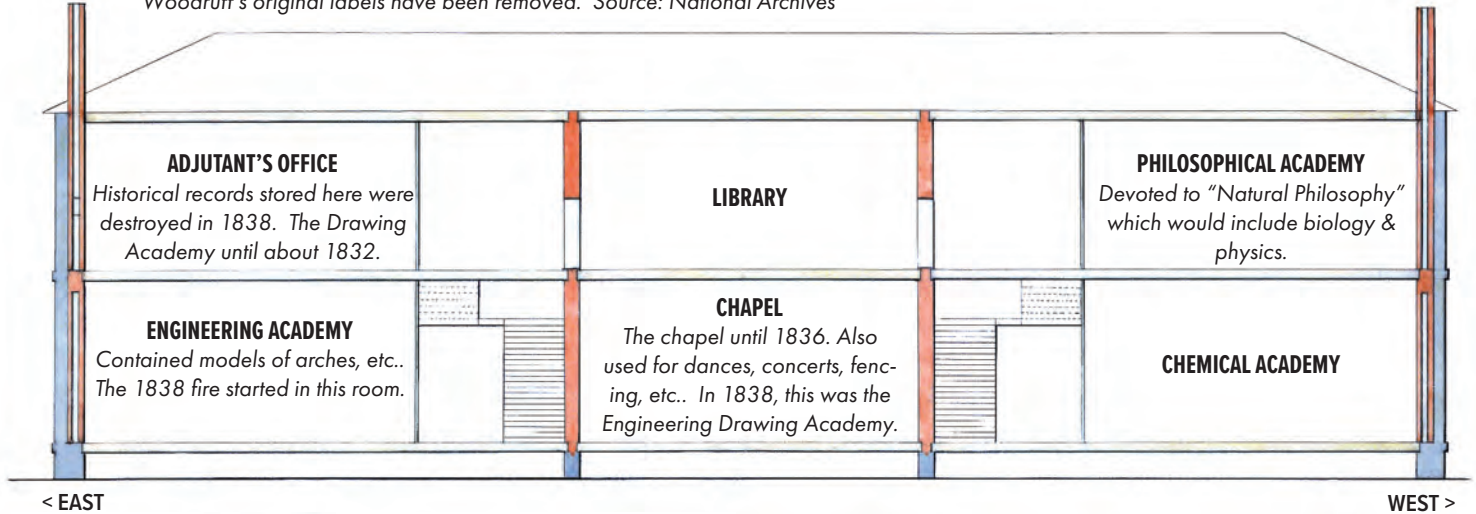
From about 1816–1836, this room in the Academy was the site of Sunday religious services. Cadets sat on hard wooden benches packed so tight that less religious boys could read without being detected by officers.



The east side of this room had a platform, a desk, and chairs for Academy personnel to use during chapel services.

## CROSS-SECTION OF ACADEMY

This drawing was created in 1838 when the Academy was destroyed by fire. The artist was 2LT I. Carle Woodruff, USMA Class of 1836. Woodruff's original labels have been removed. Source: National Archives



The Academy's walls ranged from 1'8"-3' thick. The first floor had high, 15' ceilings and the second floor 14'. The arched, first floor windows were 10' high. On the second floor, the windows were 8' tall.

### SECOND FLOOR

ceilings: 14' high  
walls: 1'10" thick

### FIRST FLOOR

ceilings: 15' high  
walls: 2' thick

### FOUNDATION

walls: 2.5'-3' thick

## THE ACADEMY FIRE OF FEBRUARY, 1838

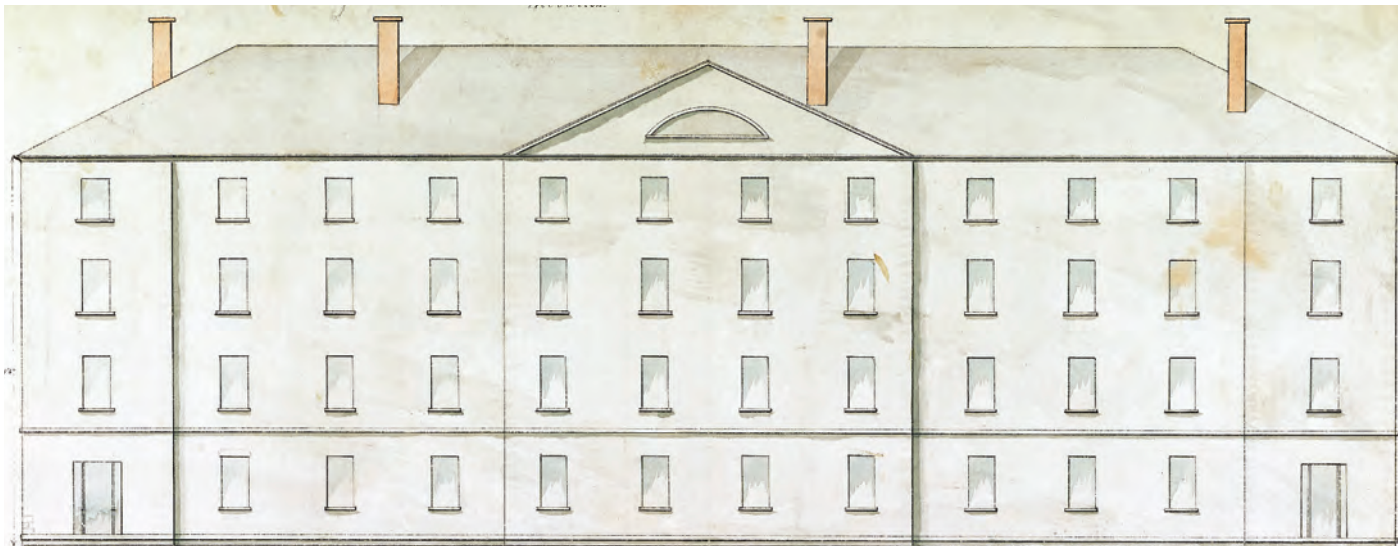
Between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. on the morning of February 19, 1838, a cadet smelled smoke and saw flames in the nearby Academy. An alarm went out and cadets and personnel rushed to the scene. The fire engine would not work when attached to a pump near the South Barracks and thus only buckets were available to fight the blaze. Cadets acted heroically and shouted, "To the Library!" hoping to save valuable items. With flames engulfing the ground level, the young men used ladders to access the second floor. Throwing items out broken windows into the winter night, they gallantly saved paintings (including famous works by Thomas Sully), books, and scientific apparatus.

Sadly, the inferno destroyed most of the Academy's early records. Items saved from the fire were dried and stored in the Hotel on Trophy Point, causing problems for visitors who then had to be fed in a mess already strained for space. Barracks rooms were converted to classrooms, causing the Academy to pack up to six cadets in a room. Tables were removed from rooms, so studying became difficult. A new academic building was already being built behind the Academy, but the fire caused a redesign of its interior to accommodate the departments that lost space in the fire. The new Academy was completed by the fall of 1838.

Below is a cadet letter published in Alabama's *Cahawba Democrat* on March 10, 1838.

*West Point, Feb. 19, 1838.*

*My Dear Father: I have determined to write you a short letter, as I have no studies to attend to to-day, on account of the hard work we had to undergo at the fire which broke out this morning about two o'clock in the Engineering Academy. The whole building was consumed, which was divided in to the Engineering, Philosophical, and Chemical Academies; and it was owing to the resolution and spirit of the Cadets that the Library, which is worth thousands, and the instruments belonging to the Philosophical and Chemical Academies, worth two hundred thousand dollars, were saved. Every thing in the Engineering Academy was destroyed, it being the left wing, and where the fire commenced and was one sheet of flame before it was discovered; and the very nearly all the lower part of the house was in flames when the corps shouted "to the Library," which they reached with success by means of ladders — I amongst the number. My forage cap was burnt to a crisp on my head, but I was not in the least burned: the same was the case with many others. The loss of the house, and what was consumed with it, amounts to \$25,000. The paintings were all saved. Our class has been turned out to put the books and different things away. Therefore, adieu.*



An 1840 plan of the North Barracks drawn by Second Lieutenant J. F. Gilmer, USMA Class of 1839 and later Chief Engineer of the Confederate States of America.

## NORTH BARRACKS, 1817

Two years after building a large barracks, the Academy had a second one. The 1815 structure was thereafter known as the “South Barracks” and the new building the “North Barracks.” At four stories and over 40 rooms, it was easily the largest building at West Point. It stood about 50’ from the South Barracks. It was demolished in July of 1851.

The North Barracks, like its neighbors, was made of gray stone and had a slate roof. It was 164’ long, 56’ deep, and 45’6” high. The outside of the building was very simple. Albert Church, Class of 1828, described it as a “four story rectangular stone building with plain walls without the least ornamentation.” The only design feature of note was a semicircular element on the pediment of the western front that resembles the fanlight on the 1815 Academy. The Barracks had four doors, one on each end and two on the western side, but only the southern door was regularly used.

Inside, the building had one long corridor on each floor. The first floor was originally section rooms (classrooms) and a guard room. The section rooms had an elevated rostrum near the windows. Cadet rooms were on the upper three floors, which were called “stoops” in the

West Point vernacular. The top floor was known as the “cock-loft.” There was one stairway at either end of the building, both on the western side. The south-west staircase was the most utilized. A room on the first floor, shown as a double room in an 1840 plan of the building, was the Dialectic Hall for the Dialectic Society. It is unclear if this was a double room when the building was completed. The south-east room of the first floor was the guard room, and the north-east room was used at times as the Post Office.

The cadet rooms had occupancies as high as six young men. Some rooms were divided by a partition into a small sleeping area and a larger parlor. John H. B. Latrobe, a member of the Class of 1822 until the death of his father, noted about the parlor area, “In the larger were a table and four or five chairs, the gun rack with pegs above it for the accoutrements, and a large wood-box in a recess next the fireplace.”

In general, cadets preferred living in the North Barracks compared to the South because they were warmer and the rooms larger. With no central hallway, any visit to a friend in the South Barracks meant going outside.

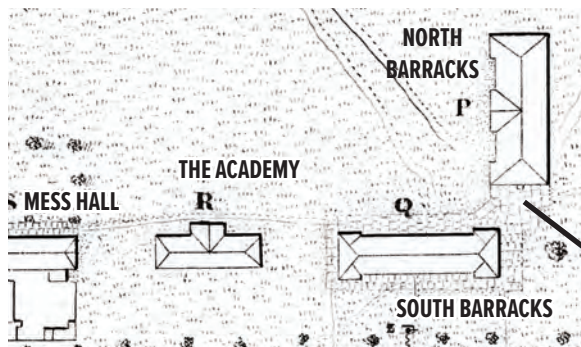
On the back (east) side of the North Barracks was an area sometimes called a coalyard and sometimes a lumberyard. It was surrounded by a wall high enough

to block the view from the first floor windows. In 1840 there was a privy in this area, but the date of its construction is unknown. Privies and other less glamorous areas are rarely shown or labeled on early West Point maps.

The infamous Egnog Riot of December 24–25, 1826, during which drunk cadets assaulted officers and destroyed property, primarily took place in this building.

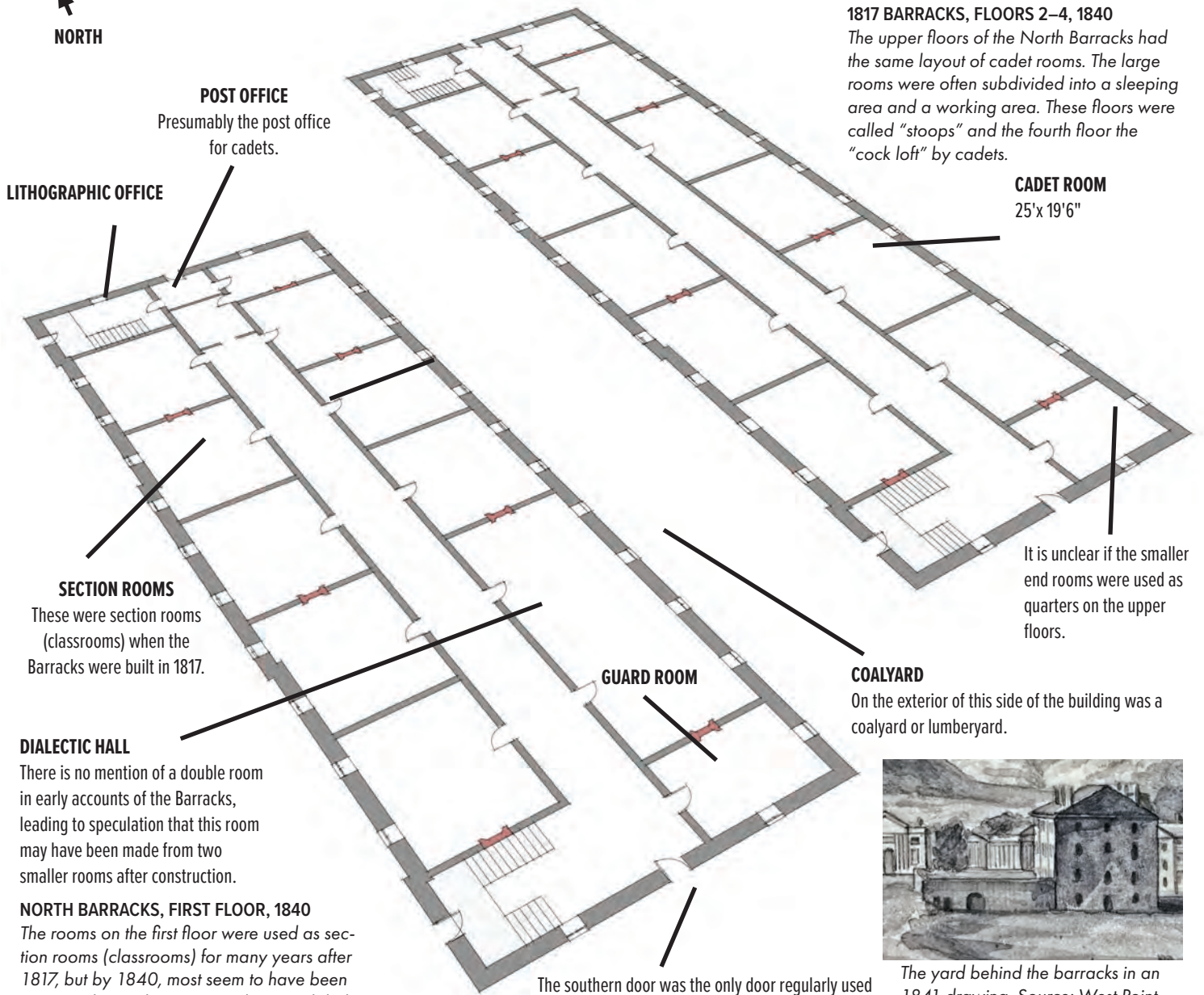
Here’s a good North Barracks story from Wood’s 1871 *The West Point Scrap Book*:

*“It was very seldom that any person went up or down the north staircase. A cadet—now alive—who graduated in 1824, told me that, for no reason he could think of, he once went down the north staircase late in the evening, and as he reached the lower landing he saw a flickering light, and heard a queer sputtering noise, like that made by a half extinguished and wet candle. Curiosity led him to investigate the cause. He saw, not knowing what it was, a dark ball in the corner, from the top of which proceeded the light. Without exactly knowing what he did, he seized hold of that which was burning, and easily took it from the ball, which he then saw was a bomb-shell, and the burning substance a shell fuze, which, being too small for the fuze-hole of the shell, he easily drew out. The shell was found charged with powder, and if accident, or rather Providence, had not led him, contrary to his usual custom, to go down the north staircase, or if, even then, he had been aware of his danger, the bomb-shell would have exploded, and possibly the side of the barrack blown out.”*



This crop of an 1826 map by T. B. Brown shows the location of the North Barracks at a right angle to the three 1815 buildings.

