

OVERVIEW HISTORY OF FORT DUPONT



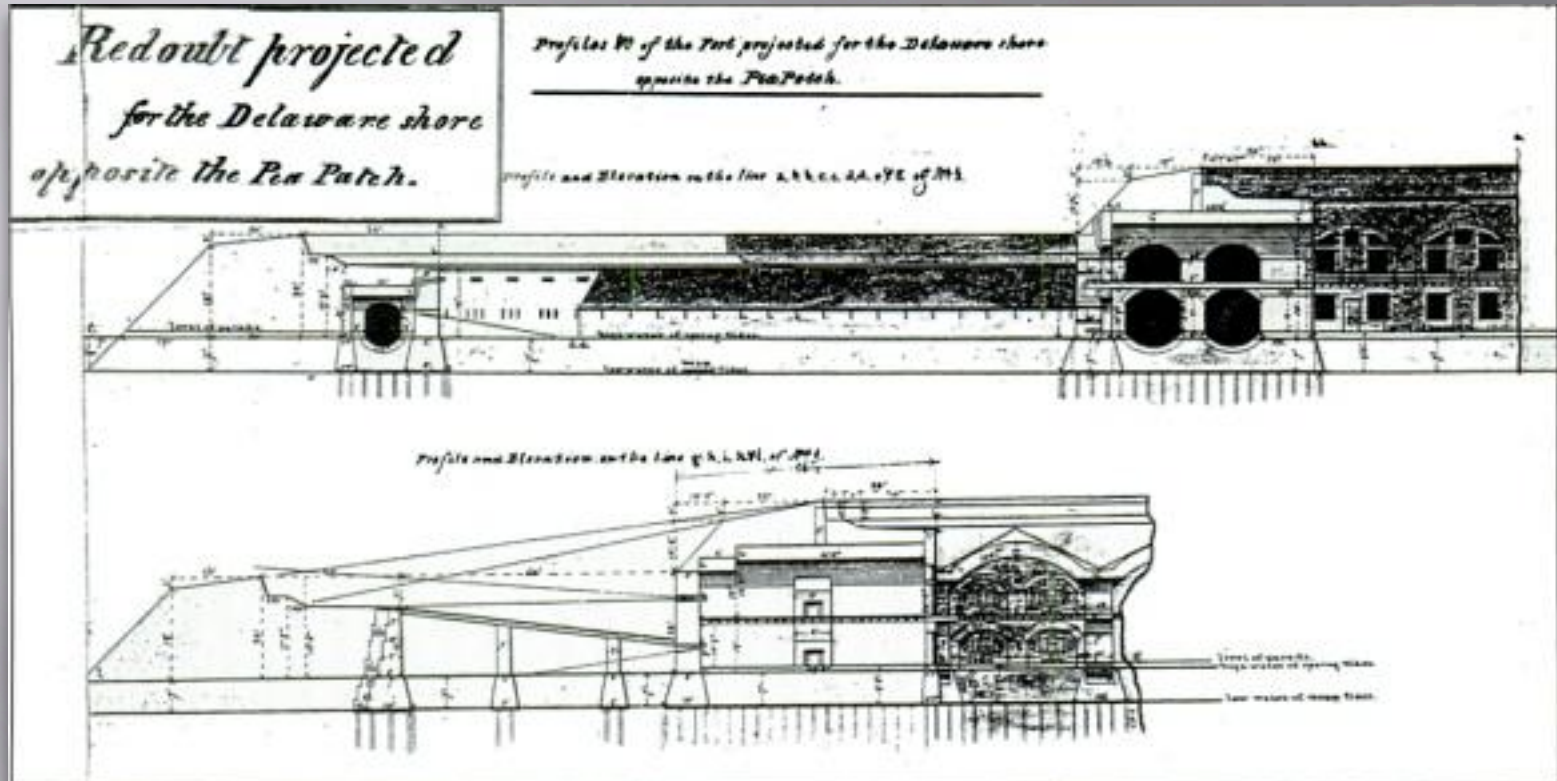
Fort DuPont 1819-1945



Brief Timeline

- ▣ 1819 - Plans for Redoubt
- ▣ 1863 - Ten Gun Battery
- ▣ 1871 - Twenty Gun Battery
- ▣ 1892 - Mine control casemate
- ▣ 1898 - Mortar & rifle batteries
- ▣ 1917 - Mobilization station for WWI
- ▣ 1922 - First Engineers arrive
- ▣ 1931 - First house moved from Fort Mott
- ▣ 1939 - Expansion & building construction
- ▣ 1944 - German POW camp
- ▣ 1945 - Declared surplus site

Circa 1819 Redoubt Plans

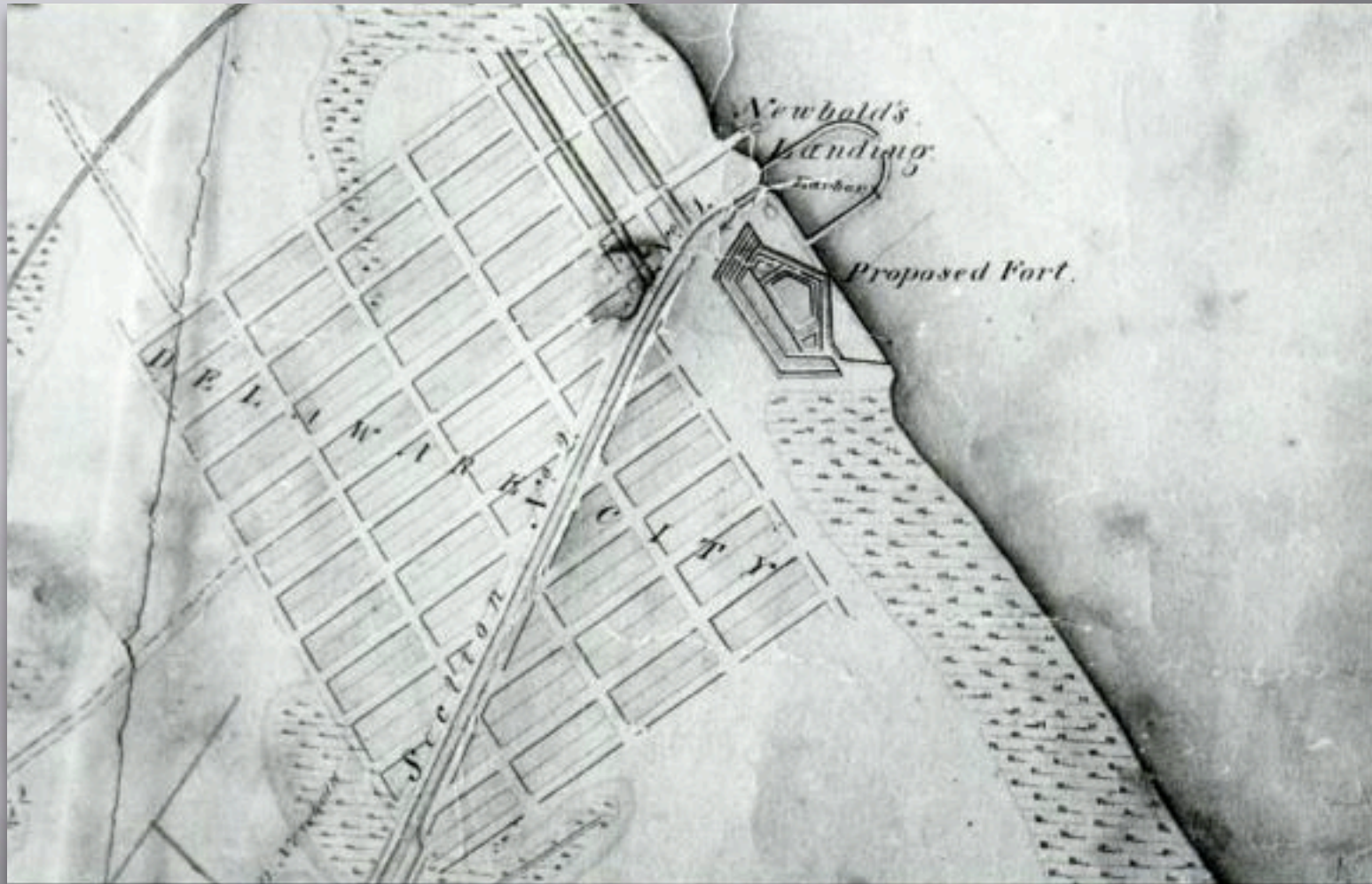


Delaware Shore
opposite the Fog Point

Main body of the fort
Hutted section of the fort
Battery

50-1

Proposed Fort on 1829 Map

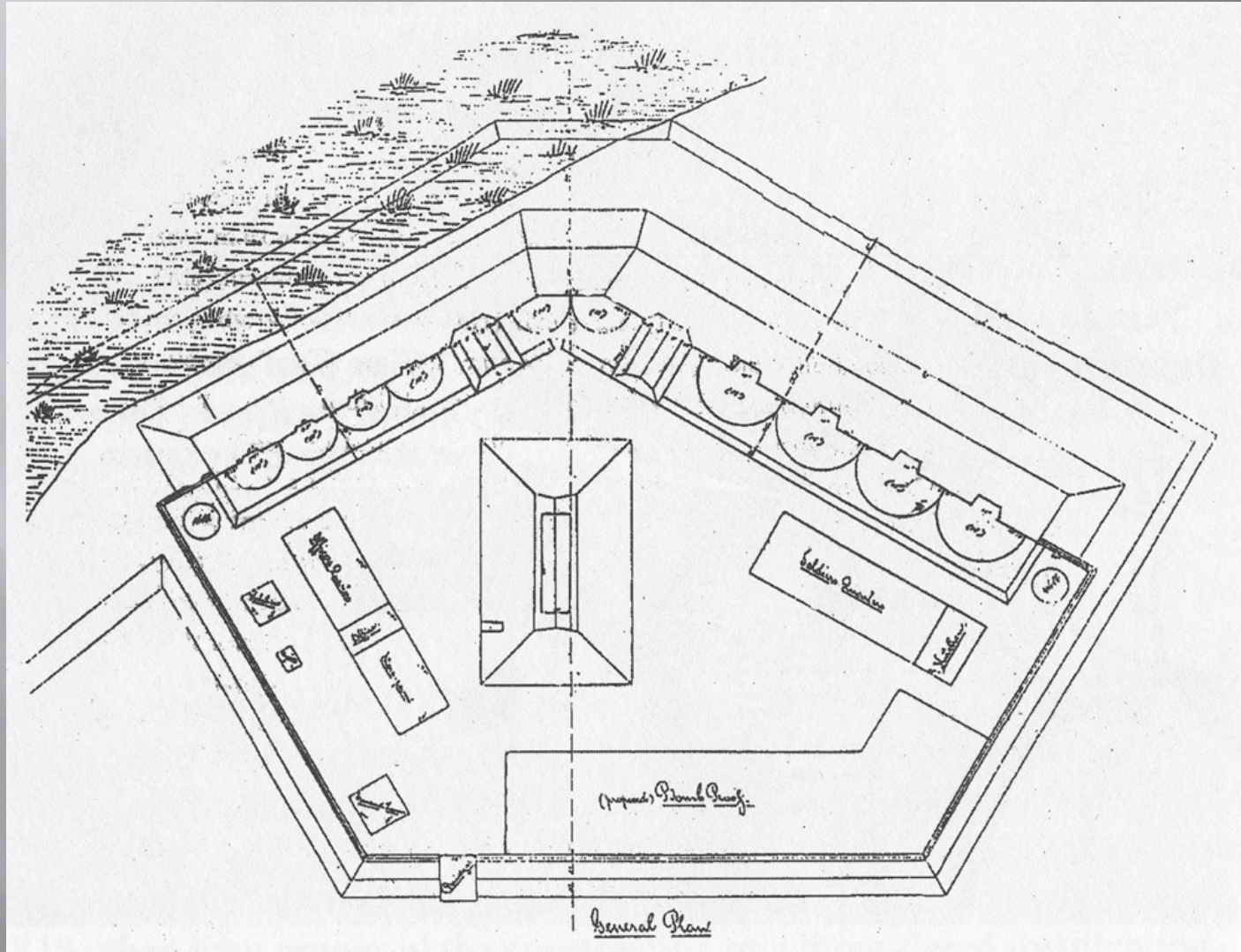


Ten Gun Battery

“A Ten Gun Battery is being constructed by the government on land purchased of Clement Reeves, Esq., near Delaware City, on the Delaware River. It is to have two faces. Six of the guns are to be 10 inches and four 15 inches, magazine [will be] bomb-proof and [there will be] bomb-proof protection for the garrison.”

