**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

**NAME:**
Rock Island Arsenal

**STREET AND NUMBER:**
Boundaries as shown on attached map

**CATEGORY (Check One):**
- District
- Building
- Site
- Object
- Structure

**OWNERSHIP:**
- Public
- Private
- Both

**STATUS:**
- Public Acquisition:
  - In Process
  - Being Considered
- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in progress

**ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC:**
- Yes:
  - Restricted
  - Unrestricted
- No

**PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):**
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainments
- Government
- Industrial
- Military
- Park
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Transportation
- Other (Specify)

**OWNER OF PROPERTY:**
United States Government

**STREET AND NUMBER:**
Department of the Army
Washington D.C.

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**
Installation Facilities Office, Rock Island Arsenal
Building 102 Rodman Avenue

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS:**
- Historic American Buildings Survey
  - DATE OF SURVEY: 1937
  - Repository for Survey Records: Library of Congress
  - STATE: D.C.
  - CODE: 11

**STATE:**
Illinois

**COUNTY:**
Rock Island

**ENTRY DATE:**
FOR NPS USE ONLY

**SEE INSTRUCTIONS**
The Arsenal is on the Island of Rock Island, midway between the cities of Moline and Rock Island on the Illinois side and Illinois and Davenport, Iowa. It is about three miles long, about 3/4 mile wide at its widest point, and consists of 945 acres.

The western end of the Island was the site of Fort Armstrong, which, at that time, sat above a sheer cliff. In 1863-67, the Clock Tower was built near the site of Fort Armstrong, which burned in 1855. "No name can be given to the exterior architecture", said Major D. W. Flagler, Commanding Officer in 1877, in speaking of the Clock Tower. "The walls are of buff limestone. All of the exterior is cut or bush-hammered work, and highly ornamented with projections, moldings, etc....it is well built but the building has no chimney, or ventilating flues and cannot be ventilated, warmed or dried.

In 1866, ten large shops were started and completed by 1876. These are on the center of the Island. These buildings are as massive as a king's castle. In most of them, the outside walls are three feet thick. The interior partition walls are 2 3/4 in width, tapering to two feet thickness in the attic. All walls are made from a single course of stone.

The massive stone shops have columns of cast iron and wrought iron in Phoenix shape. They have broad, sturdy iron stairways. Ceilings are 13 to 16 feet from the floor. Floors and roof decking were made of 2 inch white pine planks.

The Commanding Officer's Quarters and three other quarters were completed in 1870-74. Two others were added in 1905 and 1907. These homes are along the North shoreline. When the great stone houses for officers were built, fireplaces were placed in many of the rooms, including some of the bedrooms. But a few fireplaces wouldn't do very much to take the winter chill from a 24 room house built with castle dimensions. The earlier homes are almost completely built of ashler limestone.

The buildings of World War I and II extend to the west. Most of these are of concrete.

The northeastern half of the island is used by a golf club founded in 1905. The club house is frame and is next to Quarters 1. The southeastern half of the island is covered by a profusion of trees and shrubs. By comparison, the western half of the island is bare. The overall shape is that roughly resembling a Gurkha knife surrounded by water.
Description - continued

Access is gained by two bridges in the west and by one in the east. The swing-span government bridge to Davenport, Iowa was built in 1898 and is still in use. The upper tier of this bridge is for trains and the lower for vehicular traffic.

Among the interesting stone installations among the older works at Rock Island Arsenal is a stone bridge on the golf course, east of the clubhouse. This bridge is in a low area where formerly a lake of some sort existed. The bridge is like something from the old country, with its keaved arch and its gargoyles. The bridge probably was designed by the late W. O. Groehnen, who came to the Arsenal with Major Flagler in 1871 and who remained 40 to 50 years. Called a "delineator", he seems to have been the arsenal architect.

It is noted that most of the casting of fences and other iron molding was done by the Arsenal.
1. Residence of Dred Scott, 1835.

2. First bridge to cross the Mississippi, 1853-56 (Abraham Lincoln successfully defended the railroad interests). Pier still stands.


4. Site of Fort Armstrong, 1816-36 (replica of blockhouse stands on site).

5. Site of Confederate Prison, 1863-65 (Confederate Cemetery still on Island).

6. Second Commander: T. J. Rodman famous for the Rodman Gun and his work on gun powder (his grave is on the Island) 1863-71.

7. Site of Rodman shops still in use and majestic homes of the 1870's.

8. Home of the Mound Builders before history was written (one mound still remains).

9. Site of Colonel Davenport's home (first real home in this area) 1833.

10. Site of one of the world's time capsules, 1968.


12. Site of swing-span government bridge of 1898.
Bibliography - continued

Hamlin, Talbot, Greek Revival Architecture in America, (Dover Publications, New York, 1964)

Pictures of Tri-Cities, C. J. Martin, Davenport, Iowa, 1901.


"There followed the construction of Davenport's frame house on the Island. "Early photographs of the house", writes Architect Earl H. Reed for the Historic American Buildings Survey, "show it to have been of a highly developed type for the Midwest, with well proportioned side and rear wings, one of the former having perhaps served as an officer.

"Davenport, who was a man of broad culture, traveled widely throughout the east and south and his familiarity with the finest colonial and post-colonial traditions shows in the architectural lines of his house. Its good proportions skillful assemblage of tasteful detail and the exterior chimneys, make the Davenport house uniquely interesting."
### MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Ordinance Memoranda #20, History of Rock Island Arsenal, Flagler, 1877,
- Government Printing Office,
- War's Greatest Workshop, Rock Island Arsenal, Arsenal Publishing Company,
- 1922.
- A History of Rock Island and Rock Island Arsenal From Earliest Times to
- Federal Writer's Project, Rock Island and Moline, American Guide Series,
- Chicago, 1937.

### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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**APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:**

945

**LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES:**

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### FORM PREPARED BY

**NAME AND TITLE:**
Leonard E. Lock, Surveyor

**ORGANIZATION:**
Rock Island Historical Society

**STREET AND NUMBER:**
822 11th Avenue

**CITY OR TOWN:**
Moline

**STATE:**
Illinois

### STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

- National [ ]
- State [ ]
- Local [ ]

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Date:**

### NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

**Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation**

**Date:**

**ATTEST:**

**Keeper of The National Register**

**Date:**
1. Ordinance Memorandum 320, History of Rock Island Arsenal, Flagler, 1877, Government Printing Office


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List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries:

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11. FORM PREPARED BY:
Leonard E. Lock, Surveyist

Rock Island Historical Society

St: 422 11th Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Moline

STATE: Illinois

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-655), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [ ] State [x] Local [ ]

Name [Signature]

Title [Survey Officer]

Date 8/20/69

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

Keeper of the National Register

Date