

For Official Use:

I.D. #: _____

Nomination Received

<u>5/1/1999</u>	Determined	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eligible	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Eli
<u>5/1/1999</u>	HPC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Denied
<u>5/1/1999</u>	Public Hearing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Denied
<u>8/2/1999</u>	City Council	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Denied

**CITY OF AURORA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**AURORA LANDMARK PROPERTIES
NOMINATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

Historic Name RED CROSS BUILDING & WWI MEMORIAL, FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL

Other Name BUILDINGS 524 & 525

2. Address of Property

Street Address BUILDINGS 524 & 525 (SE CORNER OF HARLOW AVE. & 8TH ST.)

City AURORA County ADAMS Zip 80045

3. Legal Description of Property

P.M. 6TH Township 3S Range 67W

NW 1/4 of NW 1/4 of NW 1/4 of SE 1/4 of Section 36

Quad Map FITZSIMONS (1965, REVISED 1994)

Lot(s) N/A Block N/A Addition N/A

UTM Reference: Zone 13 Easting 513980 Northing 4399530

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the nominated property on a continuation sheet)

4. Present Owner of Property

Name UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Address US ARMY GARRISON, FITZSIMONS Phone 303/361-8270

City AURORA State CO Zip 80045

(If the property has multiple ownership, please give the names and addresses of all owners on one or more continuation sheets)

Property: Red Cross Building & WWI Memorial, Fitzsimons General Hospital

5. Preparer of Nomination

Name RON SLADEK Date 15 JANUARY 1998

Organization TATANKA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATES, INC.

Address P.O. BOX 1909 Phone 970/229-9704

City FORT COLLINS State CO Zip 80522

6. Classification of Property

building(s) district site structure object area

7. Condition of Property

excellent good fair deteriorated ruins

original location moved (date of move _____)

8. Use of Property

Historic PATIENT RECREATION FACILITY; WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL

Current VACANT

9. Original Owner UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, WAR DEPARTMENT

Source of Information CULTURAL RESOURCE STUDY, FITZSIMONS ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
(FRONT RANGE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, 15 AUGUST 1991)

10. Year of Construction 1918 (RED CROSS BUILDING); 1923 (MEMORIAL)

Source of Information CULTURAL RESOURCE STUDY, FITZSIMONS ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
(FRONT RANGE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, 15 AUGUST 1991)

11. Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist or Designer

QUARTERMASTER CORPS / ARMY CONSTRUCTION DIVISION
A.C. LAMBIE COMPANY (CONTRACTOR)

Source of Information CULTURAL RESOURCE STUDY, FITZSIMONS ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
(FRONT RANGE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, 15 AUGUST 1991)

Property: Red Cross Building & WWI Memorial, Fitzsimons General Hospital

12. Architectural Style / Engineering Type

MILITARY VERNACULAR WITH MISSION STYLE ELEMENTS; COBBLESTONE MONUMENT

13. Description (Describe the current condition and appearance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

14. Alterations (Describe and date significant changes made to the original property on one or more continuation sheets)

15. Significance of Property

Nomination Criteria:

- 1 - the property (district) exemplifies or reflects the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state or community
- 2 - the property (district) is identified with a historic person or historic group significant to national, state, or local history
- 3 - the property (district) embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable to the study of a period, style, method of construction, or indigenous materials or craftsmanship
- 4 - the property (district) is representative of the work of a master builder or architect
- 5 - the property (district) contains the possibility of important archaeological discoveries in prehistory or history
- 6 - the district consists of a definite area which, due to its unique location or singular characteristics, represents established and familiar visual features of the neighborhood, community or city

Areas of Significance:

MILITARY

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

16. Significance Statement

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Property: Red Cross Building & WWI Memorial, Fitzsimons General Hospital

17. Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

18. Legislative Information

Aurora Ward #: 1 Name of Representative NADINE CALDWELL

Colorado House District #: 36 Name of Representative STEPHANIE TAKIS

Colorado Senate District #: 25 Name of Senator BOB MARTINEZ

US House District #: 1 Name of Representative DIANA DEGETTE

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY NOMINATION

19. Photocopy of USGS Map showing location of site

20. Site Plan showing site boundaries

21. Black and White Photographs

22. Color Slides

23. Optional Materials

- a. Floor plans showing existing conditions
- b. Landscape plan showing existing conditions
- c. Sequential historic floor plans
- d. Sequential historic site plans

AURORA HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name RED CROSS BUILDING & WWI MEMORIAL, FITZSIMONS GENERAL HOSPITAL

Section Number 3 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Red Cross Building & World War I Memorial, as with most of the buildings on the Fitzsimons General Hospital property, has not been separated into a parcel of land distinct from the rest of the base. Consequently, it has no lot number or other identifying legal description to distinguish its boundaries from surrounding buildings or properties. Given this unique situation, it is recommended that the boundaries of the property be established as follows:

The Red Cross Building & World War I Memorial property is bordered to the north by the south curb line of Harlow Ave.; to the south by the north curb line of the unnamed street running along the south edge of the property; to the east by the west curb line of 11th St.; and to the west by the east curb line of 8th St.

These boundaries are suggested to provide a reasonable, defensible, and clearly-defined buffer in all directions. In addition, they are intended to preserve not only the Red Cross Building & World War I Memorial, but also the surrounding landscaping that includes the paved walkways, mature trees, shrubs, and grassed yards that are important to the recreational setting and overall historic integrity of the property.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

Erected above a reinforced concrete foundation, the two-story Red Cross Building is constructed of hollow terra cotta tile walls, uniformly finished on the exterior with stucco and accented with wood trim around the windows and doors. The moderately-pitched gabled roof is finished with red asphalt shingles and exposed rafters, and extends in each of the four primary compass directions from a central point at the base of a prominent octagonal lantern. Narrow one-story projections are found along each side wall around the perimeter of the building, all of which have hipped roofs finished with asphalt shingles and exposed rafters. Mission Revival shaped parapets with stuccoed caps are found at the end walls of the primary gabled roof in all four directions. A single metal attic louver is present in each gable wall. Projecting toward the east from the main Red Cross-shaped block of the structure are two identical, World War II-era, one-story stuccoed additions with low-pitched hip roofs covered with gravel. The prominent lantern at the center of the roof has an octagonal wood base covered with horizontal siding, above which is a band of eight large louvers that suggest the lantern's practical use as a ventilator. Rising from this visual base is an octagonal shaft consisting of eight tall 8-light windows, capped by a short octagonal bell-cast roof, above which projects a tall slender finial that terminates in a ball. To the north and south of the lantern are two short square stuccoed chimneys located on the ridge lines of the primary roof on the north and south wings.