Philadelphia Inquirer
7 November 1863

Ten Gun Battery – 1863 to 1865



Ten Gun Battery

“I have been working hard all day hauling gun carriages and chassises from Delaware City to the Fort. I just swing them under large wheels, and then 25 or 30 men can easily haul them up.”

Sgt. Bishop Crumrine
Independent Battery G
Pittsburgh Heavy Artillery
15 September 1864

Ten Gun Battery

“The battery is a nice place now, all the 10-inch guns are mounted and the 15-inch [guns] are on the wharf. The grass is long and green, and I keep it trimmed as nice as a posy bed. The government property is all fenced in, and I am now thinking how I can get lime to whitewash the fence. Our garden is flourishing peas a foot high, onions, and potatoes in abundance. Henry Champ, gardener.”

Sgt. Bishop Crumrine
Independent Battery G
Pittsburgh Heavy Artillery
25 May 1865

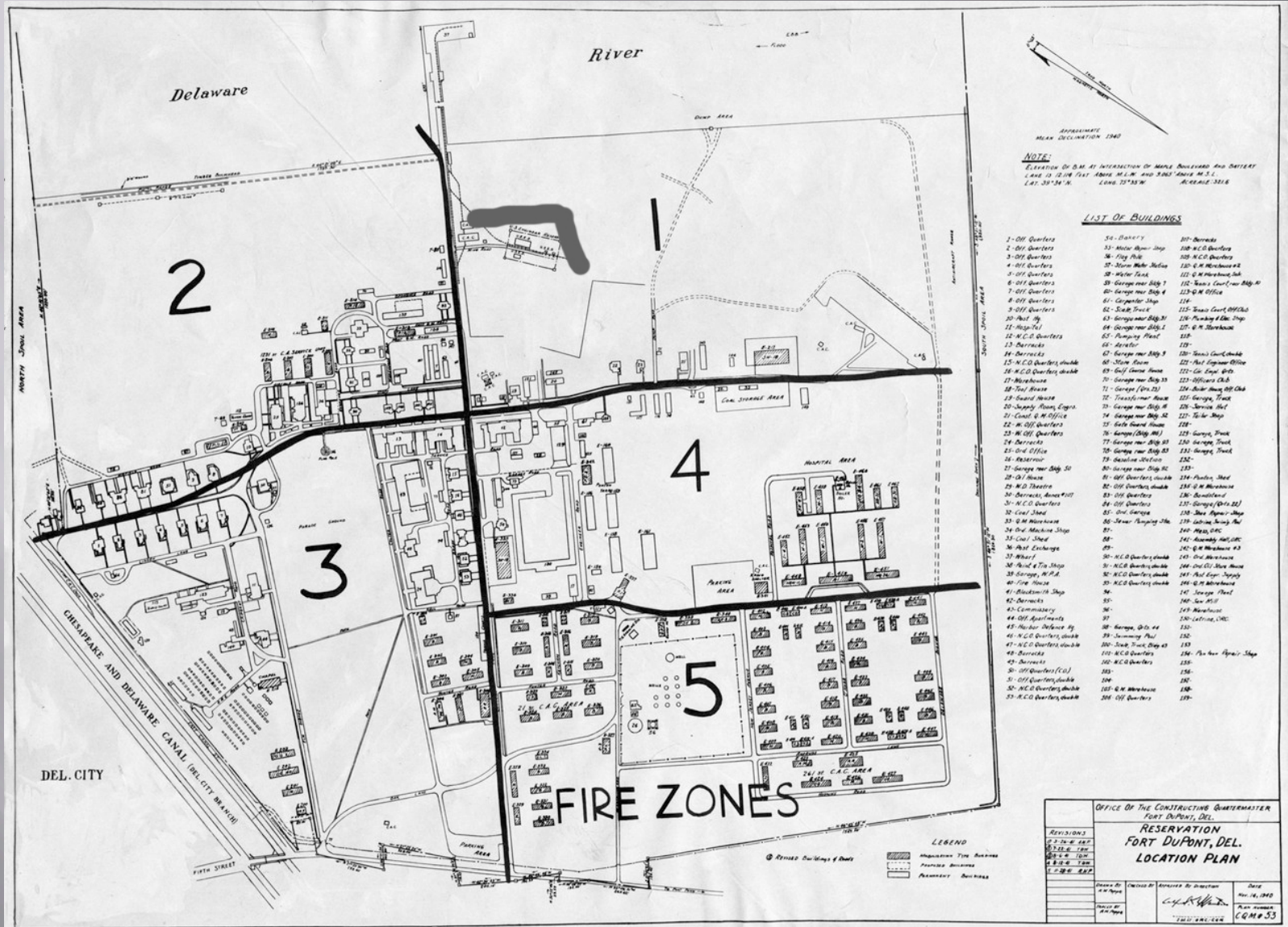
Location of Ten Gun Battery



Location of Ten Gun Battery



Location of Ten Gun Battery



Twenty Gun Battery

- ▣ In 1871, 68 acres transferred from Clement Reeves to federal government for \$18,000
- ▣ Construction started the following year under direction of Lt. Col. John Kurtz
- ▣ Referred often as “the fort opposite Fort Delaware”
- ▣ By 1877 project abandoned following severe storms, lack of funds, and death of Kurtz
- ▣ Remains of battery remain today located behind the 1940s “white warehouse” along Sussex Ave (historic Maple Ave)

Twenty Gun Battery



Battery Delaware Shore, Loutham point, from Southwest
Sept. 7-1892

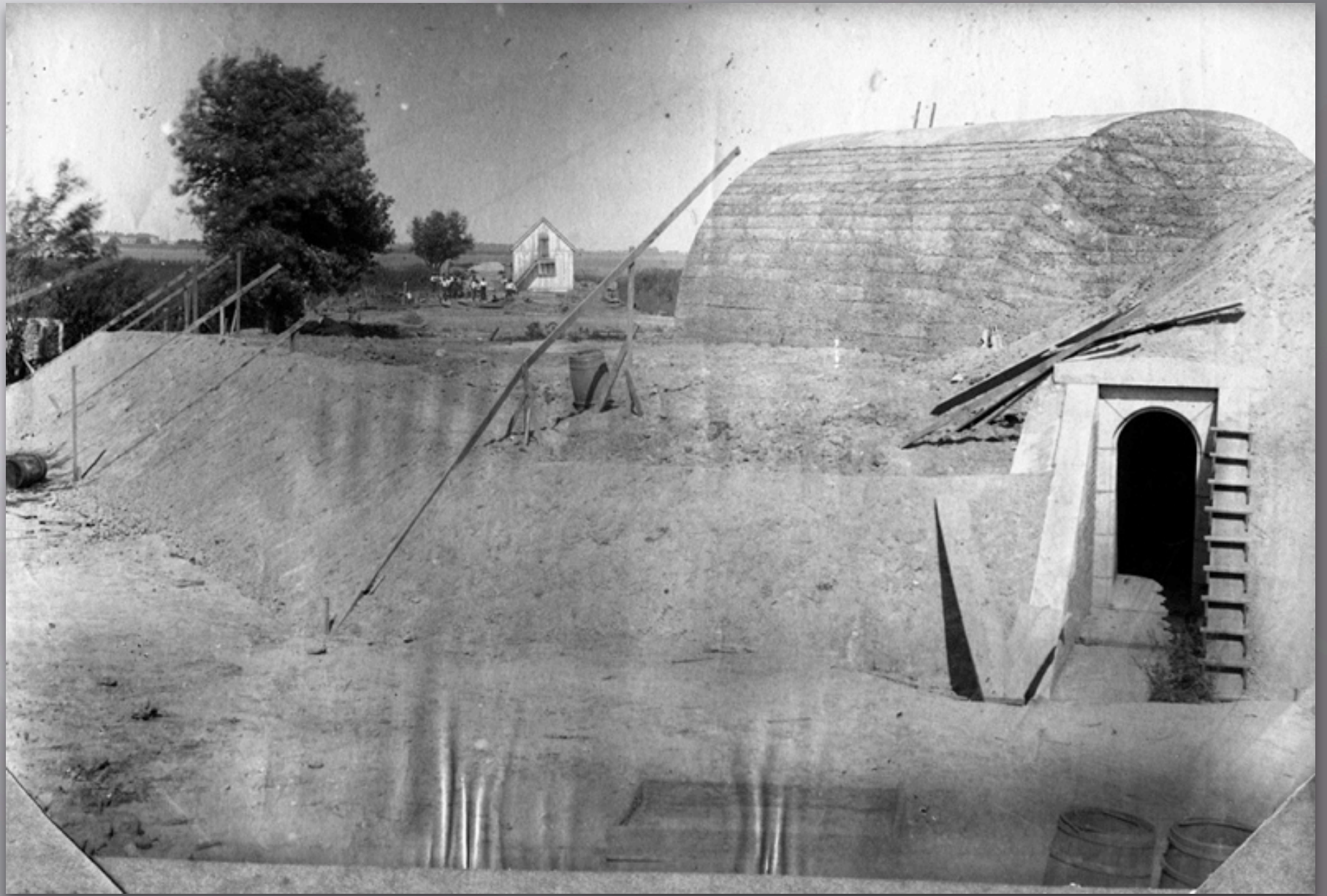
Twenty Gun Battery



Mine Control Casemate - 1892



Casemate, Melawan Shore, opposite Ft. Delaware
Under construction, Sept. 6-1892 - Looking Northwest



U.S. Mine Planter General E.O.C. Ord as photographed off the coast of Fort DuPont

