HISTORIC PROPERTIES REPORT

SHARPE ARMY DEPOT

LATHROP, CALIFORNIA

FINAL REPORT

JULY 1984

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sharpe Army Depot, the western distribution center for the U.S. Army Depot System Command, is located on 724 acres of land in California's San Joaquin Valley, ten miles south of the city of Stockton. It has approximately eight million square feet of space for the storage and distribution of general supplies to installations in eight western states, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Pacific. The depot is composed of 182 buildings, 74 of which were built during World War II for the Lathrop Holding and Reconsignment Point and the Lathrop Engineer Depot. Additional major construction occurred during the Korean War and the Vietnam War. There are no Category I, II, or III historic properties at Sharpe Army Depot.
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PREFACE

This report presents the results of an historic properties survey of Sharpe Army Depot. Prepared for the United States Army Materiel Development and Readiness Command (DARCOM), the report is intended to assist the Army in bringing this installation into compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and its amendments, and related federal laws and regulations. To this end, the report focuses on the identification, evaluation, documentation, nomination, and preservation of historic properties at Sharpe Army Depot. Chapter 1 sets forth the survey's scope and methodology; Chapter 2 presents an architectural, historical, and technological overview of the installation and its properties; and Chapter 3 identifies significant properties by Army category and sets forth preservation recommendations. Illustrations and an annotated bibliography supplement the text.

This report is part of a program initiated through a memorandum of agreement between the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, and the U.S. Department of the Army. The program covers 74 DARCOM installations and has two components: 1) a survey of historic properties (districts, buildings, structures, and objects), and 2) the development of archeological overviews. Stanley H. Fried, Chief, Real Estate Branch of Headquarters DARCOM, directed the program for the Army, and Dr. Robert J. Kapsch, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) directed the program for the National Park Service. Sally Kress Tompkins was program manager, and Robie S. Lange was project manager for the historic properties survey. Technical assistance was provided by Donald C. Jackson.
Building Technology Incorporated acted as primary contractor to HABS/HAER for the historic properties survey. William A. Brenner was BTI's principal-in-charge and Dr. Larry D. Lankton was the chief technical consultant. Major subcontractors were the MacDonald and Mack Partnership and Melvyn Green and Associates. The authors of this report were Melvyn Green and Christy Johnson McAvoy. The authors gratefully acknowledge the help of Sharpe Army Depot Public Affairs Officer Clyde C. Hall and his staff; K. Morimoto of Facilities Engineering; JoAnn Gordon, the base Records Manager; George Winges; and Raymond W. Hillman, the Curator of History at the Haggin Museum.

The complete HABS/HAER documentation for this installation will be included in the HABS/HAER collections at the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, under the designation HAER No. CA-26.
Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

SCOPE

This report is based on an historic properties survey conducted in 1983 of all Army-owned properties located within the official boundaries of Sharpe Army Depot. The survey included the following tasks:

- Completion of documentary research on the history of the installation and its properties.
- Completion of a field inventory of all properties at the installation.
- Preparation of a combined architectural, historical, and technological overview for the installation.
- Evaluation of historic properties and development of recommendations for preservation of these properties.

Also completed as a part of the historic properties survey of the installation, but not included in this report, are HABS/HAER Inventory cards for 41 individual properties. These cards, which constitute HABS/HAER Documentation Level IV, will be provided to the Department of the Army. Archival copies of the cards, with their accompanying photographic negatives, will be transmitted to the HABS/HAER collections at the Library of Congress.

The methodology used to complete these tasks is described below.
METHODOLOGY

1. Documentary Research

Research was conducted at the Stockton City Library, the Haggin Museum in Stockton, the Department of History at the University of the Pacific, and Sharpe Army Depot. The California State Historic Preservation Office was also contacted about possible historic properties at Sharpe Army Depot, but none were identified by this source.