“...a space of about fifty feet intervening, through which many a cap and plume were carried toward the Hudson, when the owner attempted to cross the funnel thus formed, in a northwest gale.” — J. H. B. Latrobe, Member of the Class of 1822.



**1817 BARRACKS, FLOORS 2-4, 1840**  
 The upper floors of the North Barracks had the same layout of cadet rooms. The large rooms were often subdivided into a sleeping area and a working area. These floors were called "stoops" and the fourth floor the "cock loft" by cadets.

**CADET ROOM**  
 25'x 19'6"

It is unclear if the smaller end rooms were used as quarters on the upper floors.

**COALYARD**  
 On the exterior of this side of the building was a coalyard or lumberyard.



The yard behind the barracks in an 1841 drawing. Source: West Point Museum

The southern door was the only door regularly used by cadets. Limiting access made it easier to post guards and keep an eye on adventurous teens.

**POST OFFICE**  
 Presumably the post office for cadets.

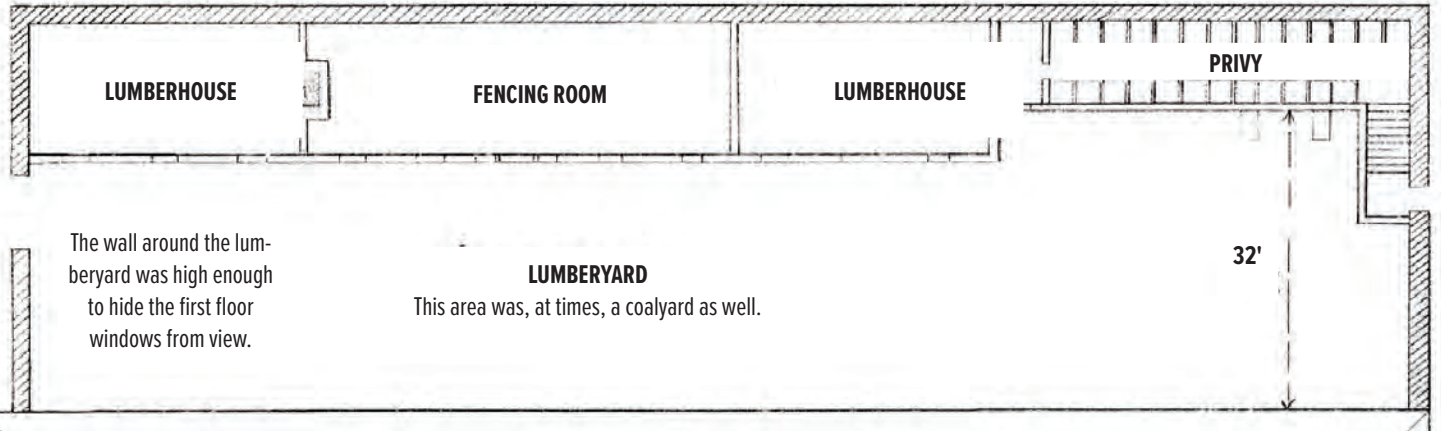
**LITHOGRAPHIC OFFICE**

**SECTION ROOMS**  
 These were section rooms (classrooms) when the Barracks were built in 1817.

**DIALECTIC HALL**  
 There is no mention of a double room in early accounts of the Barracks, leading to speculation that this room may have been made from two smaller rooms after construction.

**NORTH BARRACKS, FIRST FLOOR, 1840**  
 The rooms on the first floor were used as section rooms (classrooms) for many years after 1817, but by 1840, most seem to have been converted to cadet quarters. The room labels apply only to the year 1840.

**LUMBERYARD & PRIVY**  
 There are numerous references in historical sources to a walled-in coalyard behind the North Barracks, meaning the east side of the building. This 1840 sketch by Gilmer is one of the only depictions of this area as it rarely appears on maps. Here, the space is for lumber and one room is dedicated to fencing. The privy area has twenty-five stalls and is accessed by stairs. It is unclear if the privy was above or below ground level. Source: USMA Archives



## POLYGONAL BUILDING, ~1818

Perhaps inspired by Thomas Jefferson's octagonal house at Poplar Forest, West Point built a multisided building in about 1818. Maps and other evidence seem to point to the building being octagonal, but one graduate refers to it as hexagonal.

The estimated construction date of this structure is 1817 or 1818. It does not appear on Webber's 1815 map or other maps that predate the 1817 North Barracks. It does, however, appear on Zoeller's 1818 map now in the collection of the West Point Museum.



This close-up of an 1830s watercolor painted from across the River to the south shows the multisided structure located on the eastern side of the Plain. Source: West Point Museum

This building was located about 50 yards to the east of the North Barracks. Some accounts and drawings indicate that it had a cupola.

This building is sometimes referred to as "Castle Harris" by cadets of the 1830s. Nathaniel Sayre Harris, called "Ninny" by cadets, was an 1825 USMA graduate who returned in 1831 as an Assistant Instructor of Infantry Tactics and was given the building as his quarters. He was very strict and generally quite disliked by cadets,



Christian Zoeller's 1818 map of West Point shows the unusually shaped building to the east of the North Barracks. It is depicted with wings on two sides. Source: West Point Museum.



This crop of John Rubens Smith's "Encampment at West Point" from the 1830s shows the relative location of the multisided "Castle Harris" on the eastern side of the North Barracks, the large building on the right. Source: Library of Congress.

many of whom harassed the young officer mercilessly. Some went as far as firing projectiles from handheld mortars made of candlesticks. His uniform was once stolen and used for an effigy placed on the roof. He was even parodied in cadet variety shows.

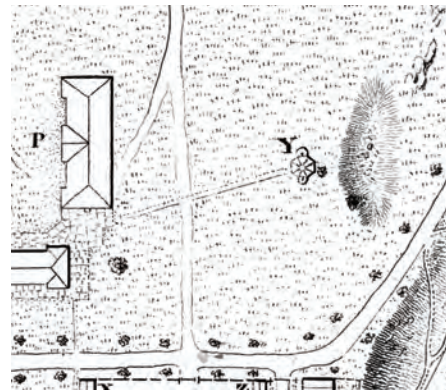
In addition to serving as "Castle Harris," the small building was also at times the Quartermaster's Office, a barber shop, a boot black room, and an ice cream and

refreshment shop run by Joe Simpson. It appears on an 1844 map of the Academy but not on maps from the 1860s. A good guess was that it was torn down about the time that the North Barracks was demolished in 1851.

Albert Church (USMA 1828) recalls a fire in the building, which he calls hexagonal, in the winter of 1827–1828:

*"The post quartermaster had fitted up a hexagonal brick building, in later years known as "Castle Harris," and standing midway between the North Barracks and the river bank, for a new office. Finding that the chimney did not draw well, he had, in the West Point fashion, added several feet to its length by placing on the top a wooden parallelepipedon, which drew so well as soon to take fire itself. I had my well drilled company, and engine out in short order, and in double-quick time, rushed to the fire, but 'ere I could get my line formed from the pumps, the second of the candidates... had contrived to get on top of the building and kicked over the chimney, parallelepipedon and all, effectually rendering further operations useless."*

The building, seemingly octagonal here, with wings, on a 1826 map by T. B. Brown. Source: NY Public Library



# HOUSING BOOM ON THE PLAIN, 1816–1820

## QUARTERS, 1819

The Commandant's House. Some sources list this as completed in 1821, but building updates sent to the War Department in 1819 indicate that it was completed that year just before winter set in. Thus, the oldest house at the Academy. Numerous modifications and additions have changed the original structure. This photo is from about 1870 and shows an added porch and addition on the right.



As the Academy grew, officer housing became a problem. Between 1816–1820, six new houses were built just on the Plain. Two of these houses, the Superintendent's House and the Commandant's House still remain. Professors Row just to the north was started in 1821, continuing the housing boom.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S QUARTERS, 1820

This has been the Superintendent's House since its completion in 1820. Construction began in 1819. The Federal-style house was originally much smaller than it is today. The porch and additions are not original. This photo is from about 1870.



## QUARTERS, 1819

Similar in size to the Commandant's house. The porch pictured was added later.



## QUARTERS, 1816

This building had two sets of quarters for junior officers.



## NORTH BARRACKS, 1817



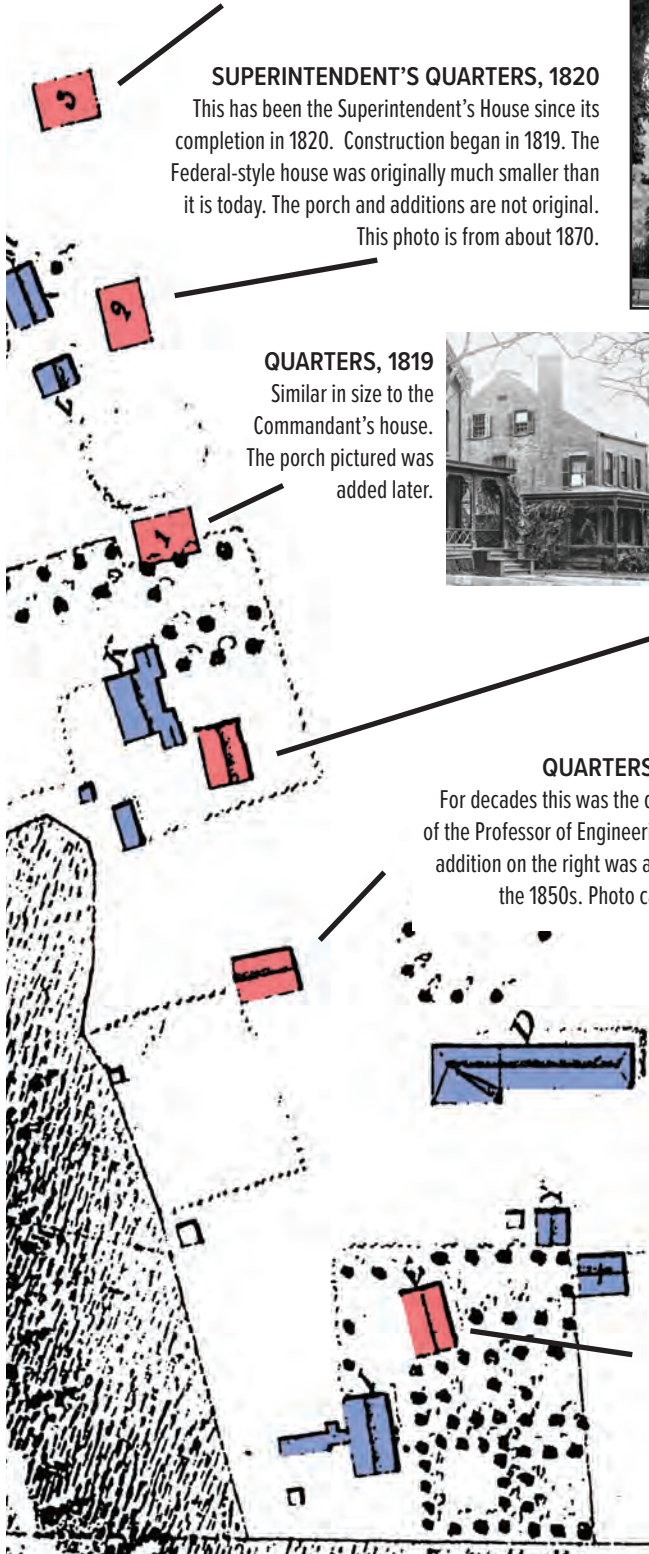
## QUARTERS, 1816

For decades this was the quarters of the Professor of Engineering. The addition on the right was added in the 1850s. Photo ca. 1870.



