



ALCATRAZ NEW INDUSTRIES BUILDING

ABBREVIATED HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

**ALCATRAZ ABBREVIATED HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT
NEW INDUSTRIES BUILDING**

**ALCATRAZ ISLAND
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

DRAFT

October 31, 2001

**Prepared by:
Lerner + Associates Architects
John A. Martini, Historian**

**TECHNICAL INFORMATION CENTER
DENVER SERVICE CENTER
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INTRODUCTION

This Abbreviated Historic Structures Report was prepared for the National Park Service by the firm of Lerner & Associates, Architects. The work was performed under a contract between Lerner & Associates and the Golden Gate National Park Association (GGNPA), a designated National Park Service cooperating association operating under the NPS Cooperating Associations Policies, Standards and Guidelines, NPS-32. A percentage of the profits from the interpretive services and book sales provided by the Association to visitors is used to fund projects that provide specifically for the interpretation of Alcatraz Island. The Architectural Historian was John Martini.

Alcatraz Island was designated a National Historic Landmark on January 17, 1986 after having first been entered onto the National Register of Historic Places on June 23, 1976. It has been in the National Park Service since the creation of Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1972 and has been open to the public for tours since October of 1973. The island remains one of the most popular tourist destinations in the National Park Service system, attracting more than 1.2 million visitors annually.

The Alcatraz New Industries Building is a contributing structure to the National Historic Landmark District. The 1980 *General*

Management Plan states that historic preservation will be the primary concern on Alcatraz Island, and states that all the military fortifications should be preserved, if feasible.

The Abbreviated Historic Structure Report will describe the buildings developmental history, outline the history of the building's modifications, describe and assess the physical condition of the building's components, and identify the features that define the building's historic character. Future studies, beyond the scope of this report, will use this information to inform full treatment and reuse plans.

This Historic Structure Report was produced primarily through the compilation and interpretation of existing information and through the inspection and analysis of existing physical conditions without destructive testing. Field records are the property of the Architectural and Engineering firm who produced this document under contract to the Golden Gate National Park Association. There were no samples taken that should be catalogued and accessioned into the park's permanent museum collection. The Abbreviated Historic Structure Report itself serves as an adequate record of the inspection, study and analysis performed by the investigators.

BUILDING INVENTORY
New Industries Building [Laundry]

BUILDING NUMBER: AL-84

NAME: Industries Building, New Industries Building, Laundry

USE: Historic use first as Laundry on Second Floor and Mat Shop, Furniture Shop, Machine and Blacksmith Shop, Dry Cleaning, Show Shop and Clothing Shop on the First Floor (ground level).

PLAN TYPE: Two story steel reinforced concrete building with a simple rectangular plan that included a 306'-0" long enclosed Guard's Walk that ran the entire length of the building's east wall.

PREVIOUS BUILDING NUMBERS Unknown

O.Q.M.G. PLAN NO. None

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

Historical Background and Context

The U.S. Army began the tradition of having Alcatraz prisoners perform at a variety of industrial tasks while the island was still a Disciplinary Barracks. These activities included a furniture shop, various clothing and shoe manufacturing plants, and a large laundry that handled military laundry from the various military posts around the bay. When the Bureau of Prisons assumed control of Alcatraz in 1933, these work activities were consolidated within a complex of three buildings on the northwest end of the island. These aging buildings had not been designed with the goal of incarcerating dangerous felons, and the Bureau of Prisons was extremely unhappy with their physical layout. Several escape attempts occurred from inside these buildings, and during one attempt a guard was killed. This lack of security was compounded by the buildings' physical locations. Two of the buildings sat at the extreme edge of the island's cliffs, and keeping the watersides of the structures under visual observation was nearly impossible. In addition, Warden James A. Johnston reported in 1936 that the laundry building nearest the powerhouse had become dangerously undermined due to high waves and would need a seawall to protect it. He suggested that the former rock quarry on the western side of the island be used for constructing a new building.

In 1938, a major Public Works Administration (PWA) funding package was approved for the modernization of Alcatraz Penitentiary. Projects that would be undertaken included construction of new staff housing, remodeling the solitary confinement block of the Cellhouse, overhauling the powerhouse, building a water tower, and constructing a massive new Industries Building. This last structure would be a 306-foot long, state-of-the-art penal factory containing all of the island's laundry and manufacturing activities in a single structure.

In its original configuration – and probably before financial limitations became evident – the new industrial area was actually to have been a compound of three buildings on the site of the old quarry area. This compound was to have been surrounded by a high concrete wall similar to the existing stockade wall around the recreation yard, and equipped with its own guard towers and vehicle sally port. The old Model Shop building was proposed for demolition under this proposal, to be replaced by a massive target backstop for an expanded guards' rifle range. (The existing rifle range would have to be moved; it sat on the site of the new industries building.)ⁱ

The total PWA building program on Alcatraz would be \$1,100,000. The "New" Industry Building alone would cost \$214,986, with the Federal Prison Industries providing \$50,000 towards the total. Louis C. Dunn of San Francisco was awarded the construction contract for

the new building in 1939 and work began the following year. It soon became evident that the original walled compound was too ambitious and would have to be refined. The concrete walls were discarded, as was the demolition of the Model Shop. (The island guards never did get a replacement outdoor range.) Instead, the proposed industries building would be enlarged and, for security, enclosed by double sets of tall cyclone fences topped with coils of barbed wire.

Warden James Johnston and his staff worked closely with the architects and construction firm to design a factory building that met their needs. Johnston recalled in his memoirs:

“I put a lot of thought into the planning. I went over it with the Associate Warden, the Captain, Lieutenants and the architects and engineers from Washington to make sure of the custodial safety. I went over it with our Superintendent of Industries for floor layout, spotting of machines, and space required for each factory. Then we all checked it again as to amount of light, air, toilet facilities, blowers to carry off dust, all with a view to providing good working conditions. We installed many new machines all provided with safety devices.

“The two storied building is arranged so that foreman guards in one shop can see what is going on in the shop next to them. The laundry occupies all of the upper floor, the clothing factory, dry cleaning plant, furniture factory, brush factory and office on the ground floor.

“We tore down the antiquated laundry building, converted the model shop building into a warehouse, and moved into the new industrial building on July 1, 1941.”ⁱⁱ

In its original configuration, the new building contained the Laundry on its Second Floor. The First Floor contained the following shops (proceeding from north to south): Mat Shop, Furniture Shop, Machine and Blacksmith Shop, Dry Cleaning, Shoe Shop and Clothing Shop.

In December 1941, only five months after the building went into service, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor caused the warden to re-prioritize the industries work going on in the building. One such change occurred in 1942 when the Mat Shop (so-called because prisoners manufactured rubber mats there from old tires) was converted into a Net Shop where convicts wove hemp ropes into cargo nets for the U.S. Navy. In addition, the open area adjacent to the Industries Building (where the old Laundry had once stood) was

used for sandblasting and repairing the steel flotation buoys that supported anti-submarine nets stretched across the Bay.

Following the end of the war, Alcatraz' industries returned to their peacetime activities. The Industries Building retained its original shop layout with the only physical alteration being the replacement of the wartime Net Shop by a Brush Shop. The 1950s, however, brought a decline in the number of military personnel stationed in the Bay Area and a corresponding decline in the amount work available for the Laundry. With the reduction of workload came an inevitable decline in revenues, and in April 1958 the director of the Federal Prison Industries sent a memo the Director of the BOP suggesting the Alcatraz laundry be closed. "It is considered necessary to discontinue the Industries laundry operation at Alcatraz because of the lack of business, high cost of operations, especially of water, difficulty of transportation and continued costs."ⁱⁱⁱⁱ In its place, he recommended that other more profitable industrial activities should expand into the space vacated by the laundry. He also recommended that a scaled back laundry, 1/3 the size of the original, be retained to serve only the needs of the penitentiary and island residents.

Initial plans for relocating the scaled-back laundry to the ground floor were prepared in late 1958 and approved with modifications in March 1959. Under this plan the renovated Second Floor would house an expanded glove and clothing factory, while the laundry would be relocated to the north end of the First Floor. Work began

on relocating the laundry shortly afterwards, a project that included removing large amounts of plumbing from the upper story and resurfacing the floor to cover the old drainage troughs. The initial work was completed in a relatively short period and the relocated laundry went into operation on 1 June 1959.