The north elevation faces onto a narrow yard and Harlow Ave., and is characterized by its centered raised entrance, accessed by way of a five-step concrete stoop with flanking metal pipe handrails. The entry contains a white wood door with ten lights, white wood surrounds, five-light sidelights, and a five-light transom. The entire north-facing elevation, which includes the two-story wings and one-story eastern additions, features numerous 6/6 double hung sash windows on both floors with plain white wood frames and surrounds, and either wood or stuccoed lug sills. A louver is located in the gable face.

The south elevation faces onto a large landscaped yard, an unnamed street, and the former post administration building. The single entrance is accessed by way of a concrete ramp with flanking metal pipe handrails. A modern metal door with a single light is present, surrounded by side lights and a transom. On the second floor at the southwest corner of the west wing is a slab door that is accessed by way of a fixed metal ladder from the sidewalk. This door enters a small room over the west entry that was used as a movie projection booth. The south elevation features numerous 6/6 double hung sash windows on both floors with plain white wood frames and surrounds, and either wood or stuccoed lug sills. The windows have old wood screens, and one louver is present in the gable face.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

The east elevation of the Red Cross Building faces onto 11th St., and the two WWII-era additions extend eastward to the sidewalk. A rear entrance to the central block of the building is recessed into a narrow passageway between the two additions, and is characterized by concrete steps and a pair of slab doors. One entrance is found into each of the two additions, with access gained by way of concrete stoops with flanking metal pipe handrails. One slab door is found on each of the additions, each with a single light and a boarded transom. The east elevation features numerous 6/6 double hung sash windows on both floors with plain white wood frames and surrounds, and either wood or stuccoed lug sills. A boarded louver space is located in the gable.

The west elevation faces onto a narrow yard and 8th St., and is characterized by its centered main entrance, accessed by way of a two-step concrete stoop with flanking metal pipe handrails. The entry contains a pair of white slab doors with a single light in each, along with white surrounds and a boarded transom. Centered above the door is a gabled wood frame hood supported by wood brackets, with a red cross in the gable face. The entire north-facing elevation, which includes the two-story wings and one-story projections, features numerous 6/6 double hung sash windows with plain white wood frames and surrounds, and either wood or stuccoed lug sills. A pair of 2/2 double hung sash windows is located on the second floor above the main entry, inside of which is the movie projection booth referenced above.

The interior of the building has been minimally remodeled, with much original material still intact. The main space is a large open two-story hall supported by square concrete pillars that occupies the central area of the building and extends into the west wing. Projecting into the east wing from the central hall is a raised wooden performance stage with a second floor flyloft. The north and south wings are occupied by small entry lobbies and a number of small rooms on both the first and second floors. Large original brick fireplaces are found on the first floor level of each of the north and south sides of the central hall, above which are wooden second-story interior balconies accessed from the north and south wings. Although the original wood floor has been covered by linoleum tiles in the central hall, the interior retains its original panel doors and door and window trim. The interiors of the two east wings also retain their original WWII-era panel doors and window trim.

In terms of the surrounding grounds, the eastern additions abut the sidewalk along 11th St. to the east, and the areas to the north, south and west of the Red Cross Building contain grassed yard with mature trees and shrubs, and intersecting sidewalks, all of which appear

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

to be original. Of these yard areas, the most extensive landscaping is found on the south side of the building. Centered in the sidewalk directly south of the building's south entrance is a World War I monument. This 10' high structure resembles a beehive in shape and was constructed of coursed large cobblestones (river rock) set with concrete mortar. Facing toward the south is a large rectangular bronze memorial plaque (4'x7'), recessed slightly into the cobblestone. This plaque is decorated with bay leaf band on the edges, wreaths around the dates, and a bas relief depiction of a caduceus and a federal eagle, upon which is superimposed the following text:

1917 1918

IN MEMORY
OF THE
OFFICERS NURSES
AND ENLISTED MEN
OF THE
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT
UNITED STATES ARMY
WHO LOST THEIR LIVES
DURING THE
WORLD WAR
THIS TABLET IS ERECTED
BY THEIR COWORKERS OF
THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

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ALTERATIONS TO THE PROPERTY

The Red Cross Building has undergone relatively minor exterior alteration since it was constructed in 1918. The facade is largely unchanged, with the most significant alteration being the World War II-era erection of two one-story additions on the east end of the building. Although these additions enveloped the first floor of the east wing, they are architecturally compatible with the design of the core building and are historically important as representatives of the growth of social services at the post during the World War II years. The only other noticeable exterior alterations involved the modern replacement of the south and west entry doors, although these were accomplished without damaging the surrounding walls and could easily be returned to their original appearance. All of these exterior alterations to the Red Cross Building are in fact minor, and do not detract from the overall historic appearance and integrity of the building.

Alterations to the interior are also minor, primarily involving the installation of linoleum flooring and carpeting, replacement of the original decorative balcony balustrades with the simple horizontal bars found there today, painting of the interior white (it was originally dark with light trim), and replacement of the original hanging light fixtures (which were probably inadequate) with fluorescent lighting. Much of the interior is in fairly original condition, and none of these alterations detract from the overall historic appearance and integrity of the building's interior spaces.

