

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Wentworth Military Academy

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Washington Avenue and Eighteenth  
Boundaries as shown on the site plan map (See Item #10) — not for publication

city, town Lexington — vicinity of congressional district #4 - Hon. Ike Skelton

state Missouri code 29 county Lafayette code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Board of Trustees, Wentworth Military Academy

street & number Washington Avenue and Eighteenth

city, town Lexington — vicinity of state Missouri 64067

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds, Lafayette County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Lexington state Missouri 64067

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1. Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1963  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Published: Columbia

city, town Columbia state Missouri 65201

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Wentworth Military Academy lies one block north of Main Street in Lexington, Missouri. The buildings on campus lie between a playing field bounded by 17th Street on the west, a small service road that bends east as an extension, 21st Street on the east, a parade ground on the north, and fronts directly onto Washington Avenue on the south. Adjacent areas are all residential.

Wentworth Military Academy consists of eleven structures, seven of which are architecturally and historically significant. These buildings all front on Washington, running east-west in a fairly straight line. The buildings within the district were erected from approximately 1830 to 1920, and almost all have been altered to reflect a unified design.

All of the buildings are in red brick, and all those built before 1914 have been sandblasted and tuckpointed. Identical entryways were added to Hickman Hall, Marine Barracks, and Junior Barracks in 1958. Decorative brick corbelling at the cornice level and projecting towers have been added to three of the buildings; and the tower and corbelling elements were repeated in the original design for the Student Union. Two of the buildings were once early post-Civil War residences, one in the Italianate and one in the Greek Revival style; only the Greek Revival structure survives relatively intact. All of the buildings have been remodelled on the interior and have had several exterior additions appended through the years. Buildings within Wentworth Military Academy Historic District are listed as follows (Numbers refer to location on the site plan map):

1. Hickman Hall, 1907, R.B. Berry, Contractor. This three-story building has stone lintels and sills. A long frame porch on the east facade with individual entries was removed and replaced by a central entrance and hall in 1924.

3. "D" Company, 1884. Presently in a ruinous state due to a fire in 1975. "D" Company was originally a two-story brick building with a hip roof and bracketed eaves. In 1888 a third floor with a mansard roof was added and in 1894 the three floors of the building were extended to the north. In 1938 decorative brick corbelling and a tower replaced the mansard roof. A library building was constructed in 1890 adjacent to "D" Company on the west, and was completely destroyed by the 1975 fire.

4. The Administration Building. This complex started originally from one building. The original building was an 1865 Italianate residence with a gabled roof, bracketing, a double central chimney, and tall round-arched shuttered windows with projecting decorative brick lintels. The architect is not known but this style is common and is still evident throughout Lexington. The house was a "T" shape with the central rectangular portion running north-south and a two-story wing on the west. In 1895 this wing was extended to connect with "D" Company and the Italianate window features and porch style, excepting the columns, were reproduced. In 1905 a projecting central tower with corner posts was added to the existent roofline, plus a matching bay to the east. In 1938 the porch was replaced by the present colossal portico in the doric order.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates  Multiple  Builder/Architect  Multiple

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Wentworth Military Academy is an example of an early military educational establishment in Missouri. It is purported to be the first academy along the Missouri River Valley to establish the military program. As such, it played an important role in the education and training of much of Missouri's future military power.

Stephen Girard Wentworth, a wealthy real estate speculator, banker and respected Lexington leader, founded Wentworth Male Academy in 1880 in memory of his son William who had died a year earlier. During its first year of operation, Benjamin Hobson and Sandford Sellers were associate principals. Hobson had successfully run the Hobson School for Boys the previous year and was employed by Mr. Wentworth to manage the new school. Hobson invited Sellers, a college friend, to join him in the undertaking. Sellers accepted the opportunity, arriving in Lexington in June, 1880. Hobson stayed with Wentworth Male Academy but one year, leaving after the 1880-81 session to follow in his father's footsteps by studying for the ministry. Sellers remained for 58 years as principal, superintendent, and finally president until his death in 1938. His second son, Sandford, Jr., was superintendent from 1923 to 1933 and his youngest son, Col. J.M. Sellers, was superintendent from 1933 to 1960, when he assumed his current position as president. A grandson, Col. J.M. Sellers, Jr., has been superintendent from 1973 to the present.

It was during the 1881-82 school term that the idea to conduct military classes was born. A student began marching other students armed with broomsticks around the schoolyard and Sellers was watching; he got the idea for military classes and offered to buy guns if the students would buy uniforms. The uniforms were ordered and the school purchased forty Austrian cadet muskets. On January 20, 1890 the name was changed to Wentworth Military Academy.

It was not until 1883 that the school began its existence at the present location. Wentworth donated a house and nine acres of land known as the Mitchell property; the house today is part of the Administration Building. By the time Wentworth died in 1896 the Academy had expanded to include 12 buildings on a 12-acre campus and a student body of 114 students that represented 19 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories and Mexico.

The start of World War I produced increased enrollments at Wentworth. A great many students went to officer training. Soon after the end of the War in 1923 Major Sellers announced that junior college would be added to Wentworth at the beginning of the 1923-24 school term. At that time the closest junior colleges for men only were in New Mexico and Texas.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

The Story of Wentworth, (Kansas City, Missouri: Spencer Printing Company, 1950). R.W. Settle.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 15.2 acres

Quadrangle name "Lexington, Mo. - East"

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A	<u>115</u>	<u>4214</u>	<u>91010</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>317</u>	<u>71410</u>	B	<u>115</u>	<u>4214</u>	<u>91010</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>317</u>	<u>71410</u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing				Zone	Easting		Northing		
C	<u>115</u>	<u>4214</u>	<u>41810</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>317</u>	<u>61115</u>	D	<u>115</u>	<u>4214</u>	<u>41810</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>317</u>	<u>71610</u>
E	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	F	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
G	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	H	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Wentworth Military Academy Historic District is bounded by an imaginary line not corresponding to any surveyed boundary but intended to separate the historically significant buildings and spaces from the rest of the campus grounds. Beginning at the southeast corner of Hickman Hall

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>J. Mary J. Matthews</u>	date	<u>January 1, 1980</u>
organization	<u>Historic Lexington Foundation</u>	telephone	<u>816/259-2957</u>
street & number	<u>1805 Main</u>	state	<u>Missouri 64067</u>
city or town	<u>Lexington</u>		

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Director, Department of Natural Resources and  
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date

For HCERS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	date
Keeper of the National Register	date
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 6

Page 1

2. Missouri: A Guide to the Show-Me State (WPA Project)

1941

Published: New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc.

state

3. Missouri State Historic Survey

1979

Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Program

P.O. Box 176

Jefferson City

state

Missouri 65102

Item number 9

Page 1

Burgdorfer, Bob. "History of Wentworth", [Lexington] Daily News, December 6, 1979, p. 1, December 7, 1979, p. 1.