Army records used for the field inventory included Real Property Inventory (RPI) printouts that listed all officially recorded buildings and structures by facility classification and date of construction; the depot's property record cards, base maps, and environmental assessment reports maintained by Facilities Engineering; historic photographs and public relations material maintained by the Public Affairs Office; and the series 228-10 historic files maintained by the Records Manager. A complete listing of documentary material may be found in the bibliography.

2. Field Inventory

The field inventory was conducted by Christy Johnson McAvoy during a four-day period in June 1983. Mr. K. Morimoto of the Facilities Engineering Office and Clyde C. Hall of the Public Affairs Office coordinated the survey. Mr. Morimoto supplied maps and drawings, and Mr. Hall and the staff of the Public Affairs Office supplied photographs and historical data, as did Records Manager JoAnn Gordon. George Winges
provided information about depot construction and development. Raymond Hillman of the Haggin Museum provided information on pre-military land use and ownership.

Field inventory procedures were based on the HABS/HAER Guidelines for Inventories of Historic Buildings and Engineering and Industrial Structures. All areas and properties were visually surveyed. Building locations and approximate dates of construction were noted from the installation's property records and field-verified.

Field inventory forms were prepared for, and black and white 35 mm photographs taken of all buildings and structures through 1945 except basic utilitarian structures of no architectural, historical, or technological interest. When groups of similar ("prototypical") buildings were found, one field form was normally prepared to represent all buildings of that type. Field inventory forms were also completed for representative post-1945 buildings and structures. Information collected on the field forms was later evaluated, condensed, and transferred to HABS/HAER Inventory cards.

3. Historic Overview

A combined architectural, historical, and technological overview was prepared from information developed from the documentary research and the field inventory. It was written in two parts: 1) an introductory description of the installation, and 2) a history of the installation by periods of development, beginning with pre-military land uses. Maps and photographs were selected to supplement the text as appropriate.
The objectives of the overview were to 1) establish the periods of major construction at the installation, 2) identify important events and individuals associated with specific historic properties, 3) describe patterns and locations of historic property types, and 4) analyze specific building and industrial technologies employed at the installation.

4. Property Evaluation and Preservation Measures

Based on information developed in the historical overviews, properties were first evaluated for historical significance in accordance with the eligibility criteria for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. These criteria require that eligible properties possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and that they meet one or more of the following:

A. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B. Are associated with the lives of persons significant in the nation's past.

C. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.
Properties thus evaluated were further assessed for placement in one of five Army historic property categories as described in Army Regulation 420-40:

- **Category I**: Properties of major importance
- **Category II**: Properties of importance
- **Category III**: Properties of minor importance
- **Category IV**: Properties of little or no importance
- **Category V**: Properties detrimental to the significance of adjacent historic properties

Based on an extensive review of the architectural, historical, and technological resources identified on DARCOM installations nationwide, four criteria were developed to help determine the appropriate categorization level for each Army property. These criteria were used to assess the importance not only of properties of traditional historical interest, but of the vast number of standardized or prototypical buildings, structures, and production processes that were built and put into service during World War II, as well as of properties associated with many post-war technological achievements. The four criteria were often used in combination and are as follows:

1) **Degree of importance as a work of architectural, engineering, or industrial design.** This criterion took into account the qualitative factors by which design is normally judged: artistic merit, workmanship, appropriate use of materials, and functionality.
2) **Degree of rarity as a remaining example of a once widely used architectural, engineering, or industrial design or process.** This criterion was applied primarily to the many standardized or prototypical DARCOM buildings, structures, or industrial processes. The more widespread or influential the design or process, the greater the importance of the remaining examples of the design or process was considered to be. This criterion was also used for non-military structures such as farmhouses and other once prevalent building types.

3) **Degree of integrity or completeness.** This criterion compared the current condition, appearance, and function of a building, structure, architectural assemblage, or industrial process to its original or most historically important condition, appearance, and function. Those properties that were highly intact were generally considered of greater importance than those that were not.

4) **Degree of association with an important person, program, or event.** This criterion was used to examine the relationship of a property to a famous personage, wartime project, or similar factor that lent the property special importance.