The World War I monument is in original condition and does not appear to have undergone any alterations.

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WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL DEDICATION ADDRESS - 1923

(Reprinted from July, 1923, Colorado Medicine.)
Address of Dr. J. N. Hall on the Occasion of
the Unveiling of the Memorial Tablet at
Fitzsimons Hospital, July 4, 1923.*

We meet today, with feelings of mingled reverence and sorrow, but yet with a sense of solemn pride, to dedicate this memorial tablet. It is erected in commemoration of our fellow workers, in the medical service of the army, who made the last great sacrifice in the World War.

We seem compelled, reluctantly, to the unwilling belief that the scourge of war is intended by the Almighty as a cleansing fire in the divine program for the slow rise and progress of mankind from savagery to a higher life.

Our sons, in the most gigantic conflict of all time, in an age when a boasted civilization proclaimed that war was no longer possible, perished in battle exactly, excepting for the difference of weapons, as did the warriors of the stone age. The living sacrifice exacted by the gods of war in our own battle of the Argonne, was doubtless even more terrible than that recorded of the greatest battle of an almost forgotten age, when Israelite and Amorite fought at Gibeon, and when Joshua, that his men might have time to complete the slaughter of their enemies, commanded, in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the Valley of Ajalon".

Our seamen sank beneath the waves of the same seas that swallowed up the galleys of the Persians at Salamis, and overwhelmed the sailors of the Romans and the Carthaginians in the Punic wars.

War has been with us since the dawn of recorded time. The Holy Book is largely a history of war. Every generation of men has had to learn the bitter lesson that, in war, fathers must bury their sons, while in the more natural processes of peace, the sons bury their fathers.

So long as human passions lead those in

*Dr. Hall has very kindly acceded to the Editor's request that he allow publication of his address in Colorado Medicine.—Ed.

power to make war, those attacked must defend themselves or perish. Man survives only by incessant struggle, and the grim doctrine of the survival of the fittest seems destined to prevail as long as man himself survives. It is our urgent duty, nevertheless, to work and hope for better things.

This tablet is erected to the memory of those deceased officers, nurses and enlisted men who did their part in war in fighting disease. They incurred knowingly and willingly the loathsome dangers of their especial work, but also, in some degree, the more spectacular hazards of the field of war. The very surgeon for whom this hospital is named, was the first officer of the American army to be slain by the enemy.

This imperishable bronze will long preserve the memory of those whose places of sepulchre are known, but it is an especially fitting memorial of those whose eternal resting place is unknown. These have laid them down alone in their last sleep, but they shall be neither unhonored nor unsung. The trees of a thousand hills shall be their canopy, and the waves of the eternal sea shall sound their funeral knell. He who watches even the sparrow's fall knows their place of sepulchre.

I think more often of these unknown dead than of those buried with loving care and martial pomp in our usual places of interment. I like to think of them as having gone to their eternal rest with heavenly honors rather than with the lesser ones which are of the earth, earthly.

The first stanza of Mrs. Alexander's "Burial of Moses", excepting for its local references, might well have been written in honor of these, our unburied dead:

"By Nebo's lonely mountain—on this side
Jordan's wave,

In a vale in the land of Moab, there lies a
lonely grave;

But no man dug that sepulchre, and no man
saw it e'er,

For the Angels of God upturned that sod,
and laid the dead man there."

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Red Cross Building is prominently located at the exact center of the Fitzsimons General Hospital post, just north of the facility's administration building and main infirmary. The building's basic design conforms to a standardized military version of the Mission Revival style, adopted for use by the Army in the southwest region of the country. Features of this style, such as shaped parapets and stuccoed exterior walls, allow the building to blend with the prevailing theme of architecture on the base as a whole. Underscoring the military's standardization of construction are elements such as a concrete slab foundation, regular fenestration, symmetrical design, spare use of extraneous materials, and minimal ornamentation. The Red Cross Building's plan shape, however, is anything but standard military fare. Erected in the shape of a Red Cross, the building is unique in Colorado and at this time is believed to be the only one of its kind in the country.

Because of the importance of this building to the recuperative mission of the post, its symbolic meaning to injured and ill soldiers, and its practical use as a morale-building center of recreation, the Army's architects were evidently instructed to stray from the utilitarian norm and design a building that would merit both its pivotal location and its function as what is arguably one of the hospital's most important structures. The Red Cross Building was conceived to be unique, with its cross-shaped plan, angled walls at the intersections of the wings, numerous windows to provide a bright interior, complex roof lines, shaped parapets, a prominent octagonal lantern, large brick fireplaces, a performance stage, interior balconies, and a spacious central auditorium/recreation room. The property is further ornamented by its landscaped grounds, which are occupied by paved walkways, mature trees and shrubs, and a World War I monument. The Red Cross Building stands out among the original structures erected at Fitzsimons, providing evidence that it received special architectural attention related to its importance as a recreation and social services center for the staff and patients residing at the post during the World War I period.

Constructed in 1918, the Red Cross Building is significant on the local, state and national levels because it embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type and style inherently valuable to the study of the period during which it was erected. Constructed in accordance with standardized plans developed by the Army's Construction Division, the building was originally designed as a temporary structure but has lasted much longer than expected. Similar to the other 47 original structures built on the post, the Red Cross Building was erected on a concrete slab with stuccoed hollow tile walls and a complex gabled and hipped roof. Characteristics which make this large building unique, however, include its Mission Revival style detailing, its Red Cross-shaped plan, its prominent central lantern, and

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and its interior layout designed for recreational use. The structure was used to house social service offices and recreational activities important to the recuperative function of the post from 1918 through the 1990s. For these reasons, the building is significant for its architecture and its association with the military and social history of the nation, with a period of significance that spans from 1918 through 1949 at the fifty year threshold.