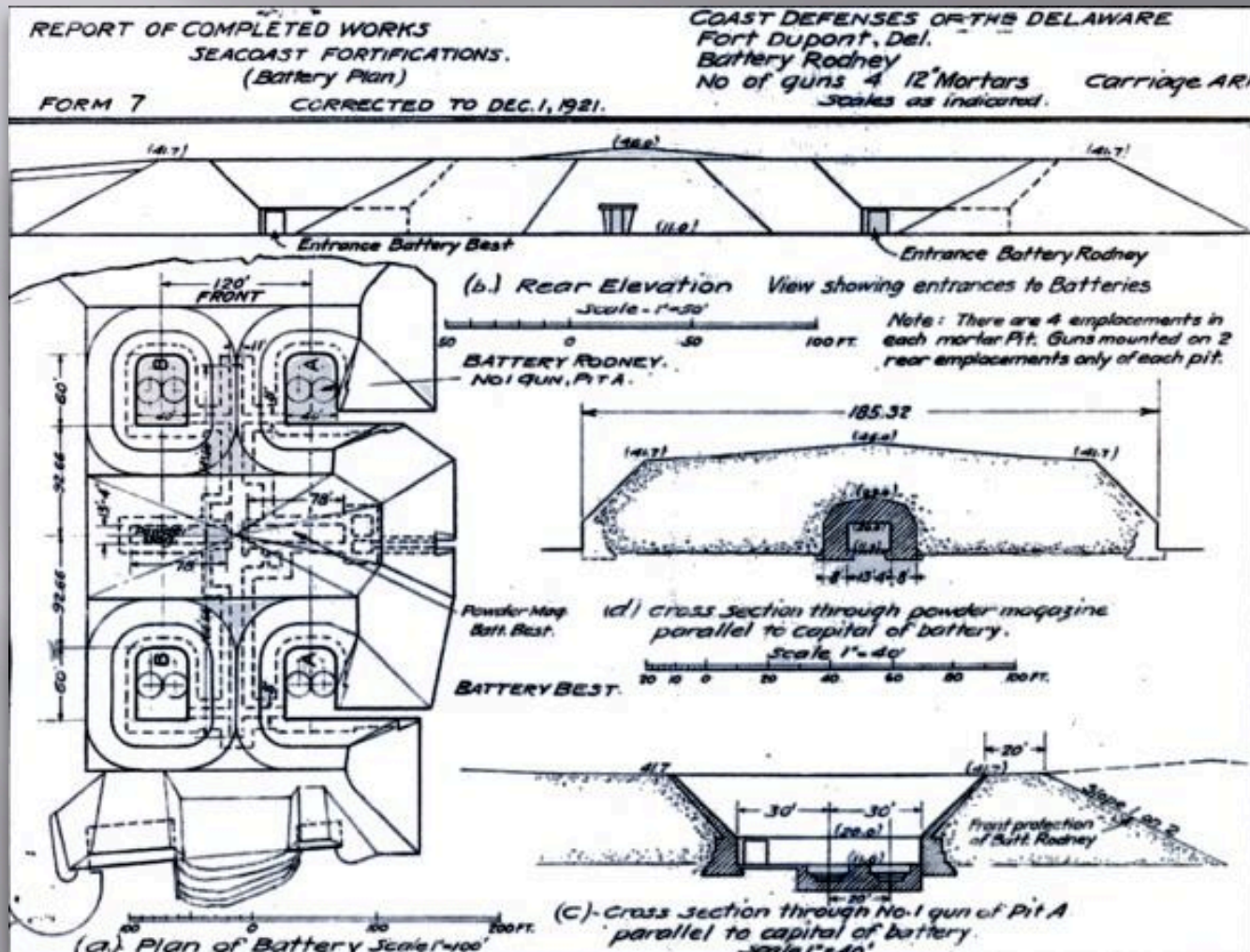


Mine Planter General Ord

- ▣ Named after Civil War general, Maj. Gen. Edward Otho Cresap Ord (1818 - 1883)
- ▣ Built in Wilmington, Del., in 1909
- ▣ Planter saw military service until 1946



Batteries Rodney - Best



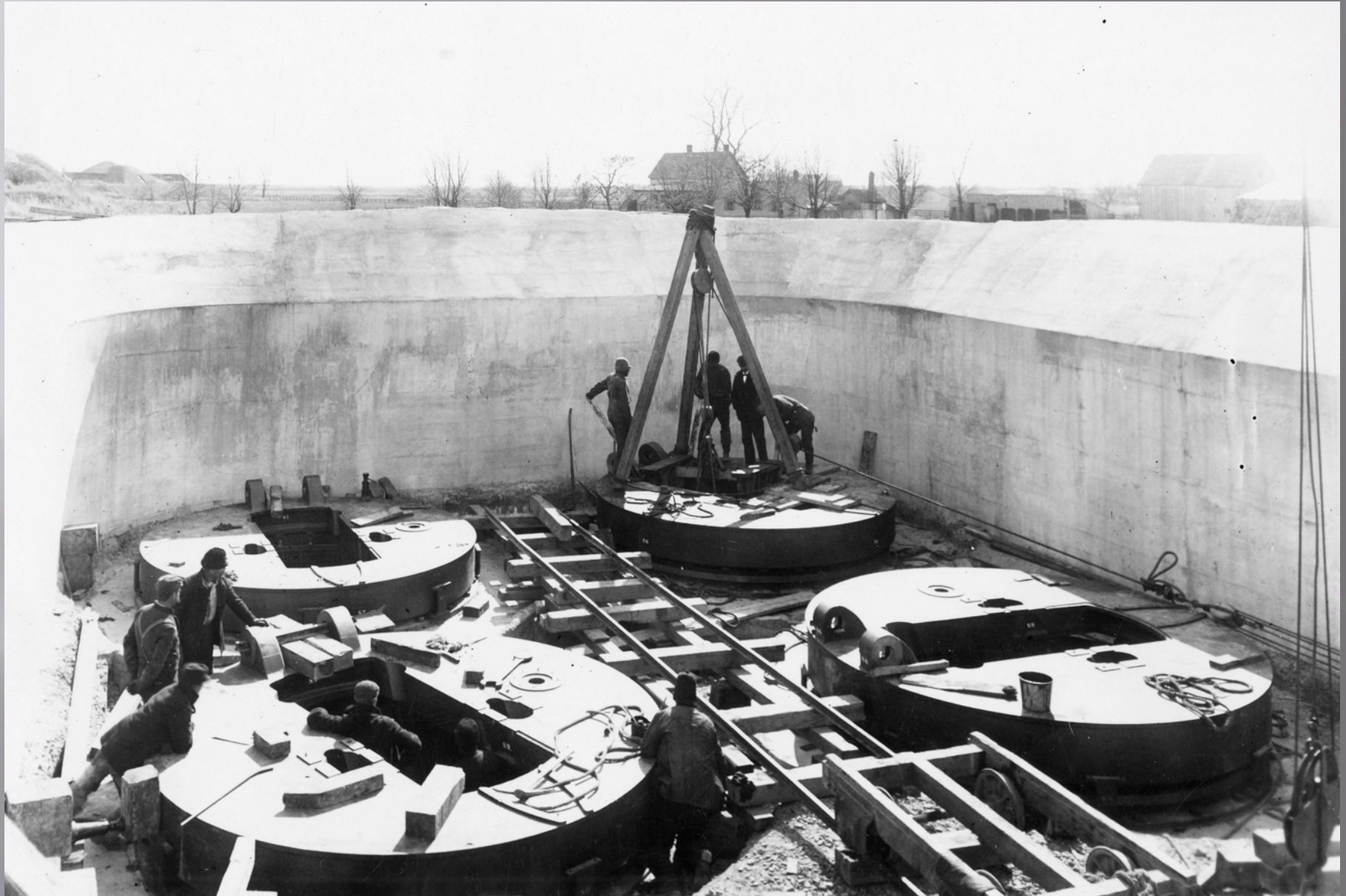
Mortar Battery Quick Facts

- ▣ Built in earnest from May to December 1898
- ▣ Dozens of construction photographs exist at the Delaware Public Archives in Dover
- ▣ Later named after Caesar Rodney & Maj. Clermont Best, officer in Span-Am War
- ▣ Construction cost was roughly \$217,721
- ▣ Originally armed with sixteen 12" Mortars
- ▣ 4 mortars from Best shipped to Hawaii in 1914
- ▣ 4 mortars from Rodney to Ft. Rosecrans in 1918
- ▣ Remaining mortars in battery until 1941

Construction - 1898



Construction - 1898



Twenty Gun Battery



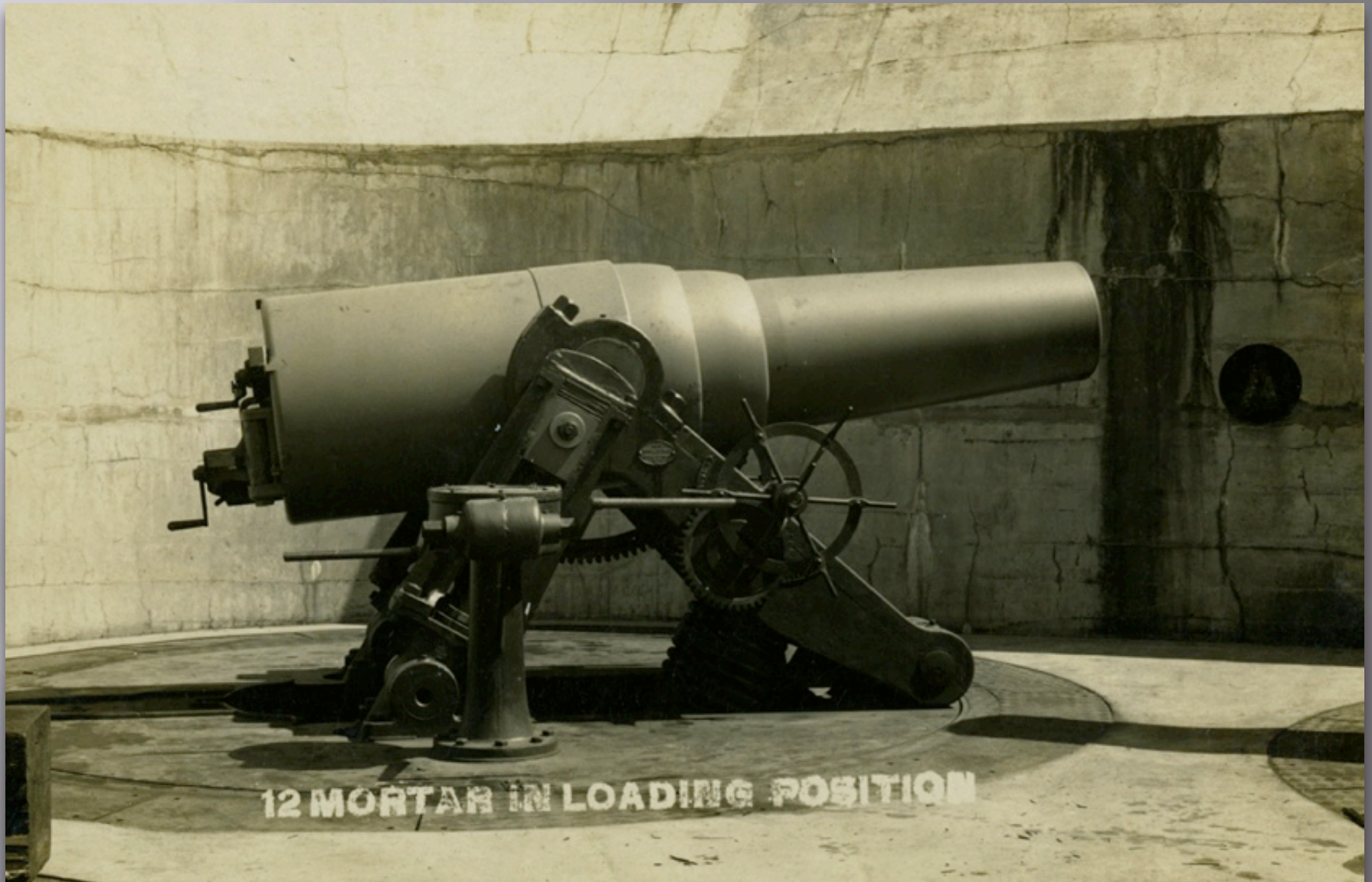
Post HQ / Officer Quarters



Construction - 1898



Mortar Battery - 1910s



Mortar Battery - 1910s



Mortar Battery Memories...

- ▣ “My brother and sister used to climb all over the guns, including the breeches. I was afraid to. The breech blocks had been removed for some purpose and the bores were quite clean and oily. Bunkers were located immediately behind each gun, presumably the hold the ammo.”