## QUARTERS, 1818

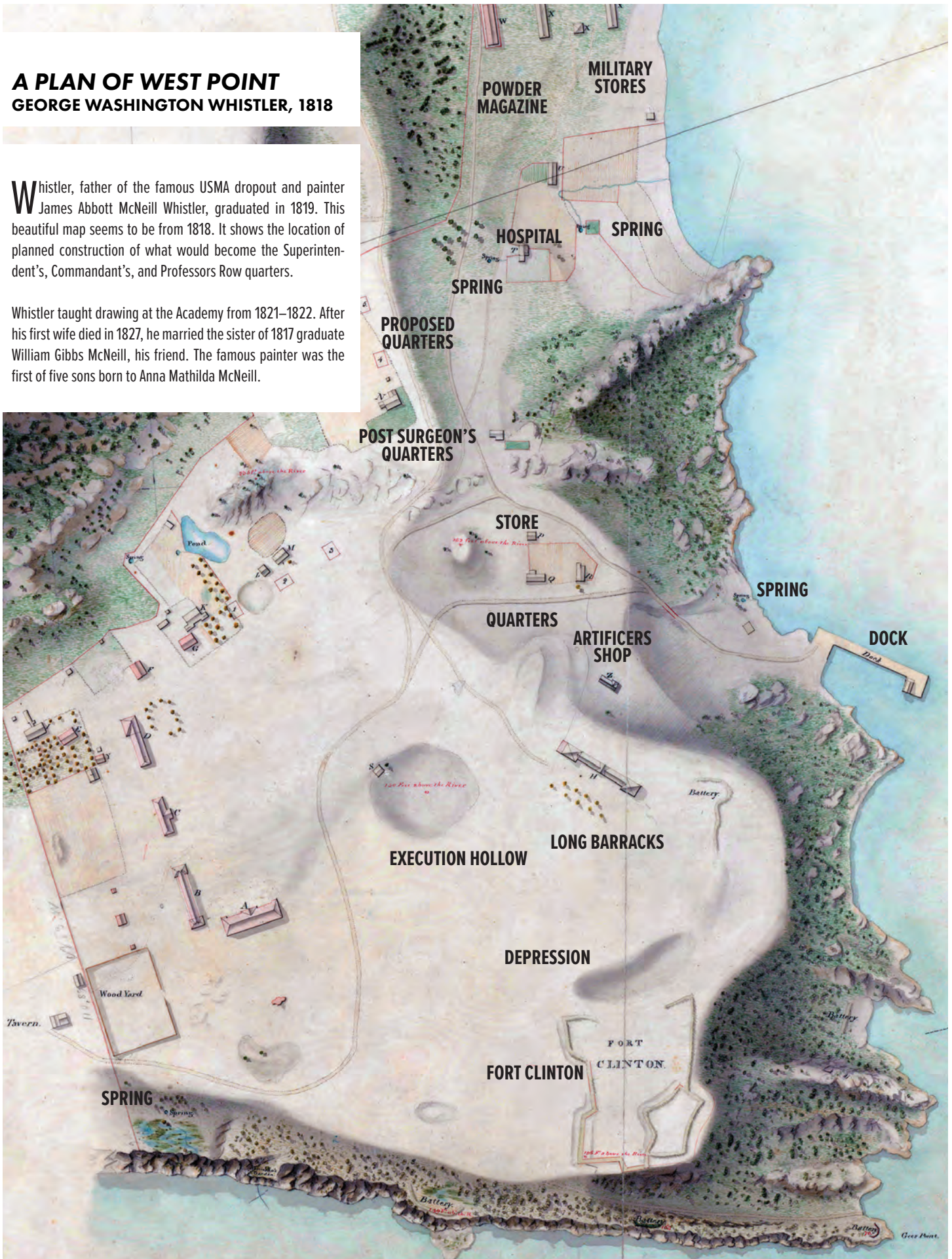
For many years, the quarters of the Professor of Chemistry. Photo ca. 1870

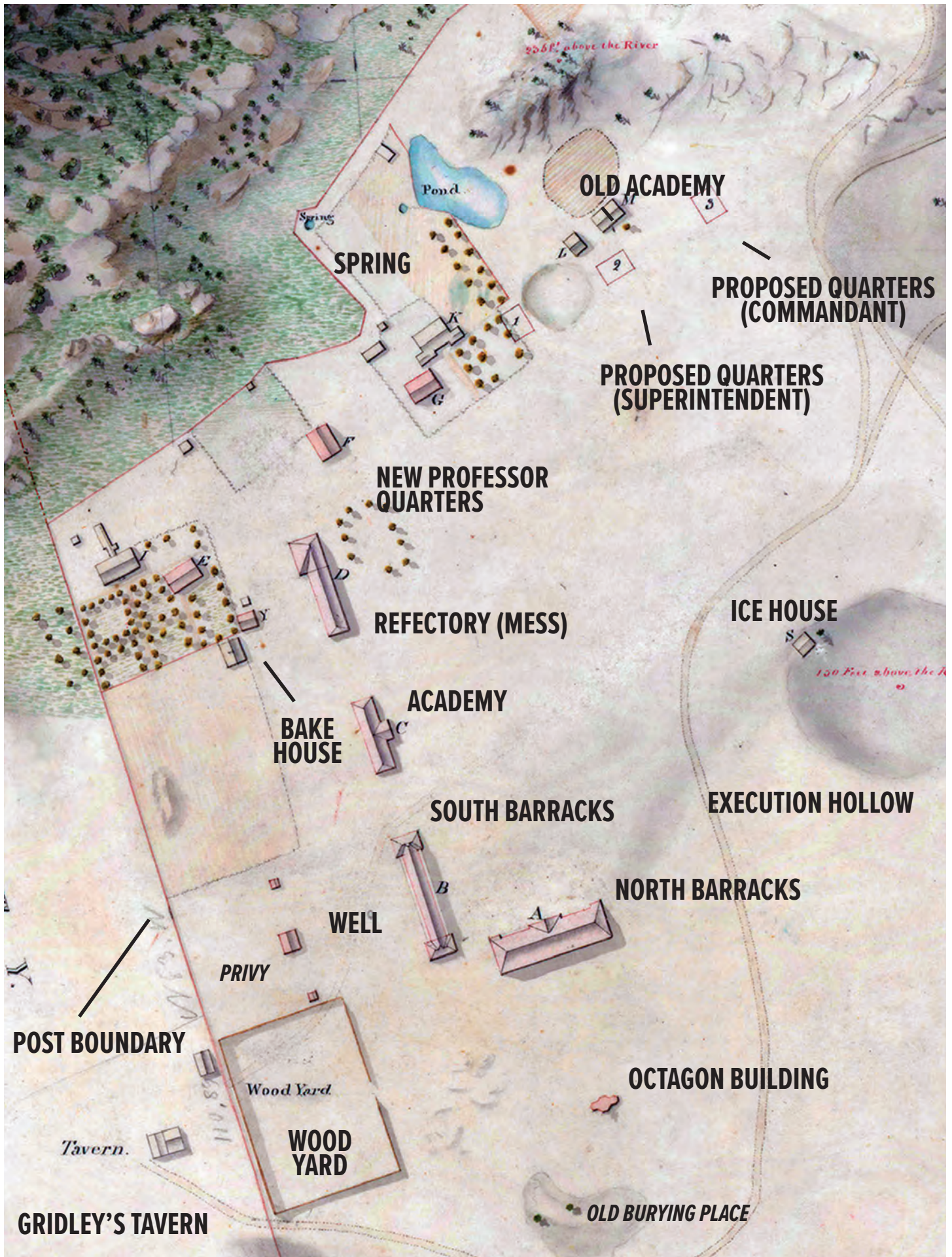


**A PLAN OF WEST POINT  
GEORGE WASHINGTON WHISTLER, 1818**

Whistler, father of the famous USMA dropout and painter James Abbott McNeill Whistler, graduated in 1819. This beautiful map seems to be from 1818. It shows the location of planned construction of what would become the Superintendent's, Commandant's, and Professors Row quarters.

Whistler taught drawing at the Academy from 1821–1822. After his first wife died in 1827, he married the sister of 1817 graduate William Gibbs McNeill, his friend. The famous painter was the first of five sons born to Anna Mathilda McNeill.



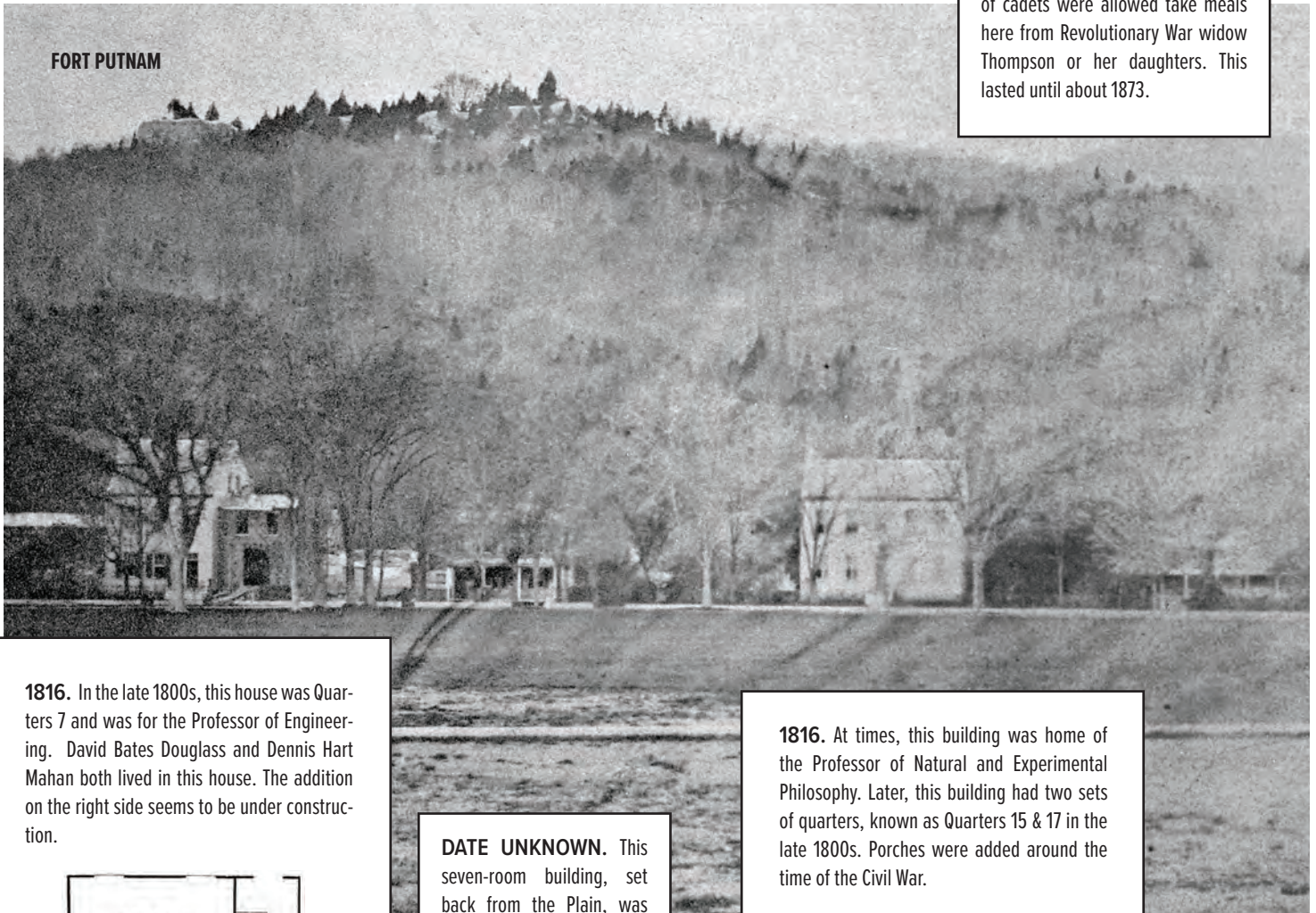




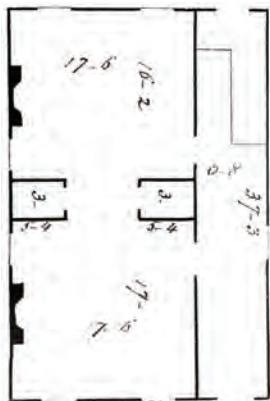
## WESTERN SIDE OF THE PLAIN, ~1856

This photo from about 1856 shows the houses built between 1816–1820 much the way they would have looked in the 1820s. The Plain was less level in the 1820s and the trees may have been smaller, but overall, this view would have been quite familiar to a cadet who graduated thirty years earlier. First-floor plans sent by Major Delafield to Colonel Totten, Chief of Engineers, in 1842 are shown for the key sets of quarters.

**PRE-REVOLUTION.** This building was the Military Storekeeper's in the early years of the Academy and became known as Mrs. Thompson's House later in the 1800s. As discussed previously, the building likely predates the Revolution. A handful of cadets were allowed take meals here from Revolutionary War widow Thompson or her daughters. This lasted until about 1873.



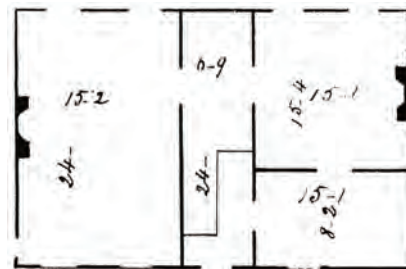
**1816.** In the late 1800s, this house was Quarters 7 and was for the Professor of Engineering. David Bates Douglass and Dennis Hart Mahan both lived in this house. The addition on the right side seems to be under construction.



FRONT DOOR

**DATE UNKNOWN.** This seven-room building, set back from the Plain, was used as a school house in the mid-1800s. Based on maps, it was likely built in the 1840s, the money being raised by the officers.

**1816.** At times, this building was home of the Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy. Later, this building had two sets of quarters, known as Quarters 15 & 17 in the late 1800s. Porches were added around the time of the Civil War.

