

LOWELL CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

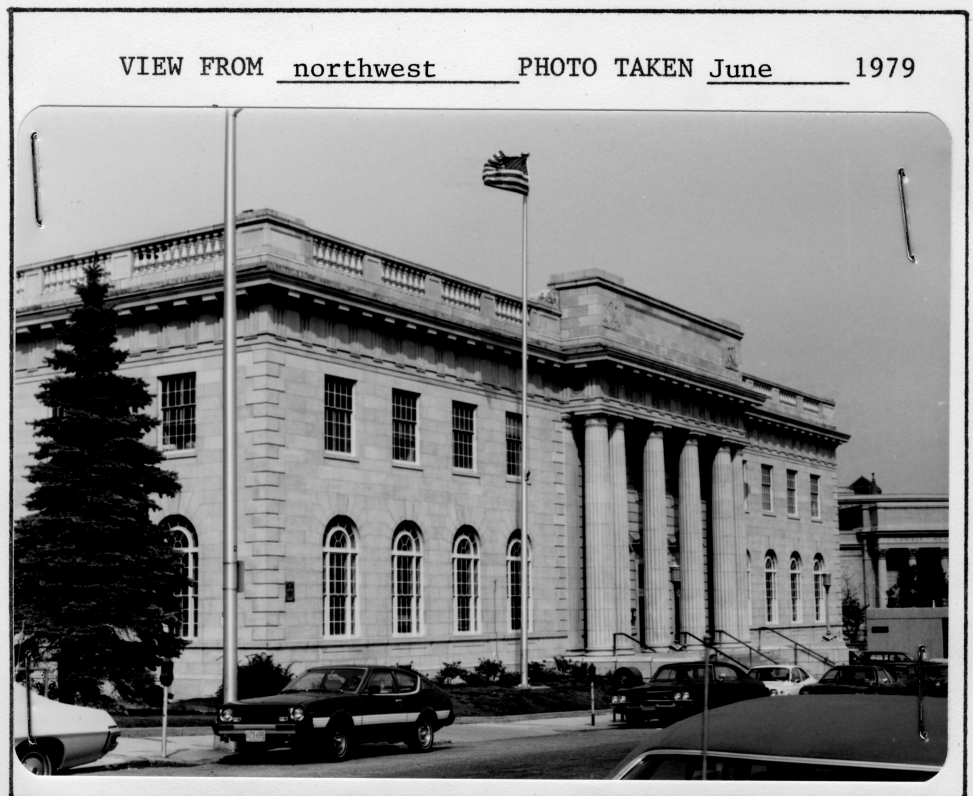
IDENTIFICATION 50 KEARNEY SQUARE MAP SHEET # 8
 1) CURRENT OWNER U.S. Government OWNER OCCUPIED yes
 2) HISTORIC NAME Lowell Post Office
 3) CURRENT NAME Federal Building
 4) PROPERTY TYPE governmental 5) ZONING CLASSIFICATION B3
 6) TAXES: PAYMENTS exempt STATUS clear
 7) WITHIN BOUNDARIES OF LHPD, Locks and Canals HD

HISTORICAL ABSTRACT

1) CONSTRUCTION DATE 1930-1931
 SOURCE documented: cornerstone; atlas
 2) ARCHITECT OR BUILDER George A. Daidy
 3) HISTORIC OWNER U. S. Government Treasury Department
 4) ORIGINAL USE: GF governmental UF governmental
 5) PREVIOUS BLDGS ON PROPERTY yes DATE pre-1821 house; boarding houses 1840; sect. of Mass Mills, 1911
 SOURCE documented: atlases; maps

DESCRIPTIVE DATA

1) ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Neo-Classical Revival
 2) PRESENT USE:
 GF governmental
 UF governmental
 3) NO OF STORIES 2
 4) PROP SQ FT 38,188
 5) PLAN rectangular
 6) ROOF hip
 7) STRUCTURAL SYSTEM
metal frame
 8) OUTBUILDINGS
E. Merr. St. ca. 1975 Siphon
 9) MATERIALS:
 FOUNDATION
dressed granite



FACADE front & sides: dressed granite; rear; yellow brick in common bond (5/1)
 TRIM terra cotta, dressed granite