The reconfiguration of the New Industries Building resulted in a domino-like reshuffling of other shop areas within the building, and as part of the on-going project the penitentiary's maintenance workers began erected new interior partitions on both floors. The last major alteration to the building occurred in March 1961 when the dry cleaning plant (apparently the last vestige of the upstairs laundry) was moved to the First Floor. The end-of-year report for 1961 also recorded that during the previous year the brush shop had expanded its operations, resulting in a much better arrangement of equipment and production lines, and that the office of the Industries' Superintendent had been remodeled.

By late 1962, though, a shutdown of the entire Prison Industries on Alcatraz was in progress. A major escape in June that year had highlighted the decaying condition of the penitentiary, and closure of the institution had been ordered for March 1963. As more and more prisoners were transferred off Alcatraz, fewer and fewer workers were available to man the Industries Building. In October 1962 the Glove Shop was the first Industry to be shut down, followed by other shops until only the Laundry remained in service.

This, too, closed down when the last prisoners were transferred on 21 March 1963.

The Industries Building and the rest of the island were transferred to the care of the General Services Administration (GSA) in 1963 following the close of the penitentiary. In November 1969, a group of Native American calling themselves “Indians of All Tribes” occupied the island for 18 months as a political gesture. During this period the Industries Building was extensively vandalized and its

window and doors broken out, but the building itself remained mostly undamaged.

The Alcatraz Industries Building takes its significance from its use as an industrial and factory building that functioned for most of the period when the island was an infamous federal penitentiary. The Industries Building is also a contributing feature to the National Historic Landmark status of the island.

Chronology of Development and Use:

- 1935 Heavy storms threaten to undermine existing Laundry Building near powerhouse.
- 1936 Old quarry on west side of island identified as suitable site for a new Industries Building
- 1938 PWA funds become available for Alcatraz modernization projects. Plans prepared for new Industrial area. Proposed details include concrete perimeter wall, guard towers, and vehicle sally port.
- 1939 Louis C. Dunn of San Francisco awarded contract to build a new Industries building.
- 1940 Construction begins on new Industries Building
- 1941 July 1. New industries building completed. Total cost \$214,986. “Old Industries Building” demolished and all shops moved into new building.
- 1942 Industries re-gear for war work. Mat shop converted to cargo net shop. Tailor shop takes contracts for manufacturing army uniforms.
- 1958 BOP recommends that the “Industries” laundry be discontinued due to declining revenues and increasing costs. Instead, a laundry of 1/3 the size to be retained purely for institutional use.
- 1959 January. Plans prepared showing new arrangement of Industries Building. Clothing shops to move to Second Floor. Scaled-back laundry to move to ground floor.
 March. Revised plans approved. Remodeling work begins.

June. "New" institutional laundry area goes into operation. Island maintenance crews begin work on constructing new partitions in building, starting on Second Floor.

November. Clothing factory in new location on Second Floor. Maintenance crews now working on partitions in glove shop on First Floor.

1961 February. Plans announced to move dry cleaning plant to First Floor.

March. Dry cleaning plant in operation on First Floor.

1962 Brush factory expands into area of First Floor previously occupied by glove shop.

Superintendent of Industries' office remodeled with wood paneling and carpeting.

September. Glove shop closed down as part of general phase-out of Prison Industries on island.

1963 February. All Industries activities cease.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION/CONDITION ASSESSMENT System of Evaluation

The condition of interior and exterior materials, fixtures, features and assemblies consists of a three-part valuation system from good to poor condition. This system allows for a general assessment of the conditions of materials. No destructive testing or laboratory analysis of the materials was performed and no rigorous analysis of the structural systems was undertaken. The objective is to assess the existing condition of materials and finishes that make up the New Industries building for use in another study to determine its present and its future usage and to indicate the amount of effort required for material stabilization, replacement and/or restoration. The following evaluation system was employed:

Good Condition: Item requires minor, if any, repair such as minor repointing of brickwork, scraping paint, patching small holes and cracks, etc., but is essentially intact.

Fair Condition: Item requires considerable amount of repair and/or minor replacement such as repointing of large areas of brickwork, repairs including some replacement, rebuilding walls, replacing fixtures and features, etc.

Poor Condition: Item has lost most of its physical integrity and requires major repair and/or replacement.

General Description

The New Industries Building, Building AL-84, is a simple steel reinforced concrete building having two floors that exemplifies economy of design. The building itself has a 306'-0" x 60'-0" footprint. It is divided equally into 51 bays by two rows of 1'-6" diameter columns that run the length of the building through its center on the interior. There are 17 bays in the longitudinal direction (northwest to southeast) spaced at 18'-0" to centerline, and 3 bays in the transverse direction (northeast to southwest) spaced at 20'-0" to centerline. Sited on the former Island Quarry, the building main entry is at the north from an entry porch under a doorway with marquee at the Second Floor level. The east wall of the building faces the high cliff wall of the former Quarry, whereas the west wall, and its series of windows and doors, command a terrific view of the Bay and Golden Gate Bridge, making it an extremely unusually sited and somewhat atypical example of a "Daylight Factory" building design. Unique features include a two-level Guard Gallery that runs the entire length of the building along the exterior of the east wall.

The window mullions are constructed out of 6"x82" steel channels welded together to form a rectangular tube 3¾"x6", filled with concrete with two ½" diameter steel reinforcing bars in the center. A typical window bay has three mullions dividing the daylight opening into three "detention sashes." The three sections are divided by narrow steel ("T" section) muntins into 96 lights at each end with one section of 120 lights in the middle. Variations of this typical detail exist at doorways on the west wall, at windows on the north and south walls, and windows on the east wall (that face the Guard Gallery).

First Floor

The Foundation is 8'-0"x8'-0" concrete footings for interior columns and 4'-0"x 12'-0" concrete footings for perimeter east wall columns. Rear (east) wall column concrete footings are 7'-0"x 7'-0" except at the corners where they are 6'-0"x6'-0". The foundation is in good condition.

The 13'-3" high First Floor level has a concrete slab on grade. The first floor slab is in good condition. The chamfered northeast corner of the First Floor level has a newly cut entry way that provides access to the building from the Tunnel to the Powerhouse. This wall is at a 45° angle to the east and north walls. This area of the First

Floor is separated from the rest of the space by a wire mesh partition wall constructed of 2x2 square tubing.

The Floor is divided equally into 51 bays by two rows of 1'-6" diameter columns that run the length of the building through its center on the interior (Column Lines B and C). These columns have a 4'-6" diameter column head and a 7'-0"x7'-0" drop panel at the ceiling and are typical throughout the interior of the building on both floors. Perimeter walls on the west are supported by 20"x20" columns that appear to be pilasters from the exterior (Column Line D). These columns integrate with the walls on the interior to give the wall a smooth appearance. On the whole, the structure is in good condition.

The west wall has double doors in the exterior walls between columns 2 and 3, 6 and 7, 12 and 13, and 13 and 14 (along column line D). Concrete block partition walls with large window openings and interior doors separate a space along Column Lines 4 and 5, and 10 and 11. Two smaller spaces are separated from the rest of the floor along the west wall at Column Lines 11, 12 and 13. The partition walls are constructed of concrete block and have large window openings and interior doors. The partition walls are in good condition. Interior windows and sash are in poor condition.

The east wall has industrial style windows of typical construction that are essentially half the typical height and are 3'-2½" tall at a height of 8'-9" above the finish floor level. Behind these windows is the Guard Gallery.

There are remnants of toilet facilities existing, all located along the east wall (along Column Line A). A facility composed of three toilet stalls and a large wall mounted sink are located between columns 2 and 3, a facility composed of two toilet stalls, one shower stall and a wall mounted sink is located between columns 5 and 6, and the last facility, composed of two toilet stalls and two wall mounted lavatories is located in the far southeast corner of the building at column 18. All plumbing and fixtures and toilet partitions are in poor condition.

Second Floor

The 13'-3" high Second Floor level has a concrete slab floor. The Main entry to the building is at the middle bay of the north wall from an exterior entry porch under a marquee through large double doors. The exterior entry porch and stairs, and the double doors are in poor condition.