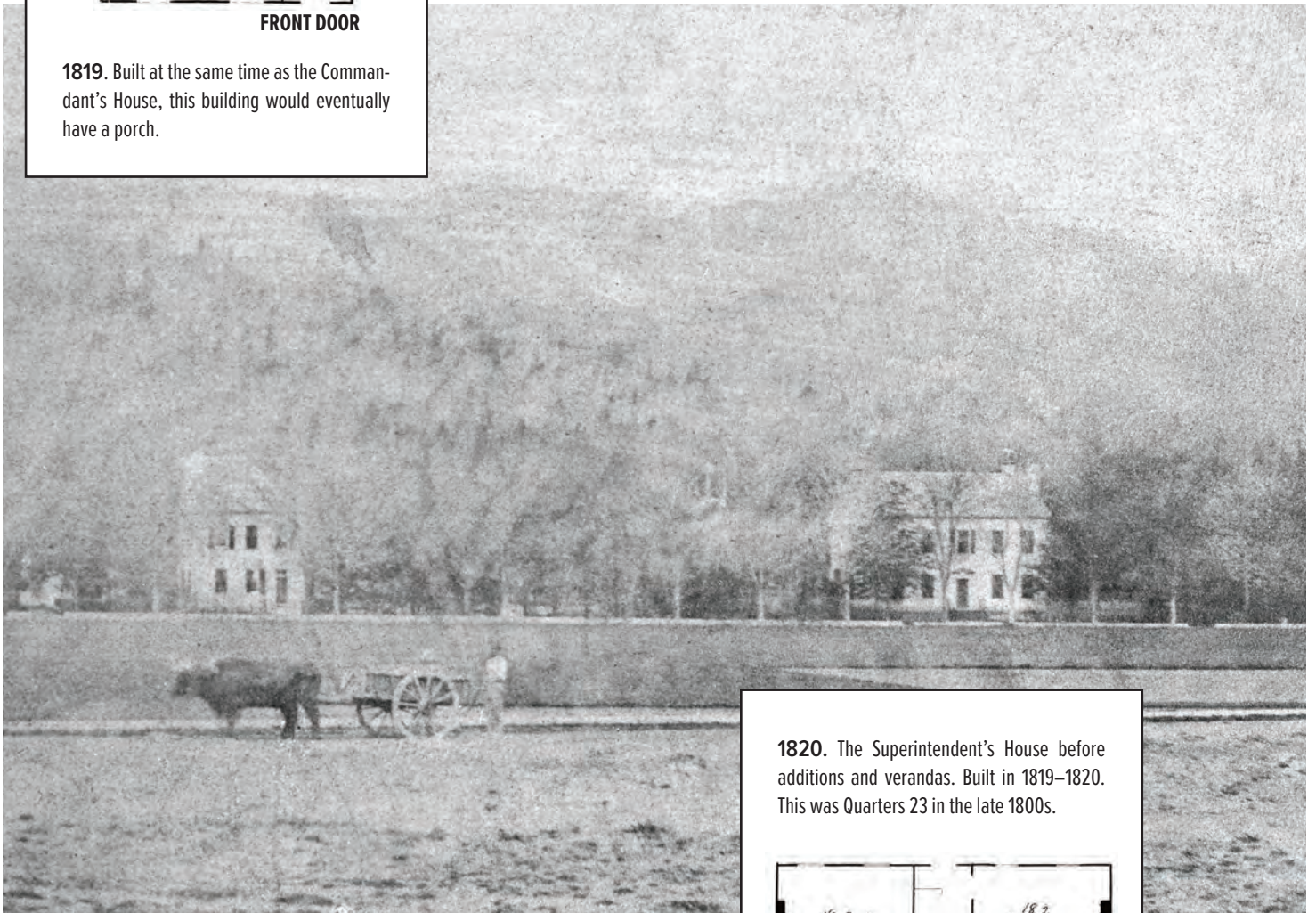


FRONT DOOR



**FRONT DOOR**

**1819.** Built at the same time as the Commandant's House, this building would eventually have a porch.



**1820.** The Superintendent's House before additions and verandas. Built in 1819–1820. This was Quarters 23 in the late 1800s.



**FRONT DOOR**

Oxen are often mentioned in early Academy business records because government funds were expended for their feed.

## CADET MONUMENT, 1818

On New Year's Day, 1817, Cadet Vincent M. Lowe was killed by a 32-pounder cannon discharge celebrating the holiday. Mangled and burned by the blast, he died. Unable to have the body prepared properly at West Point, Professor Davies and one other rowed the body to Newburgh and then brought it back to the Academy for burial. Lowe was buried soon after at "German Flats," a level area overlooking the river about a mile north of the Plain where soldiers of German ancestry camped during the Revolution.

Histories of the Academy generally record that the West Point Cemetery at German Flats was laid out in 1817, but the 1902 Annual Report of the Superintendent gives a date of 1816. It is known that some burials around this time were at a site that would now be close to the back of Washington Hall (the mess hall). Other graves were scattered here and there, including the eastern side of the Plain.

The fact that Lowe was buried at German Flats implies that others may have buried there beforehand as well. It seems odd that a spot one mile from campus would be chosen in January for a burial if it was not already used for that purpose or planning for a cemetery there had already begun. But, Augusta B. Berard mentions the 1817 burial of a small child as the first burial there. This confuses the issue because with Lowe being killed on January 1, 1817, it seems unlikely that he was not the first burial of the year. In any case, the Cemetery has remained at German Flats to this day.

The original layout of the Cemetery was much smaller than the current plan. The area outside the older sections were cultivated gardens at least as late as the 1880s. In the early days, the path to the gravesites



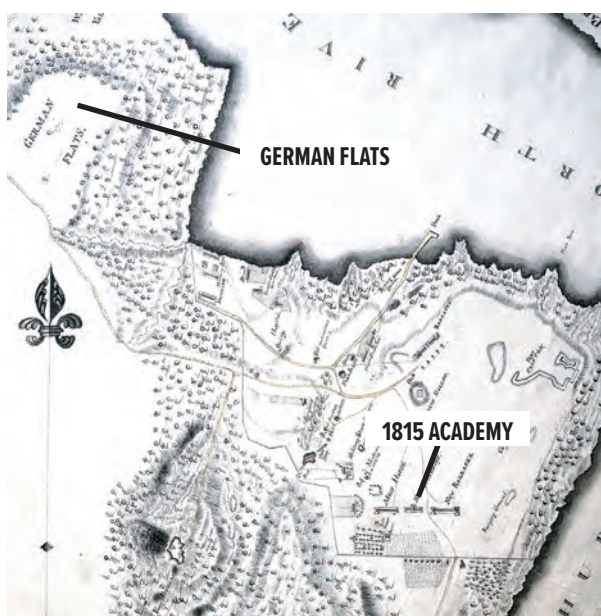
This watercolor from John Rubens Smith shows the Cadet Monument around 1820–1825. Notice that the River is visible. Today, trees block the entire view. Source: Library of Congress

passed right through the crops and the graves were "overgrown with tangled grass, burdocks and thistles" according to Berard. An improved road was constructed in 1839–1840 and Superintendent Richard Delafield added a wall and iron gate. Several expansions have occurred through time. Remains buried near the Plain were moved to the formal Cemetery in about 1818.

Cadets were so moved by the death of their classmate that they each donated fifteen dollars towards the erection of a monument in his honor. This column with the look of a castle tower is now known as the Cadet Monument. During the nineteenth century it was one of the most mentioned and visited sites at the Academy for tourists and was often depicted in artwork. Although dedicated to Lowe, panels on the side are memorial plaques to cadets and officers who passed away during the Academy's first decades.



The Cadet Monument as it appeared in a book from 1895. Source: Farrow, 1895.



German Flats, where the West Point Cemetery and Cadet Monument is located, on a map from 1815 or 1816 copied a few years later by J. G. Bruffs. Source: USMA Archives

The *Evening Post* of New York reported Vincent M. Lowe's death on January 6, 1817:

*Suddenly, at West Point, on the 1st instant, Cadet VINCENT M. LOWE, aged 18 years. He was killed by the accidental explosion of charge of powder in a cannon, while ramming the cartridge; the accident is supposed to have occurred in consequence of an imperfect spunging of the place after a previous discharge. —Cadet Lowe was an amiable and intelligent youth. His death has deprived the Military Academy of one of its ornaments, and the nation of a promising young soldier.*

## WOOD MONUMENT, 1818

**B**orn in Massachusetts in 1783, Eleazar Derby Wood reported to West Point in May of 1805 and graduated in October of 1806. He was then involved in the construction of fortifications in New York Harbor on Governor's Island and Bedloe's Island, now known as Liberty Island. The 11-pointed, star-shaped fort on Bedloe's Island would come to be known as Fort Wood in his honor and now serves as the base of the Statue of Liberty. Wood also worked on fortifications in Virginia. During the War of 1812, Wood was sent to build forts, such as Fort Meigs, along Lake Erie under the command of future President William Henry Harrison. Wood held Fort Erie in August of 1814 but was killed on September 17, 1814 while leading an attack to capture a British battery.

Major General Jacob Brown admired Wood and after the War ordered a monument constructed in Wood's honor at West Point. Brown personally paid for the obelisk. Wood's Monument was erected in October of 1818 and was located in the middle of the Plain in front of the

1815 Academy. Just a month after its completion, Sylvanus Thayer asked that a railing be put around the obelisk. An 1820 engraving, included on this page, shows the memorial on the Plain.

Wood's Monument stayed in front of the Academy on the Plain for about three years before being moved (in 1821 according to Academy sources) to a small hill that stood just west of the site of the current Firstie Club. This hill, known as Bunker's Hill on early maps, would eventually be called Monument Hill because of Wood's Monument. The obelisk stood on top of the small hill, surrounded by a fence and evergreen trees.

By the late nineteenth century, a plan developed to level the small hill that the Monument stood on and to use the earth to fill in Execution Hollow. This meant that the Monument had to be moved. While some sources say this happened in the 1870s, the monument is clearly visible on an 1883 map of the Academy. Contemporary accounts generally say 1885 and this seems correct because an 1891 map shows that the Monument had been moved and the hill it stood upon leveled.



*The Wood Monument on the top of "Monument Hill" in a late nineteenth century photo. The obelisk was moved to the Cemetery about 1885. Source: New York Public Library*



*The Wood Monument in the 1860s. Source: USMA Archives*



*Today, the Monument is in the West Point Cemetery. Photo by author.*

*This illustration from about 1820 shows the location of Wood's Monument on the Plain in front of the 1815 Academy Building. It was moved to a hillock on the edge of the Plain in 1821. Source: USMA Archives*



## SUPERINTENDENT'S QUARTERS, 1820

The Superintendent's Quarters was the fanciest of the houses built between 1816 and 1820. With Federal details such as tooth-like dentils under the roofline and a semi-circular fanlight over the door, it would have been considered a conservative but stylish home for the time. It cost \$6,670 to build and thus came in over the budget of \$5,000. Construction began in 1819, was halted for the winter, and completed in 1820. While known as Quarters 100 today, it was Quarters 23 for decades in the nineteenth century.

The original house was smaller than what tourists see today, with dimensions of only 48'x37'. The familiar, ornate porch was added after the Civil War and expanded in the 1930s. None of the additions



The area indicated in the original size of the Superintendent's quarters, 48'x36'.  
Image Source: Google Earth

on the back are original. They were primarily added after the Civil War and around the turn of the twentieth century. Congress approved funding to build outhouses for the structure in 1824. Some reports indicate toilets were added in the 1870s.

Expansions to the house occurred in the following years or periods: 1860–1877, 1874–82, 1889, 1896, 1912, and 1938.

Colonel Sylvanus Thayer was the first resident of the home. He maintained two offices in the basement. One was for work and study and the other, smaller, for meeting with cadets, who could call on him between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. in the morning. Officers could meet with him in the late afternoon.

The large garden that today occupies the south side of the grounds would not have been recognizable to nineteenth century visitors. It was developed after 1932. In the first decades of the house, there were gardens behind the house likely used for vegetables and other household needs. As discussed earlier, there was also a pond behind the house that was at times used for harvesting ice.



A rare photograph of the Supe's House before the porch was added. The estimated date is 1855–1857. Source: USMA Archives

This photo by Second Lieutenant John Pittman of the Superintendent's House is from 1870 or 1871 and shows the porch added a few years before the photo was taken. Colonel Thomas Gamble Pitcher, Superintendent, and his wife are seated by the front door. The stairway to the basement can be seen on the right side. Many of the windows are simpler or smaller than today's house. On the right side, each floor has only one window compared to double windows today. Also, the two first-floor windows on either side of the door have now been replaced by single triple-massed windows. Finally, on the current house, the porch extends around the sides. Source: USMA Archives



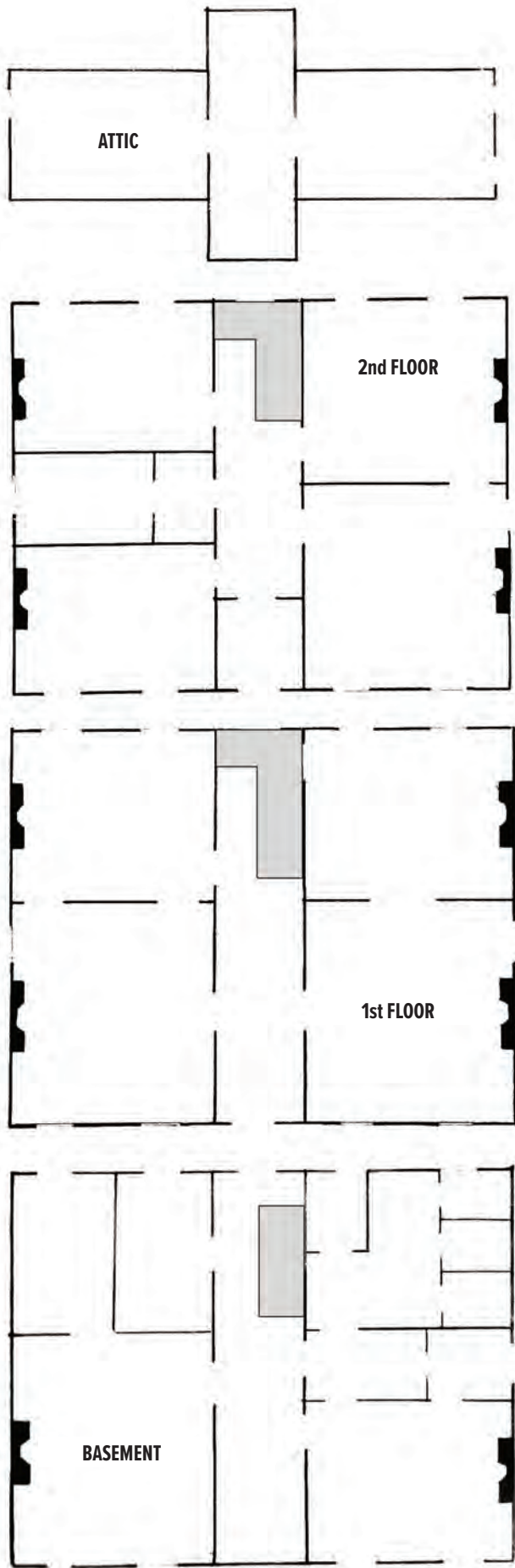
## WHAT COLOR WAS THE SUPE'S HOUSE IN 1820?

Anyone who has visited West Point remembers the Superintendent's House as a white house. Americans love bright white houses, but it would be wrong to assume that Quarters 100 has always been white. Peale's 1801 watercolor shows many yellow ocher houses at West Point. Mrs. Charles Davies, recalling her childhood at West Point before 1820, remembered many of the quarters painted yellow (Berard 1886). Thus, yellow is a good possibility, and my guess at the building's first color.