The World War I Monument, placed at this site in 1923, is also unique with its beehive shape and cobblestone construction. The bronze marker inset into the monument is one of only four identical plaques that were cast, each of which was placed at a different Army medical facility in the United States. The monument is significant as a unique memorial erected by the members of the Army medical service to their fellow officers, nurses, and enlisted men of the Medical Department who gave their lives for their country in the recent European conflict. Placed on the site at a time when war memorials were being erected throughout the nation as well as overseas, the monument is significant both as a representative of this commemoration effort and for its unusual method of construction using cobblestones. For these reasons, the World War I Monument at Fitzsimons is significant on the national level and has a period of significance limited to the year of its construction.

Fitzsimons General Hospital, originally designated US Army General Hospital No. 21, was established in 1918 as World War I was drawing to a close. Not long after the nation entered the war in April 1917, the Denver Civic and Commercial Association (predecessor to the Chamber of Commerce) along with other prominent community leaders spearheaded a campaign to convince the military to establish a base in the area. The War Department saw the city's isolation in the interior of the country as less than desirable for a training or supply installation, however it was viewed as an appropriate location for a military recuperation hospital. By this time, the state was well known as a mecca for tuberculars and others suffering from other respiratory illnesses, most of them sent west from the crowded East Coast cities to recover in the high altitude, bright sun, and clean air of Colorado. Many Denver hospitals and sanitariums were developed between the 1890s and 1910s specifically to treat the large numbers of tuberculars arriving in the area, among them the Jewish Consumptives Relief Society campus, Agnes Memorial Sanitarium, Bethesda Sanitarium, Craig Hospital, National Jewish Hospital for Consumptives, and Lutheran Hospital.

With a burgeoning number of soldiers returning from Europe stricken with tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases (as well as suffering from gas attacks and chest wounds), along with Denver's nationally-recognized reputation for the treatment of pulmonary illness, the

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Army responded positively to the requests of Denver leaders. Colonel George Bushnell, a prominent medical officer in the Surgeon General's office and a leading expert on tuberculosis (he had also spent two years recuperating from the disease in Colorado), was sent west on an inspection tour in November 1917 to locate a possible site for a new Army hospital. After inspecting several properties in the Denver area, Bushnell became most impressed with a 595-acre parcel of rural land on the plains eight miles east of Denver and two miles east of the town of Aurora. This large tract, partly occupied by the A.H. Gutheil Nursery, had a panoramic view of the Rocky Mountains to the west, was at an appropriate distance from Denver for a recuperation hospital (close enough for supplies but far enough to maintain a quiet atmosphere), and was large enough to accommodate the low-density spatial needs of a hospital that would be designed to treat patients with respiratory ailments.

Based upon Bushnell's recommendation of the site, the War Department asked Congress for an appropriation of \$500,000 for the initial development of the property into an Army hospital. In the meantime, the Denver Civic and Commercial Association quickly raised \$150,000 in four days through public subscription, and arranged to purchase the property and secure it for Army use. In addition to private investment, the city of Denver donated \$10,000 and Aurora donated one dollar for every citizen living in the small town adjacent to the hoped-for medical post. Local leaders steadfastly pursued the project, realizing that the hospital would become one of the area's primary government institutions and would be accompanied by tremendous economic benefit to the adjacent communities. Upon purchasing the Gutheil Nursery property for \$140,000, the Denver Civic and Commercial Association became the sole owner of the land, and proposed to lease it to the federal government for a fee of one dollar per year. The War Department accepted the offer and announced its plans to construct General Hospital No. 21.

Ground was broken in April 1918, with construction of the first forty-eight buildings underway the following month. Plans and oversight were provided by the Quartermaster Corps and the Army's Construction Division, with construction completed by the A.C. Lambie Co. of Denver. As with other Army hospitals under the direction of the Surgeon General, General Hospital No. 21 was designed to handle a variety of ailments and injuries. However, because of its location in Colorado this facility was conceived from the beginning to focus upon the treatment of respiratory illness. Wards were constructed as individual buildings rather than as wings of a single large structure, and were designed for the prevailing medical treatment (particularly for tuberculosis) known as heliotherapy, which in practical application meant that patients spent a good portion of each day resting on porches, soaking in the

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strong rays of the sun and breathing the fresh high altitude air. Over time, however, the effectiveness of this method of treatment was found to be limited to non-respiratory forms of tuberculosis such as that which affected the joints. Treatment regimens also included exercise, rest, special diets, symptomatic remedies, and in some cases surgery.

To allow for the free movement of air, the early ward and infirmary buildings were staggered and separated by wide buffers of open space later landscaped with grass and several thousand trees during the early 1920s. This spacious plan was extended with buffers of varying sizes throughout the post, which was organized in the symmetrical pattern of an army cantonment with the main infirmary, administration, and Red Cross buildings at the center of the complex. In addition, the buildings constructed at General Hospital No. 21 in 1918-1919 were designed according to Army specifications for the southwest region in the popular but restrained Mission Revival style, characterized by exterior stucco, shaped parapets on some structures, and little in the way of ornamentation. This style was maintained with each new phase of construction, and is uniform today except for the main hospital building erected during World War II.

Construction continued at a hectic pace throughout 1918, hurdling the difficulties of labor and supply shortages during the war, with the first group of buildings dedicated in mid-October. Although not officially completed until 1919, the first patients arrived within days of the dedication ceremony, delivered by rail along a Union Pacific spur laid into the post from the north. By Armistice Day on 11 November 1918, only one month after dedication of the first group of buildings, the hospital had reached its capacity of 380 beds. One month later, the facility was caring for 600 patients. With patients streaming into the new facility, the Army realized that it would be inadequate to handle the number of soldiers returning from Europe in need of treatment. A second and then third group of buildings were erected immediately, and within a short period of fewer than two years the post was developed from vacant ground to a fully operational military recuperation hospital and medical training facility. With a capacity of 1200 beds upon completion of the initial round of construction, General Hospital No. 21 became the largest facility of its kind in the world.