The Floor is divided equally into 51 bays by two rows of 1'-6" diameter columns that run the length of the building through its center on the interior (Column Lines B and C). These columns have a

4'-6" diameter column head and a 7'-0"x7'-0" drop panel at the ceiling. Perimeter walls on the west are supported by 20"x20" columns that appear to be pilasters from the exterior (Column Line D). These columns integrate with the walls on the interior to give the wall a smooth appearance. On the whole, the structure is in good condition.

The west wall has typical window bays with three mullions dividing the daylight opening into three "detention sashes." The three sections are divided by narrow steel "T" section muntins into 96 lights at each end and one section of 120 lights in the middle.

The east wall has industrial style windows of typical construction that are essentially half the typical height and are 3'-2½" tall at a height of 8'-9" above the finish floor level. Behind these windows is the Guard Gallery.

The south wall has a double doorway in the middle bay that opens out onto a suspended steel "inmates' walk." The bays at each side of the doorway have daylight openings of typical construction and proportions.

On the Second Floor, remnants of interior finishes are visible. In the bay formed by columns along Lines 1 and 2 at Column lines A and B, partial height partition walls have been erected out of luan paneling and 1x3s. The partitions are in poor condition. In the bays

formed by columns along Lines C and D at Column Lines 1 through 4, partition walls constructed of concrete block with large window areas are located. At the former Accounting Office, the structure for a drop ceiling is visible. This space also has a small toilet room with toilet and lavatory intact, where acoustical ceiling tiles can be seen. The interior finishes are in poor condition. Along Column Line 7 is a concrete block partition wall with large window openings and a large double door. Adjacent to this partition wall, along the east wall in the bay created by columns along Line C and D at Column Line 7 and eight is a small Shop separated from the rest of the floor by concrete block partition walls with large window openings and one door. Adjacent to this Shop is a wire cage partition of almost the same size, of unknown use. Two small office/shop spaces are separated from the rest of the space in the southwest corner of the building. These spaces are constructed out of concrete block partition walls. Each space has interior partition walls with large window openings and one door.

Besides the toilet room in the Accounting Office at the north, three other toilet facilities are located on the Second Floor, two along the east wall (along Column Line A). Located at Column Lines 5 and 6 is a facility consisting of three toilet stalls and one large wall mounted sink with a separate single toilet stall with one large wall

mounted sink and a wall mounted lavatory just a few feet away.

Located at Column Line 7 is a facility consisting of three toilet stalls, one large wall mounted sink and a small wall mounted lavatory. The third toilet facility is located along the south wall (Column Line 18) between Columns A and B that consists of three toilet stalls and one large wall mounted sink. All plumbing, fixtures and toilet partitions are in poor condition.

EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS AND FEATURES

System of Evaluation

The objective of evaluating the architectural significance of the New Industries building is to rank the exterior envelope and interior spaces of the building and the elements, features, and uses that define them so as to inform a plan for stabilization, replacement, removal, and/or restoration of the building. The ranking is based on how important those elements, features, and uses are in defining the architectural character of the building, now a ruin, also given that a Period of Historical Significance has not been established. Factors considered in the evaluation include:

- 1) Historical importance of the various spaces, elements, uses, or features in defining the building
- 2) Quality and condition of materials and workmanship and
- 3) Uniqueness of the design and rare features.

The following evaluation system of defining the level of significance was employed:

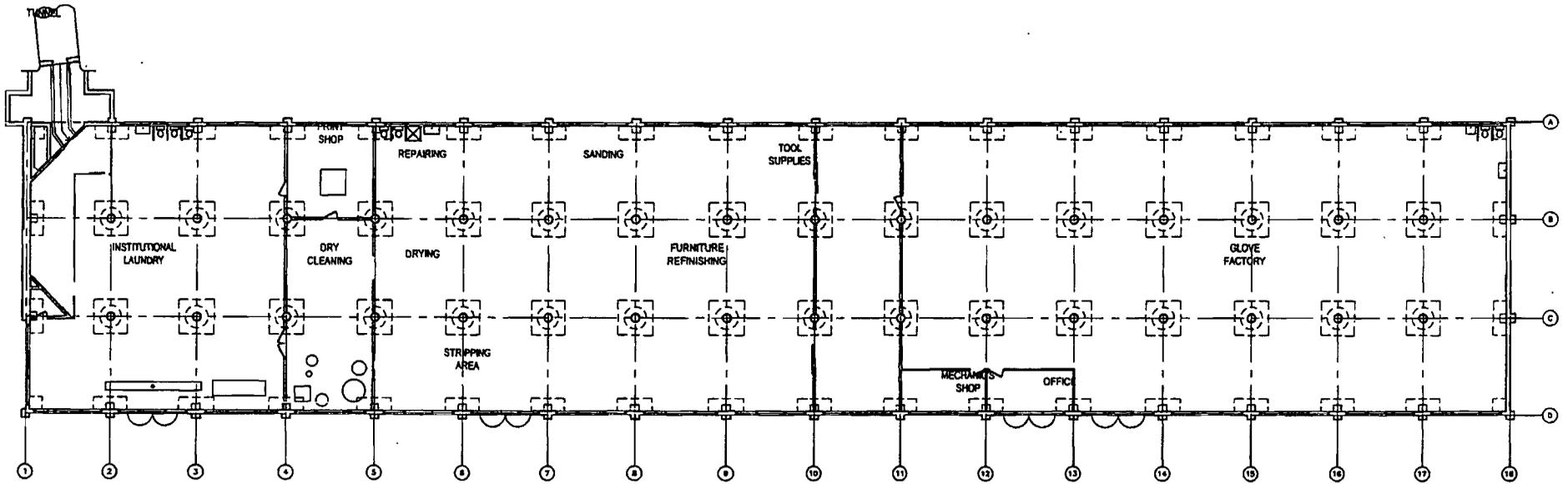
Major Architectural Significance: Item contributes the most to the architectural character of the building. The design, materials, and workmanship of these items are generally of a high quality and in good condition. They are often unique volumes, elements or features, have age value and are usually highly contributing to the historic character of the building.

Minor Architectural Significance: Item contributes to a lesser extent to the architectural character of the building. The design, materials, and workmanship of these items are generally standard and the items are in good to fair condition. They are often undistinguished and common volumes, elements or features, do not have age value and usually contribute to a lesser extent or detract from the historic character of the building.

Elements and Features

[ADD]

Appendix A: Drawings



NEW INDUSTRIES BUILDING - 1st FLOOR PLAN
EXISTING CONDITIONS



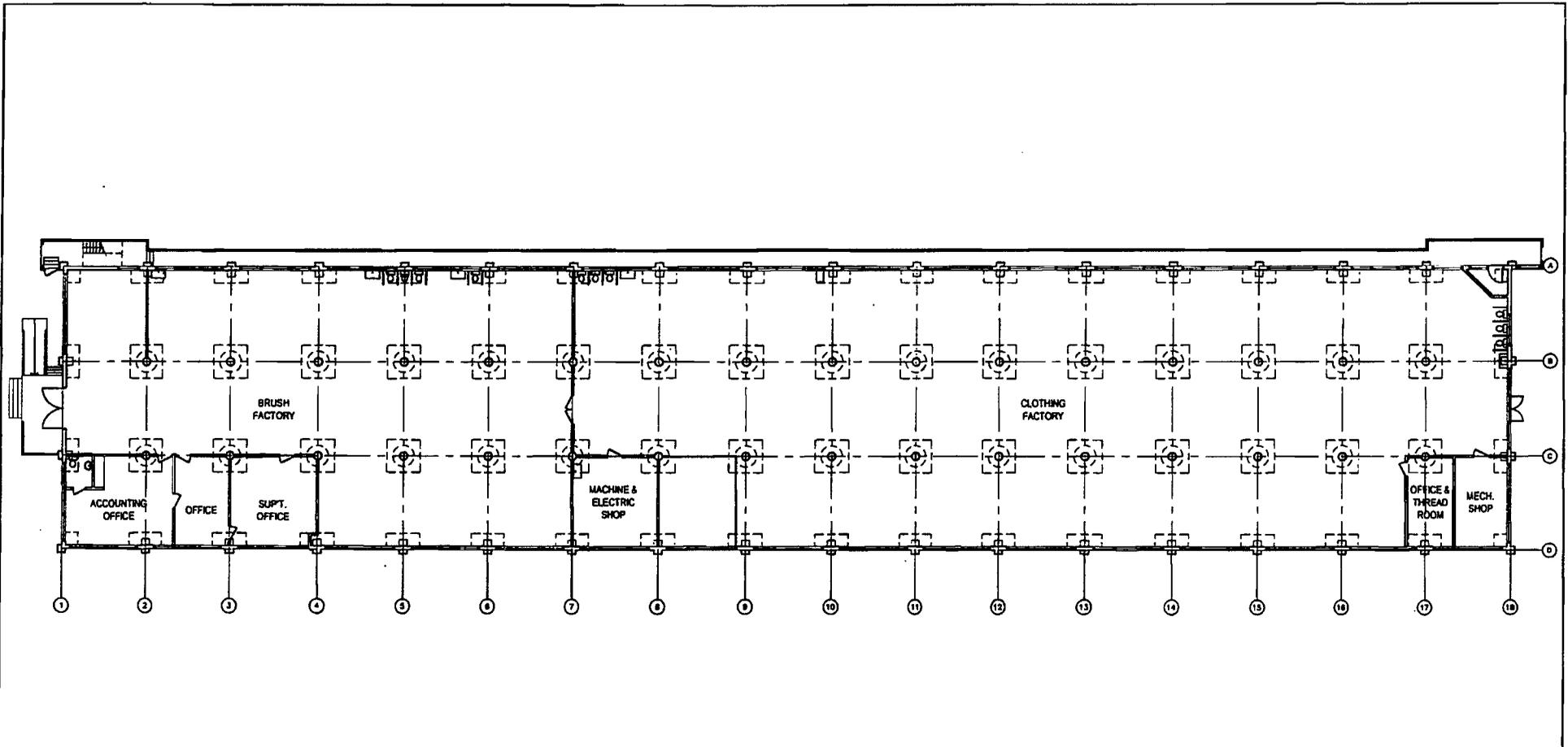
**LERNER
+
ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS**