The majority of DARCOM properties were built just prior to or during World War II, and special attention was given to their evaluation. Those that still remain do not often possess individual importance, but collectively they represent the remnants of a vast construction undertaking whose architectural, historical, and technological importance needed to
be assessed before their numbers diminished further. This assessment centered on an extensive review of the military construction of the 1940-1945 period, and its contribution to the history of World War II and the post-war Army landscape.

Because technology has advanced so rapidly since the war, post-World War II properties were also given attention. These properties were evaluated in terms of the nation's more recent accomplishments in weaponry, rocketry, electronics, and related technological and scientific endeavors. Thus the traditional definition of "historic" as a property 50 or more years old was not germane in the assessment of either World War II or post-war DARCOM buildings and structures; rather, the historic importance of all properties was evaluated as completely as possible regardless of age.

Property designations by category are expected to be useful for approximately ten years, after which all categorizations should be reviewed and updated.

Following this categorization procedure, Category I, II, and III historic properties were analyzed in terms of:

- **Current structural condition and state of repair.** This information was taken from the field inventory forms and photographs, and was often supplemented by rechecking with facilities engineering personnel.
• The nature of possible future adverse impacts to the property. This information was gathered from the installation's master planning documents and rechecked with facilities engineering personnel.

Based on the above considerations, the general preservation recommendations presented in Chapter 3 for Category I, II, and III historic properties were developed. Special preservation recommendations were created for individual properties as circumstances required.

5. Report Review

Prior to being completed in final form, this report was subjected to an in-house review by Building Technology Incorporated. It was then sent in draft to the subject installation for comment and clearance and, with its associated historical materials, to HABS/HAER staff for technical review. When the installation cleared the report, additional draft copies were sent to DARCOM, the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer, and, when requested, to the archaeological contractor performing parallel work at the installation. The report was revised based on all comments collected, then published in final form.

NOTES


2. Representative post-World War II buildings and structures were defined as properties that were: (a) "representative" by virtue of construction type, architectural type, function, or a combination of these, (b) of obvious Category I, II, or III historic importance, or (c) prominent on the installation by virtue of size, location, or other distinctive feature.

Sharpe Army Depot, the western distribution center for the U.S. Army Depot System Command, is located in California's San Joaquin Valley, ten miles south of the city of Stockton near the town of Lathrop. It is situated on 724 acres and has 182 structures, 74 of which were built during World War II. The depot is responsible for the management, storage, inventory, and issue of general supplies to military sites in eight western states, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Pacific. (Illustration 1)

The Army constructed the depot in 1942 as the Lathrop Holding and Reconsignment Point and the Lathrop Engineer Depot to store supplies that could not be accommodated in the overcrowded Port of Stockton, a nearby deep water port on the San Joaquin River. During the war years, 74 of the installation's current 182 buildings were erected. At war's end, the Army transferred the holding and reconsignment point to the Transportation Corps. In 1946, the entire installation was transferred first to the Quartermaster General and shortly thereafter to the Corps of Engineers. During the post-war period, the function of the depot shifted from storage to the repair of construction equipment returned from overseas combat. In 1946, the installation's name was changed to the Stockton General Depot, and in 1948 it was renamed Sharpe General Depot, in honor of Henry Sharpe, a former Quartermaster General. The Korean and Vietnam Wars resulted in an increased work load at Sharpe. The Army upgraded many of the installation's World War II buildings and constructed new maintenance, housing, and storage facilities.
Illustration 1 Site map of Sharpe Army Depot. Major storage structures are located between the elliptical rail lines, the "North Balloon" and the "South Balloon." Administration and housing facilities are located at the north end of the depot. (Source: Facilities Engineering, Sharpe Army Depot)
Early in 1942, the War Department announced that the Stockton-Sacramento area was being considered for the location of a holding and reconsignment point needed to regulate the flow of supplies into west coast ports. A 738 acre tract of farmland near Lathrop, California was subsequently acquired. The site was advantageously located near major transportation facilities: the deep water port of Stockton was 10 miles away, a transcontinental highway ran nearby, and the site was situated between the parallel lines of the Southern Pacific and Western Pacific Railroads.  