Included among the first 48 structures erected at General Hospital No. 21 was the Red Cross Building, located at the exact center of the one-mile square complex and completed on 5 October 1918. Designed as a recreational and social service center for ambulatory and semi-ambulatory patients, the building included a large two-story auditorium/recreation room, a performance stage, two large fireplaces, small bedrooms and offices in the north

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and south wings, and a movie projection booth over the west entrance. Inside the auditorium/recreation room were pool tables, a large library lining the walls, numerous chairs for reading and socializing, and game tables. The initial recreational and social service purposes for which the structure was erected in 1918 continued, with a short hiatus during the 1930s, well into the 1990s.

The American Red Cross increased its visibility and level of active involvement at US military installations at home and abroad during the European war that raged from 1914 through 1918. Paramount among Red Cross services provided to the Army were the training of nurses, the staffing and supply of ambulances, the preparation and supply of base hospitals, and the establishment of volunteer-managed social service efforts and recreational facilities for ill and injured soldiers. In April 1917, the United States entered the war in Europe and the American Red Cross was placed under the control of a federally-appointed war council. While General John J. Pershing assigned the YMCA to oversee entertainment of the troops in most of Europe, the Red Cross was asked to handle recreational activities and canteens in France as well as for those soldiers being treated in hospitals, passing through railroad stations, and at ports of debarkation and embarkation in the United States. With the Red Cross under the control of the War Council, the Surgeon General arranged to construct a large Red Cross recreational and service facility at the center of the new General Hospital No. 21 rising from the prairie east of Denver.

Patients sent to the Army's new recuperation and treatment hospital near Denver in 1917 and 1918 were classified by the European base hospitals as no longer fit for duty as a result of serious injury, permanent disablement, or illnesses requiring long-term care such as tuberculosis. With many of General Hospital No. 21's patients there for extended periods of treatment, the Army realized that the facility would require a program of recreational activities to entertain the patients and to keep their morale high. Although the Progressive Era was reaching its end, it had impacted the operation of military installations in the sense that the Medical Department of the Army (and the Navy) realized by 1918 that it had to provide for the long-term welfare of recuperating soldiers and veterans, ensuring that these damaged men would return to happy and productive lives. In addition, the prevailing medical theories of the day regarding treatment of tuberculosis stressed the importance of maintaining high spirits among patients struggling with the disease. To achieve these goals, the Red Cross established its Hospital and Recreation Corps to organize and manage recreational programming, and to look after the welfare of soldiers and sailors recuperating in military hospitals.

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At General Hospital No. 21, the new Red Cross Building housed nightly entertainment for the patients and staff, organized beginning in April 1919 by John A. O'Brien, the new Red Cross Recreational Officer stationed at the post (a quarantine of the post prior to April prevented the booking of entertainment acts there over the previous six months). Prior to assuming responsibility for the Red Cross program, O'Brien worked as the manager of the new Soldiers' and Sailors' Club in downtown Denver and for a short time coordinated an entertainment program at Fort Logan. At the beginning of each evening's program, medical officers stationed at the hospital presented a short lecture about tuberculosis. Offering a diverse program of entertainment, the soldiers and staff at General Hospital No. 21 were then treated to boxing matches, musical performances, vaudeville acts, movies, and public speakers. Under orders from the commanding officer, the programs were terminated by 9:00 p.m. so that all could turn in for the night at a reasonable hour. With the assistance of Denver theater owners, O'Brien was able to secure some of the best traveling acts in the country during their local engagements. The programs were so popular that the Red Cross Building soon could not handle the large crowds gathering there nightly. Packed to standing room capacity, those who could not get inside the building watched the performances from the second floor windows while standing on the one-story projection roofs.

Also used for educational programs, O'Brien scheduled weekly lectures in the Red Cross Building conducted by Denver-area businessmen on topics such as how to make a living after being discharged from service. The Assistant Recreational Officer, working from the Red Cross Building under John O'Brien's supervision, organized athletic activities such as short hikes, tennis, volleyball, croquet, and baseball. On Sunday nights, the building was handed over to the post chaplains, who conducted services as well as religious lectures and musical performances there. For the bedridden patients, O'Brien scheduled entertainment that could be enjoyed from the wards, including a sharpshooting exhibition outside the main infirmary and a visit by a circus and horseback exhibition team.

During the 1920s, General Hospital No. 21 continued to treat patients damaged by the war and veterans taking advantage of their health benefits, surviving early efforts to close the facility as part of the general demobilization. Valued by the Surgeon General's Office as an important Army tuberculosis hospital, the federal government decided to retain the facility and on 26 June 1920 redesignated the post as Fitzsimons General Hospital, named for William Thomas Fitzsimons, the first American Army medical officer to be killed by enemy fire in World War I. That same year, 3,442 patients were admitted to the hospital, of whom 2,132 arrived for treatment of tuberculosis. Establishing a high recovery rate, the facility

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became widely known for its success in treatment and for its research into this pulmonary plague that had already killed hundreds of thousands of Americans. Fitzsimons also established its importance during the 1920s as a medical training hospital, not only for those assigned to the post but also for medical personnel sent there from other facilities. By the end of the decade, the facility had grown to a capacity of 2100 beds, and was larger than any other government hospital in the country.

In July 1923, an addition was made to the Red Cross Building property with the placement on the south side of the building of a large World War I monument. This beehive-shaped cobblestone monument with its large bronze memorial plaque was dedicated to the members of the Medical Department who had perished in the recent European war. The bronze tablet is one of only four cast by the Gorham Manufacturing Co. of Providence, Rhode Island, and was paid for by funds raised from one dollar donations offered by the surviving officers, nurses and enlisted men of the Medical Department who had served during World War I. In addition to the monument placed at Fitzsimons General Hospital, the other three were erected at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, the Medical Field Service School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and at Letterman General Hospital in San Francisco. Attending the dedication ceremony in July 1923 was Surgeon General Ireland, who arrived for the ceremony and to inspect the post.