- Neil Lewis, lived at Fort DuPont as kid in 1930s



Batteries Read & Gibson

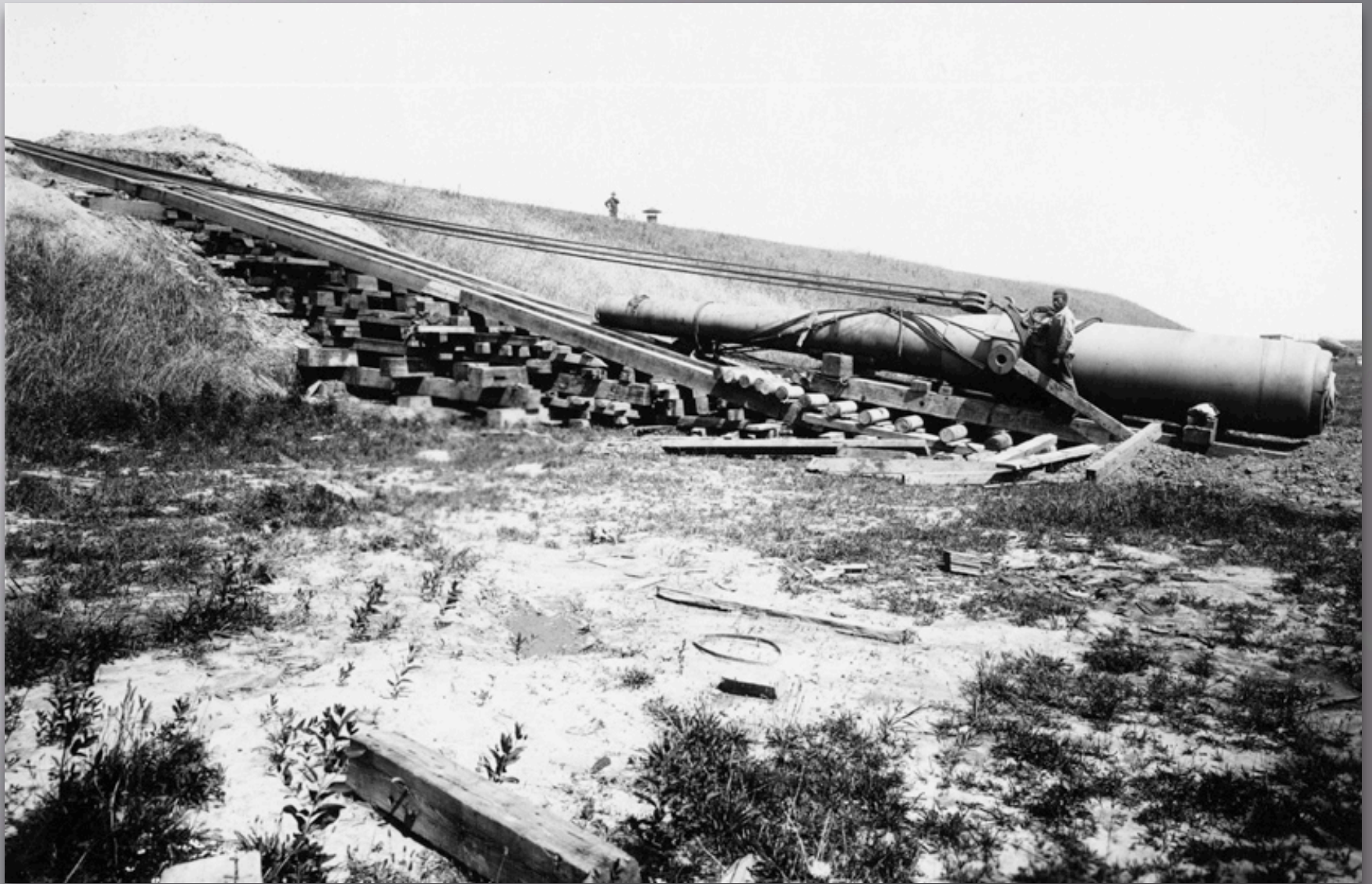
- ▣ Split battery later named Read-Gibson
- ▣ Total construction cost: \$148,785
- ▣ Constructed May through December 1898
- ▣ George Read was a signer of the Declaration of Independence from New Castle, Delaware
- ▣ Armed with two 12" rifled guns en barbette
- ▣ Guns were sent to Fort Hamilton (Battery Doubleday) in 1918
- ▣ One carriage was sent to Fort Hancock, other was scrapped in 1918
- ▣ Batteries were later used for storage by 1st Engineer Regiment

Batteries Read & Gibson

- ▣ Col. James Gibson was U.S. Army officer who was KIA on 17 Sep 1814 at Fort Erie, Canada
- ▣ Battery Gibson was armed with two 8" rifled guns M1888II on disappearing carriages
- ▣ Gibson's guns were both removed and sent to Watervliet arsenal in 1917
- ▣ Gibson's carriages were both removed in 1818, and scrapped in 1922

View from 20-Gun Battery in 1898

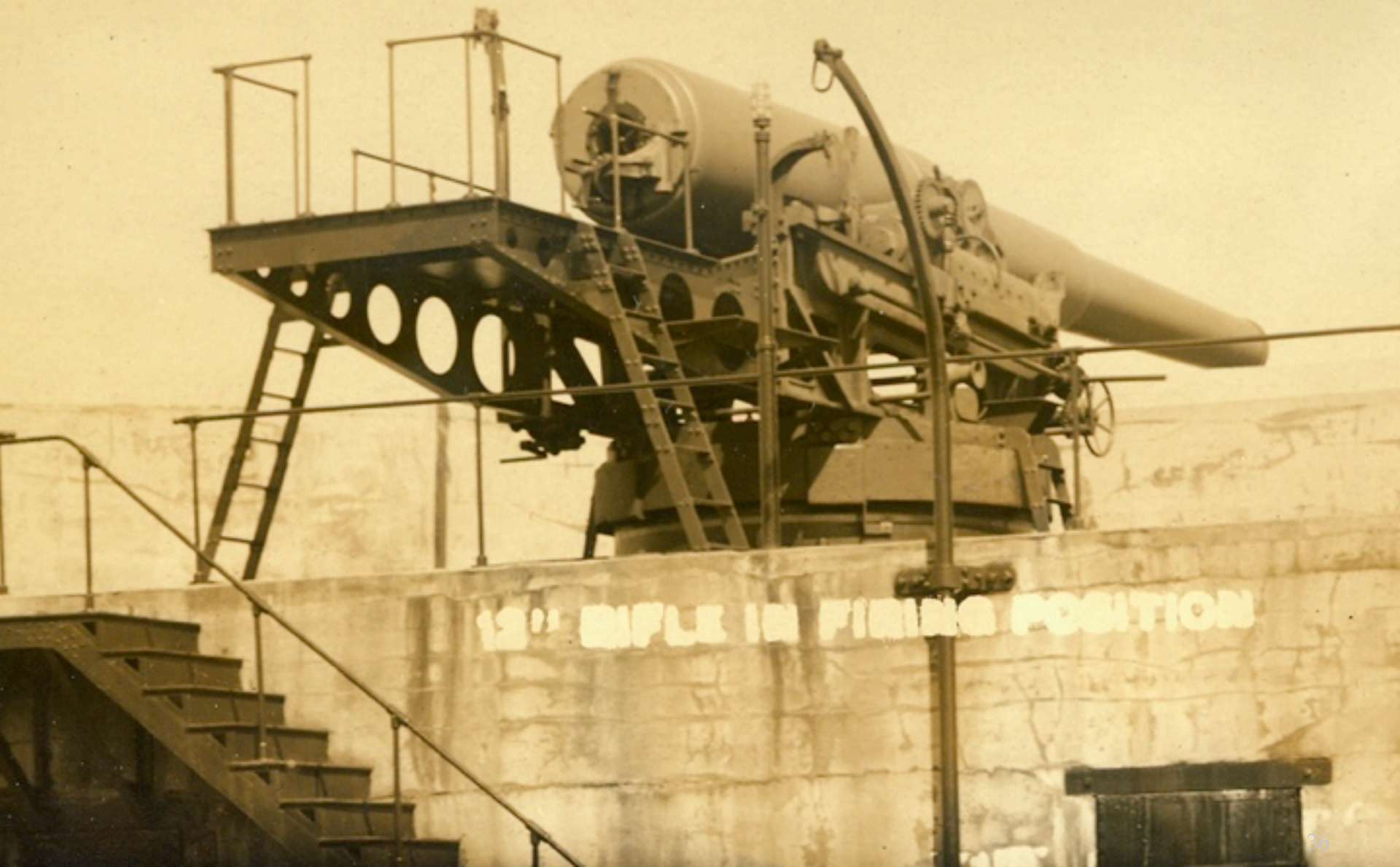








Rifle Battery, early 1900s



July 25, 1902

- ▣ Floating target was towed to a place in Salem Cove near Salem Creek Lighthouse.
- ▣ Fired “not for accuracy, but to test guns 1 and 3 for errors. They were fired from the same elevation and at the same angle several times to ascertain the degree of variance between the two guns for information in battery fire when accuracy tests will be made”
- ▣ Four shells struck land in New Jersey
- ▣ Land of William Reeve was struck by three shots from Fort DuPont

July 25, 1902

- ▣ Those shells displaced 70 cubic yards of dirt
- ▣ Fourth shot hit dyke belonging to Money Island Meadow Co. displacing ten cubic yards of earth
- ▣ Reeve was paid \$86.00 by govt. for damages
- ▣ Money Island Meadow was paid \$5.00
- ▣ Two of the shells displayed at fire department in Salem, N.J. for many years
- ▣ One shell returned to Fort DuPont in 2006



Shots which struck the Reeve Property and the Money Island Meadow area, NJ.
(Source: Record of Board Proceedings at Fort duPont, Nov 24, 1902, NARA I, RG-92, Entry 89, Box 3917.)

Salem Fire Dept., circa 1908

GUN TEST AT FORT DUPONT.

**\$12,000 Worth of Ammunition Used and
Windows in Delaware City
Shattered.**

Special to The New York Times.

WILMINGTON, Del., July 26.--An official test of the eight-inch and twelve-inch rifles at Fort Dupont was made by Government experts yesterday. Many windows in Delaware City houses were broken by the concussion of the big guns. The purpose of the tests was to ascertain the exact time in which the guns could be fired, and to find whether the disappearing carriages on which are mounted the eight-inch rifles could stand under the firing.

The Government inspecting party were Col. Wallace Randolph, Major Charles Shaler, Albert Cummins, and J. D. Knight, Capts. D. H. C. Lentze, W. H. Coffin, and R. P. Davis, and J. R. Freeman, a civilian expert.



Batteries Ritchie & Elder



Battery John Ritchie

- ▣ “This battery was constructed in 1900, received its armament of two 5-inch guns in 1906, and was dismantled in 1917. It is not part of any defense project, nor is it of any future military or historical value. No work has been done on the care and preservation of the emplacement since the armament was removed, and it is in such a state of deterioration as to be an eyesore, and unfit for any possible use.”

- Lt. Col. Joseph C. Mehaffey, Sept. 26, 1939

Battery John Ritchie

- ▣ Named after the artillery captain killed at Lundy's Lane during War of 1812
- ▣ Constructed in 1900 for \$16,702
- ▣ Two 5-inch M1900 guns mounted in 1905/06 on M1903 pedestals and removed in 1917
- ▣ Guns and carriages sent to Fishermans Island in Virginia for use at an emergency battery in 1918
- ▣ Destroyed in 1940, concrete used by WPA for a road improvement project at Fort DuPont