1108 C BRYANT STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103
PHONE: 415 - 363 - 5475
FAX: 415 - 221 - 7608
EMAIL: LERNERARCH@AOL.COM

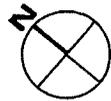
**ALCATRAZ QUARTER MASTER BUILDING
ABBREVIATED HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT**

GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DRAWN BY: TN	SHEET #:
CHECKED BY: AL	01
DATE: 10/26/01	



NEW INDUSTRIES BUILDING - 2nd FLOOR PLAN
EXISTING CONDITIONS



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ARCHITECTS**

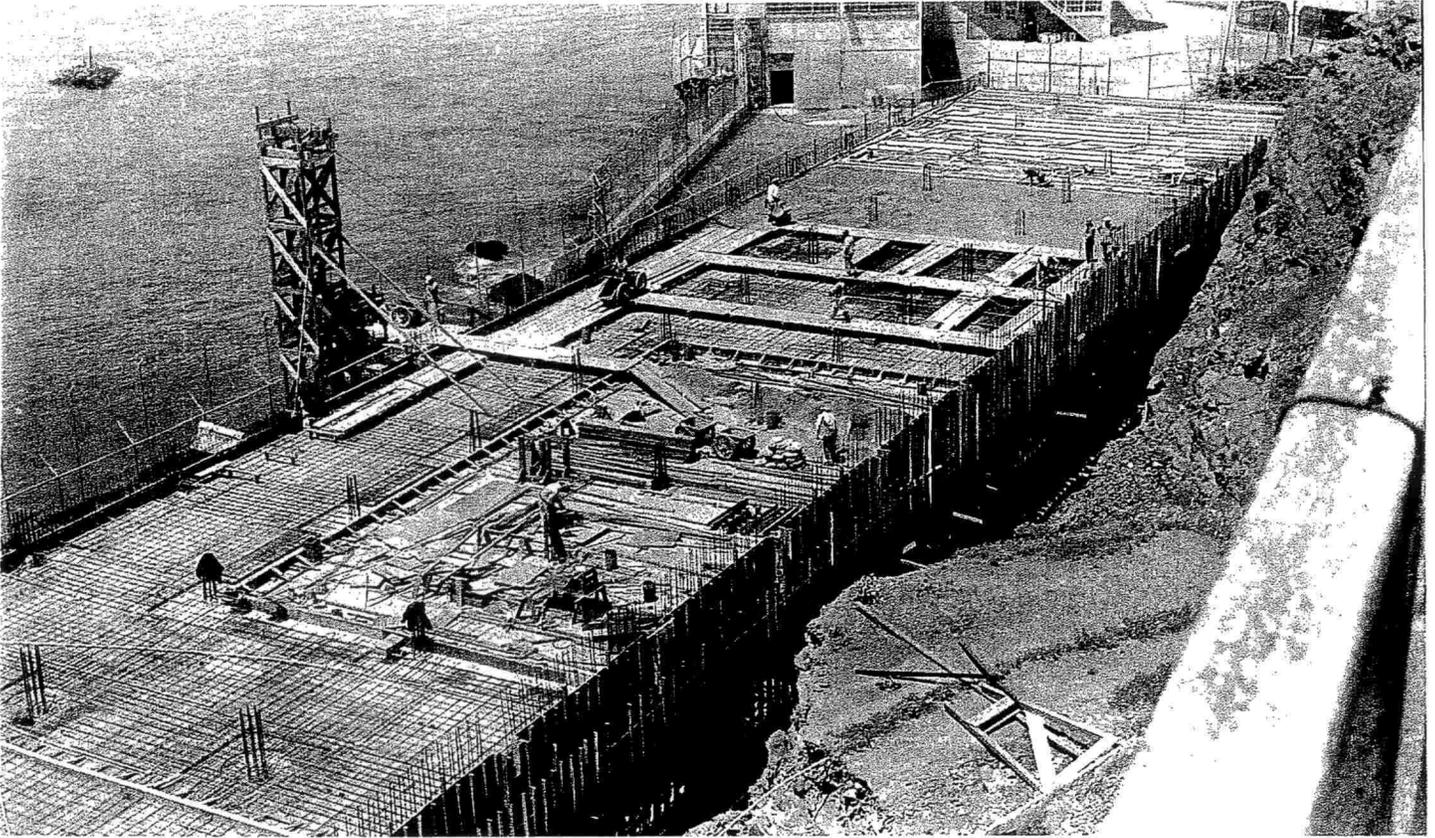
1109 O BRYAN STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102
PHONE: 415 - 393 - 8478
FAX: 415 - 252 - 7940
EMAIL: LERNERARCH@aol.com