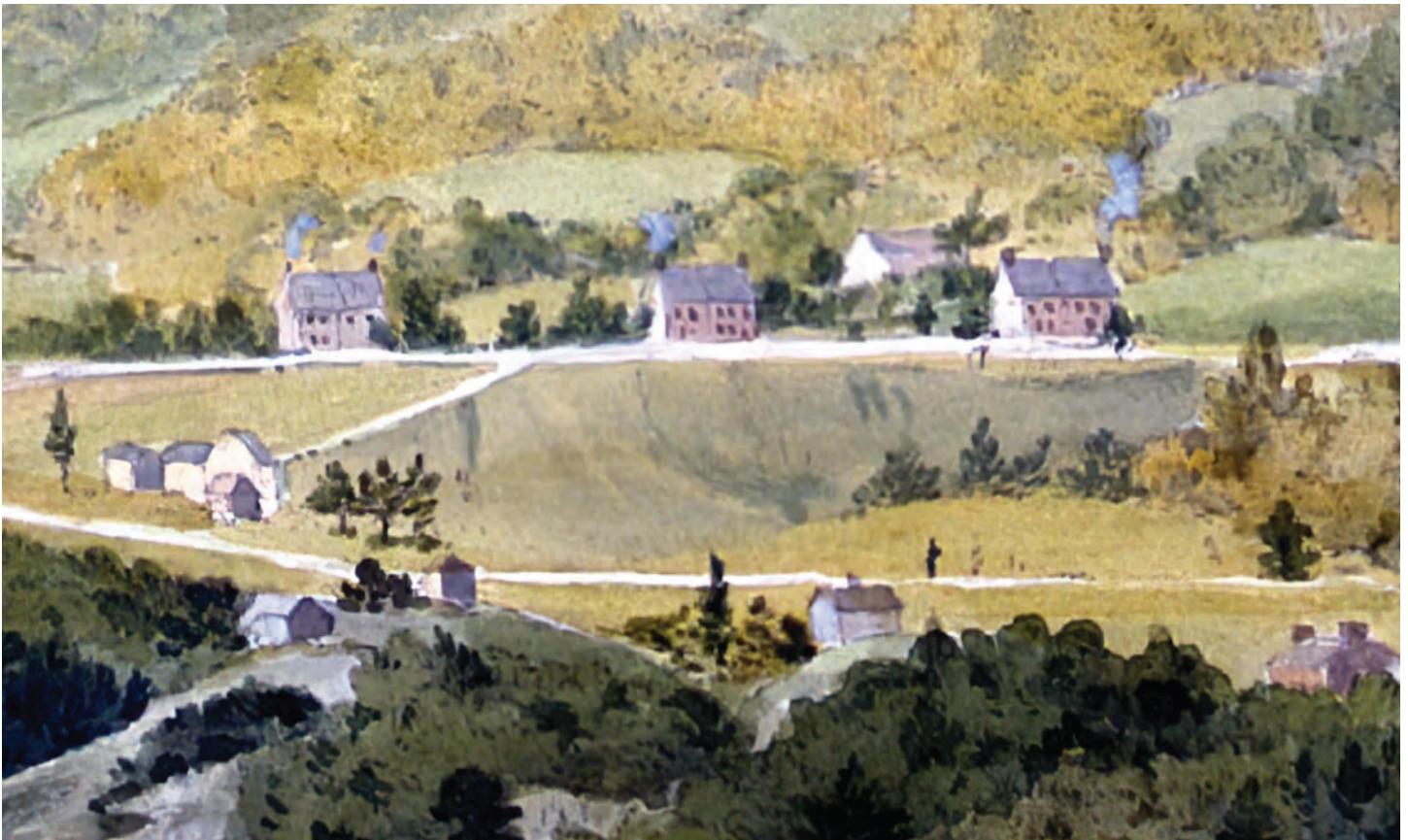
The evidence is as follows:

1) An 1833 magazine article by a cadet "Quiff" describing his plebe experience recalls walking from the dock "until we arrived at the gate of a large yellow house, where I followed my conductor into a kind of office down a cellar, where sat, before a table of papers, the real adjutant, a fine looking man with whiskers..." It is well known that the Adjutant's office was in the basement of Thayer's House.

2) A paint analysis done by the Corps of Engineers concludes that the oldest sample taken from bricks on the front wall is a yellow ocher. The report claims that this must be from the early twentieth century citing a photo they claim shows the building unpainted in 1902. I strongly reject this conclusion. USMA Centennial photos show the house as fairly dark in tone, but the surface appears even and does not show the tell-tale stains and mortar that an unpainted building would show. Furthermore, the gutters seem to be the same tone as the house. Judging color from early photographic processes is difficult, so the dark tone of the house does not necessarily mean it is brick. In addition, the 1901 Superintendent's Report indicates that the Academy "painted 58 sets of officers' quarters" and "36 sets of enlisted quarters," which seems like a perfectly reasonable thing to do the year before the Centennial celebration attended by the President. That nearly every quarters was painted but the Supe's house was unpainted brick seems unlikely.



*The house's floorplan in the 1840s.  
Source: National Archives*



The houses of Professors Row as seen in a watercolor by John Rubens Smith likely painted between 1830 and 1835. The landscape is much less forested than today. Source: Library of Congress

## PROFESSORS ROW, 1821 & 1826–28

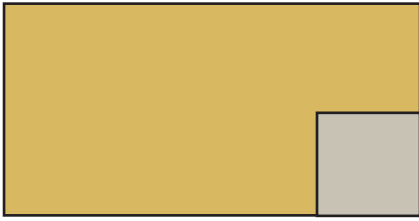
The six sets of brick quarters known as Professors Row, just north of the Plain, are among the oldest structures at the Academy. Three duplexes, they were built from north to south. The double quarters closest to the Catholic Chapel was completed in 1821 according to West Point Quartermaster Charles Williams' 1889 facilities inventory. However, in records from 1823 there are mentions of expenses for a double stone house. The middle set was finished in 1826 according to Charles Williams, but see below for a discussion. The building closest to the Plain was erected in 1828. Some followup work on the two new buildings was completed in 1829. The reverse order of this construction is likely because there was an existing quarters roughly on the site of the current Dean's House.

The builder of the first house (1821) seems lost to history, but the 1826 and 1828 homes were built by a Daniel Corwin. A request for sealed bids was advertised in the summer of 1826. This makes it unlikely that the first of the two homes was completely finished in 1826. He was paid \$13,229.50 for the contract.

**S**EAL'D PROPOSALS will be received by the Quarter Master, of the Army at West Point until the first of August next. for building by contract two Double Stone Houses, at that place agreeably to the description and plans which can be seen by applying at the Office of the Quarter Master of the Army, at the Military Store, No. 61 Washington street, between the hours of 10 and 1 o'clock. JENEAS MACKAY, Assin't Quarter Master.

In the summer of 1826, West Point requested bids for the construction of two of the Professors Row houses. This is from the July 19, 1826 edition of *The Evening Post* in New York. Mackay was the West Point Quartermaster at the time.

## THE COLORS OF EARLY WEST POINT



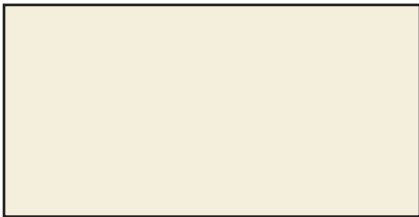
### YELLOW OCHER

*Purchased in large kegs throughout the 1820s. Memoirs of the 1810s recount many "yellow" houses. This could have been mixed with white and brown to make a gold color. The inset shows a combination of primarily yellow ocher, Spanish brown, and white lead.*



### SPANISH BROWN

*Also purchased by the Academy in large kegs, this was the cheapest and most common exterior and primer paint of the era. It could have been browner or redder than shown depending on the pigment. Some Spanish Brown's are almost an oxblood color [inset].*



### WHITE LEAD

*This white, produced by soaking lead in vinegar, would look yellowish to modern eyes. Linseed oil used in making paint during this era would also cause the white to look a bit yellow.*



### BLUE / PRUSSIAN BLUE

*Blue paint, sometimes specifically recorded as "Prussian Blue" was purchased in smaller quantities than the paints listed above. Prussian Blue could be mixed with white to produce a robin's egg blue [inset]. Blue interiors were common during the era. There is no evidence of blue exteriors at West Point.*



### VERDIGRIS GREEN

*Academy records often report buying green pigment of an unknown type and at times verdigris green. Green, varnished, was common on window blinds and for decorative interior features. It could also be mixed with white for interiors. The inset shows verdigris mixed with Prussian Blue and Lead White.*



### CHROMIC YELLOW

*Appears rarely in the records. Could have been mixed with Prussian Blue to produce a light green.*



### LAMP BLACK

*Purchased fairly often based on records. This paint is also known as Carbon Black and is made by grinding up soot. A common gray was lamp black plus white lead.*

We will never definitively know what color buildings were painted in the 1820s, but we have clues. Quartermaster records from the decade record paint purchases, giving us rough base colors. As mentioned above, I believe the Superintendent's House was yellow in the 1830s, as was the Hotel.

Of course, paints can be mixed and pigments varied, so this page serves to give a general sense of what the color palette of the Academy could have been based on paint purchases. Trim colors wax and wane with cultural trends.

With a few exceptions, the Academy at this time purchased the paint as raw pigment and mixed with linseed oil on location. Turpentine was also used during the era to thin the paint and litharge could be added to aid drying. All of these products can be found in Academy Quartermaster records. Receipts for painting contractors have also survived. Despite the colors on this page, many interior walls, such as in the barracks, would have simply been white-washed.



## SERVICE AREAS NORTH, 1820s

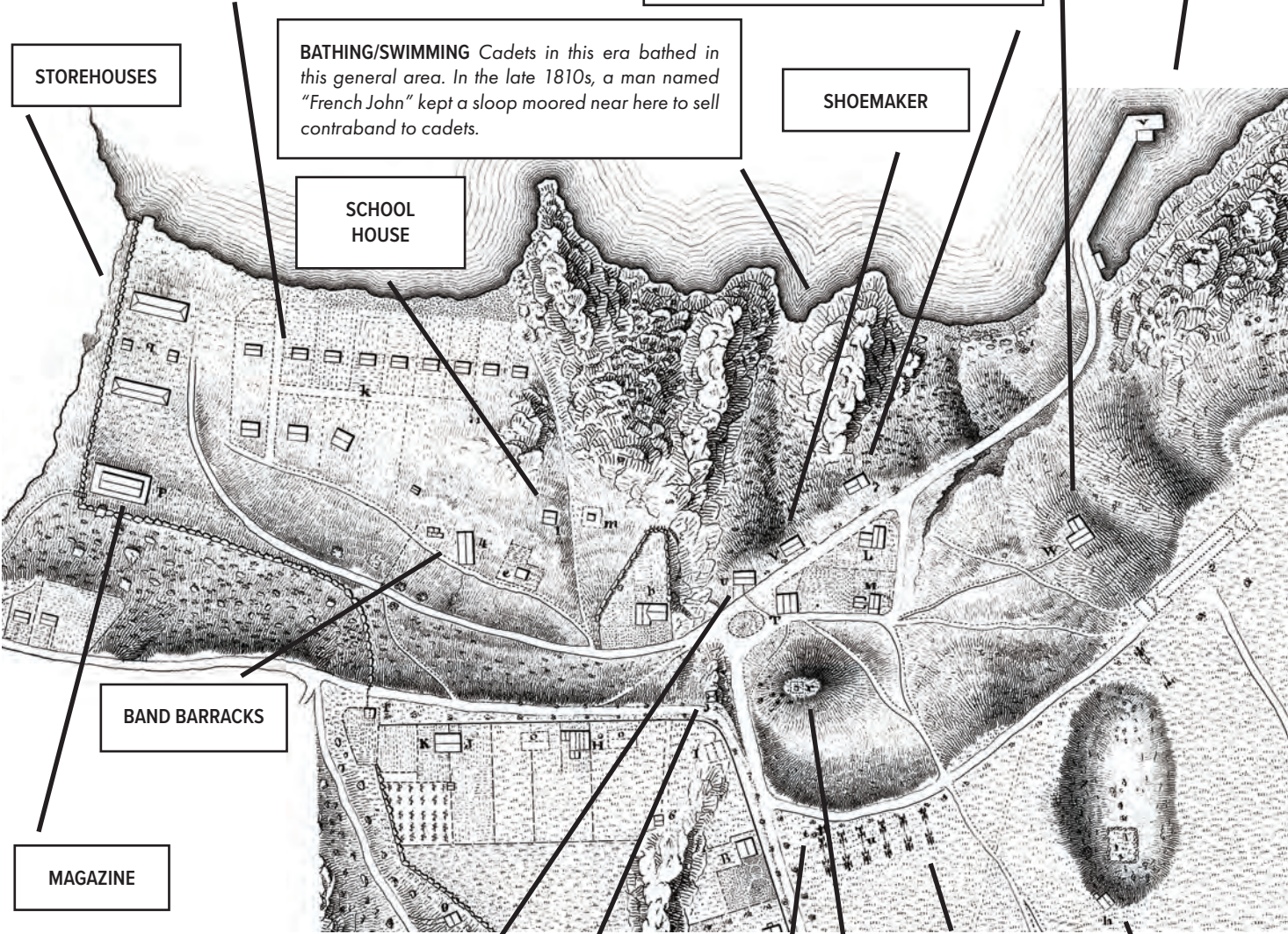
As the number of cadets and faculty at the Academy grew there was a corresponding increase in service personnel and facilities. Most of the non-academic services were located on the slope to the River north of the Plain. Over time, the buildings in this area were expanded or replaced. Below is a cropped area of an 1826 map by T. B. Brown showing this area. Buildings not labeled are quarters.

**PUBLIC DOCK** Quartermaster records show repeated purchases of 4" plank for the wharf. At least once, this is designated as oak plank. The Academy also seems to have owned one or more boats at this time.

**WORKSHOP** This building, labeled "Work Shop" (1818), "Artificers Shop" (1818), and "Carpenter's Shop" (1826), does not appear on Webber's 1815 map of the Academy nor on maps after 1829. It would have likely been moved when the West Point hotel was built in 1829.

**MRS. THOMPSON'S BARN** This tiny building was built between 1818 and 1826. It appears on maps through at least the 1840s.

**CAMP TOWN (also CAMPTOWN)** The name of this area is explained by an early resident of West Point as referring to the place where a Mr. William Camp and his Bermudian wife lived after moving to West Point in the 1810s. The original "Camp Town" was closer to the Plain than indicated below, but over time, the large meadow in this area became the site of several small log houses used by soldiers and later service personnel. The small houses are often called **LOGTOWN** in memoirs and reports in the nineteenth century. Proper houses were built in the 1830s.



**BATHING/SWIMMING** Cadets in this era bathed in this general area. In the late 1810s, a man named "French John" kept a sloop moored near here to sell contraband to cadets.