Battery Samuel Elder



Battery Samuel Elder

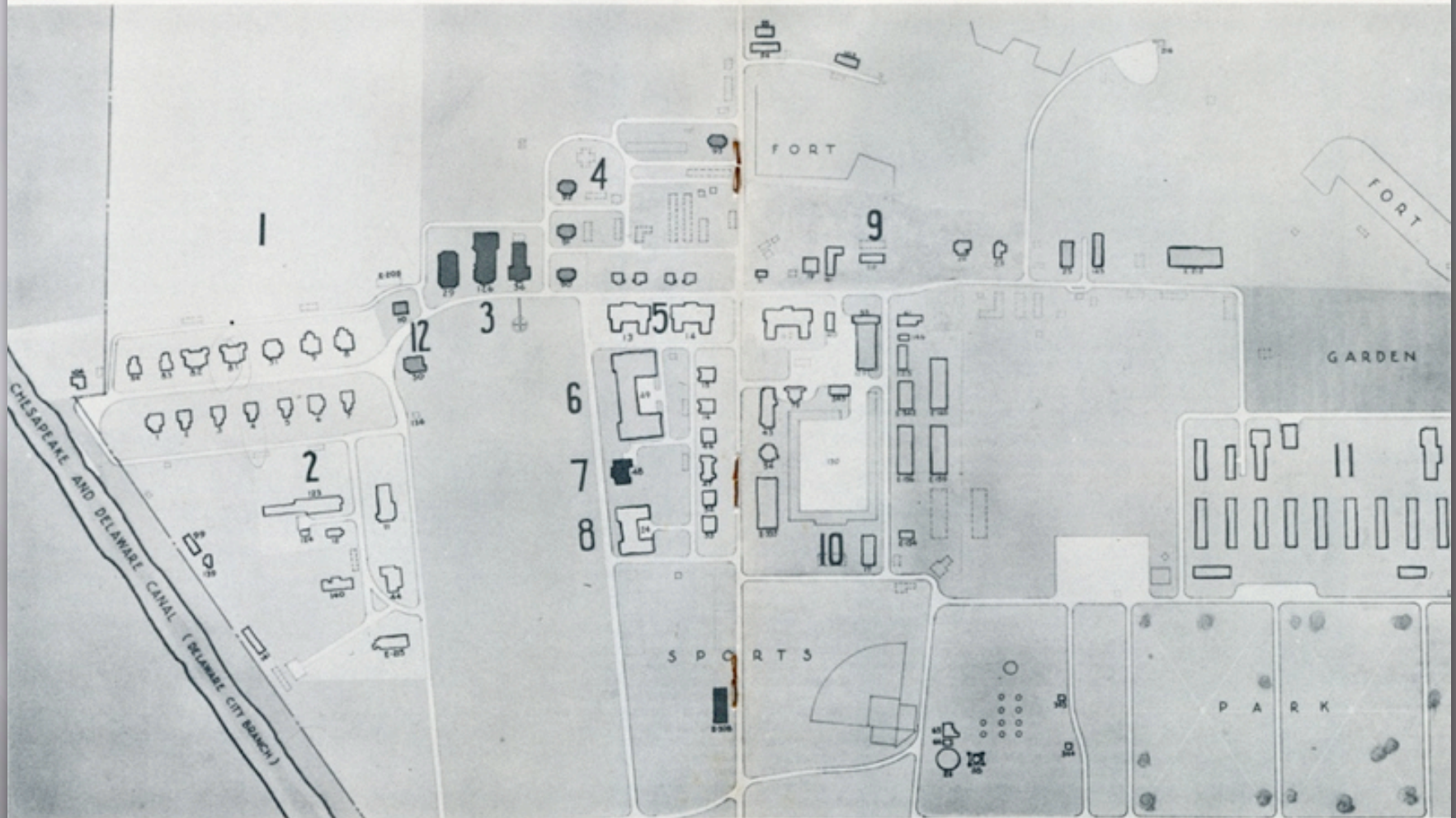
- ▣ Built from 1903 until 1904 with cost of \$18,383
- ▣ Named after Civil War soldier, Maj. Samuel Elder of the 2nd U.S. Artillery
- ▣ Armed with two 3" rapid-fire guns on M1903 barbette mounts, not totally mounted until 1910
- ▣ Last gun battery staffed at Fort DuPont
- ▣ Guns remained in place until 1942
- ▣ Guns moved to nearby Liston Range Lighthouse located south of Reedy Island

The Structures of Fort DuPont



1948 Map of Site w/ Buildings

Distribution of the Services of the Health Center



1. CHILDREN

2. PERSONNEL AND STAFF

3. RECREATION

4. PHYSICIANS' RESIDENCES

5. ALCOHOLICS

6. CRIPPLED CHILDREN AND AGED

7. MEDICAL CENTER

8. EPILEPTICS

9. PERSONNEL AND STAFF

10. UTILITY AREA

11. EMERGENCY HOSPITAL

12. ADMINISTRATION

Elm Avenue in early 1900s



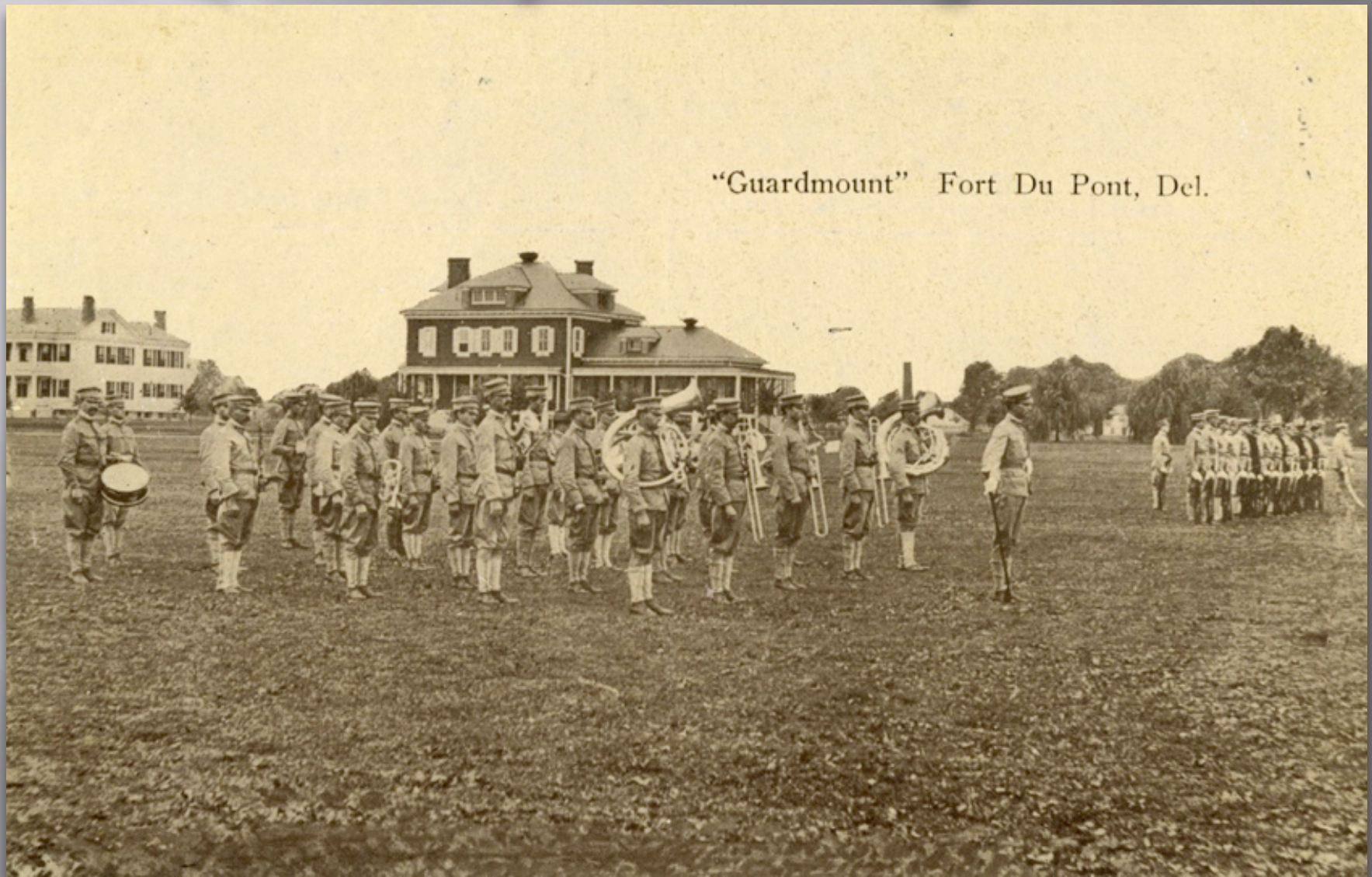
ENTRANCE TO FT. DUPONT

LAMAR PHOTO

View of Elm Avenue & Parade



BOQ & Hospital along Elm Ave



Corner of Elm / Officers Row



ENTRANCE & OFFICERS ROW
FORT - DUPONT DEL.

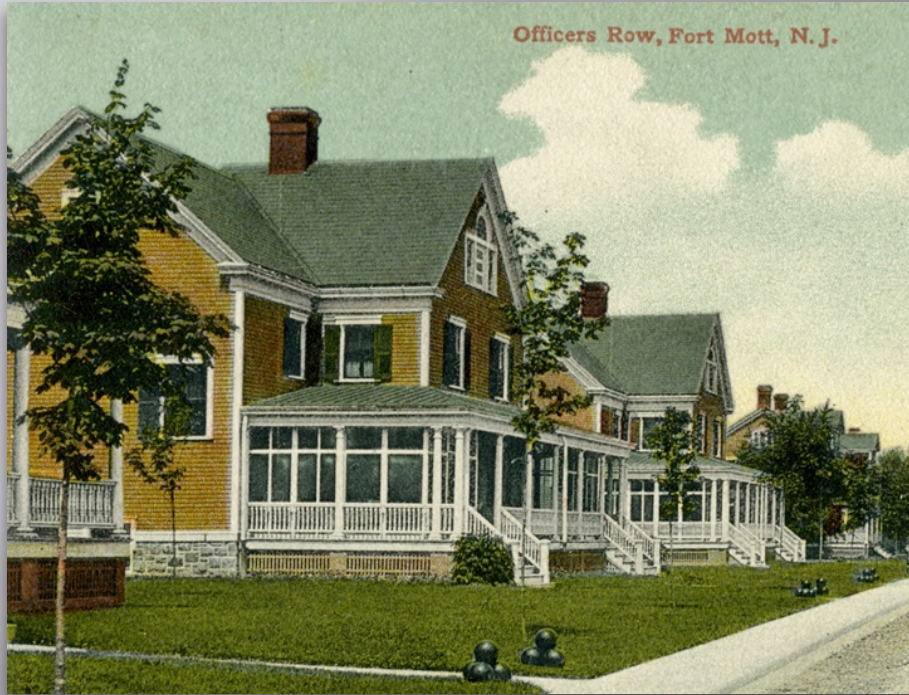
G. L. Thompson, Pub., N. Y. 283

The fountain replaced the triangle.

Officers Row,
Fort Du Pont, Del.



Fort Mott Houses - 1931-1932



Officer Quarters - Building 81



Fort Mott Officer Quarters

- ▣ First set of quarters were moved from Fort Mott to Fort DuPont in December 1931
- ▣ “Four-and-half mile journey required an hour and 48 minutes and was completed as darkness fell” -Philadelphia Inquirer
- ▣ Exercise conducted by 1st Engineer Regiment
- ▣ Six more quarters were moved across the river the next year on Dec. 12, 1932
- ▣ Two of these quarters still remain at Ft. DuPont

Fort Mott Officer Quarters

- ▣ “Army engineers at Fort Dupont, Del., received practical instruction and also eased their own housing situation recently when they moved several buildings across the Delaware river from Fort Mott, N. J.”

