



U.S. ARMY

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COMMEMORATING ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL'S 160TH ANNIVERSARY

AUGUST IN MILITARY HISTORY

A Short History of Quarters One

- 1921 ⁵ The United States and Germany sign a formal peace treaty.
- 1934 ⁵¹ After 19 years, the United States withdraws from Haiti.
- 1942 ⁸ Marines capture the airfield on Guadalcanal after just one day.
- 1944 ¹ GEN George Patton's Third Army becomes fully operational and sweeps across France.
- 1945 ⁶ The second atomic bomb is dropped on Japan over Nagasaki.
- 1953 ²⁰ The Redstone Rocket becomes the United States' first ballistic missile.
- 1961 ¹³ East German forces close and barricade the streets connecting East & West Germany.
- 1964 ⁴ The Gulf of Tonkin Incident occurs, eventually drawing the U.S. into the war.
- 1990 ³ The Iraqi military crosses into Kuwait, creating the pretense for the Gulf War.
- 1996 ³ Osama bin Laden issues his first warning to the United States.

MONTHLY TRIVIA

- 1 What future President visited RIA and stayed in Q1 on TDY as an Army Officer?
- 2 What was burned in the basement of Q1 to keep the greenhouse warm in the winter?
- 3 How many ghosts reside in Quarters One?

ANSWERS FOR JULY 2022 QUESTIONS

- 1 How much money did the Army pay the Davenport family for the remaining 150 acres of privately owned land on RIA?
➤ **COL Davenport's family received \$40,740 for the land or approx. \$948, 204 in 2022 money.**
- 2 Where did the first stone come from to build the Arsenal?
➤ **A quarry in Le Claire, IA.**
- 3 What paper took a vested interest in the construction of RIA and the Prison barracks, for good and bad?
➤ **The Rock Island Argus, Editor J.b. Danforth. The Army would classify the paper and editor as disloyal to the Union cause.**

AMERICANS DON'T HAVE KETTLES?

BUT THEN HOW DO THEY MAKE TEA?!

by throwing it into the harbor

Of all the revolutionary acts in the 1770s, the one with perhaps the most amusement involved was the Boston Tea Party. So iconic was the simple act of dumping tea into the harbor that you can actually pay to dump teabags in Boston harbor as a tourist hot spot today. Of course, the Assistant Historian just prefers to dump bottles of Lipton into the Mississippi River instead.



Trivia answers, digital newsletters, and more history is available on the ASC History website:

<https://aschq.army.mil/About-Us/History>

Of the many treasures on Arsenal Island, perhaps the most beloved one by the surrounding community is Quarters One. Designed by the second commander of the Arsenal, COL Thomas J. Rodman, Quarters One was constructed between 1869 and 1871. At the time that Rodman assumed command of the arsenal in 1865, the only quarters available on the island were abandoned barracks from the Confederate Prison Barracks. By the time ground was broken for Quarters One, the first stones were also being laid for the stone shops in Rodman's grand vision as well. An "aestheticist," Rodman sought to keep the buildings of the arsenal uniform in design and presentation.

At just over 20,000 square feet, Quarters One is the second largest house in the federal housing system. It is only beaten in size by the White House. Its construction consists of Le Claire and Joliet Limestone, although it is likely that most of this limestone was sourced from the Joliet quarry. The stones that compose the external walls range from 18 to 24 inches thick. In addition to the Prison Barracks, Storehouse A, and the ruins of the Davenport House on the island prior to its construction, there were large dumps of ammo and artillery. Rodman repurposed this obsolete materiel and used it for the internal support structures in the stone shops and Quarters One as well as the decorative fencing and veranda accents.



Ten fireplaces and seven stoves provided in-room heat and ambiance inside Quarters One, with nine of the fireplaces being made with Italian marble, and one being made by red brick. The main floor featured two parlors that were almost mirror images of each other, a study, a dining room, breakfast nook, and final prep kitchenette. The ceilings in the front half of the house are 16 feet high and accented with decorative cornices. The polychrome floors that still are in the house today were made with oak and walnut. Pine was used in the butler's quarters in the rear of the second floor.

Care was made to reduce the use of gas for lighting in the quarters. Numerous internal windows coupled with large external windows were used to increase the amount of natural light in interior rooms. Two impressive skylights overlook the foyer and stairway. The third floor also leads to a widow's walk which then leads into a tower that is an additional two stories tall. The view from this tower gives an impressive and unique view of the Quad Cities area and overlooks the arsenal, five bridges, and view up and down the river. At its top, the tower stands 110 feet tall.

Rodman had justified the grand scale of Quarters One's construction with several different reasons, each of which can be observed on each floor of the building. The first floor was to be used to entertain guests and host public events in the parlors. It was also to be used as a headquarters via the study until a proper dedicated building could be completed. The second floor functioned as the living quarters for the family, as well as to house distinguished visitors to the new grand arsenal. The third floor was to be a barracks for Soldiers that were coming through the area. Adjacent rooms at the rear of the second and third floors were to house staff for the house.



Two temporary structures and two temporary landscaping features were also on the grounds over the duration of the houses use. The structures included a conservatory at the rear where the modern patio is located, which was built after the turn of the century and destroyed sometime in the 1970s. The second was a Japanese style tea house which was situated on the embankment of the river. The two landscaping features included a Japanese style garden which ran along a path from the house to the teahouse and a rose garden which was situated off to the south of the house. Landscaping of the grounds was not completed until 1872.

Rodman lived just long enough to move into the house, but sadly died in his study on 7 JUN 1871. The first public event that Quarters One hosted was his funeral, which was attended by some accounts of "hundreds of wagons full" of people from the surrounding community. Quarters One had an additional 37 occupants following Rodman, with the last one being GEN Radin who departed in 2008. Today the large Italian Villa style house sits without a resident but does occasionally open for tours run by Rock Island Arsenal's Family, Morale, Wellness, and Recreation Office. The house can, and frequently is, rented out for various private events and gatherings as well.

History is being made every day at this command.

Presented to you by your friendly ASC History Office. Feel free to call or stop by our office for any of your history needs.

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