Sellers, Mrs. Sandford. "My Life in Lexington," personal memoirs, n.p., 1940.

Sellers, Colonel James M., Jr. Personal Documents, n.p., n.d.

Settle, R.W. The Story of Wentworth. Kansas City: Spencer Printing Company, 1950.

Wilson, Judge S.N. "Some History Along Washington Avenue," Unpublished essay, February, 1, 1930.

Item number 10

Page 1

and extending north in an imaginary line to a point corresponding to the northwest corner of the field house; thence east to the northeast corner of the fieldhouse; thence east on a sidewalk that extends behind the kitchen addition of Sandford Sellers Hall; thence east to a point connecting with an asphalt service road directly north of the Memorial Chapel; and extending in a southeasterly direction along the south side of this road around the northeast corner of the Sellers-Wikoff Scholastic Building; continuing in a southeasterly direction around the north facade of the Superintendent's Residence; continuing southeasterly to a point at the northeast corner of the Junior Barracks; thence south to the southeast corner; thence in a southwesterly direction on the north side of the service road to connect with Washington Avenue at 21st Street; thence west along the north side of Washington to the starting point.

Item number 11

Page 1

2. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey

and State Contact Person

Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Program

P.O. Box 176

Jefferson City

April 7, 1980

314/751-4096

Missouri 65102

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

5. The Student Union, east half, 1920, architect Ira Kellar; west half, 1914. Originally built as a gymnasium, this two-story brick building has a projecting central tower with inset stone round-arched lintels over a half-round window over the main entry on the south facade and is repeated on the west facade. The decorative brick corbelling rising to extended parapet blocks on the four corners produce a tower-like effect. Two large additions on the north, a swimming pool and a field house, were both added in 1966. The interior of the Student Union was redesigned in 1968 by Kivett and Myer of Kansas City.

7. Marine Barracks, 1918. This two-story structure was originally of frame construction and was bricked over in 1928.

10. Superintendent's Residence. The original house, now the ell portion, was constructed around 1838. The present south or primary facade was said to have been constructed in 1848. The house is in a Greek Revival style common in Lexington with a gabled roof, two end chimneys, a bracketted cornice, stone lintels and sills, and a typical doorway with a five-light transom and six-light flanking sidelights. A victorian art glass window treatment has replaced the original second floor entry, and the original porch was rebuilt in 1974. The outbuildings have been razed and the brick has been sandblasted.

11. Junior Barracks, 1920. This three-story brick building is in the same style as the Marine Barracks.

Nonconforming Intrusions:

- 2. Service Building, constructed in 1948.
- 6. Sandford Sellers Hall, three-story brick built in 1959. A one-story dining and kitchen area has been added to the north.
- 8. Memorial Chapel, 1955.
- 9. Scholastic Building, 1941.

Condition

Wentworth Military Academy is in good condition.

Present Status

Future plans call for "D" Company Building to be reconstructed. Several new buildings are proposed for an unknown future date that would be within the boundaries of the district and attached to present structures. There is no threat from the surrounding residential areas.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

During the Depression the school fell into hard financial straits but through the help of the creditors in Lexington and elsewhere and through the efforts of the Board of Trustees, Wentworth survived. World War II brought another decline with many students of the junior college age drafted in 1941. Three months after War was declared, 268 alumni were in some branch of the military service. Enrollment soon began flowing in for students anxious for military training and the Academy had to turn down 100 applicants during the fall of 1942. During the War, Wentworth graduates who served included 6 generals, 2 colonels, 35 lieutenant colonels, 78 majors, 125 captains, 358 lieutenants, 1 commander, 1 lieutenant commander 48 ensigns, and three flight officers.

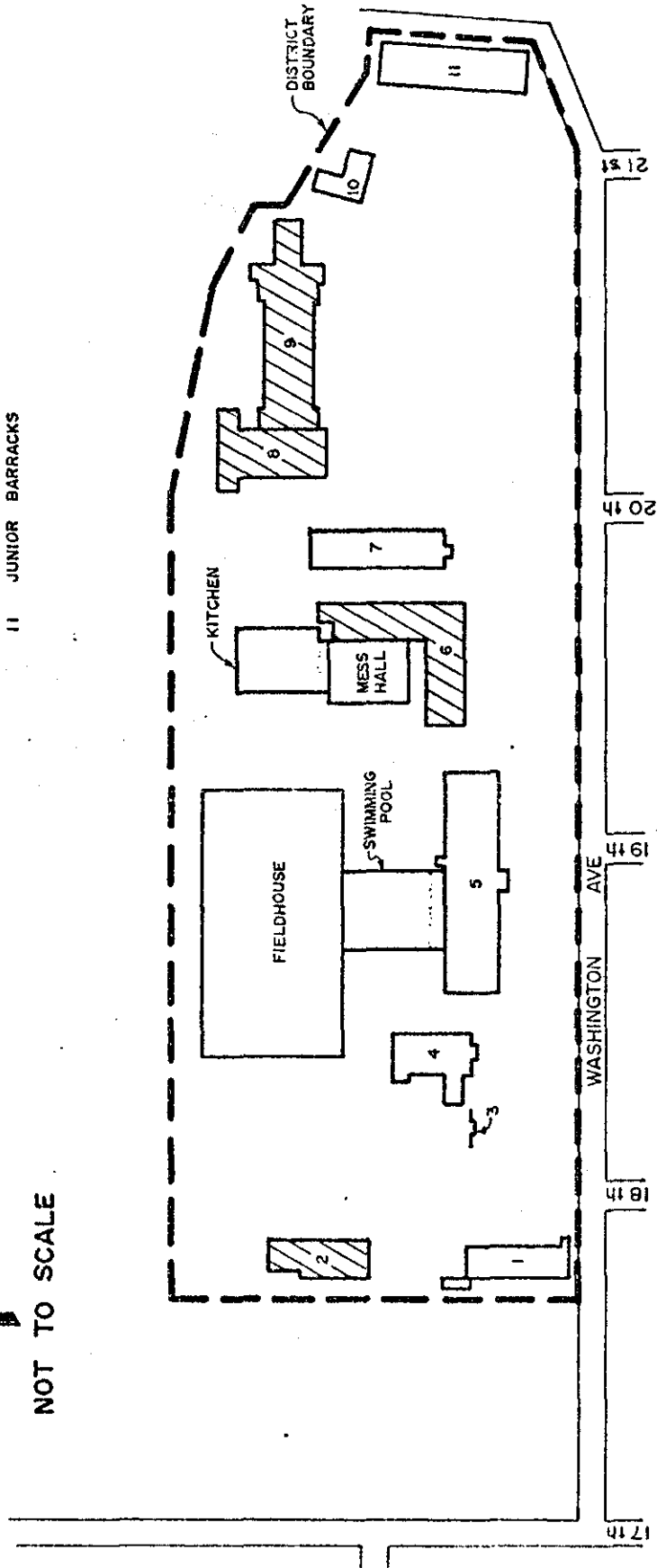
The Academy continued to prosper during the 1950's and into the 1960's. During these two decades were built the Memorial Chapel, a college barracks with an all-school dining room, a library addition, the field house and swimming pool, and the student union interior design. The enrollment peaked during this period at about 550 students. Today the campus covers 137 acres and includes four dormitories, a student union, field house, health center, and chapel. The west section of the Administration Building was destroyed by fire in 1975. The fire was believed to have been caused by faulty wiring.