Although the hospital had been operational for only a short time, its impact upon the economy and social fabric of Denver and Aurora was keenly felt by area citizens and community leaders. Local contractors, construction supply houses, and both skilled and unskilled laborers benefited immediately from the construction of the post. Many of the early nurses employed at Fitzsimons came from the population in the surrounding area, and the facility provided advanced training for nurses sent to study there by Denver area hospitals. Personnel stationed at Fitzsimons traveled the few miles to Denver and adjacent Aurora to shop and for entertainment, and their families often moved to the area as well. The post baseball team competed in the Denver City Baseball League, achieving second place in 1924. Numerous civilians and volunteers were employed throughout various offices and departments on the post, enhancing interaction between the facility and the surrounding community. Included among these were the many local Red Cross volunteers who offered their time and service to the staff and the patients being treated there. In 1929, the federal government signed a long-term lease on the Fitzsimons property with the Denver Chamber of Commerce, ideally ensuring that the facility would remain a vital part of the community for years to come.

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During the early 1930s, Fitzsimons General Hospital was plagued by the increasingly costly maintenance of deteriorating buildings and infrastructure, compounded by cutbacks in military finance due to the Depression. Structures erected in 1918 and 1919, many of them designed to be temporary, were requiring large investments in maintenance. The power plant and its steam heating system were also in dire need of significant repair or replacement. Surrounding communities and businesses, by now dependent upon the millions of dollars in revenue generated from Fitzsimons payroll and supply purchases, were again concerned that the hospital would be closed. Although identified by the Army for possible closure in 1932, the hospital admitted over 5,100 patients that year. Even with these numbers being treated, the Surgeon General issued orders in April 1933 that the facility be prepared for closure by the end of June. Shocked at the news, local political and business leaders, with the help of Denver's two major newspapers, immediately mounted a campaign to save Fitzsimons from closure. Colorado's Congressional delegation was notified and led the effort to persuade the Surgeon General's office to improve the facility rather than shut it down. Two years later, the dispute ended when Congress approved the post's funding and a new Surgeon General announced that the hospital would remain open.

In March of 1933, the First National Bank of Aurora failed due to the Depression, and the Fitzsimons recreational fund was frozen. In addition, the American Red Cross temporarily discontinued its hospital-based recreational programs, forcing the posts' staff and patients to develop their own entertainment and recreational activities. Exhibition of movies was continued by pooling contributions from the patients themselves. Movies were shown two nights a week in the Red Cross Building, and a portable projector was taken into the wards four nights a week to provide entertainment to the non-ambulatory patients. Denver-area performing groups visited the post to provide musical and theatrical entertainment, and the Red Cross Building continued to be used for its library and game tables. This situation continued for several more years, until increased funding became available to re-establish more extensive programming during the late-1930s build-up for World War II.

By mid-summer of 1935, the War Department requested funds for improvements at Fitzsimons from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which allocated \$282,000 to the project. Within a few months, several hundred workers were busy rehabilitating buildings and infrastructure, improving the grounds, demolishing structures scheduled for removal, and erecting new buildings. After several years of concern over possible loss of the facility, the surrounding communities of Denver and Aurora were finally able to relax their efforts. With world affairs deteriorating by the mid-1930s, the Army was increasing its number of enlisted

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personnel and gearing up for the looming battle. Taking advantage of these circumstances, Colorado's Congressional leaders approached the Surgeon General with the idea of making Fitzsimons a permanent installation with the construction of a large modern Army hospital. The War Department approved this request in July 1936, and the Surgeon General issued orders for the preparation of plans for what was to become the largest general Army hospital building in the country. Completed in December 1941, the main hospital building was accompanied by numerous other structures erected during the build-up for World War II.

Command of Fitzsimons General Hospital was assumed by Brigadier General Omar H. Quade in 1942, who shepherded the facility through the war and an unprecedented period of growth. With America fully engaged in the battle overseas and thousands of patients again streaming into Fitzsimons and its new Art Moderne main hospital building, the Army embarked upon another major expansion of the post. In 1942 alone, \$1.5 million was spent upon buildings and improvements, with new construction predominantly involving the erection of semi-permanent and permanent brick structures, all of which were stuccoed on the exterior to retain the prevailing Mission Revival style.

Fitzsimons General Hospital healed thousands of ill and injured servicemen during World War II, and entered the post-war years with a phenomenal record of success, prepared to provide the best in medical care to veterans, their families, and soldiers injured in wars yet to come. As a general medical hospital, the facility was designated after the war to handle not only respiratory illnesses, but also specialties such as general and orthopedic surgery, thoracic surgery, deep x-ray therapy, and psychiatry. Many Aurora citizens worked at the hospital in civilian positions since the post was established, and a good number of the enlisted medical personnel as well as servicemen treated at Fitzsimons settled in the area, creating even stronger bonds between the post and the surrounding community.

During the World War II period, the Red Cross Building continued to be used as a facility for the recreation of staff and patients, however it could no longer handle the large audiences desiring to attend programs. Consequently, its function as a movie and live performance hall was transferred to a new post theater erected in 1943. In order to create more office and recreation space in the building, two one-story additions were erected on the east side of the main structure. With exterior stucco and 6/6 double hung sash windows, the additions blended well with the original building. The Red Cross Building served recuperating soldiers as a center of socializing and social services through the end of the war in 1945. After the

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war, it continued in this role during times of peace as well as throughout the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Following the end of the Vietnam War, the Red Cross withdrew its professional staff from the coordination of recreation programs at military hospitals nationwide due to budgetary cutbacks, however the Red Cross Building at Fitzsimons continued to serve as an informal social gathering place for patients and hospital staff. In June of 1996 the hospital post was de-activated, and the Red Cross Building's long period of service to the Fitzsimons community came to an end. The structure is now vacant and awaiting a new use.