**ALCATRAZ QUARTER MASTER BUILDING
ABBREVIATED HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT**

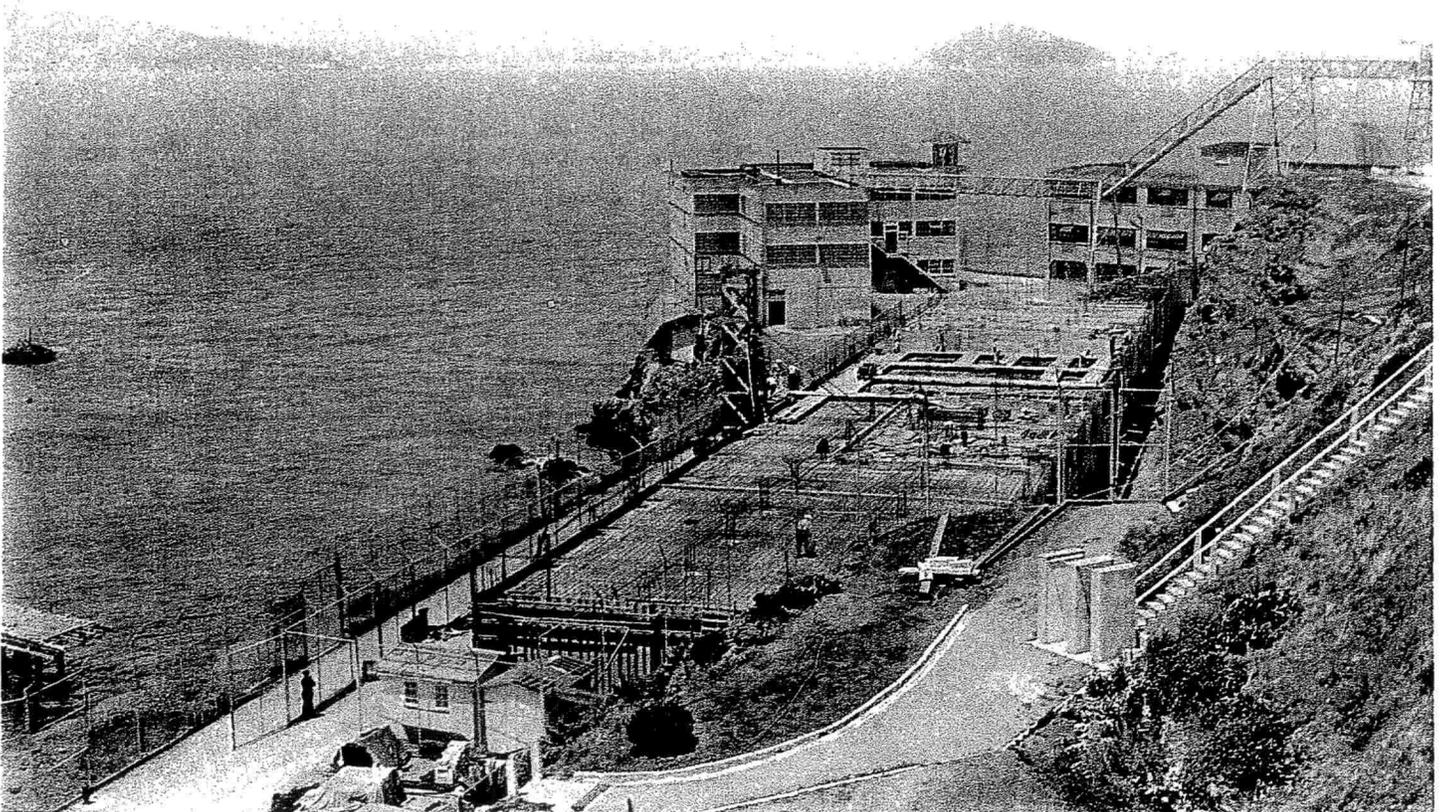
**GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

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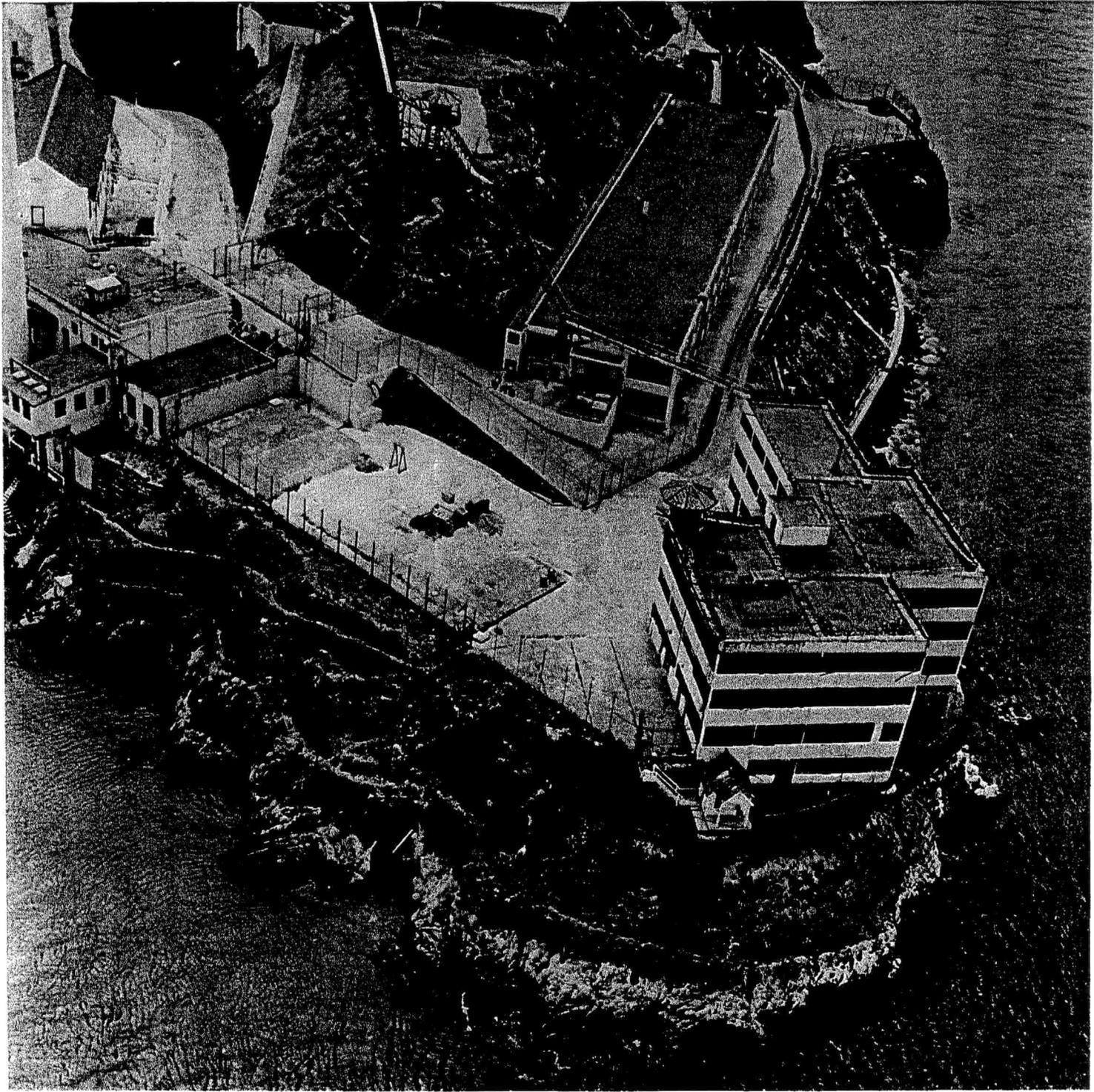
Appendix B: Photos