SITE PLAN MAP  
 WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY  
 LEXINGTON, MISSOURI

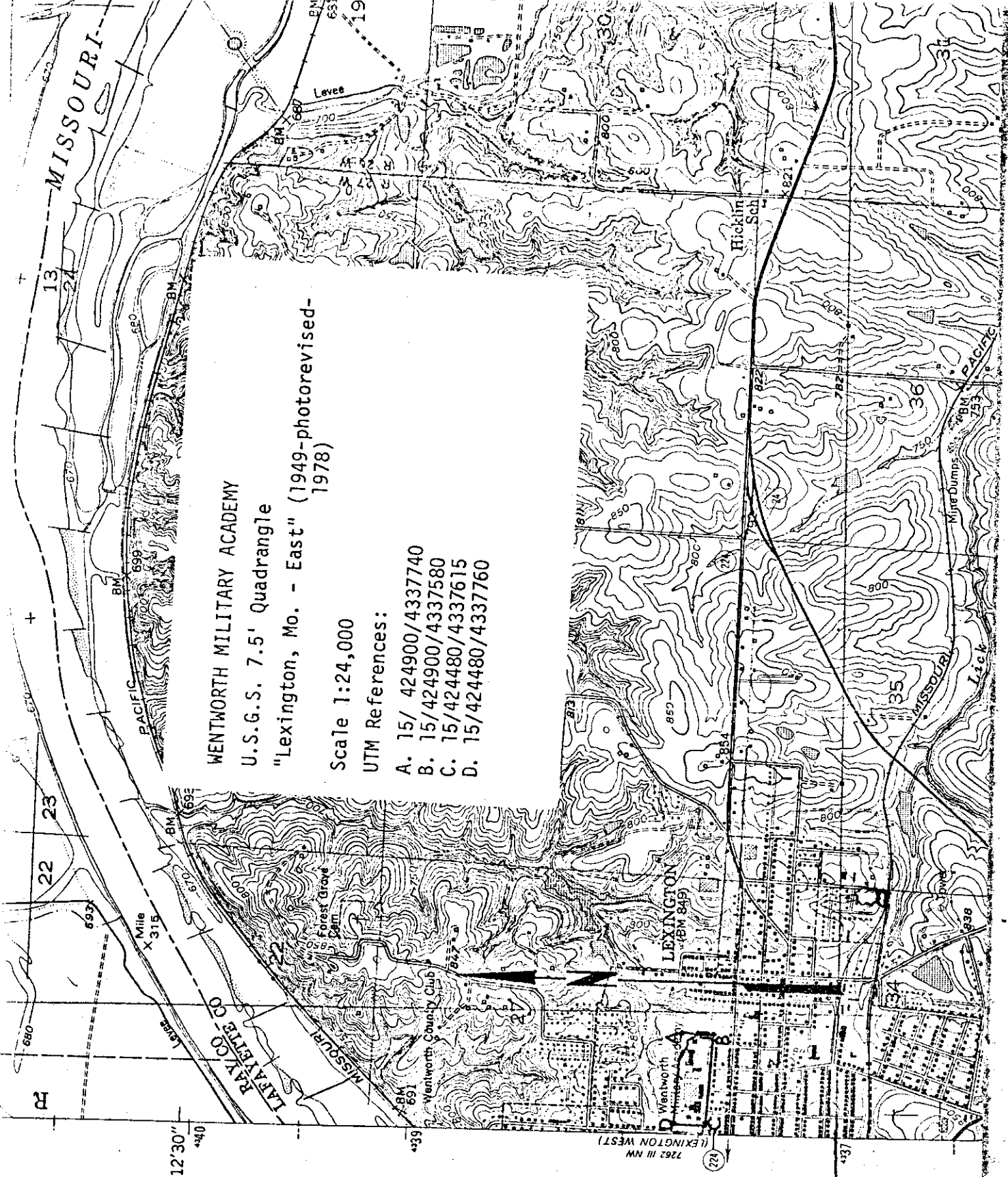
LEGEND

- 1 HICKMAN HALL
- 2 SERVICE (INTRUSION)
- 3 "D" COMPANY
- 4 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
- 5 STUDENT UNION
- 6 SANDFORD SELLERS HALL (INTRUSION)
- 7 MARINE BARRACKS
- 8 MEMORIAL CHAPEL (INTRUSION)
- 9 SCHOLASTIC BUILDING (INTRUSION)
- 10 SUPERINTENDENT'S RESIDENCE
- 11 JUNIOR BARRACKS

NOT TO SCALE







**WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY**  
 U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle  
 "Lexington, Mo. - East" (1949-photorevised-1978)

Scale 1:24,000

UTM References:

- A. 15/ 424900/4337740
- B. 15/424900/4337580
- C. 15/424480/4337615
- D. 15/424480/4337760

KANSAS CITY (UNCL. U.S. 7.1) 40 MI.  
 WELLINGTON 7.5 MI.

12'30"

7262 III NW  
(LEXINGTON WEST)

Wentworth  
Military Academy

Wentworth County Club

Forest Grove  
Cem.

Mile  
X 315

LATAHETE CO  
MISSOURI

MISSOURI

Hickin  
Sch

Mine Dumps

Leek

MISSOURI

PACIFIC

BN  
631

Levee

100

680

BM

690

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690

WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY

#473

COUNTY:

Lafayette

LOCATION:

Washington Avenue & Eighteenth, Lexington, Mo.

OWNER:

Board of Trustees, Wentworth Military Academy

ADDRESS:

Washington Avenue & Eighteenth, Lexington, MO  
64067

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.:

April 25, 1980

DATE SENT TO D.C.:

September 11, 1980

DATE OF REC. IN D.C.:

September 17, 1980

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER:

November 24, 1980

DATE CERTIFICATE AWARDED  
(AND PRESENTER):

*requested 1-5-81*

DATE FILE REVIEWED:

Wentworth Military Academy is an example of an early military educational establishment in Missouri. It is purported to be the first academy along the Missouri River Valley to establish the military program. As such, it played an important role in the education and training of much of Missouri's future military power.

WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY 1 of 14

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Gary J. Matthews

Date: October, 1979

File Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

Hickman Hall view looking Northwest.



LEWIS AND CLARK COLLEGE 2 of 14

LEWIS AND CLARK COLLEGE

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Gary J. Matthews

Date: October, 1979

Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

Hickman Hall view Looking East.



NORTH MILITARY ACADEMY 3 of 14

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Mary J. Matthews

Date: October, 1979

Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

"D" Company Building, south primary facade,  
and only remaining wall fully extent.





WE

WEITWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY 4 of 14

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Mary J. Matthews

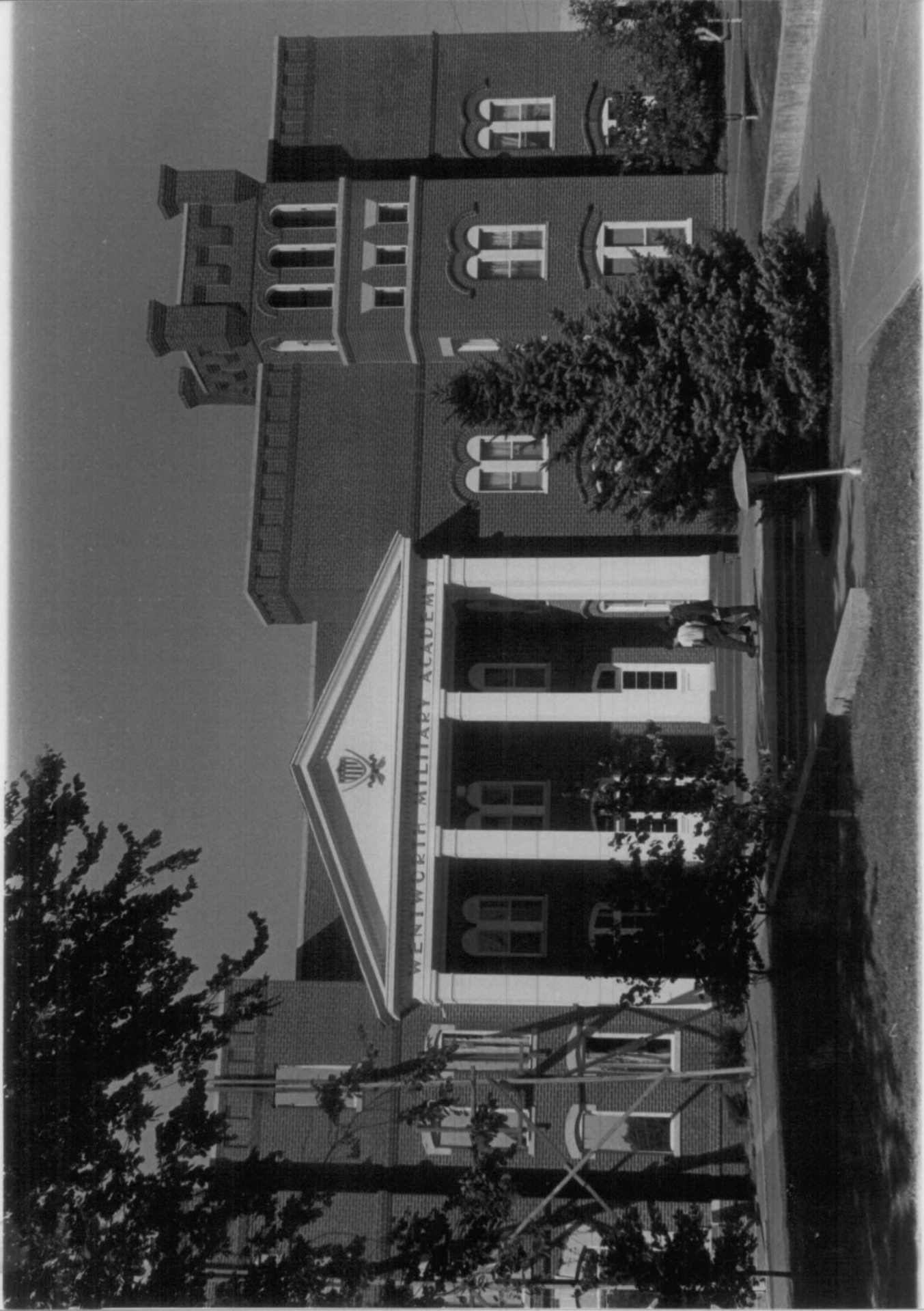
Date: October, 1979

Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

Administration Building, south primary  
facade with "D" Company adjacent to the west.



WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY 5 of 14

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Mary J. Matthews

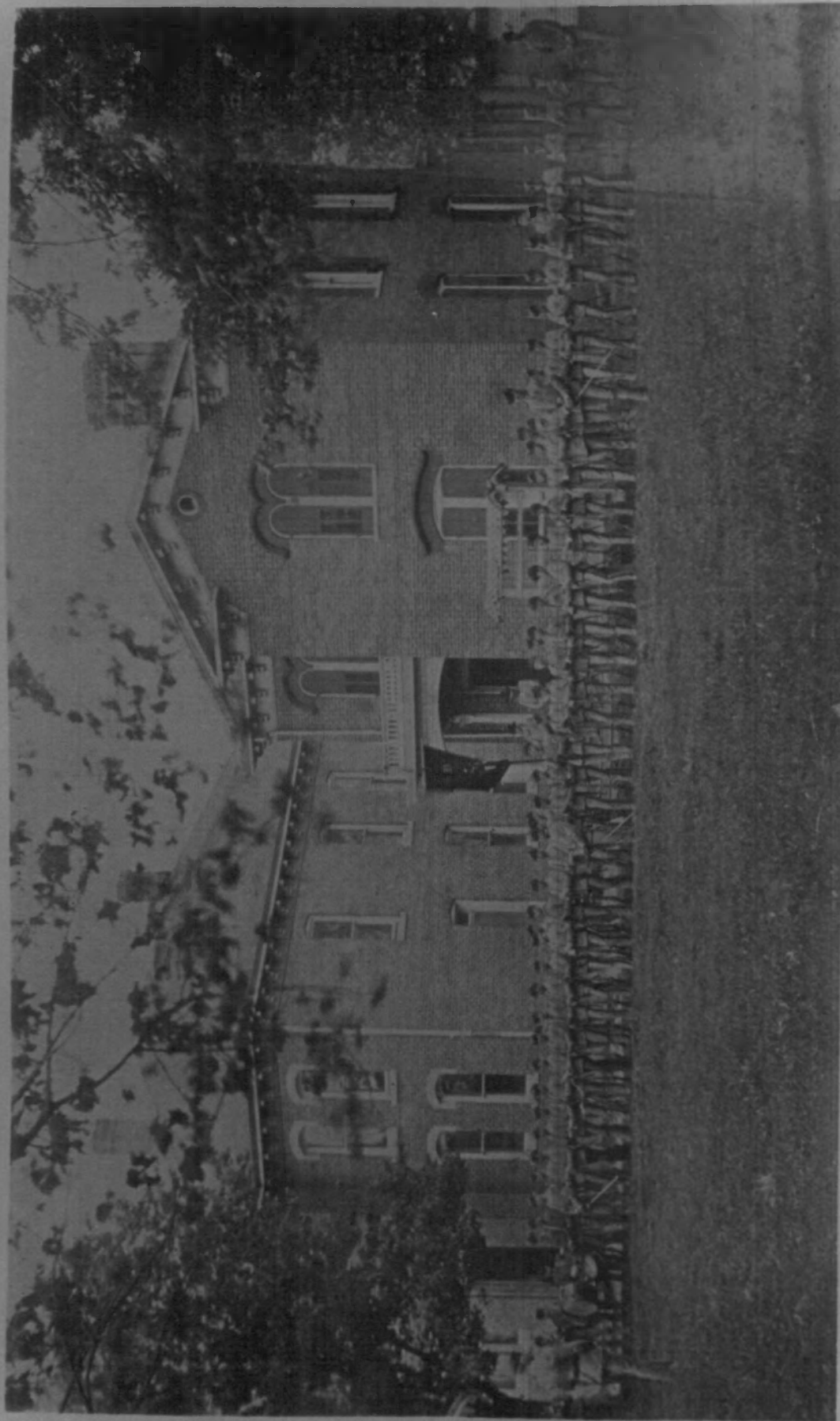
Date: October, 1979

Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

Administration Building, showing "D"  
Company to the left, c. 1865. From E.A.  
Settle, The Story of Wentworth, 1950.



FROM ABOUT 1885-1888 THE CORPS AND MAIN BUILDING APPEARED AS ABOVE. IN 1888 A MANSARD ROOF WAS ADDED TO THE BUILDING AT THE LEFT

WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY 6 of 14

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Gary J. Matthews

Date: October, 1979

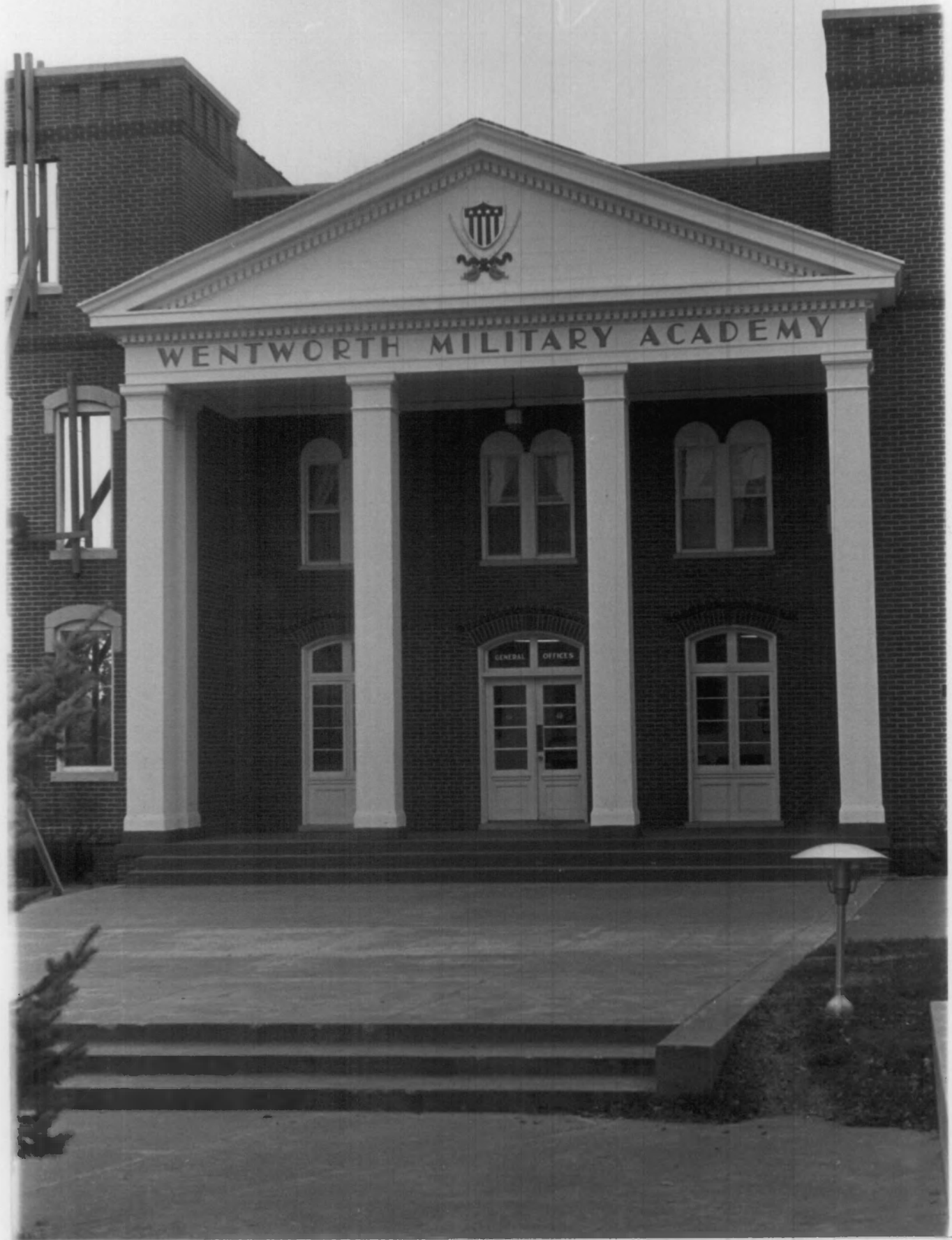
Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

Central bay, Administration Building, facing south.