**SHOEMAKER**

**BAND BARRACKS**

**MAGAZINE**

**TAILOR** In the late 1810s and 1820s, the tailor was Samuel Wilton. He is said to have invented the curved chevron on cadet uniforms. He lived in the house just to the west.

**FLAGSTAFF**

**ARTILLERY PARK**

**MARKET HOUSE**

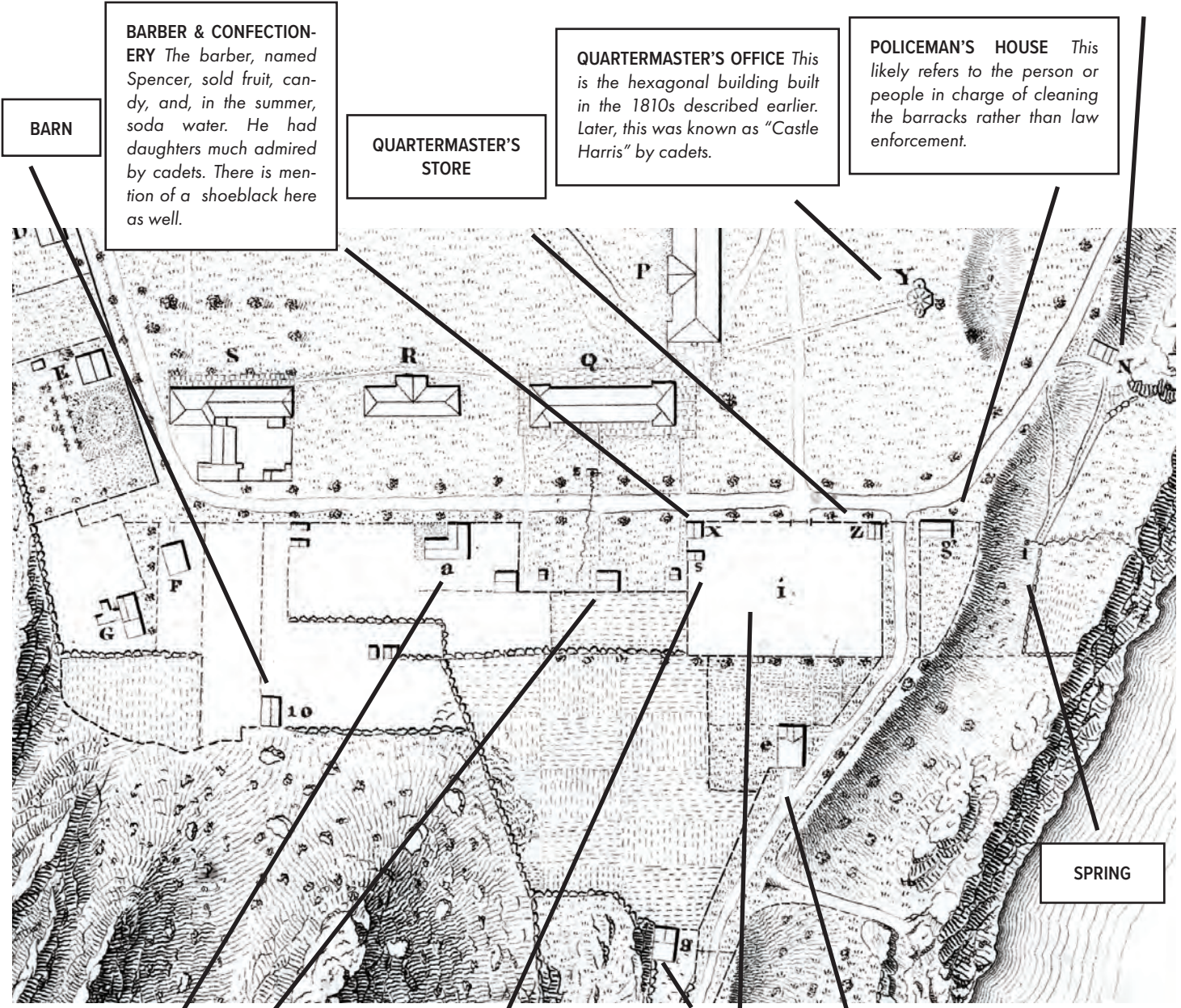
**WOOD MONUMENT**

**ICE HOUSE** The pond behind the Superintendent's House was the main ice source.

## SERVICE AREAS SOUTH, 1820s

The area “behind” the barracks along the southern boundary of the Academy developed into a service area as the 1810s became the 1820s. North’s Tavern had become Gridley’s Tavern in 1816 and was such an ongoing problem for Academy leaders that the Government bought the property, which included Fort Putnam, in 1824. This freed the Academy to develop what had been the southern boundary more vigorously. T. B. Brown’s 1826 below shows some of the service areas that had been added in the 1820s.

**MR. WILLIS’ HOUSE** Richard Willis immigrated from Ireland in 1816 and was band master at West Point by 1817. He was a master of the “keyed bugle” (aka Kent bugle) and toured the East Coast performing on the instrument. He died in 1830. Ships would anchor off West Point to listen to Willis and the West Point Band perform.



**BARBER & CONFECTIONERY** The barber, named Spencer, sold fruit, candy, and, in the summer, soda water. He had daughters much admired by cadets. There is mention of a shoeblick here as well.

**QUARTERMASTER'S STORE**

**QUARTERMASTER'S OFFICE** This is the hexagonal building built in the 1810s described earlier. Later, this was known as “Castle Harris” by cadets.

**POLICEMAN'S HOUSE** This likely refers to the person or people in charge of cleaning the barracks rather than law enforcement.

**BARN**

**SPRING**

**SUTLER** This store was operated at this time by a Mr. DeWitt, who also lived in the building.

**PRIVY?** Although unlabeled, this is likely the privy for the barracks

**FIRE ENGINE HOUSE** Fires were common and cadets were well trained in the latest technology.

**BARN**

**WOOD YARD** This fenced area allowed cadets hidden passage to Gridley's Tavern before it was sold to the Academy. Cadets rigged certain boards to facilitate clandestine access.

**HOSPITAL** This is the old North's or Gridley's Tavern. After the Academy purchased the property in 1824, the building was used as a hospital. In the 1830s, it was used as a school. Eventually, part of the building was moved to the south of the 1830 hospital and survived for decades. At times it was occupied by the clerk of cadet records.

## KOSCIUSZKO MONUMENT, 1828

Andrzej Tadeusz Bonawentura Kosciuszko, the Polish nobleman military engineer who had a significant role in designing and improving the Revolutionary War fortifications at West Point, was well-regarded by cadets in the Academy's early days. His selfless service to American independence was seen as an ultimate expression of the love of liberty.

In the 1820s, the Corps asked Superintendent Thayer for permission to erect a monument to Kosciuszko. Thayer approved and cadets raised five thousand dollars for the project, including agreeing to donate twenty-five cents from each month's pay-check. An 1824 story in the *Niles Register* reported:

*The cadets of the United States Military Academy at West Point have offered a gold medal the value of fifty dollars for the best design for a monument to the memory of Gen. Thaddeus Kosciu'szko. It is to be erected at West Point on a romantic spot., situated on the banks of the Hudson and known by the name of Kosciuszko's Garden.*

*This Currier & Ives view of the Kosciuszko Monument from the second half of the nineteenth century is one of the most common views of West Point during the day. This same angle can be seen in art from several different sources. Source: Library of Congress*



*The \$50 gold medal awarded to J. H. B. Latrobe in 1825 for his winning design of the Kosciuszko Monument, which is seen on the medal. Latrobe debated taking the medal or a cash payment due to his family's financial hardships, but his mother told him to take the medal because money would not last but the medal would be an inheritance.*

They selected J. H. B. Latrobe as the designer. Latrobe had been a cadet in the early 1820s before being forced to leave because of his father's death. Despite the earlier intention of placing the monument at Kosciuszko's Garden, it was erected in 1828 on the site of Fort Clinton overlooking the Hudson River. Leftover funds, however, were used for a marble fountain in the Garden.

On Labor Day, 1913, a bronze statue by sculptor Dominic Borgia was unveiled on top of the 1828 column. Borgia's design is quite similar to a 1910 monument in Washington, DC by Polish sculptor Antoni Popiel. Funding for the statue came from Catholic organizations.





From the oration of Cadet Charles Petigru at the dedication of the cornerstone of the Kosciuszko Monument, July 4, 1828.

*His generous self devotion in the cause of his country and of liberty, his constancy of purpose, the unwavering firmness with which he continued under all circumstances to assert and maintain with indefatigable ardor, those great principles which an enlightened understanding had pointed out as the guide to his conduct. In defiance of the allurements of power and of pleasure on the one hand, and of difficulties and dangers which would have appalled any less resolute than himself, on the other—his firmness in adversity, his moderation in prosperity, his unwavering love of justice, even in times of civil wars and party dissensions, when the bond of civil union seemed almost dissolved.*

Kosciuszko Monument in the 1860s.

## WATER SYSTEM, 1829

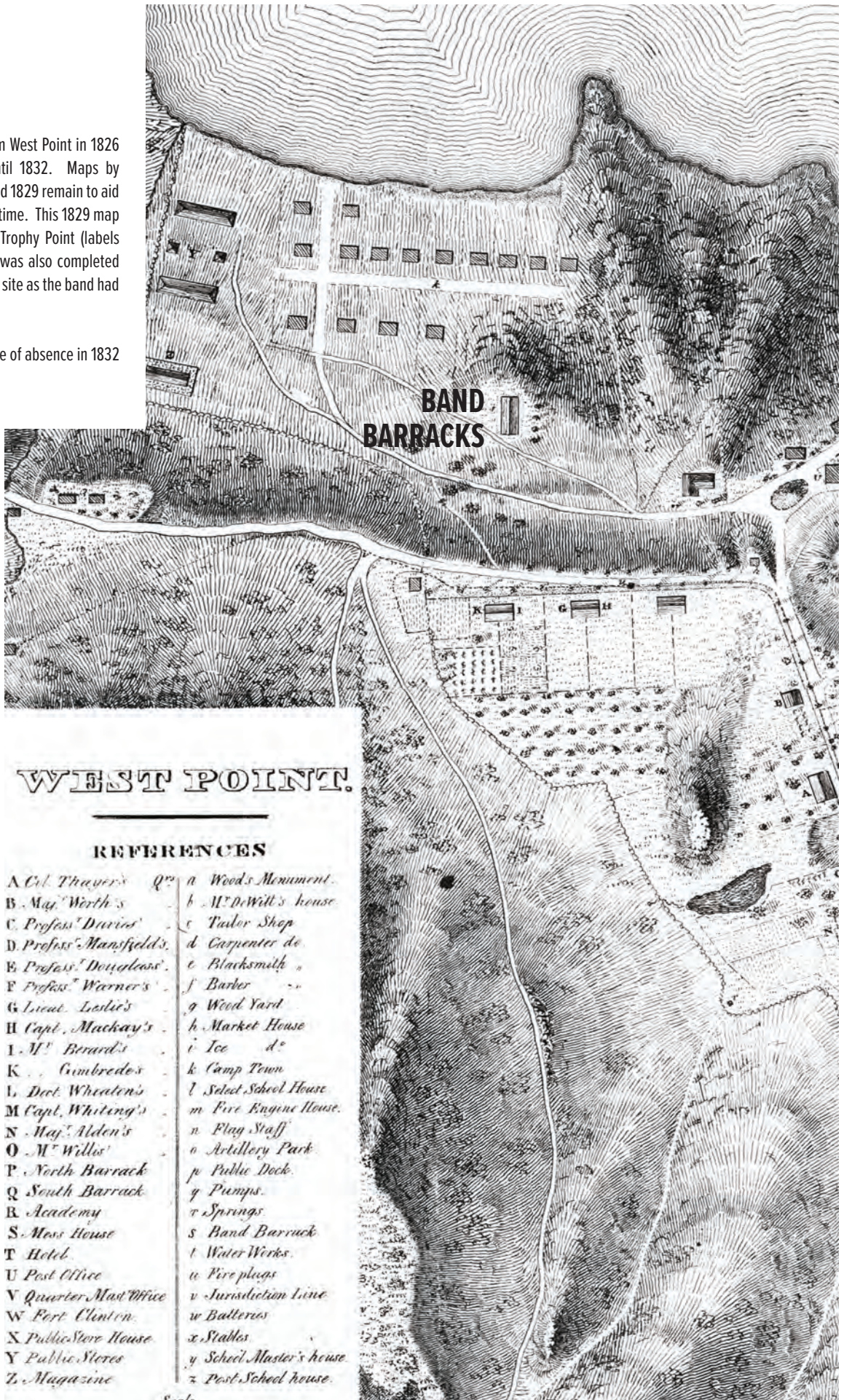
In order to facilitate the building of a much needed hotel on Trophy Point, the Government invested in a water distribution system that used gravity to bring water down from the area near what for a long time was Delafield Pond, now drained. As you can see from the map, the trunk line split with one line going to the site of the Hotel (discussed on the next page) and another serving the officers quarters and barracks.