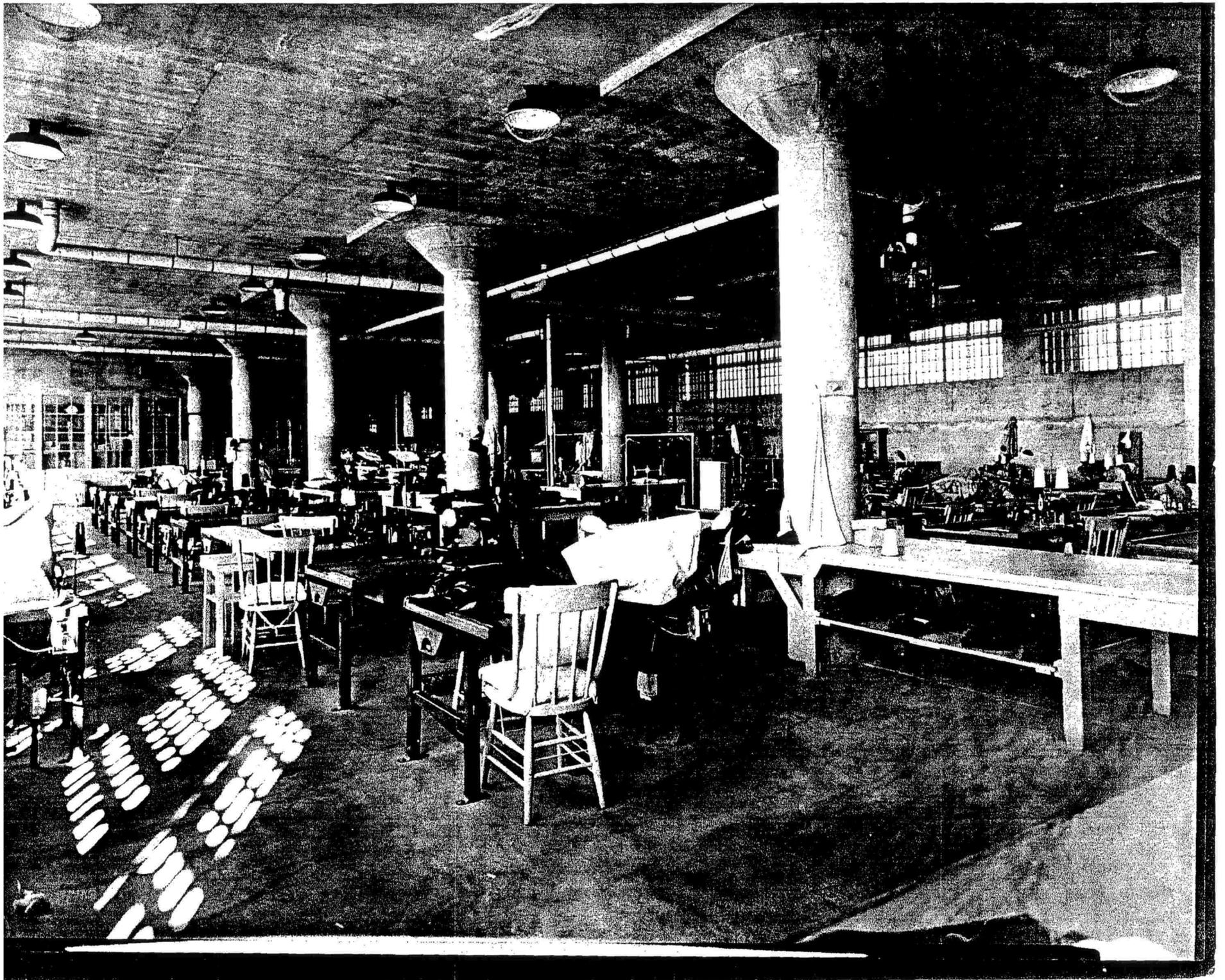


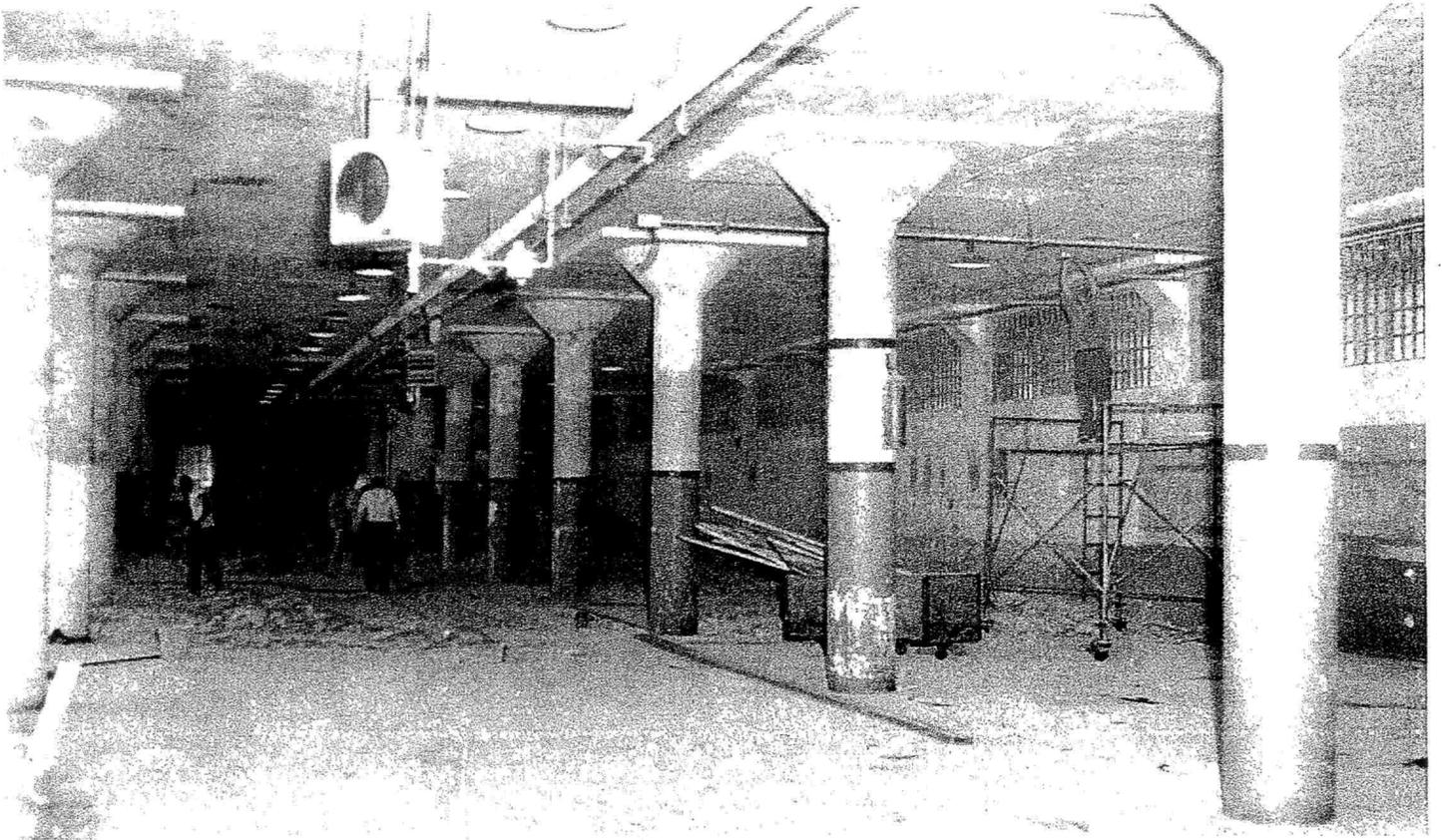
New Industries Building construction, 1940 (ANARA)



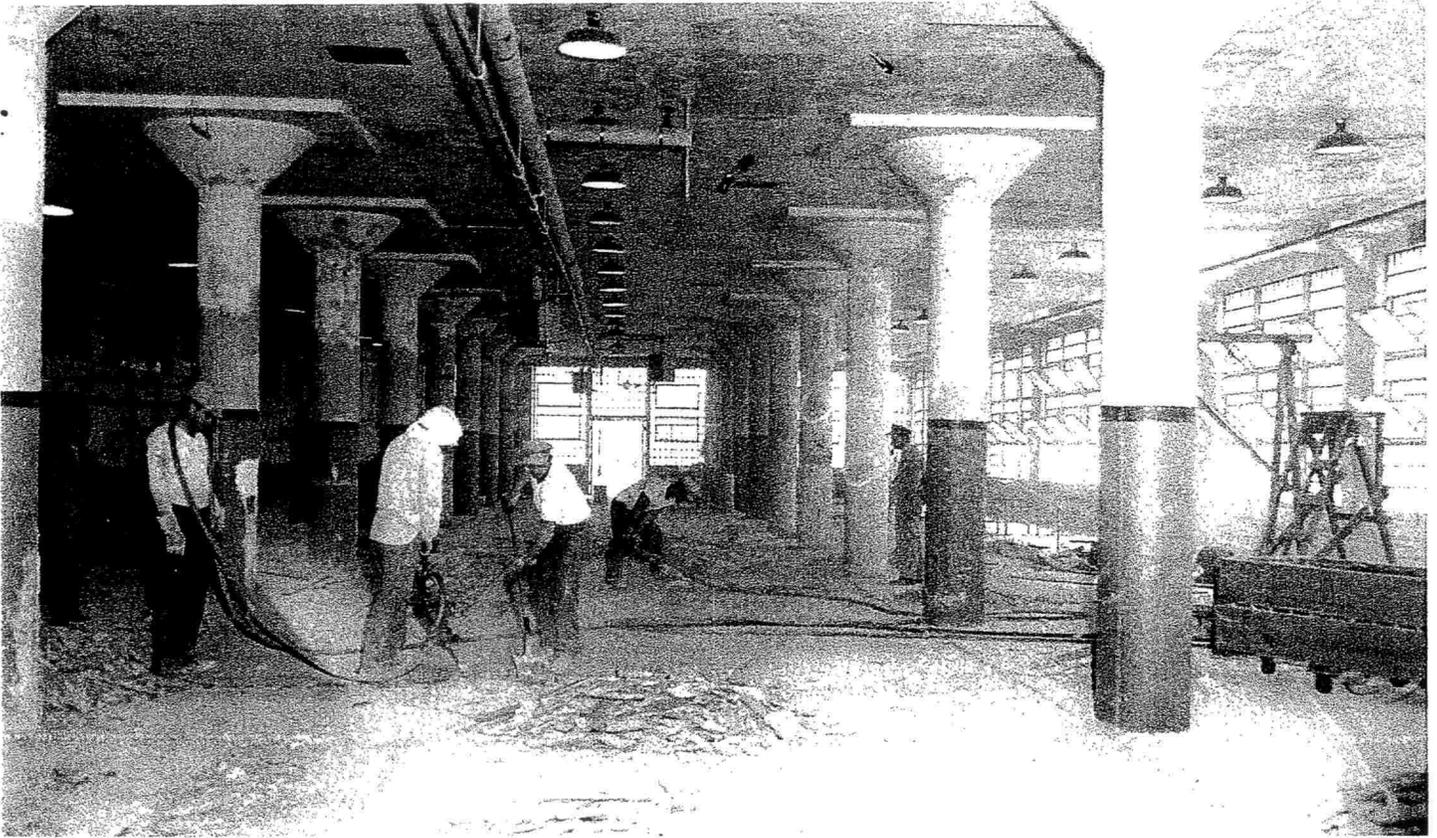
New Industries Building construction, 1940 (NARA)