Work on the holding and reconsignment point commenced shortly after acquisition of the site. All existing buildings were either sold and removed or eventually demolished. Construction contracts were awarded to MacDonald and Kahn of San Francisco, Carl Swenson and the Earl Heppel Company of San Jose, and the Campbell Construction Company of Sacramento. Over the next year, storage, maintenance, housing, and community facilities were erected, and elliptical rail lines, named the "North Balloon" and the "South Balloon", were laid to connect the existing major railroads. At the same time, construction of the Lathrop War Aid Depot (redesignated the Lathrop Engineer Depot in August 1942) began at the site. Except for storage and administration buildings, structures on the installation were jointly used by the holding and reconsignment point and the engineer depot.  

The installation was laid out in two major areas: storage and administration.
Storage Area

Located in the middle of the installation and separated from the administration area by the "North Balloon," this area contained the storage facilities for both activities. Six warehouses (Buildings 205, 208, 305, 308, 408, and 508) were built along the eastern side for the holding and reconsignment point, and two warehouses (Buildings 286 and 386) and two storage sheds (Buildings 486 and 586) were constructed on the opposite side for the engineer depot. The eight warehouses are wood-frame, one-story structures with sliding metal doors opening onto concrete loading docks. Each has rail access on one principal side and truck access on the other. The two groups of warehouses are separated by an open space containing rail lines connecting the "North Balloon" and "South Balloon." (Illustrations 2 and 3)

Between 1942 and 1944, additional structures were erected in the storage area. These included office, maintenance, and storage facilities (Buildings 108, 648, 684, 116, 171, 101, 661, and 691), a fire station (Building 135), and a sewage treatment plant (Building 307). Except for the sewage treatment plant which is constructed of concrete block, these buildings are wood-frame structures covered with corrugated metal or asbestos and wood siding.

Administration Area

Administration, housing, community, and post engineering facilities were erected at the north end of the installation in 1942-1943. A pair of two-story, wood-frame structures housing the headquarters of the holding and reconsignment point (Building 1) and the engineer depot (Building 2) faces the
Illustration 2  Aerial view of Sharpe Army Depot during initial construction, c. 1942. Warehouses for the Lathrop Holding and Reconsignment Point were built on the site's eastern side, and the Lathrop Engineer Depot's warehouses and open storage sheds were on the opposite side. The two groups were separated by an open area containing rail lines that connected the "North Balloon" (at the left of the photograph) with the "South Balloon." (Source: Public Affairs Office, Sharpe Army Depot)
Illustration 3  Interior of Building 208. This Army photograph taken about 1945 shows the interior of one of the six large warehouses built along the eastern side of the installation for the Lathrop Holding and Reconsignment Point. (Source: Records Management Office, Sharpe Army Depot)
traffic circle at the northeast corner of the site. A cafeteria (Building 3), a BOQ (Building 4), a community center (Building 25), a security building (Building 6), and dormitory housing for 200 civilians (which has been removed) were built nearby. These buildings are either wood-frame or masonry structures. A dispensary (Building 7) constructed of brick was added to the area in 1945. A post engineering facility was erected south of the administration buildings adjacent to the "North Balloon" in 1943. Only Buildings 41, 42, 44, and 48 remain from this small complex of one-story, wood-frame structures and quonset huts. (Illustrations 4 and 5)

**POST-WAR CONSTRUCTION**

Changes in administration of the installation followed the war. The holding and reconsignment point was discontinued and transferred to the Army Transportation Corps in late 1945. In March 1946, the entire installation was transferred to the Quartermaster General and shortly thereafter to the Corps of Engineers. Under the Corps, the installation (designated as the Stockton General Depot and later as the Sharpe General Depot) began restoration and remanufacture of engineer equipment. To accommodate this mission, maintenance and repair facilities were constructed over the next several years. The largest of these (Buildings 179 and 649) are one-story, wood-frame structures.