3



WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY 7 of 14

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Mary J. Matthews

Date: October, 1979

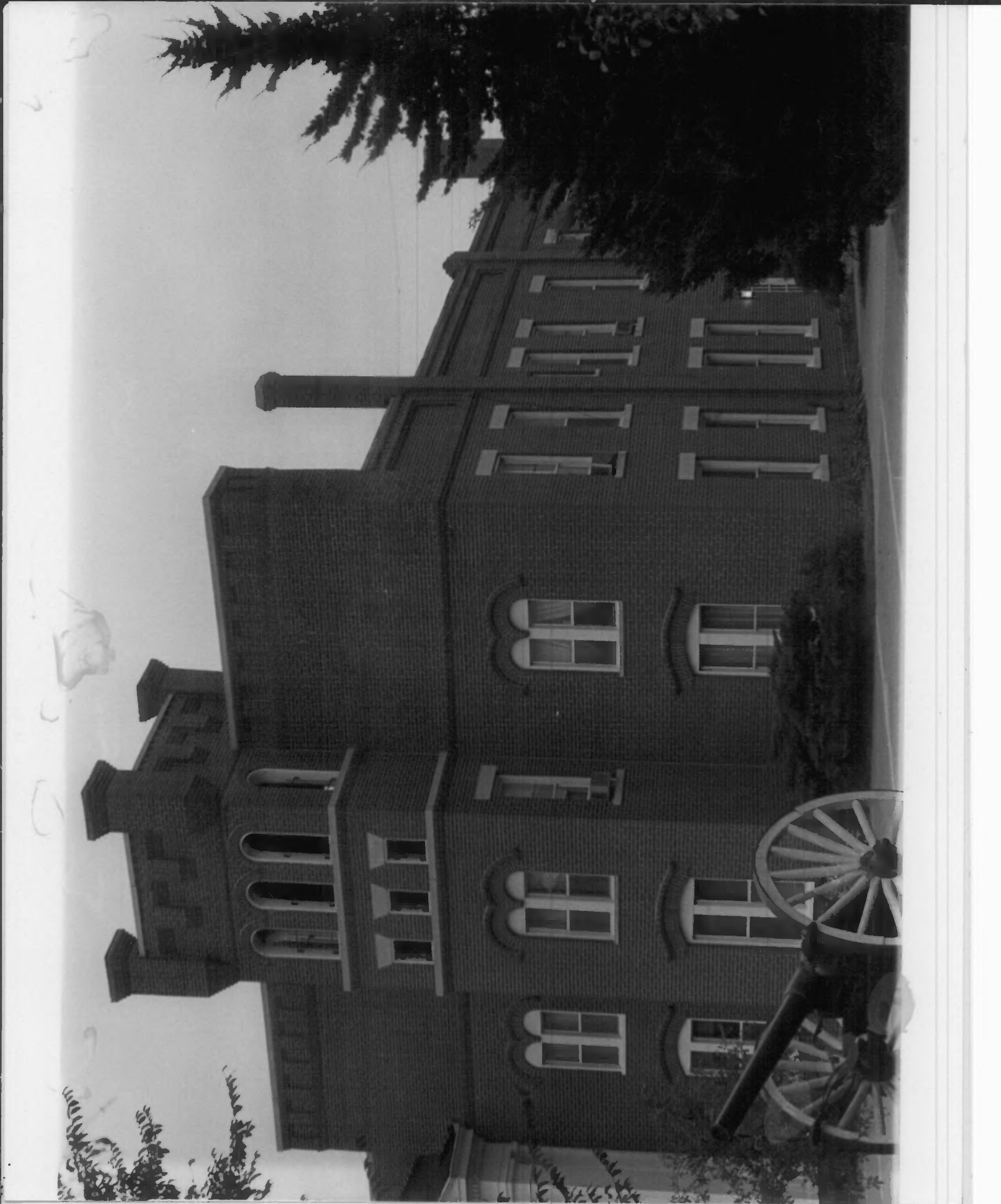
Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

West bay, Administration Building, facing south.





WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY 8 of 14

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Mary J. Matthews

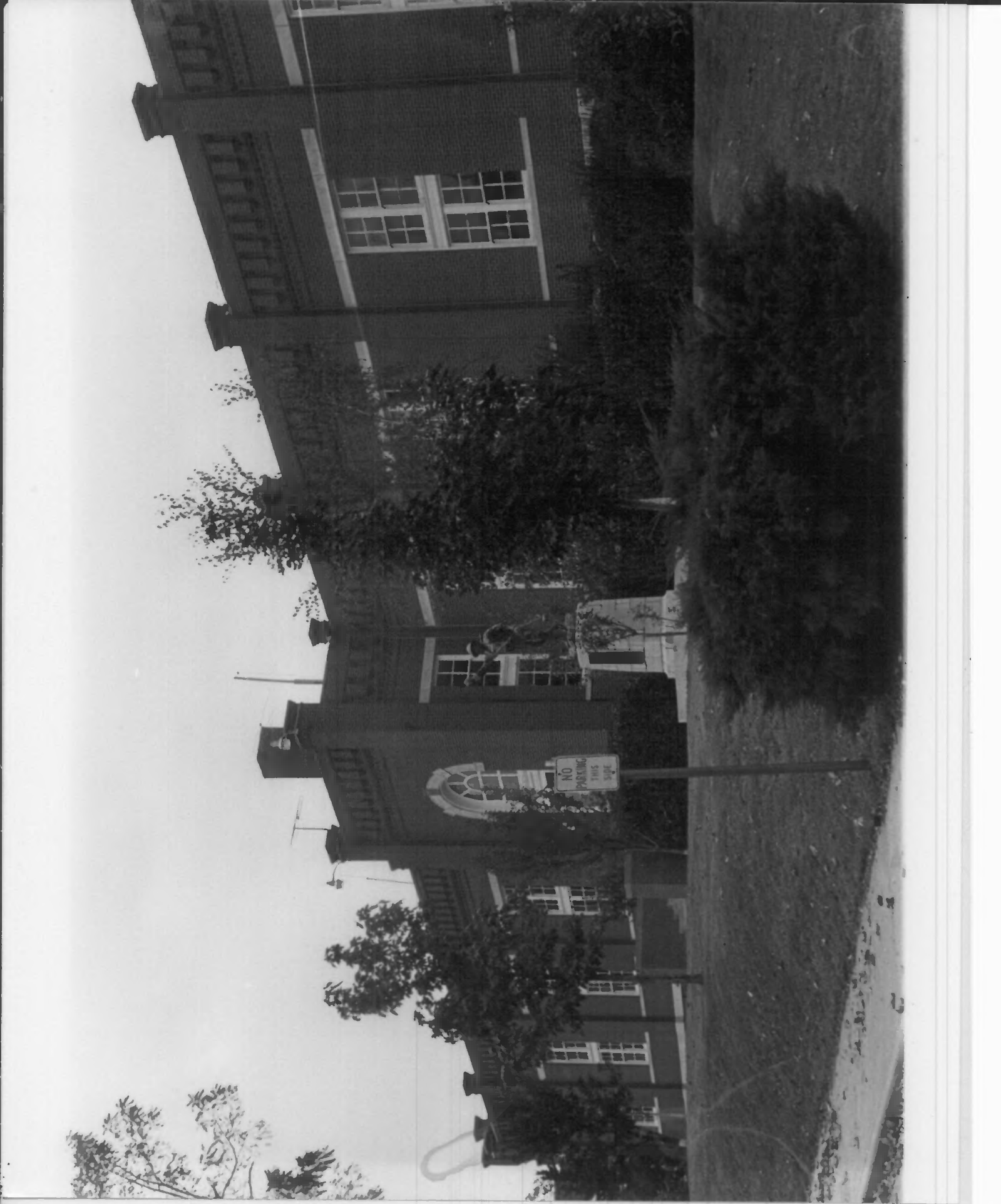
Date: October, 1979

Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

The Student Union, south primary facade  
Looking east.



WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Mary J. Matthews

Date: October, 1979

Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

Entry detail, the Student Union.



WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY 10 of 14

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Gary J. Matthews

Date: October, 1979

Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

Marine Barracks.



WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY 11 of 14

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Mary J. Matthews

Date: October, 1979

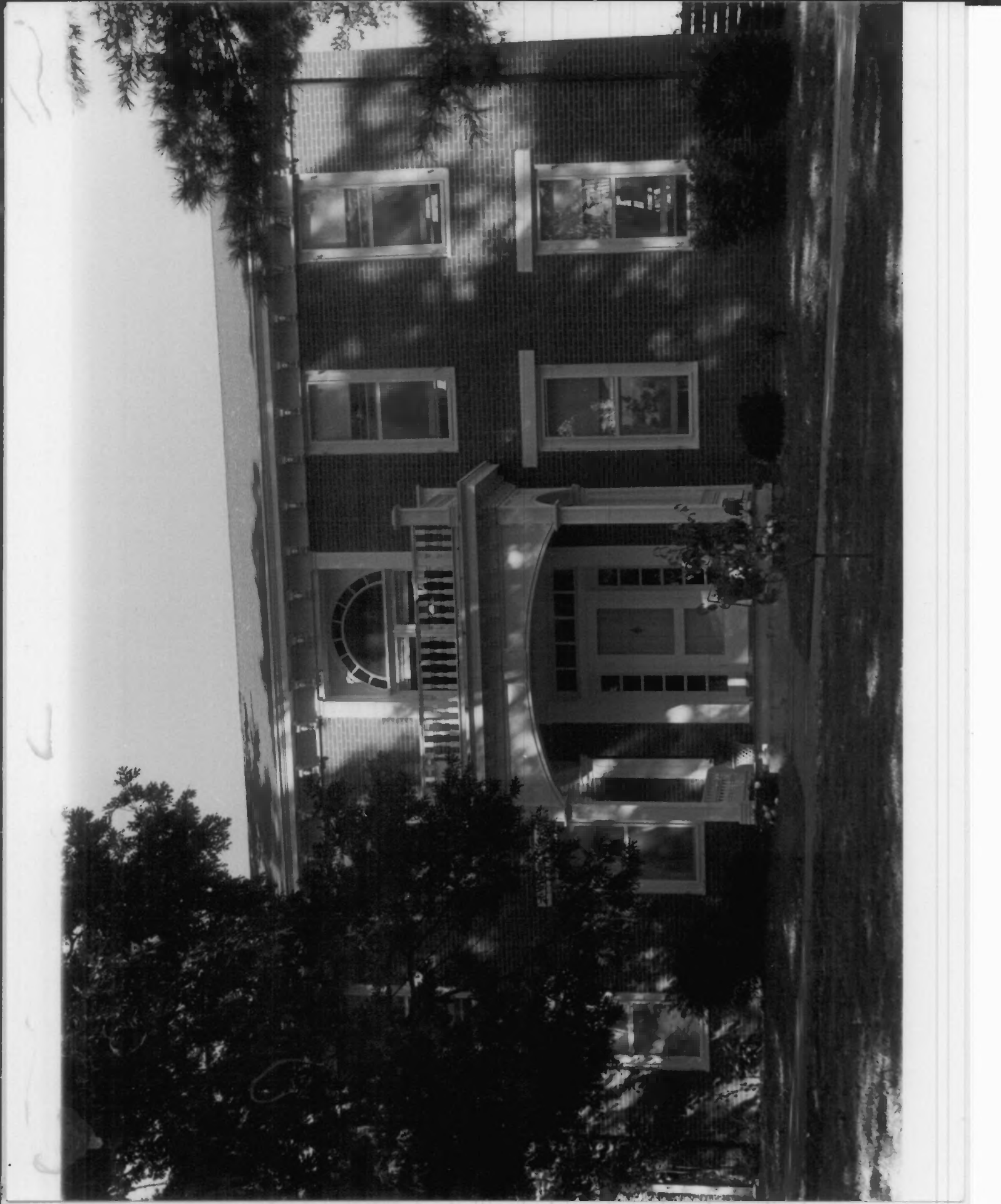
Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

Superintendent's Residence, south primary  
facade.