10) NOTABLE SURFACE & LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS dressed granite wall at river bank (N.E. of bldg)

ADDRESS 50 KEARNEY SQUARE

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 1) CONDITION OF BUILDING FABRIC. excellent
- 2) IF DETERIORATED, CAUSES n/a
- 3) INTEGRITY OF HISTORIC BLDG FABRIC: GF intact original fabric
UF intact original fabric
- 4) SURROUNDING LAND USES commercial, industrial, river frontage, canal frontage
- 5) INTEGRITY OF PROP'S HIST SETTING moderately disrupted historic setting
- 6) IMPORTANCE OF PROP TO HIST SETTING focal point in area

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION

The Federal Building, on East Merrimack Street between the Eastern Canal and the Concord River, is faced in gray granite on the front and sides to the tops of the columns. The entablature and balustrade are of matching gray terra cotta. The round-arched first floor windows, rectangular second story windows, quoins and balustrade reflect the Colonial Revival style, while the central Doric portico and full entablature with triglyphs and mutules are characteristic of the Neo-Classical Revival.

ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The site of the Federal Building has undergone several changes of use prior to the construction of the present building in 1930-1931. Limited in its accuracy, the 1821 Map of Lowell notes a "Homestead" standing on the western portion of this lot, on the approximate site of the Eastern Canal. Subsequent maps of 1831 and 1832 record a building of similar plan, labeled "Mansion House." Based on the 1832 map, this structure would have straddled both sides of the Eastern Canal extending part-way onto the western edge of the Federal Building's lot. The relatively inaccurate scale of these early maps makes it impossible to determine the exact location of this structure in reference to now existing buildings.

Between 1839 and 1841, this property was built-up with two brick rows of "tenement" houses built for the Massachusetts Cotton Mills by the Proprietors of Locks and Canals. Two streets were laid out on the property at this time; Hancock Street extended along the east bank of the Eastern Canal, while Mill Square ran at right angles to Hancock Street along the southern boundary of the Massachusetts Mill Yard. In 1910-1911, these two brick rows were demolished to allow the construction of Section 12 of the Massachusetts Cotton Mills. Section 12 was a five-story high brick building which had frontage on the Concord River from Section 8 of the Massachusetts Mills to East Merrimack Street. Section 12 extended along east Merrimack Street over the Eastern Canal to Canal Street. In 1929-1930, Section 12 was demolished (see Massachusetts Mills--General History--List of Figures).

The site was purchased for a Post Office in 1929 for \$120,000.00. George Augustine Daidy, a Lowell native and an architect for the Public Buildings Administration, designed the building. James A. Wetmore is recorded on the corner

cornerstone as the supervising architect. Construction began in August of 1930; the Lowell firm of Johnson and Meloy won the contract with a bid just under \$350,000.00. The building opened in January, 1932. Considerable damage was inflicted on the basement of the building by the 1936 flood.

Sources

See Research Report on Mass. Mills.