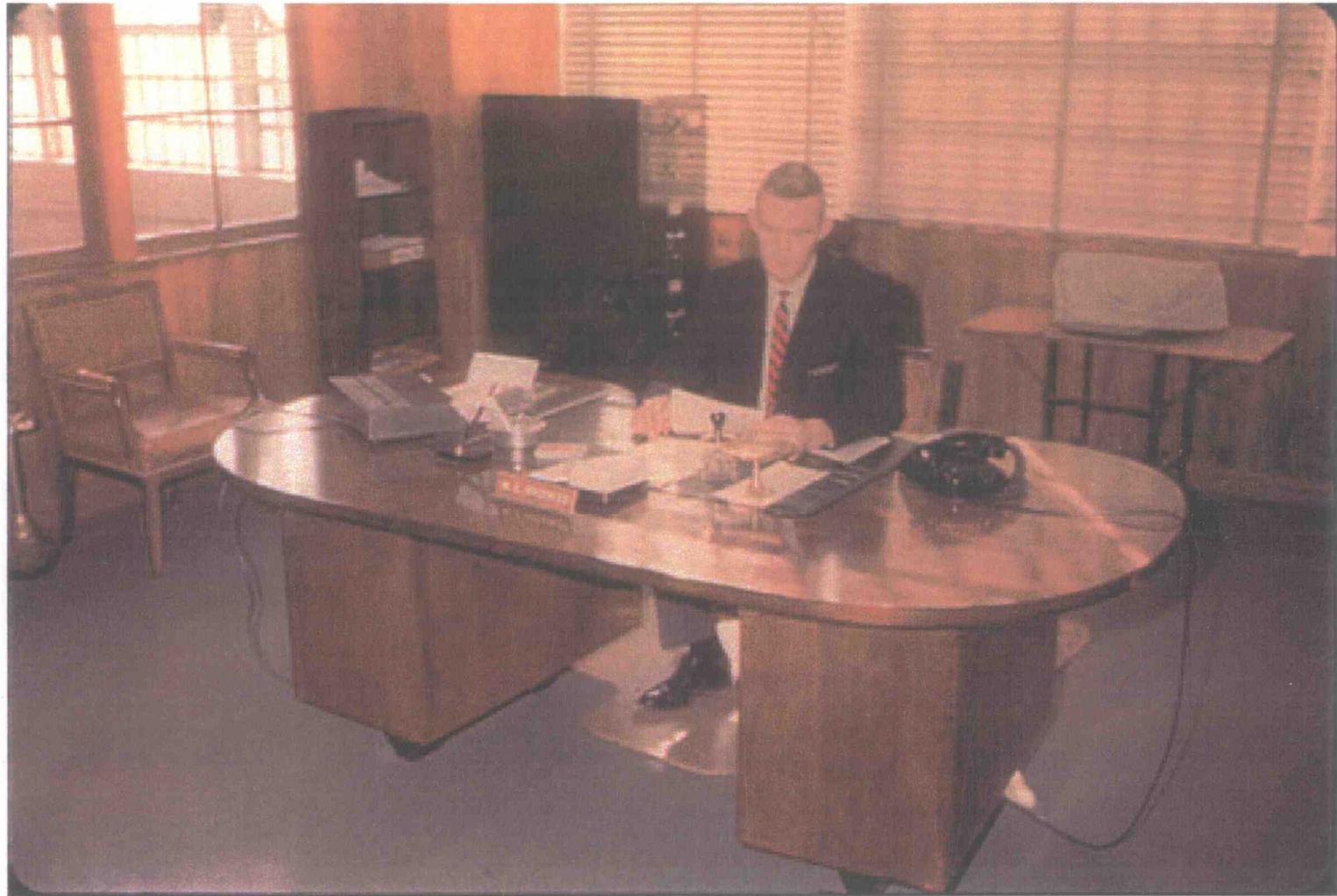
New Industries Building remodeling, 1959 (NPS)



New Industries Building remodeling, top floor, 1959 (NPS)



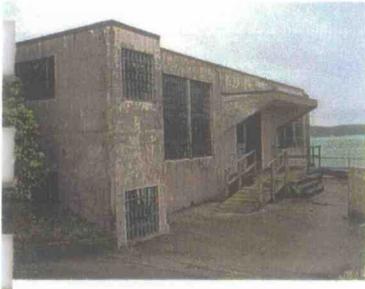
New Industries Building remodeling, top floor, 1959 (NPS)



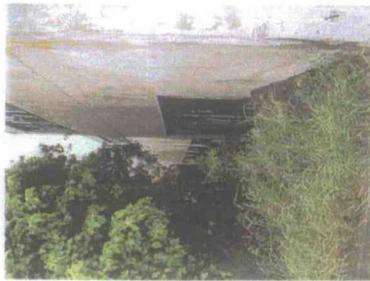
ca. 1962



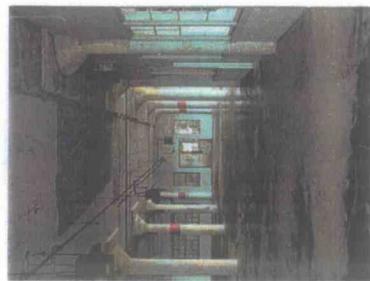
2001



nib-ahsr10



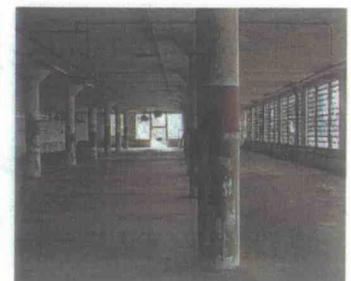
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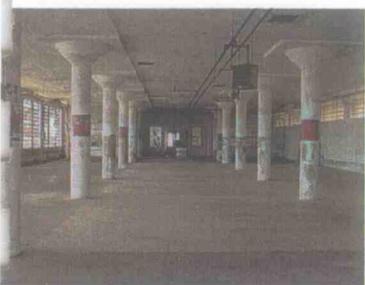
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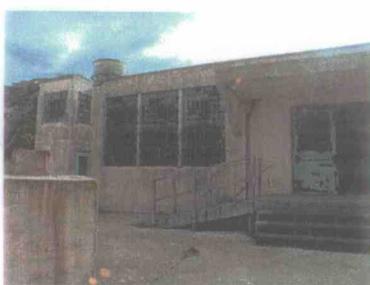
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nib-ahsr14



