



News Release

U.S. ARMY SUSTAINMENT COMMAND

March 26, 2008

QUARTERS ONE: FACTS AND HISTORY

Quarters One was the brainchild of Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Rodman, who became known as the “Father of Rock Island Arsenal.” Rodman envisioned a residence that would be large and grand enough both to serve as living space for the Arsenal’s commanding officer, and to provide a place to conduct business, entertain distinguished guests and visitors, and provide them with temporary quarters. In keeping with that vision, he designed Quarters One as a private home capable of hosting large-scale public events.

Construction of Quarters One began in May 1870, on prime land along the Mississippi River. The following June, before it was ready for occupancy, Quarters One hosted its first public event. Sadly, that event was the funeral of Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Rodman, who had died suddenly at the age of 55. In the spring of 1872, Lt. Col. Daniel W. Flagler moved into Quarters One and become its first full-time resident.

Designed in the style of an Italian villa, Quarters One is constructed of Joliet limestone that is two feet thick at the building’s foundation. The same limestone was used to build the ten original “stone shops” on the Arsenal. The interior of Quarters One covers nearly 22,000 square feet on three floors, a size which made it the second-largest single-family dwelling owned by the federal government, ranking behind only the White House.

There are more than 50 rooms in Quarters One, including a large kitchen, a formal sitting room, a dining room, a library, several guest bedrooms, and a number of room-sized closets. A veranda wraps around two sides of Quarters One, with a screened-



Charles Lindbergh, shown above with Col. David King, visited Quarters One in 1927, just three months after his historic transatlantic flight. The interior features of Quarters One include a brass knight statue at the foot of the main staircase.



in porch that leads to the main entry. Above the third floor is a staircase leading to the building's distinctive tower. The hipped roof of the residence has a flat upper deck with skylights. The basement of Quarters One has a concrete floor and contains one area that was used for baking bread and churning butter, and another that once served as a courtroom for military hearings.

The interior of Quarters One features hardwood floors made of maple, oak and walnut; fireplace mantles made of white Italian marble; and decorative door knobs and hinges made of brass. All of the knobs and hinges were produced in the Arsenal's shops, using excess brass recovered from ammunition production and from captured Confederate rounds. Arsenal workers also fabricated the metal grillwork supporting the veranda, and made many of the doors still hanging in Quarters One and several pieces of furniture that remain in use. Other distinctive features include a brass knight statue at the bottom of the main staircase; ceiling medallions; stained glass; ornate molding along the ceilings; and a brass fireplace screen marked with the Ordnance Corps logo.

Three out-buildings that once stood on the grounds of Quarters One were removed after they fell into disrepair: A boat house along the river, which was built after the original construction of Quarters One and removed at an unknown date; a tea house, which stood near the site of the boat house and was torn down in 1927; and a greenhouse, also known as the conservatory, which was torn down in 1979.

In keeping with Rodman's vision, Quarters One has entertained a number of distinguished visitors, including at least two future presidents. William Howard Taft, who then served as Secretary of War, stayed at Quarters One in 1908 during a brief respite from his successful presidential campaign. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who then held the rank of lieutenant colonel, stayed at Quarters One in 1919 on the return leg of a cross-country motor truck trip designed to assess the conditions of the nation's highways. Generals William Tecumseh Sherman, William Sheridan and John J. Pershing are among the military leaders who have visited Quarters One. In September 1996, King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden, who were in the United States on an official visit marking the 150th anniversary of the largest Swedish migration to this nation, received a cannon salute fired from the grounds of Quarters One as they passed by during a Mississippi River cruise.

But the most famous visitor to Quarters One may have been Charles Lindbergh, who visited the area and stayed in the residence in August 1927, just three months after his solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean. The "Lindbergh bed" in the room where he spent the night is marked with a plaque, and remained available for use by guests for as long as Quarters One served as a residence.

Quarters One and its grounds hosted many social events over the years, including holiday receptions, Easter egg hunts, garden club meetings, graduation receptions, luncheons, cocktail parties, and at least one wedding. Local charities such as the American Red Cross benefited from fund raisers held at Quarters One. The residence was also open to the public for tours on an occasional basis, with the nominal fees paid for the tours also benefiting local charities.

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