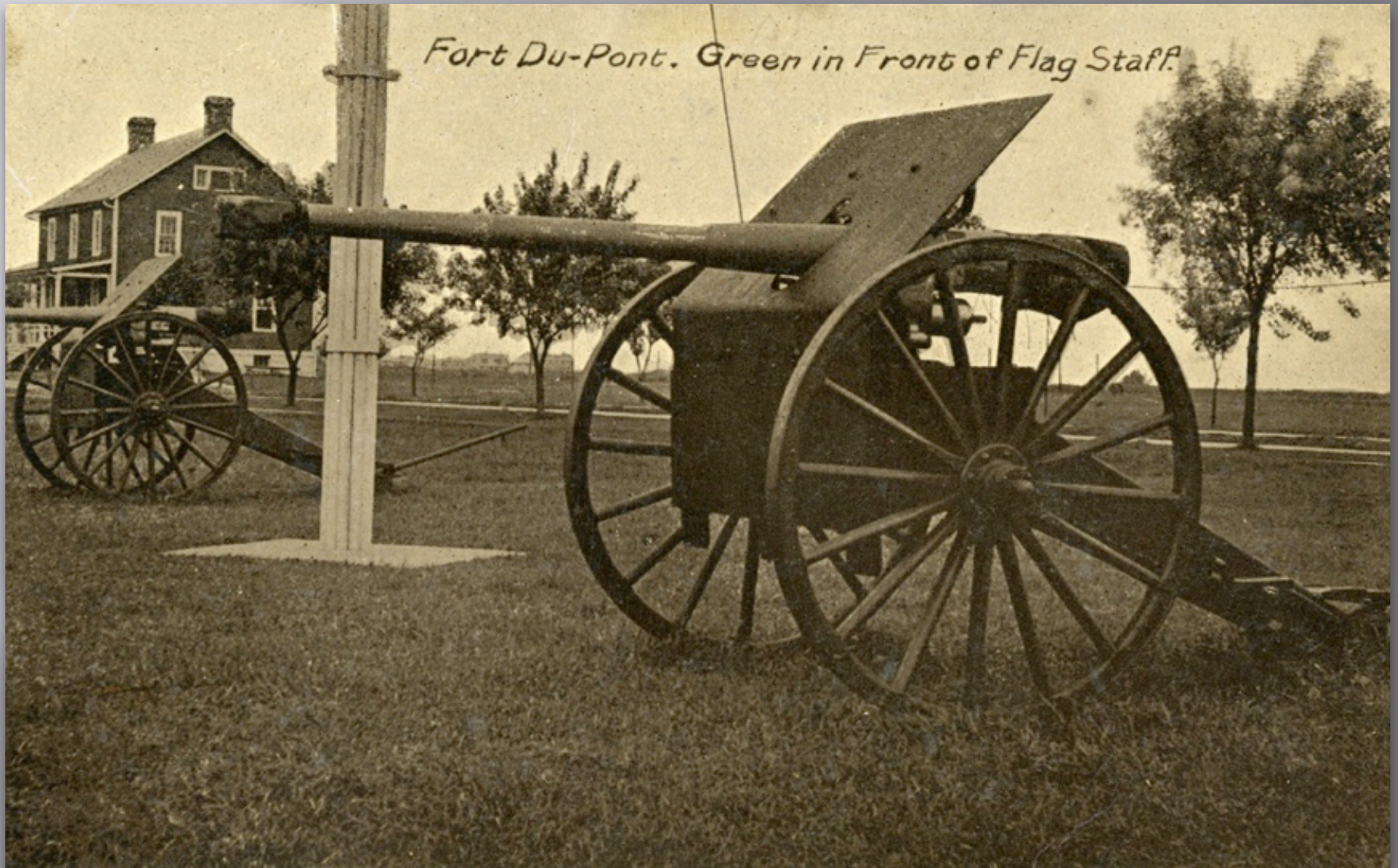
- Chicago Tribune, Dec. 14, 1932

Post HQ and CO Quarters



8112 Co. Officer's Quarters & Headquarters
Delaware City, Del.

Post Headquarters



Post Headquarters



Movie Theatre - Built 1933



Service Hut / NCO Club / YMCA Built 1917



PX / Gym - built 1906



Post Exchange / Gym



Barracks along Maple Blvd



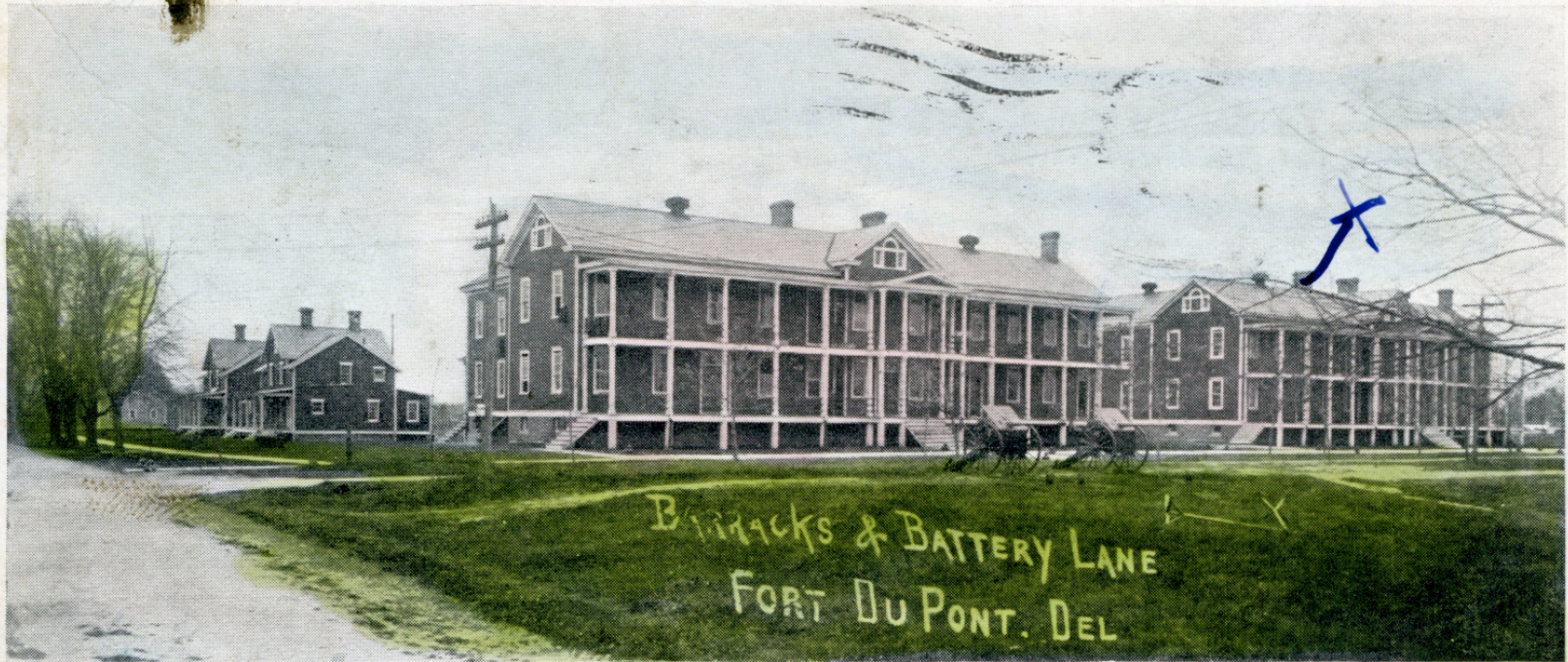


160 (N)

Soldiers Barracks
Fort DuPont, Del.

This shows the Barrack in which I sleep.
we have all windows open & that fresh air makes me feel
fine!

Soldiers' Barracks - Built 1901



G. L. Thompson Pub., N. Y. 285

What do you think of my home
for the next 2 years -

Frank S.D.

NCO Quarters - Built 1901



BATTERY LANE FT. DUPONT

Battery Lane - NCO Duplex



Battery Lane - NCO Duplex



Barracks & NCO Duplexes



Double-Company and Band Barracks, built in 1909



Barracks Fire of 1936



Guardhouse - Built in 1901



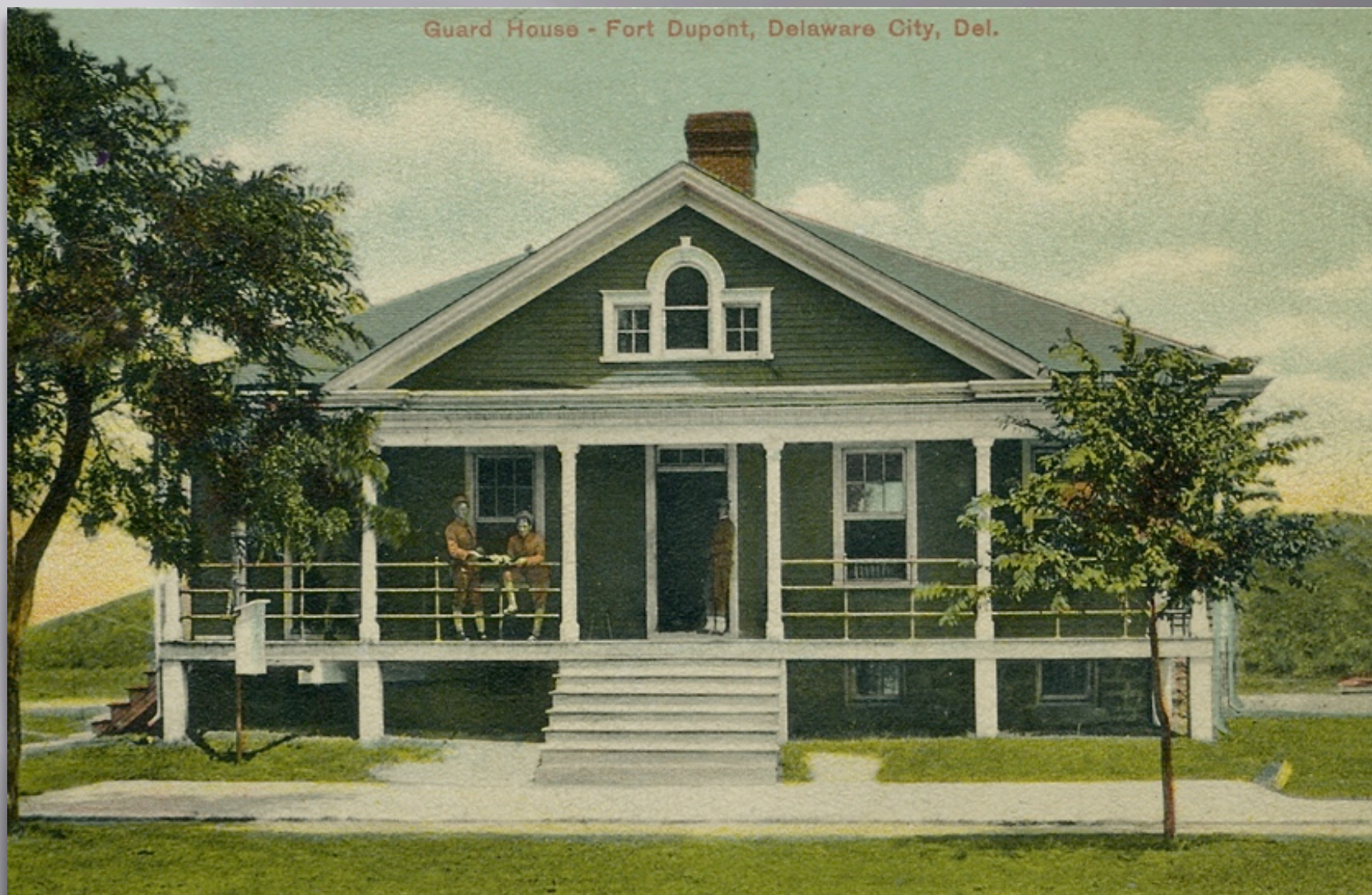
CHANGING THE GUARD FORT DU PONT, DEL.

G. L. Thompson, Pub., N. Y. 273

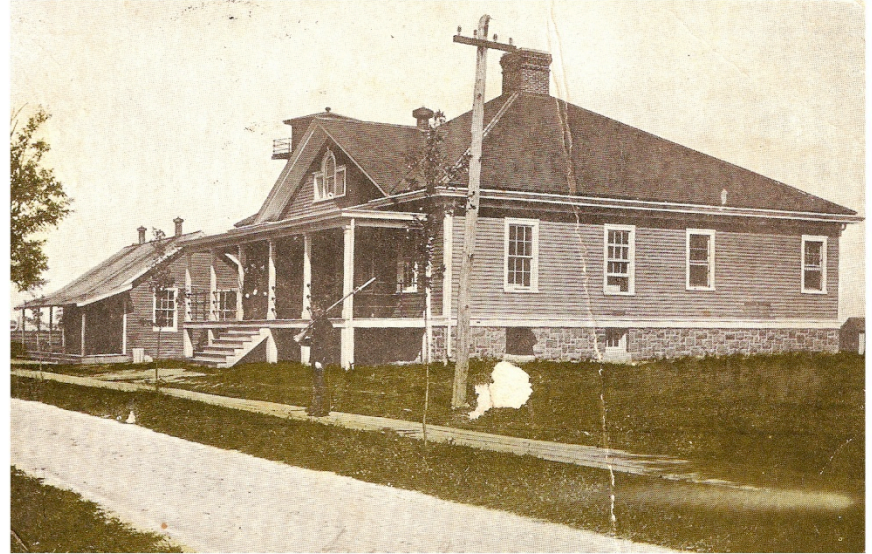
merry Xmas. and hope you have a good feed. Regards from A+B. R.C.

*Dec. 13th 05.
Do you
know
this
place.
Well I
wish
you a
merry Xmas.
Regards from
A+B.
R.C.*

Guard House - Fort Dupont, Delaware City, Del.