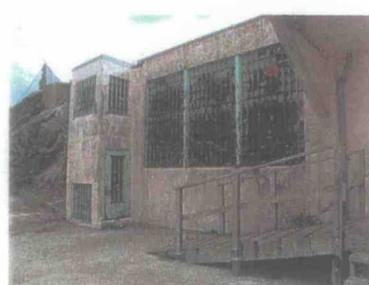
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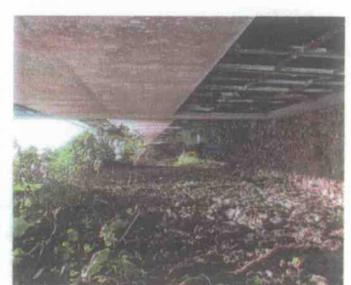
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nib-ahsr19



nib-ahsr20



nib-ahsr21



nib-ahsr22



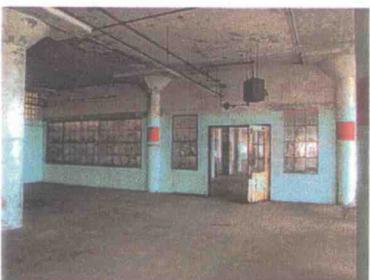
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nib-ahsr26



nib-ahsr27



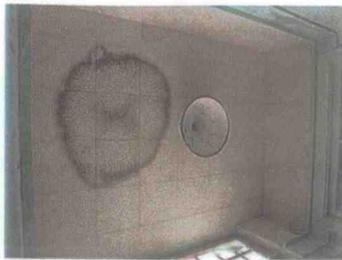
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nib-ahsr30



nib-ahsr31



nib-ahsr32



nib-ahsr33



nib-ahsr34



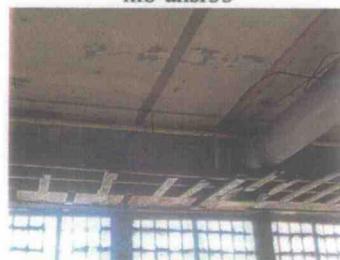
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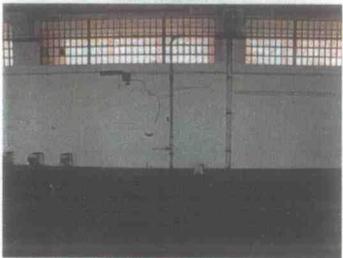
nib-ahsr37



nib-ahsr38



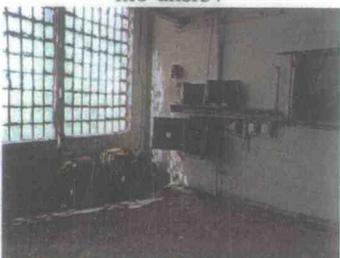
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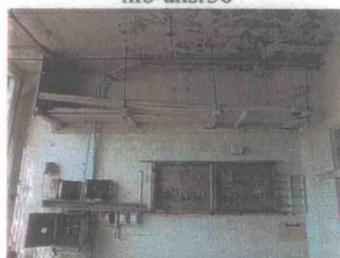
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nib-ahsr41



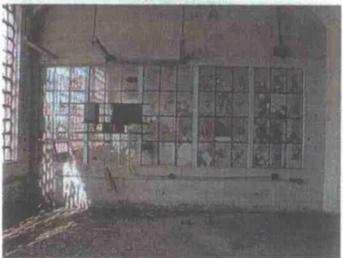
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nib-ahsr43



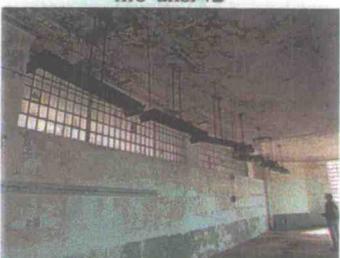
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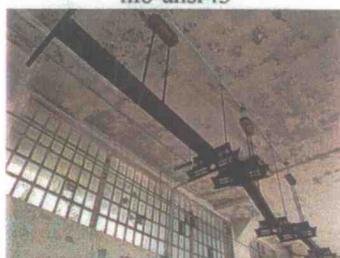
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nib-ahsr46



nib-ahsr47



nib-ahsr48



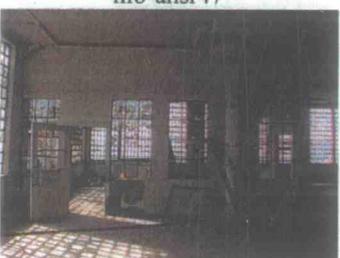
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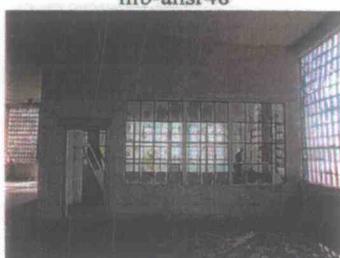
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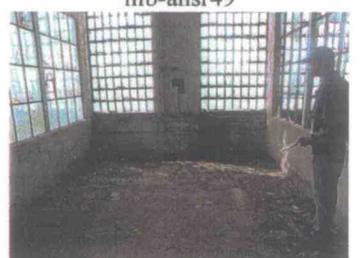
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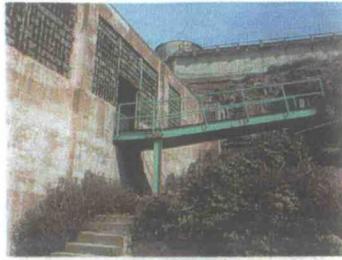
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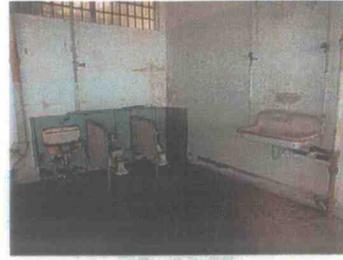
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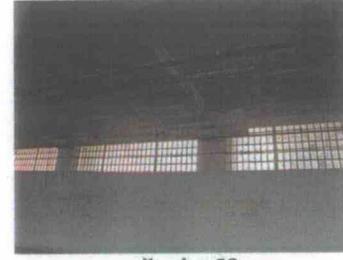
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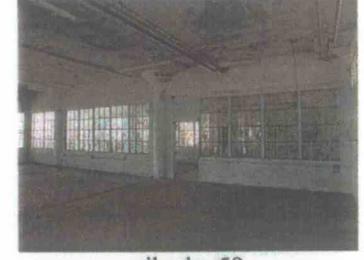
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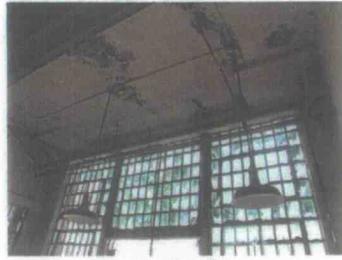
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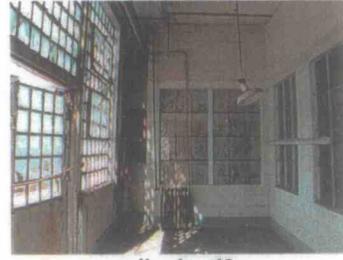
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nib-ahsr60



nib-ahsr61



nib-ahsr62



nib-ahsr63



nib-ahsr64



nib-ahsr65



nib-ahsr66



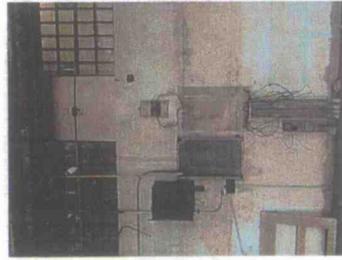
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nib-ahsr68



nib-ahsr69



nib-ahsr70



nib-ahsr71



nib-ahsr72



nib-ahsr73



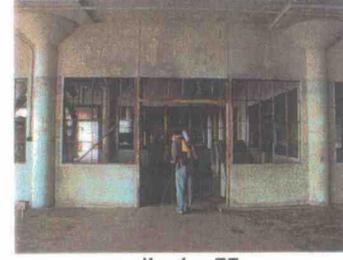
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nib-ahsr75



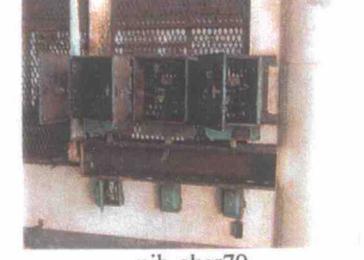
nib-ahsr76



nib-ahsr77



nib-ahsr78



nib-ahsr79

Appendix C: Footnotes and Bibliography

ⁱ Drawing "Proposed Walled Work Area – General Scheme," 17 January 1938. NPS, GOGA, Park Archives & Records Center (PARC), Arthur M. Dollison Collection.

ⁱⁱ Johnston, Warden James A. *Alcatraz Island Prison and the Men Who Live There*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949. Pg 193.

ⁱⁱⁱ Memo, A.H. Conner to J.V. Bennett, "Laundry at Alcatraz," 3 April 1958. Folder: "Monthly Reports, Narrative, 1956-1964," Box 16, Alcatraz Administration Files, RG 129, San Bruno Federal Archives and Records Center (FARC), National Archives & Records Administration (NARA)

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