The two major post-war building periods at the site coincided with the Korean and Vietnam Wars. A large reinforced concrete warehouse (Building 404), a major repair and maintenance building (Building 178), and a number of smaller storage and maintenance facilities were constructed during the Korean War.
Illustration 4  Aerial view of the administration area from the north, 1945. The headquarters buildings for the holding and reconignment point and the engineer depot, the post cafeteria, BOQ, and security building are located near the traffic circle at the middle of the photograph. The post engineering complex is shown at the top of the photograph. (Source: Records Management Office, Sarge Arm Depot.)
Illustration 5  View of the depot Headquarters (Building 1). The current Headquarters Building originally housed the holding and reconsignment point's administrative offices. A similar structure (Building 2) served as the headquarters for the engineer depot. (Source: Field inventory photograph, Christy Johnson McAvoy, Melvyn Green & Associates, 1983)
The depot became a major supply center for troops in southeast Asia and prepared fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters for combat during the Vietnam War. A hangar (Building 585) and airstrip built in 1960 supported this mission, as did a repair shop (Building 613) built in 1968 to test batteries and repair aircraft transmissions. A large concrete block maintenance facility (Building 655), built to augment the depot's primary maintenance building (Building 649), was also erected during the Vietnam War. (Illustration 6)

Housing and community facilities expanded at the depot in the 1960s and 1970s. After the close of the installation's Stockton Field Annex, which had provided housing for the depot, residences were built at the north end of the site in 1964. They include a single family, wood-frame house for the depot commander (Building 26) and eight two-story, wood-frame, multi-unit buildings (Buildings 27-34). Four wood-frame stuccoed buildings, originally constructed at Stockton Field Annex in 1940, were moved to Sharpe's administration area in 1974 and now house the chapel (Building 11), post exchange (Building 10), clothing sales store (Building 14), and recreation building (Building 12). (Illustration 7)

Redesignated the Sharpe Army Depot in 1962, the installation continues to be a major supply depot for the Army and serves as a home for Army Reserve and National Guard units. The latter are housed in a large Army Reserve center (Building 73) built in 1978, which forms the nucleus of a 7 acre reserve unit complex. The State Department also maintains an office at the depot that is involved in the distribution of excess government property to foreign governments.
Illustration 6  View of hangar (Building 585) and aircraft parking area from the east, c. 1967. During the Vietnam War, the depot prepared fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters for combat. The facilities shown above were used in support of that mission.
(Source: Public Affairs Office, Sharpe Army Depot)
Illustration 7 View of Chapel (Building 11). Four wood-frame structures that were originally constructed at the Stockton Field Annex in 1940 were moved to Sharpe's administration area in 1974. One of these, Building 11, houses the depot chapel. (Source: Field inventory photograph, Christy Johnson McAvoy, Melvyn Green & Associates, 1983)
NOTES


2. Lathrop Holding/Reconsignment Point - 1942-43. Volume 1, pp. 3a, 4, 5.


Chapter 3

PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND

Army Regulation 420-40 requires that an historic preservation plan be developed as an integral part of each installation's planning and long range maintenance and development scheduling. The purpose of such a program is to:

- Preserve historic properties to reflect the Army's role in history and its continuing concern for the protection of the nation's heritage.
- Implement historic preservation projects as an integral part of the installation's maintenance and construction programs.
- Find adaptive uses for historic properties in order to maintain them as actively used facilities on the installation.
- Eliminate damage or destruction due to improper maintenance, repair, or use that may alter or destroy the significant elements of any property.
- Enhance the most historically significant areas of the installation through appropriate landscaping and conservation.