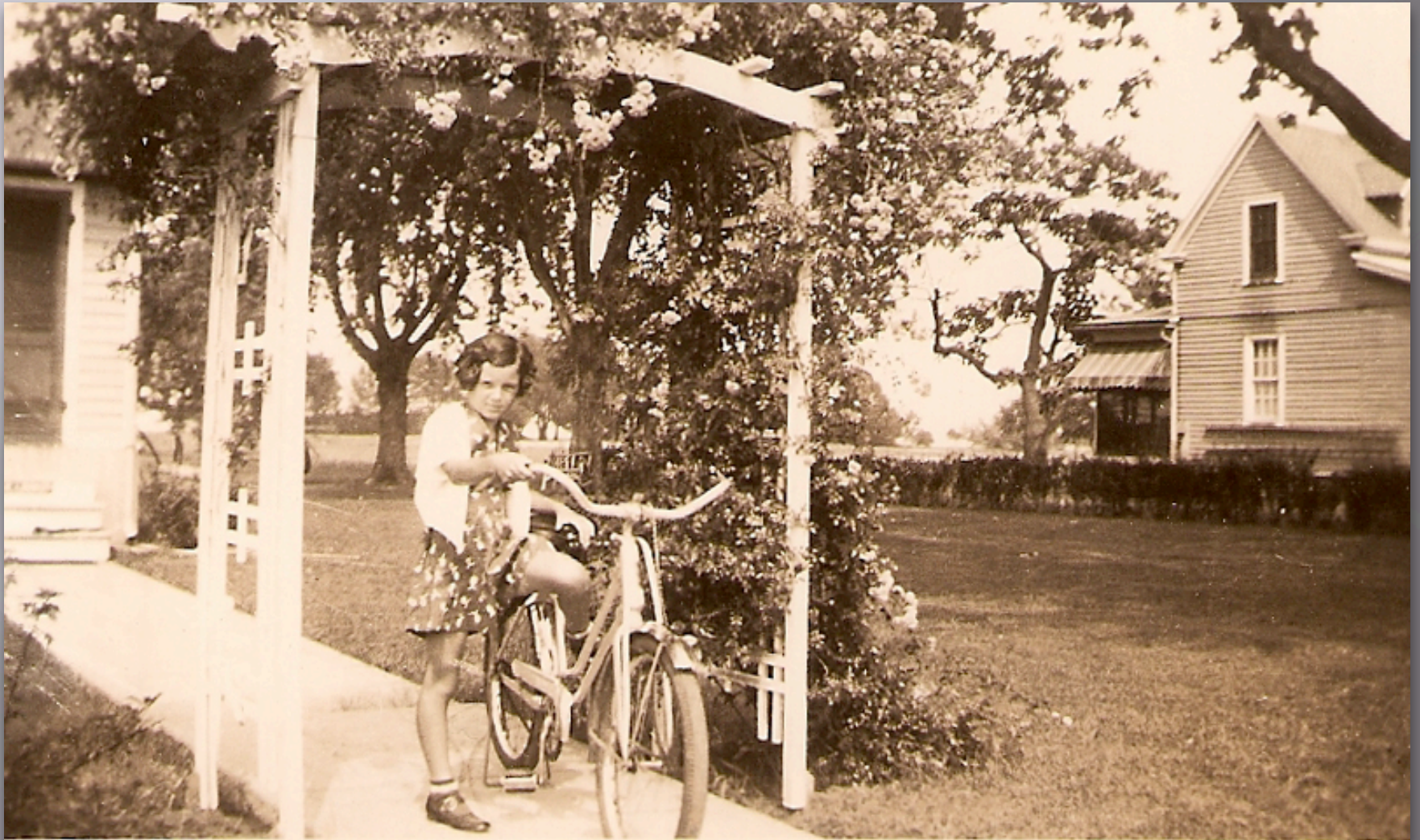
Guardhouse



Warrant Officer Quarters #22



Bonnie Bonner, Quarters 22 (left) and Quarters 23 (right) in 1930s



Bonner Kids - 1930s



Brick NCO Duplex - 1933



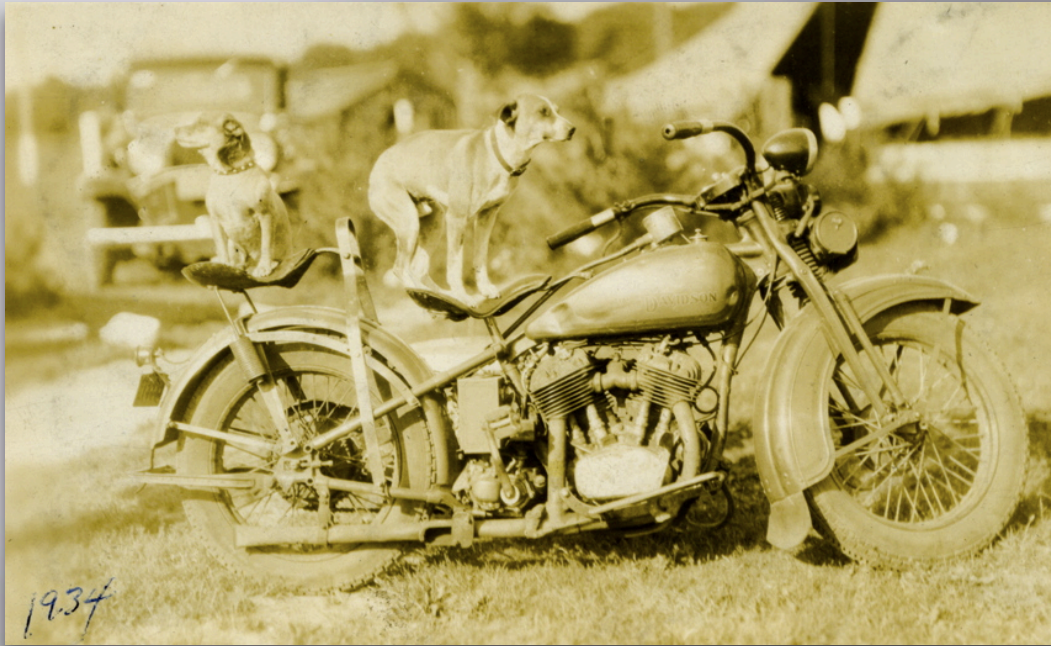
Brick NCO Duplex - 2011



Filling Station & Pump House



1930s: A serious military post





"Motor Section"

- Belly Robber -



Mess. Sgt.
- JESSIE GAINES -



Engr. Band - Slightly intoxicated.



"The Gay Nineties"

World War II

- ▣ Post was modernized and expanded with temporary buildings during 1940-1941
- ▣ Units like the 21st, 122nd and 261st Coast Artillery units were activated and sent to Fort DuPont to train in 1940, leading up to 1941
- ▣ Engineer units such as the 30th Engineer Battalion and 70th Engineer Company were also stationed at Fort DuPont in 1940
- ▣ Barracks later used as German POW camp, 1944

21st Coast Artillery Barracks Built 1940



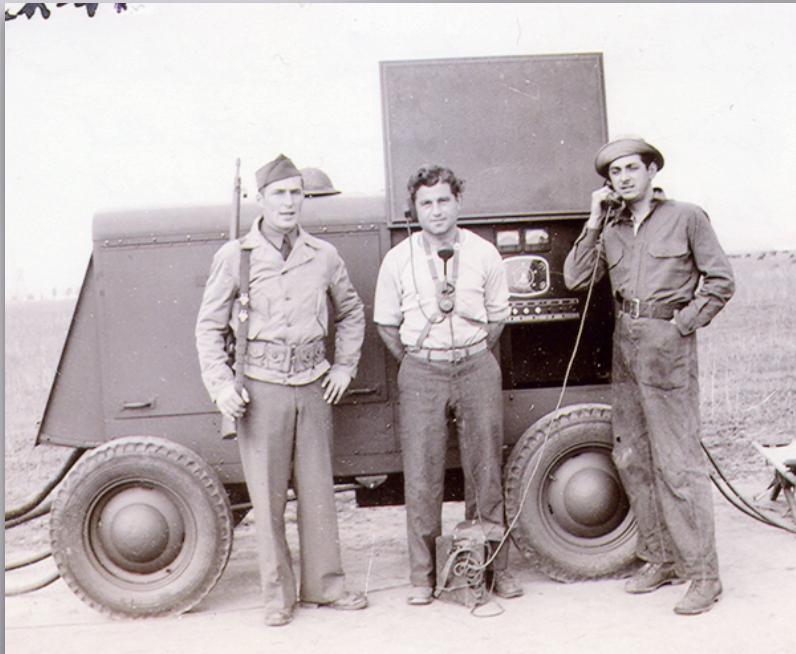
Cantonment Area circa 1940



122nd Coast Artillery Bn.



122nd Coast Artillery Bn.



Visitors Day 1941



Soldiers attending the radio school in 1941



Nurses at Fort DuPont, 1943



Nurses at Fort DuPont, 1944



Post Newspaper - 1940s



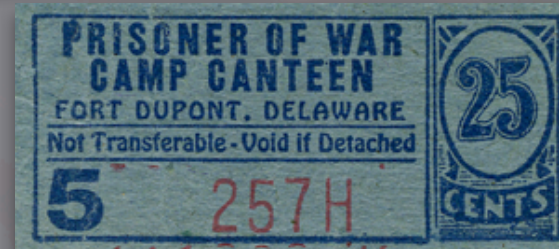
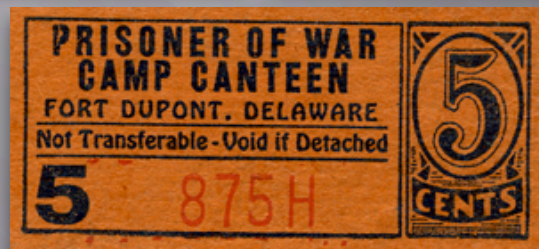
German POW Camp 1944-45

- ▣ “I like to remember those days since I was treated well. I was lucky to be taken a US prisoner of war and have thus been able to survive the war.”