12 of 14

WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Mary J. Matthews

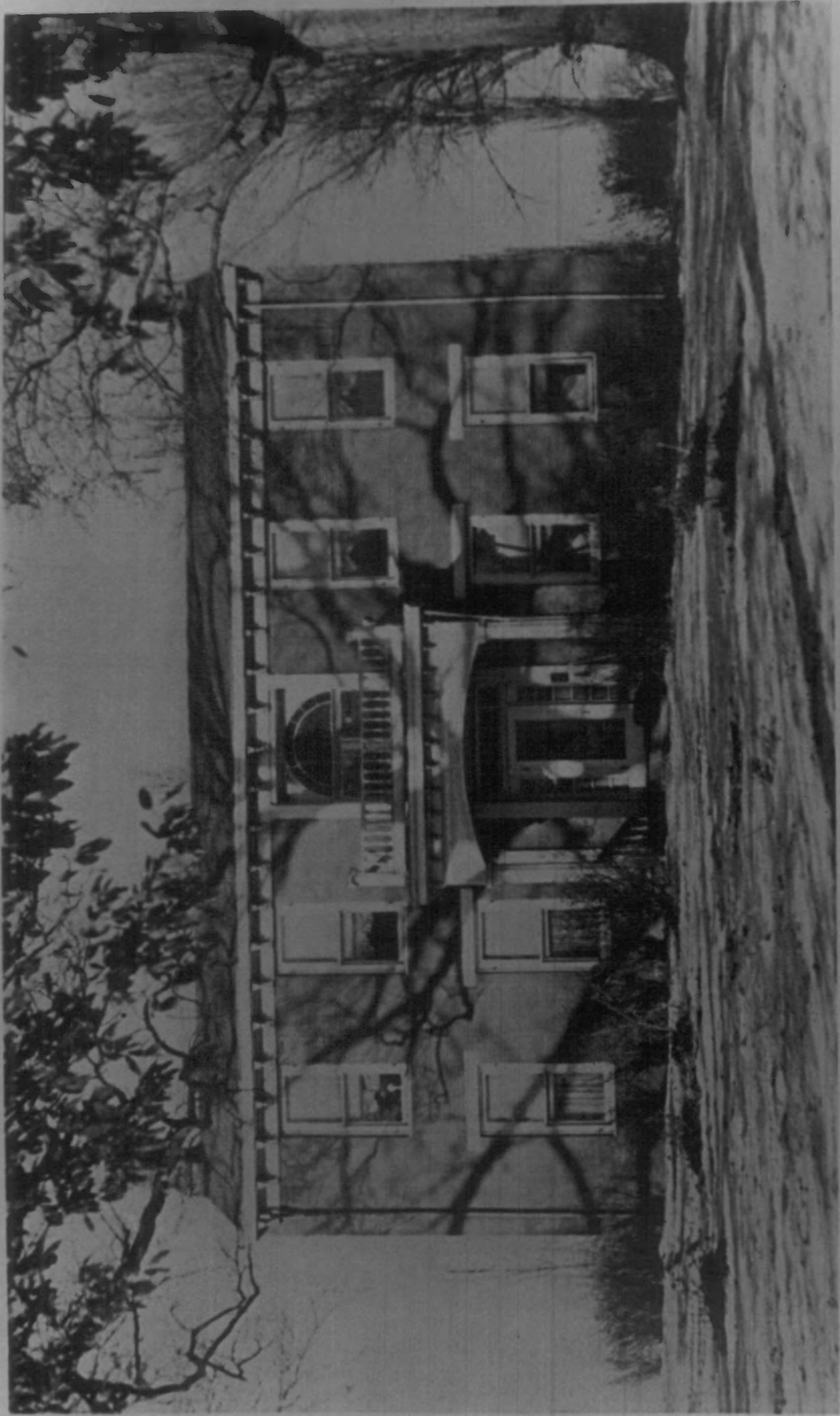
Date: October, 1979

Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

Superintendent's Residence c. 1950, from  
E.A. Settle, The Story of Wentworth.



AN HISTORIC FACULTY RESIDENCE ON THE CAMPUS (MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED YEARS OLD)

13 of 14

WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Mary J. Matthews

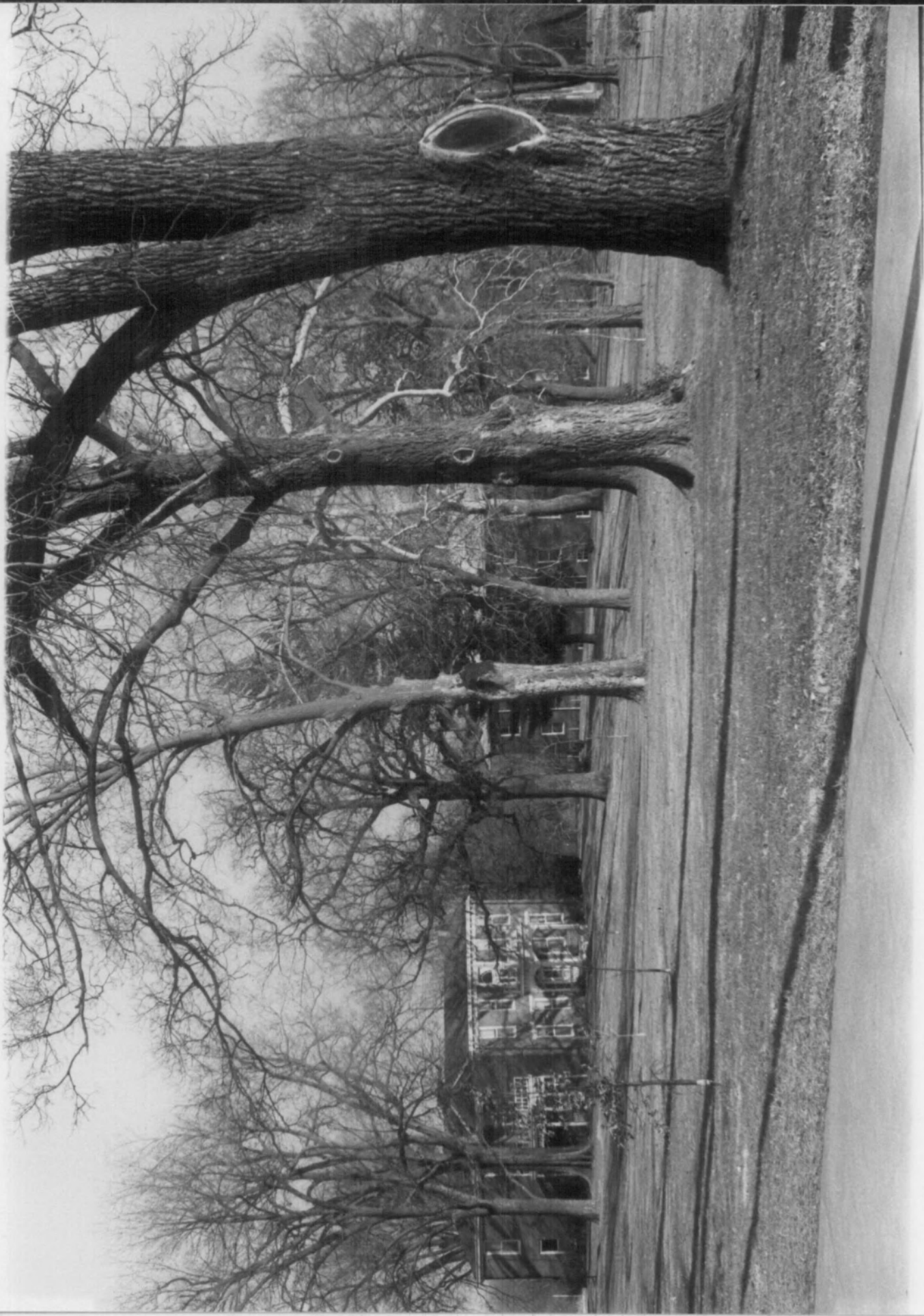
Date: October, 1979

Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

View Looking West.



WENTWORTH MILITARY ACADEMY 14 of 14

Lexington, Missouri

Photographer: Mary J. Matthews

Date: October, 1979

Neg. Loc.: Lexington Landmarks

P.O. Box 433

Lexington, Missouri 64067

View looking West towards Sandford Sellers Hall.