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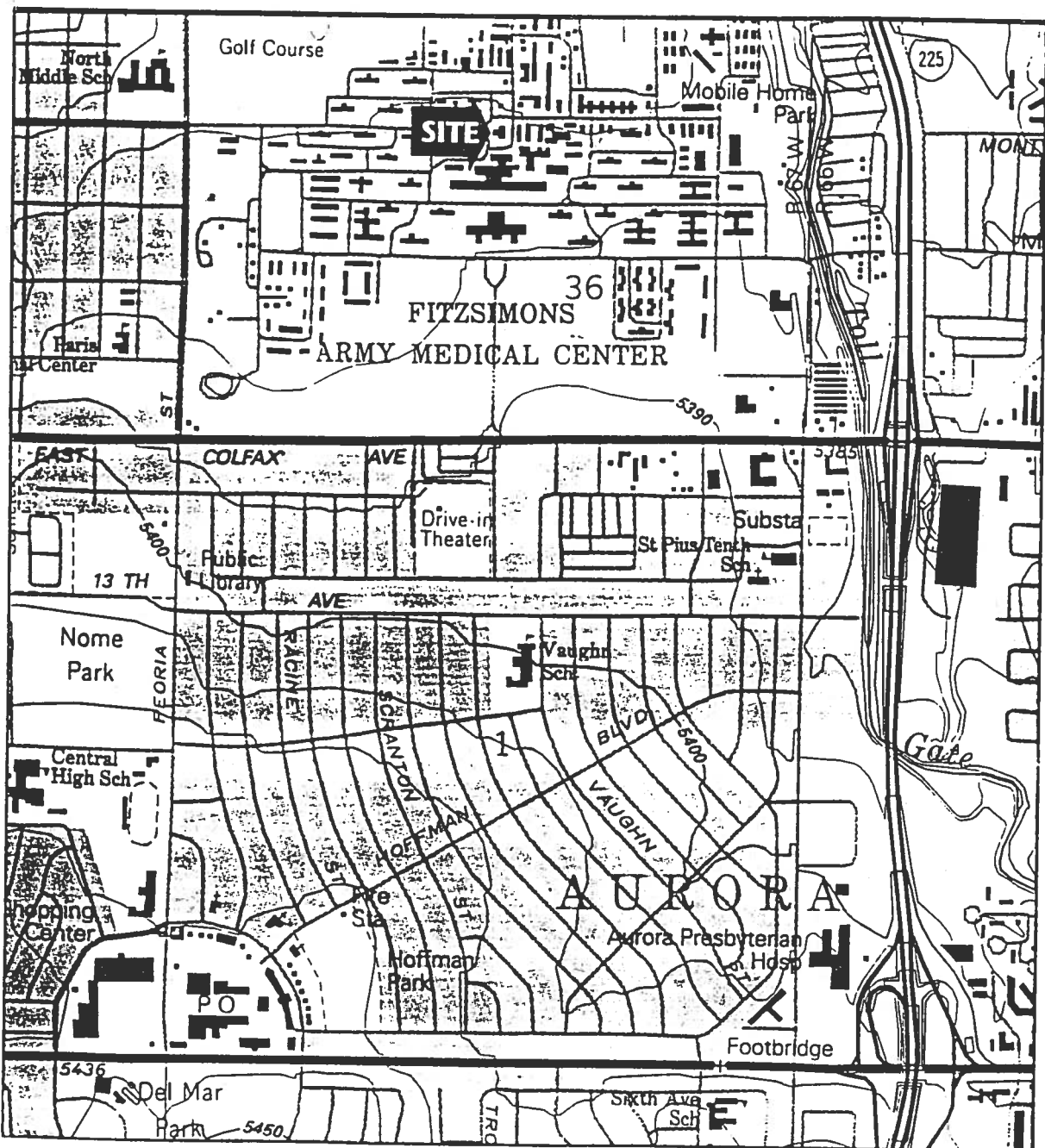
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USGS 7.5' TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
FITZSIMONS QUADRANGLE
(1965, REVISED 1994)



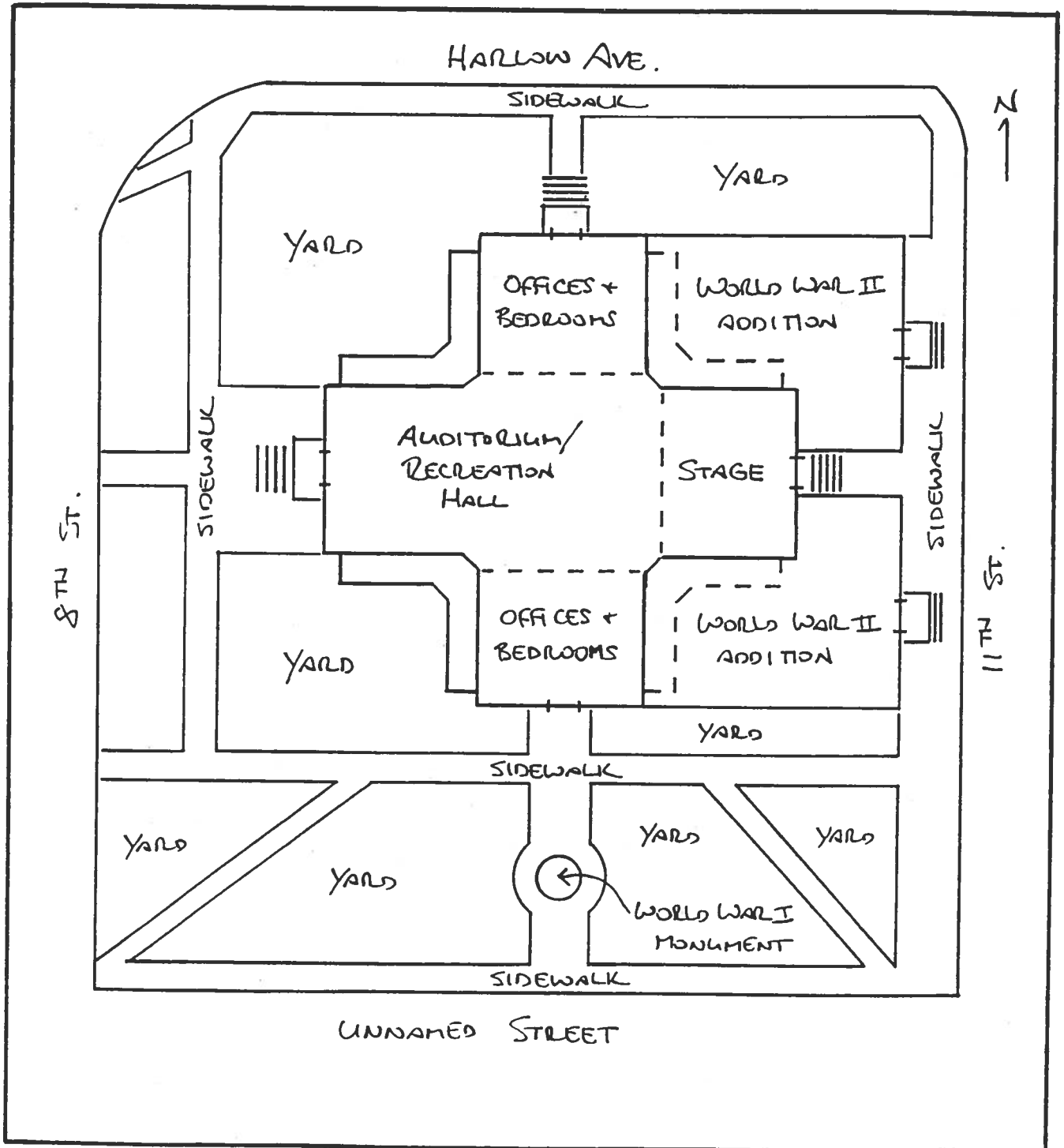
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SITE PLAN