To meet these overall preservation objectives, the general preservation recommendations set forth below have been developed:

Category I Historic Properties

All Category I historic properties not currently listed on or nominated to the National Register of Historic Places are assumed to be eligible for nomination regardless of age. The following general preservation recommendations apply to these properties:
a) Each Category I historic property should be treated as if it were on the National Register, whether listed or not. Properties not currently listed should be nominated. Category I historic properties should not be altered or demolished. All work on such properties shall be performed in accordance with Sections 106 and 110(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act as amended in 1980, and the regulations of the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation (ACHP) as outlined in the "Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties" (36 CFR 800).

b) An individual preservation plan should be developed and put into effect for each Category I historic property. This plan should delineate the appropriate restoration or preservation program to be carried out for the property. It should include a maintenance and repair schedule and estimated initial and annual costs. The preservation plan should be approved by the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council in accordance with the above referenced ACHP regulation. Until the historic preservation plan is put into effect, Category I historic properties should be maintained in accordance with the recommended approaches of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Revised Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings and in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer.
c) Each Category I historic property should be documented in accordance with Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) Documentation Level II, and the documentation submitted for inclusion in the HABS/HAER collections in the Library of Congress. When no adequate architectural drawings exist for a Category I historic property, it should be documented in accordance with Documentation Level I of these standards. In cases where standard measured drawings are unable to record significant features of a property or technological process, interpretive drawings also should be prepared.

**Category II Historic Properties**

All Category II historic properties not currently listed on or nominated to the National Register of Historic Places are assumed to be eligible for nomination regardless of age. The following general preservation recommendations apply to these properties:

a) Each Category II historic property should be treated as if it were on the National Register, whether listed or not. Properties not currently listed should be nominated. Category II historic properties should not be altered or demolished. All work on such properties shall be performed in accordance with Sections 106 and 110(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act as amended in 1980, and the regulations of the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation (ACHP) as outlined in the "Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties" (36 CFR 800).
b) An individual preservation plan should be developed and put into effect for each Category II historic property. This plan should delineate the appropriate preservation or rehabilitation program to be carried out for the property or for those parts of the property which contribute to its historical, architectural, or technological importance. It should include a maintenance and repair schedule and estimated initial and annual costs. The preservation plan should be approved by the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council in accordance with the above referenced ACHP regulations. Until the historic preservation plan is put into effect, Category II historic properties should be maintained in accordance with the recommended approaches in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Revised Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings\(^4\) and in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer.

c) Each Category II historic property should be documented in accordance with Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) Documentation Level II, and the documentation submitted for inclusion in the HABS/HAER collections in the Library of Congress.\(^5\)

**Category III Historic Properties**

The following preservation recommendations apply to Category III historic properties:
a) Category III historic properties listed on or eligible for nomination to the National Register as part of a district or thematic group should be treated in accordance with Sections 106 and 110(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act as amended in 1980, and the regulations of the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation as outlined in the "Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties" (36 CFR 800). Such properties should not be demolished and their facades, or those parts of the property that contribute to the historical landscape, should be protected from major modifications. Preservation plans should be developed for groupings of Category III historic properties within a district or thematic group. The scope of these plans should be limited to those parts of each property that contribute to the district or group's importance. Until such plans are put into effect, these properties should be maintained in accordance with the recommended approaches in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Revised Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings and in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer.

b) Category III historic properties not listed on or eligible for nomination to the National Register as part of a district or thematic group should receive routine maintenance. Such properties should not be demolished, and their facades, or those parts of the property that contribute to the historical landscape, should be protected from modification. If the properties are unoccupied, they should, as a minimum, be maintained in stable condition and prevented from deteriorating.
HABS/HAER Documentation Level IV has been completed for all Category III historic properties, and no additional documentation is required as long as they are not endangered. Category III historic properties that are endangered for operational or other reasons should be documented in accordance with HABS/HAER Documentation Level III, and submitted for inclusion in the HABS/HAER collections in the Library of Congress. Similar structures need only be documented once.

**CATEGORY I HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

There are no Category I historic properties at Sharpe Army Depot.

**CATEGORY II HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

There are no Category II historic properties at Sharpe Army Depot.

**CATEGORY III HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

There are no Category III historic properties at Sharpe Army Depot.

**NOTES**


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Microfilm collection of local news articles relating to Sharpe Army Depot.


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