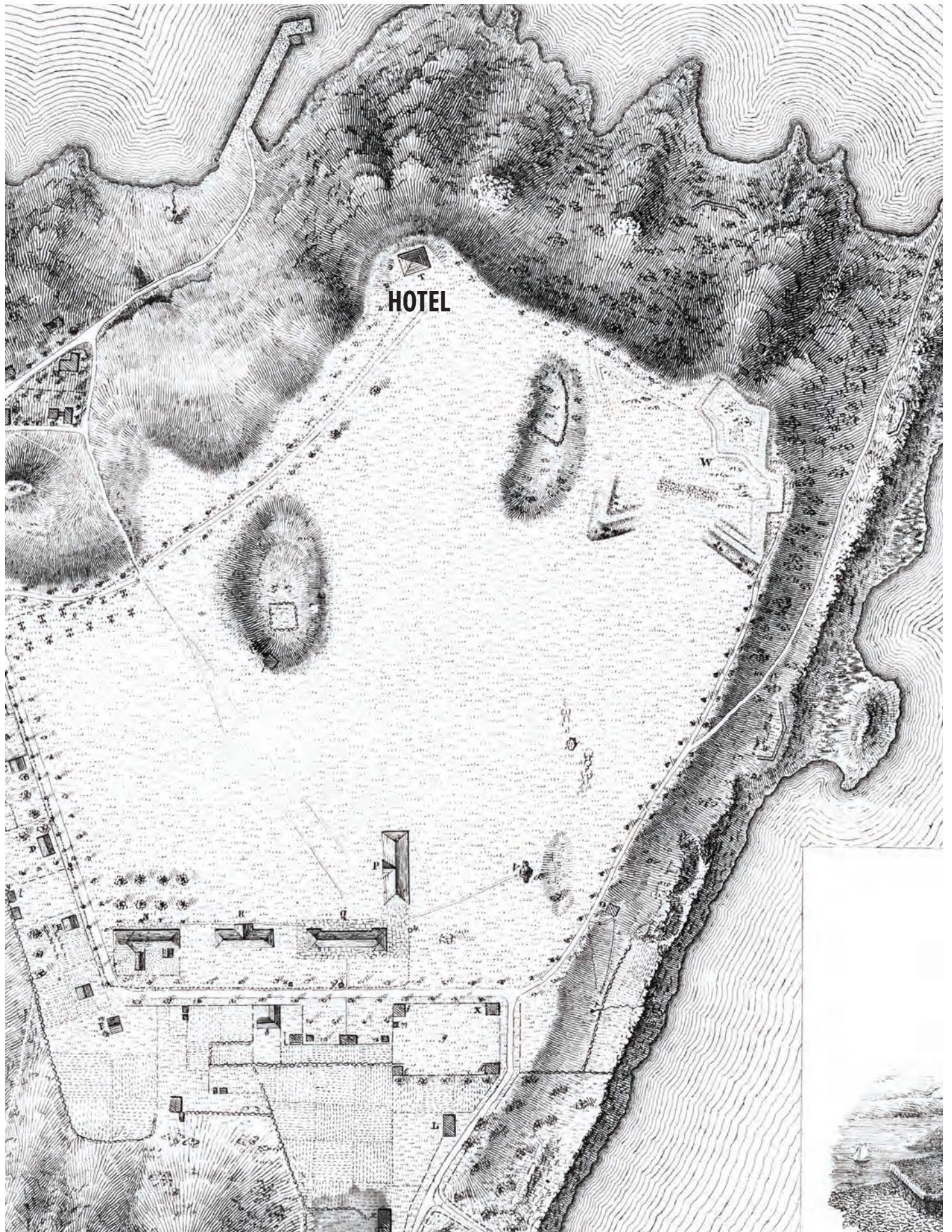


## WEST POINT T. B. BROWN, 1829

Theophilus B. Brown graduated from West Point in 1826 and remained at the Academy until 1832. Maps by Brown from 1826 (see pages 46–47) and 1829 remain to aid in understanding the landscape of the time. This 1829 map from shows the brand new hotel on Trophy Point (labels added). A new barracks for the band was also completed at this time (1828 or 1829) on the same site as the band had occupied before.

Sadly, Brown was forced to take a leave of absence in 1832 and died in 1834.





## WEST POINT HOTEL, 1829

The need for guest lodging at West Point was a significant problem in the 1820s, and as early as 1820, the Board of Visitors recommended the building of a hotel. The small number of rooms in the Mess were inadequate and basic. During the 1826 Board of Visitors Meeting, for example, 30–40 people were forced to crowd together in the Refectory rooms meant for ten people. Many women were forced to sleep on floors when beds were given to male members of the Board.

Using proceeds from the sale of timber from Academy property, particularly hoop poles used in making barrels, the Hotel was completed in 1829. The cost was \$17,226.12. The original structure was a square, four-story stone building. The entire first floor of the hotel was surrounded by a large piazza (porch).

The location chosen was Trophy Point where the Great Chain and Hudson River overlook now draw tourists. The loss of the Long Barracks to fire in 1826 cleared Trophy Point of all construction and made it a logical choice for the Hotel. It commanded a great view, was close to the dock, and allowed guests to easily watch parades and drill on the Plain.

In 1850, the Hotel expanded with the addition of twenty-five “sleeping apartments” and enlarged and/or improved in 1870 and again in the late 1870s and 1880s. At some point in the mid-1800s the Hotel went from being seasonal to year-round.

PROPRIETOR	YEARS
J. S. Bispham	1830
William B. Cozzens	1831–1837
Jacob H. Holt	1837–1840
Francis Rider	1840–1852
Captain Stephen R. Roe	1852–1869
Theodore Cozzens	1869–1874
Albert H. Craney	1875–1899
John P. Craney	1899–1911
Emilie Logan	1911–

*West Point Hotel proprietors and their approximate tenure.*



*A commonly used engraving of the West Hotel used throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.*

While praised during the 1830s and 1840s as being as good as fine New York City establishments, by later in the century the hotel struggled to modernize and retrofit itself with adequate plumbing and other expectations. After large, luxury hotels opened in Highland Falls in the 1850s, the West Point Hotel had less to offer other than the views. An 1854 magazine article said, “The West Point Hotel is so beautifully and conveniently located that many visitors prefer enduring its untamed waiters and indifferent cookery, to being a mile below the Point at Cozzens’ Hotel, kept by the distinguished publican of that name.” Despite periodic upgrades, a 1913 news account noted that it only had three bathrooms for as many as 150 guests!

When the Academy underwent a construction boom after 1903, a new hotel was planned that would have been placed on the slope south of the main campus above the road to Highland Falls. This would have been close to where Wilson Road is today. News accounts in 1907 heralded the end of the West Point Hotel, but budget cuts meant the new facility was never built and the increasingly inadequate survived until 1932, about six years after the Hotel Thayer commenced operations.

The Hotel was temporarily closed in 1838 after the Academy burned to the ground. Rescued books and scientific instruments were housed in lieu of guests. The facility was also closed for a while after a June 1912 fire caused by the explosion of an alcohol lamp

a guest was using to heat hair curlers. While a significant fire, the furniture was rescued and it seems that guests returned within weeks or months.

When reading nineteenth century accounts of the Hotel, it is often referred to by the name of its proprietor. For example, Captain Stephen Roe was the hotelkeeper in the 1850s and 1860s and there are many references to “Roe’s Hotel” or just “Roe’s.” It is not always easy to determine the proprietor in any given year, but a rough table of hoteliers appears on this page.

**THE WEST POINT HOTEL,**  
**West Point, New York.**  
**The only hotel on the military post.**  
**ALBERT H. CRANEY, Proprietor.**

*“The only hotel on the military post.” was the closest thing to a tagline the West Point Hotel ever had. This advertisement is from 1888. As with most famous hotels of the day, ads were run in major newspapers and magazines throughout the country.*

### PROPRIETORS

William B. Cozzens, proprietor in the 1830s, had previously ran the West Point Mess. He would go on to manage hotels in New York City, including the American Hotel at 223 Broadway, the current site of the Woolworth Building (1912). In the 1850s, he opened “Cozzens West Point Hotel” in Buttermilk Falls (Highland Falls). A magnet for New York society, it stood on the high ground near the current site



Before the 1850s, guests would climb or ride up the hill from the dock. From 1850 onward, guests arriving by steamer would stop at Cozzens' Landing in Highland Falls or later in the century at what is now known as South Dock. Omnibus carriages, as shown in this image from the Civil War era, would then take them to the Hotel. Note that it says Roe's Hotel West Point and not the West Point Hotel. After 1850, rail passengers on the east side of the river were ferried by boats that met the trains. Rail service to West Point did not begin until 1883. Source: USMA Archives

of the Five Star Inn next to the West Point Visitors Center. The Cozzens family ran the Highland Falls hotel until it became Cranston's West Point Hotel in 1881. Cranston's had severe financial problems in the 1890s. William B. Cozzens was also involved in New York City politics. He died in 1884 and is buried in the West Point Cemetery.

Francis Rider, proprietor in the 1840s, was close friends with Professor of Drawing Robert W. Weir. Rider's wife Francis was painted by Weir. In the late 1850s, Rider managed the St. Germain Hotel near the future site of the Flatiron Building in New York City. He also ran the Pavilion Hotel in Newport in the late 1850s and the Stanwix Hotel in Albany in the mid-1860s. He died in April of 1868.

Although his obituary says he took over the Hotel in 1849, Academy records show that Stephen Roe co-managed the Hotel in 1851 with Francis Rider and then took over in 1852. He was previously one of the great steamboat captains of the Hudson and piloted the DeWitt Clinton, the Iron Witch, and the fast New World. His time with the New World introduced him to many famous Americans, so he had an excellent reputation for hospitality by the time he took the position at West Point in his early 40s. He died in 1885 and is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx.

After Roe, Theodore Cozzens, son of William B. Cozzens, operated the Hotel for a few years until his death in 1863. Albert Craney then operated the

Hotel until his death in 1899. Before arriving at West Point, Craney had operated hotels in New York and Washington. He is buried in the West Point Cemetery. After his death, the Hotel was run by his widow Elizabeth and his son, John P. Craney.

The Craney lease expired in 1911 and the Hotel passed to control of Emilie Louise Logan. Her control of the property appears to have lasted at least into the 1920s. In 1918, Logan published *West Point: Gibraltar of the Hudson*, a history and advertisement for the Hotel.

The Hotel was closed in 1926 after the Thayer Hotel opened. The structure was used as a warehouse until it was razed in 1932.



The view north from the Hotel was one of its primary selling points.



An undated photo of the Hotel's front desk. Source: USMA Archives



## CADETS' HOSPITAL, 1830

A dedicated hospital for sick cadets was a clear need as the size of the Corps of Cadets expanded in the 1810s. The 1820s purchase of Gridley's tavern led to that building being used as a hospital for a few years, but the structure was too small to be truly adequate. Work began on a larger building in the late 1820s and was completed and occupied in 1830. It was located just south of the main Academy buildings. The modern location would be close to the south end of Mahan Hall. The now demolished Central Apartments was near the site for decades.

When built, the stone building had one-floor for wards with a two-floor wing on either end. These were at times the residences of the surgeon and assistant surgeon. The dimensions were 130'x 40'. The building had no plumbing for decades and fireplaces were the only means of cooking. The floors were yellow pine, which over time proved unsatisfactory for hygiene and led to leaks. Rooms for attendants for hygiene and led to leaks. Rooms for attendants were in the basement. In the 1840s, sugar maples were in front of the east facade.

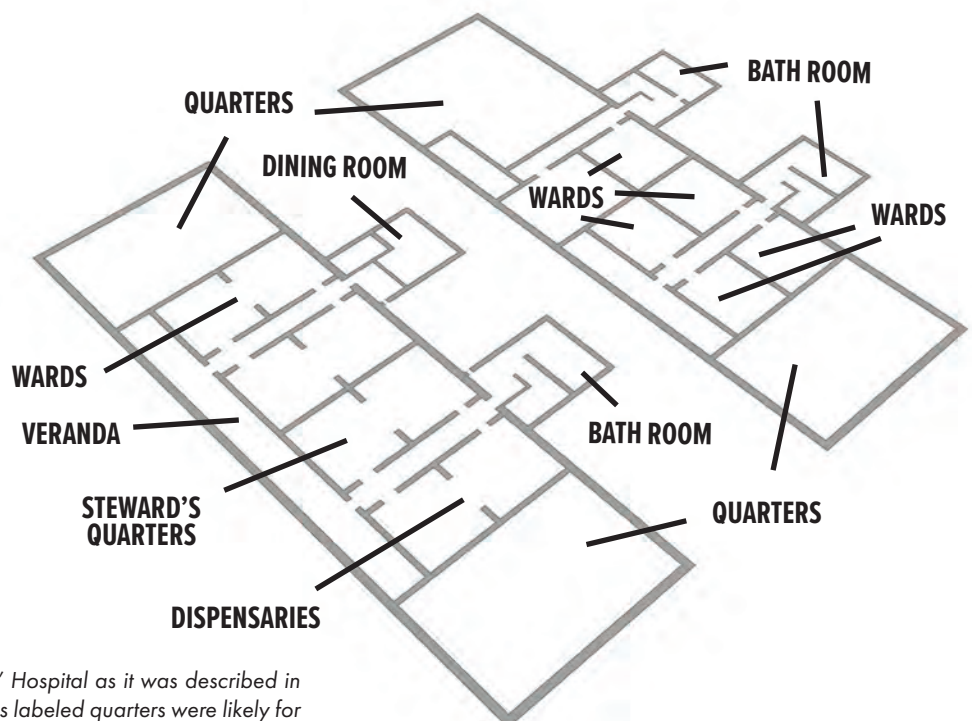
Criticisms of the adequacy of the building appear periodically in Academy reports. At some point in the late 1850s or early 1860s, a second story and attic were added to the middle section of the hospital. This allowed for additional wards and bathrooms to be added in new stairways at the back of the building. The date for the addition is unclear as of this writing and is not noted in the typical sources, but an 1854 government document notes an appropriation of \$6,500 for enlarging the building.

After a new hospital was finished in 1884, a \$3,500 appropriation from Congress in 1886 allowed this building to be converted into four quarters for officers. A one-story porch was added to the north side at some point and presumably the south end as well.



A photo of the Cadets' Hospital believed to be from about 1860. Source: USMA Archives

This crop of an 1830 painting in the collection of the West Point Museum shows the hospital when it was brand new or perhaps under construction. The artist is John William Hill.



The layout of the Cadets' Hospital as it was described in an 1870 report. The areas labeled quarters were likely for the Surgeon and Assistant Surgeon.



*The Cadets' Hospital as it appears in an 1873 class album. The stonework, including the quoins along the edges, bears a strong similarity to Professors Row, the only surviving stone buildings from this era. The rounded Roman arches would have resembled those on the 1815 Academy building also standing at the time of the Hospital's construction and would again be included on the (Old) Cadet Chapel in 1836. Source: USMA Archives*

## NOTES & REFERENCES

### Page 2

Pappas (1993) mentions that the Plain had yellow pines less than 12' tall. This seems to come from the Revolutionary War diaries of Samuel Richards.

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“Execution Hollow” is the most common term for the depression on the Plain that lasted until the late nineteenth century, but “Gallows Hollow” is also used. For example, Bailey refers to Gallows Hollow in his memoir (1891), and an 1893 *New York Times* article about Army football notes that “carriages and other vehicles lined the road from the corner of the new academic building [now Pershing Hall] to Gallows Hollow.”

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### Page 3

Map by author.

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The 1798 order restricting access to North's Tavern by West Point personnel can be found on page 12 of the Hamilton reference below. It begins, "Every NComd Officer and Private are strictly prohibited from entering or being [in] and about the House of Thomas North, without a written Pass signed by an Officer."