NOT TO SCALE



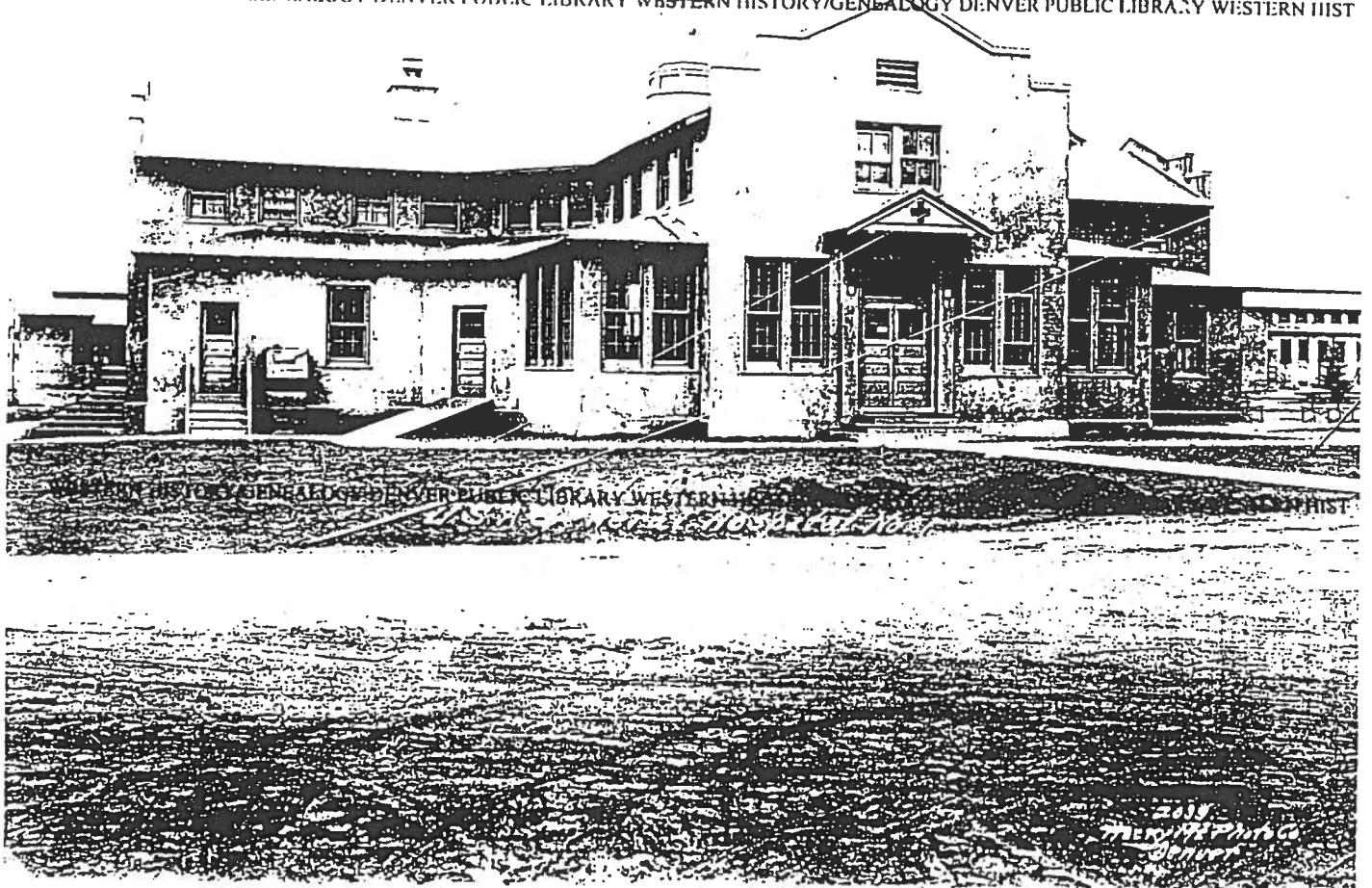
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HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH - CIRCA 1918

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HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH - CIRCA 1920