-Kurt Henkel, former POW at Fort DuPont



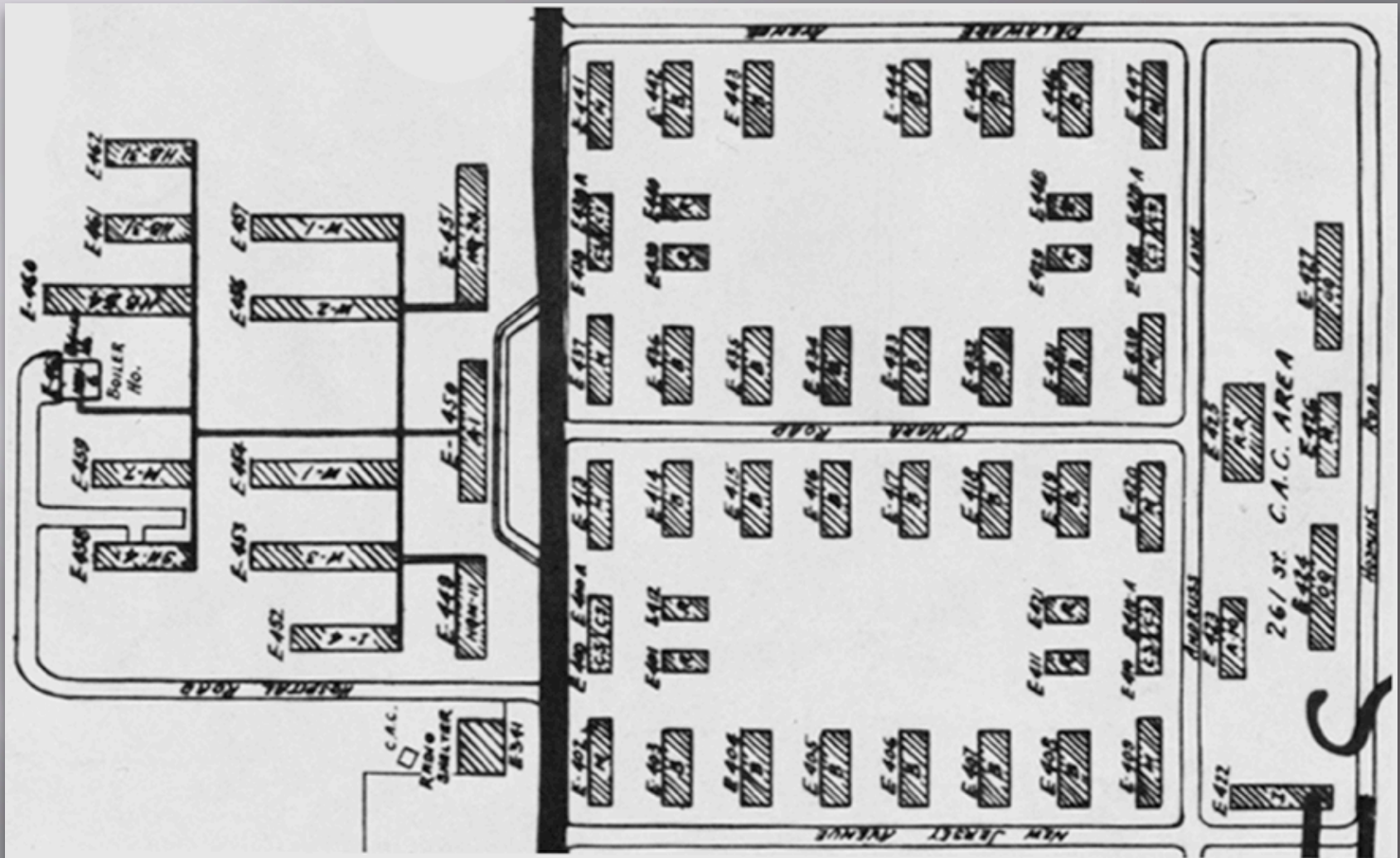
POWs Held at Fort DuPont



German POW Camp

- ▣ The camp was established May 24, 1944, according to the International Red Cross
- ▣ Camp was located near the present day Delaware Army National Guard Armory
- ▣ Majority of the original lot of POWs came from Camp Roswell, New Mexico
- ▣ Main camp consisted of 23 two-story barracks
- ▣ Camp supported about 3,000 POWs at height
- ▣ On count cited 897 POWs at Fort DuPont with 1,352 at the sub camps in lower Delaware
- ▣ POWs were allowed to keep their military caps

German POW Camp



German POW Camp

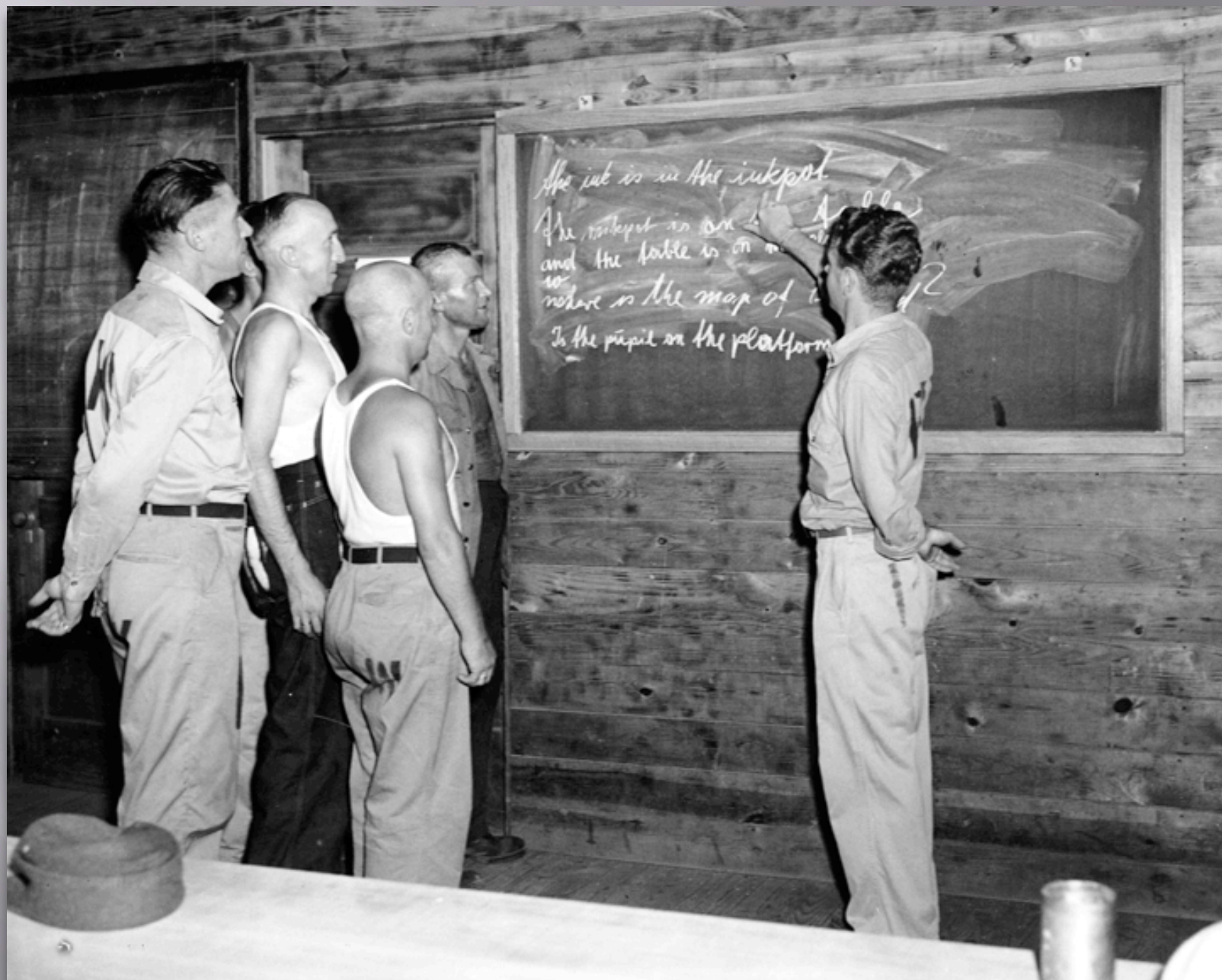


Inside POW Barracks









Governor Bacon Health Center



Governor Walter W. Bacon-accepting ownership of old Fort Du Pont on behalf of the State of Delaware . . . January 30, 1947: (left to right) Att'y Gen. Albert W. James, Sec'y of State William J. Storey, Governor Bacon, Robert F. Lavelle, real estate assistant, Federal Works Agency; Lieut. Gov. Elbert N. Carvel, Dr. M. A. Tarumlanz, Charles C. Castella, division engineer, Federal Works Agency.



HON. WALTER W. BACON, Governor of Delaware

1941-1945

1945-1949

"I predict that within a few years, the benefits derived from this Health Center will rank with those of our original school and road building program, and the building of our new Delaware River Bridge. This project furnishes many benefits and opportunities, denied at present, not only in our own state, but in many other communities.

"It is most gratifying to know that we are transforming a plant designed entirely for war purposes, to one beneficial to the health, happiness and welfare of our state, and a place where many may be rehabilitated into useful citizens."

—Governor Bacon, in accepting the
Fort DuPont Reservation
January 30, 1947

Medical Center



Medical Center on Kent Avenue . . . This fine building is equipped with modern facilities, including operating rooms, X-ray and physiotherapy departments, clinical laboratory and pharmacy.

Tilton Building



Tilton Building on Kent Avenue . . . This modern hospital building, named after a famous Delaware physician and first surgeon general of the United States, has been remodelled to care for crippled children on the first floor and bedridden, senile patients on the second floor.



Home for Nurses on New Castle Avenue . . . Every effort has been made to provide for the comfort of personnel at the Health Center. The nurses' home looks out over the spacious parade ground.



The theatre on Sussex Avenue . . . This theatre will provide many hours of relaxation for the patients and personnel at the Health Center.



Religion is an important phase of life at the Governor Bacon Health Center . . . This simple little chapel on New Castle Avenue will assist the patients in their spiritual lives. Chaplains of the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish faiths will conduct services here.



Pleasant surroundings for children . . . This is a typical interior of one of the children's cottages on Sussex Avenue, removed from the larger buildings at the Health Center.



Recreational Building on Sussex Avenue . . . This brick building has been completely remodelled for the recreation of the patients and personnel. It is in the heart of the Health Center. Here will be held dances, parties and here are facilities for games and relaxation.

**The Governor Bacon
Health Center Admin-
istration Building . . .
This is the hub of the
Health Center.**



Images of Amerca: Fort DuPont

DELAWARE CITY, DELAWARE

Fort DuPont is named in honor of Rear Adm. Samuel Francis Du Pont and located on the Reeden Point tract, land initially granted to Henry Ward in 1673. Fort DuPont originated during the Civil War as a heavily armed earthwork fortification. In 1864, Sgt. Bishop Crumrine wrote, "these guns command the channel and could blow to atoms any vessel rash enough to attempt to pass." In the decades to follow, the battery at Delaware City was gradually modernized into a formidable military post that remained active through World War II. Declared surplus, the site reopened in 1948 as the Governor Bacon Health Center. By 1996, over 300 acres were reestablished as Fort DuPont State Park.

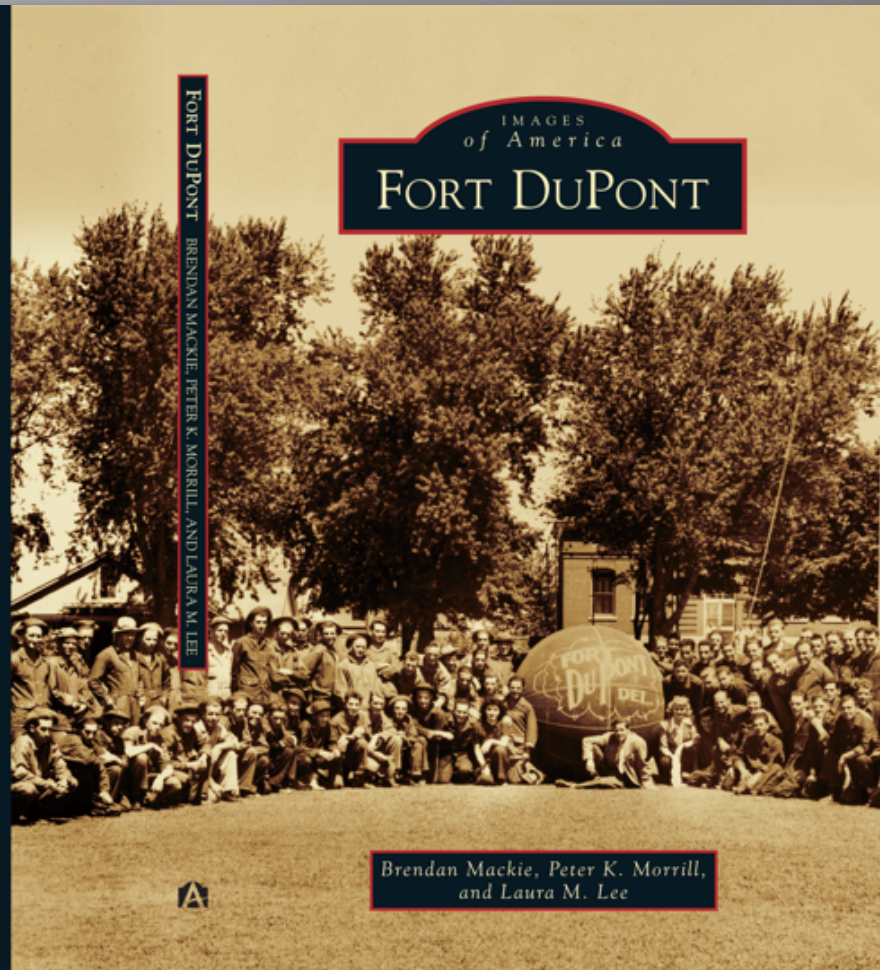
Brendan Mackie is a photojournalist with the 101st Public Affairs Detachment and a member of the Coast Defense Study Group. Peter K. Morrill has a degree in historic preservation from the College of Charleston and serves as a historical interpreter at Fort DuPont State Park. Laura M. Lee is interpretive program manager and historian at Fort DuPont State Park. *Images of America: Fort DuPont* includes photographs from various public and private collections as well as personal stories by the soldiers and civilians who were actually there.

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Questions?