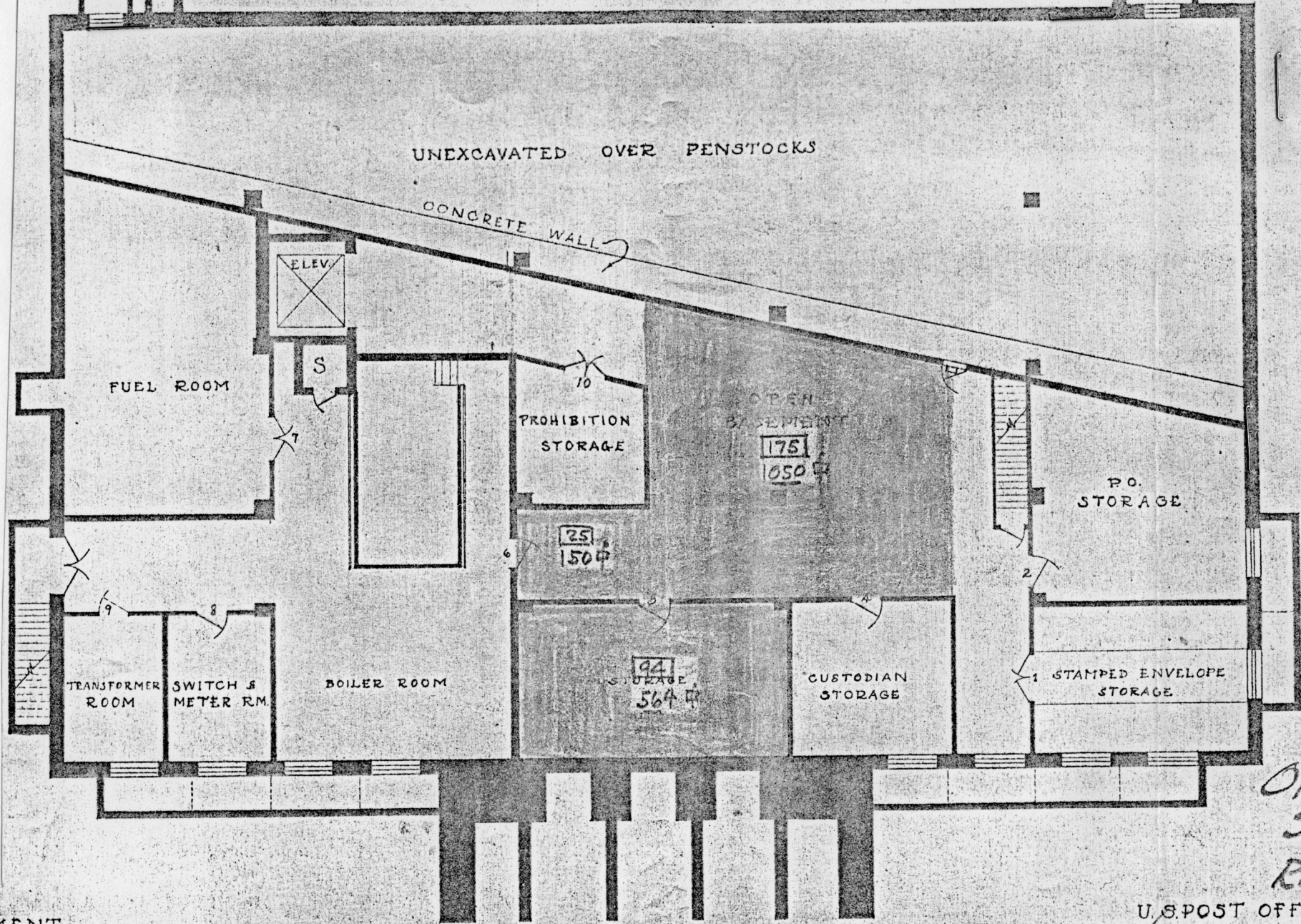
Daidy, George Augustine. "A Historical Record of the Design and Construction Lowell, Massachusetts Post Office," mss. in Special Collections, U. of Lowell Library.

Lowell Sun, June 6, 1965.

ARCHEOLOGICAL COMMENT

The Federal Building site has been the scene of heavy building activity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Construction in 1911 of Mass. Mills' "Section 12," a five story brick building, must have destroyed any below ground remains of the boarding houses previously on the site. The Post Office Building, constructed in 1930 and 1931, does not fill the whole lot, but rather has grassy areas, driveways, and parking lots alongside and behind the building. Remnants of the preceding industrial building could be preserved beneath those areas. In addition, the present building was erected over three penstocks extending from the Eastern Canal toward the Concord River. These pass beneath the northeast portion of the building. The basement of the building was not excavated over these penstocks, substantially reducing the space available in the basement level.

Basement plan of Post Office, drawn 11/11/31. Note unexcavated area over the penstocks. U. of Lowell Library, Special Collections.



ASSIGNMENT
BASEMENT PLAN
SCALE $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'-0''$

TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS TO BE ACCOMMODATED ON THIS FLOOR 294
 TOTAL SHELTER SPACE ON THIS FLOOR 1764 SQUARE FEET ✓