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The reference to the Long Barracks as the “Blue Bar-

racks” is on the reverse of an inkwash believed to be by Archibald Robinson and can be seen on page 10.

### Pages 8–9

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The inkwash of the Long Barracks presumed to be by Archibald Robinson is in the collection of the West Point Museum. It says “Blue Barracks” on the reverse.

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### Pages 12–13

Peale (1801).

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"Steam Boat." 1808. *The Evening Post (New York)*, June 20, 1808.

#### Page 14

The Barron map is from 1805–1807 and is from the collection of the USMA Archives & Special Collections.

#### Page 15

Zoeller (1808).

"Died." *The Arkansas Gazette*, November 12, 1822. [Zoeller's obituary, which lists his place of birth as Germany. Some sources call him Swiss].

#### Page 16

Swift (1890).

The sources for the shape of the Headquarters come from Zoeller (1808), an 1815 map by Cadet John A. Webber in the collection of the New York Historical Society, a circa 1817–1818 map by Cadet George Washington Whistler, and an 1826 map by USMA graduate and drawing instructor Theophilus B. Brown (T. B. Brown). The latter two are in the holdings of USMA Archives.

A map attributed to J. G. Bruffs, a cadet from 1820–1822 that shows the West Point landscape from about 1815 or 1816 indicates a workshop next to the pond.

#### Page 17

Photo by author. The grave location is the New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site, New Windsor, NY.

Church (1879) discusses skating in Execution Hollow.

#### Page 18

Illustration by author. Data from:

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#### Page 19

Map by the author.

#### Page 20

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Map and graphic by the author.

#### Pages 22–23

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#### Page 24

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[Note: The map does not show West Point in 1821. The landscape depicted is ca. 1815.]

#### Pages 25–27

The full barracks illustration is in the collection of the National Archives.

Halsey (1815).

Woodruff (1815).

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#### Pages 28–29

The plan of the first floor, and other details, are based on Halsey (1815) and Woodruff (1815).

The Sully artwork is in the Frick Collection.

The 1840s map is in the National Archives.

Church (1879) mentions the drawing academy being on the second floor of the mess hall.

Berard (1886) mentions church services being held in the mess hall.

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#### Pages 30–31

Some details of the Academy come from Halsey (1815) and Woodruff (1815).

The 1840 sketch by Arden and the 1838 drawing by Woodruff are in the collection of the National Archives.

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#### Pages 32–33

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#### Page 34

Berard (1886) references "Castle Harris"

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The 1844 map referenced is in Colton, Joseph Hutchins. 1844. *A Guide Book to West Point and Vicinity*. J. H. Colton.

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gress. [Note: The Library of Congress indicates that this is from about 1820, but that dating is incorrect.]

Zoeller (1818).

### Page 35

Most of the photos on these pages are from USMA Archives. Most are from the Pitman Collection made from about 1870–1872. The underlying map is by George Washington Whistler, Class of 1819 and later an instructor of drawing. His son was the famed painter James Abbott McNeill Whistler. The map is referred to as being from 1818 in the USMA Centennial materials.

### Pages 36–37

Map: Library of Congress

### Pages 38–39

Photo: USMA Archives

Floorplans:

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### Page 40

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### Page 41

The 1860s image appeared in a 1864 Class Album in the collection of the USMA Archives.

Zoeller's 1808 map and Webber's 1815 map both label the hill that would eventually host Wood's Monument as "Bunkers Hill." Berard (1886) refers to "Monument Hill" as the location. Before it was the home for the obelisk, the flag pole was on the site.

### Pages 42–43

Photos: USMA Archives

Mrs. Davies is quoted in Berard (1886).

The floorplan is from Delafield (1842).

Peale (1801).

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### Page 45

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### Page 49

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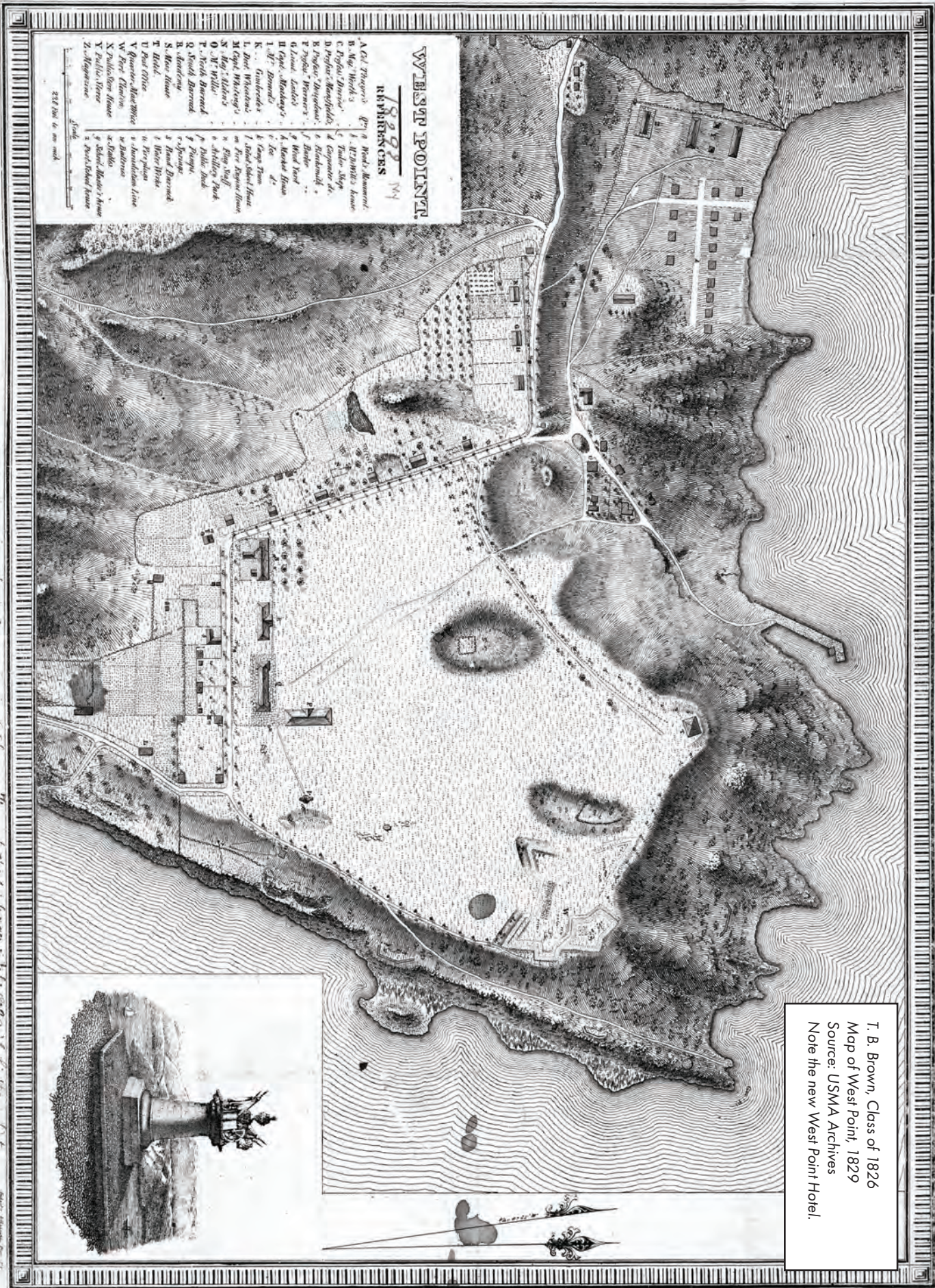
Williams (1889).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to the USMA Archives team for their patience and help, including Suzanne Christoff, Alicia Mauldin-Ware, Susan Lintelmann, Casey Madrick, Doug Litts, and Elaine McConnell! Thanks also to Marlana Cook at the West Point Museum and the countless archivists at the Library of Congress and the National Archives.

*The Cadet Monument in the 1820s or 1830s.*  
Source: John Rubens Smith, artist; Library of Congress





# WEST POINT

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- A. Col. Truitt's 9th & 10th Regiments
- B. Major West's 1st Artillery
- C. Engineer Detachment
- D. Engineer Detachment
- E. Engineer Detachment
- F. Engineer Detachment
- G. Engineer Detachment
- H. Engineer Detachment
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- V. Engineer Detachment
- W. Engineer Detachment
- X. Engineer Detachment
- Y. Engineer Detachment
- Z. Engineer Detachment

Scale  
214 feet to one inch

T. B. Brown, Class of 1826  
 Map of West Point, 1829  
 Source: USMA Archives  
 Note the new West Point Hotel.



William Chapman, Class of 1831  
 Map of West Point, 1830  
 Source: USMA Archives

A  
 PLAN  
 of  
**WEST POINT**  
 by  
 Capt Wm. Chapman  
 1830



- 1830-1831
- A Col. Thayer's Quarters
  - B Capt. Fitch's Quarters
  - C Capt. Davis's Quarters
  - D Capt. Cook's Quarters
  - E Capt. Dwyer's Quarters
  - F Capt. Lathrop's Quarters
  - G Capt. Gardner's Quarters
  - H Capt. Brooks's Quarters
  - I Capt. Conroy's Quarters
  - K Capt. Warren's Quarters
  - L Capt. Whiston's Quarters
  - M Capt. Allen's Quarters
  - N Capt. Miles's Quarters
  - O Capt. Barratt's Quarters
  - P Capt. Howard's Quarters
  - Q Capt. Hunt's Quarters
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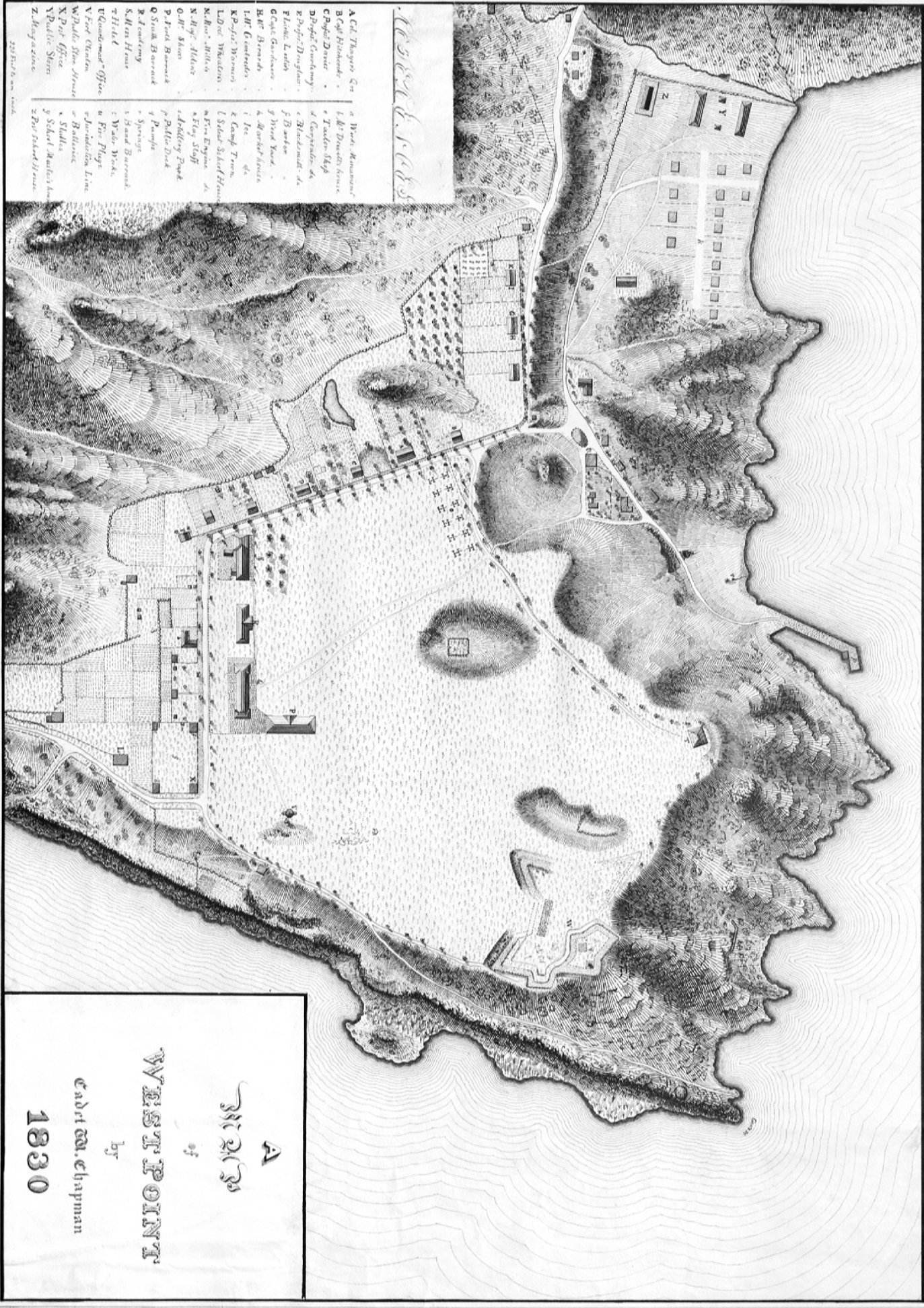
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<https://www.executionhollow.com/contact>

W.C. C. & S. 1830



- A. Col. Thayer's Quarters
- B. Capt. Bunker's Quarters
- C. Capt. Dyer's Quarters
- D. Capt. Conroy's Quarters
- E. Capt. Doughty's Quarters
- F. Lieut. L. Miller's Quarters
- G. Capt. Gardner's Quarters
- H. Mr. Brown's Quarters
- I. Mr. Conroy's Quarters
- K. Capt. Brown's Quarters
- L. Dr. W. H. W. W. W. W.
- M. Mr. Miller's Quarters
- N. Mr. Allen's Quarters
- O. Mr. Shaw's Quarters
- P. Capt. Bunker's Quarters
- Q. Capt. Bunker's Quarters
- R. J. Conroy's Quarters
- S. Mr. H. W. W. W.
- T. Hill's Quarters
- U. General's Office
- V. First Captain's Office
- W. Mr. Shaw's Quarters
- X. Post Office
- Y. Public Store
- Z. Magazine

at West Point  
 1. Mr. Brown's Quarters  
 2. Captain's Quarters  
 3. Standards  
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**A**  
**MAP**  
 of  
**WEST POINT**  
 by  
 Capt. W. C. Chapman  
**1830**