POPULATION:
 EMPLOYEES 170 ✓
 PUBLIC 250 ✓
 TOTAL 420 ✓

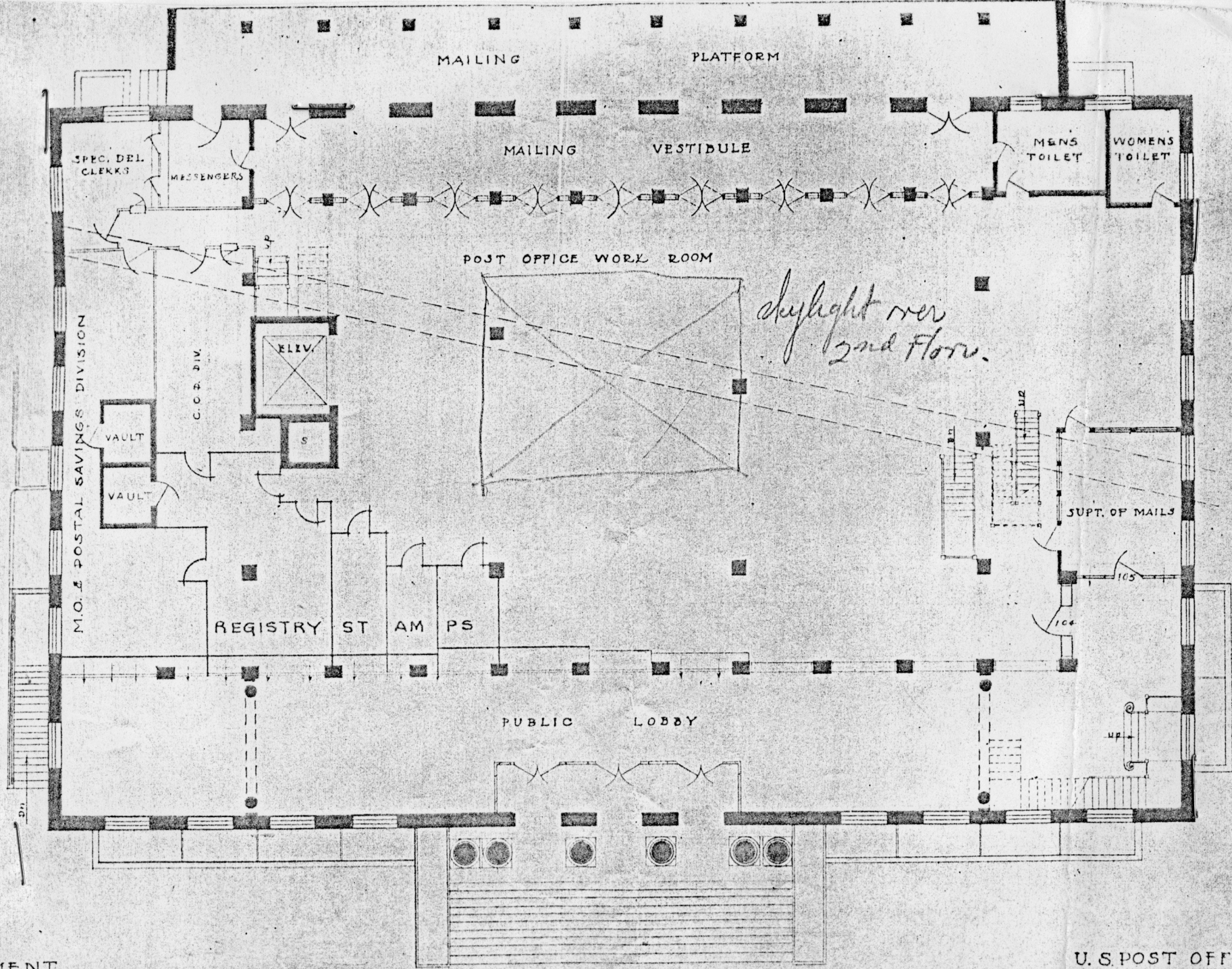
TOTAL SHELTER SPACE IN THIS BUILDING 2520 SQ. FT. ✓

U.S. POST OFFICE
 LOWELL, MASS.
 DWG. AS-2
 DWN. BY M.D.B. 11/11

John W. Durbin
 Assistant Chief
 Protective Construction

OK
 S.
 R.

First floor plan of Post Office, drawn 1931 and revised 1939.
 U. of Lowell Library, Special Collections.



ASSIGNMENT
 FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE $\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'-0''$

U.S. POST OFFICE
 LOWELL, MASS.
 DWG. AS-3
 DWN. BY M.D.B. 11-7-31.
 REVISED W.D.C. 11-17-39