

403/D-64

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT - PART I
BUILDING NO. 7A, WOOD STORAGE BUILDING
EDISON NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
(ADMINISTRATIVE, HISTORICAL, AND ARCHITECTURAL DATA)

Prepared by Melvin J. Weig, Superintendent;
Benjamin Levy, Supervisory Historian; and
Gordie Whittington, Exhibits Specialist (Restoration)

July 28, 1964

PLEASE RETURN TO:

TECHNICAL INFORMATION CENTER
DENVER SERVICE CENTER
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
LIBRARY
Denver, Colorado

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DENVER SERVICE CENTER
LIBRARY

Name of Area Edison National Historic Site

Melvin J. Weig, Superintendent
Benjamin Levy, Supervisory Historian
Gordie Whittington, Exhibits

Prepared by: Specialist (Restoration)

Date July 28, 1964

REVIEWED

EASTERN OFFICE, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Architect _____ Date _____

Engineer _____ Date _____

Landscape Architect _____ Date _____

REGIONAL OFFICE

Interpretation _____ Date _____

Operations _____ Date _____

RECOMMENDED

Melvin J. Weig
Superintendent, _____ Date July 30, 1964

(Sgd) Eugene R. De Silets
Acting Chief, _____ Date 8/25/64 (Adm. & Tech.)

Regional Director _____ Date _____

Assistant Director, Design and Construction _____ Date _____

APPROVED

Director _____ Date _____

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT - PART I
BUILDING NO. 7A, WOOD STORAGE BUILDING

Prepared by

Melvin J. Weig
Superintendent

Benjamin Levy
Supervisory Historian

and

Gordie Whittington
Exhibits Specialist (Restoration)

July 23, 1964

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
Administrative Data	
Prepared by Melvin J. Weig, Superintendent, July 27, 1964	1
Historical Data, with Exhibits 1-7	
Prepared by Benjamin Levy, Supervisory Historian, June 15, 1964	2-9
Architectural Data, with Photographs and Drawing	
Prepared by Gordie Whittington, Exhibits Specialist (Restoration), July 24, 1964	10-17

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT - PART I

BUILDING NO. 7A, WOOD STORAGE BUILDING

"ADMINISTRATIVE DATA"

Prepared by

Melvin J. Weig
Superintendent

July 27, 1964

Administrative Data

The Wood Storage Building, Building No. 7A, was one of the smaller shed-type structures at the old Edison Laboratory, but nonetheless part of the historic scene from about 1919, when it appears to have been erected, through the year of Thomas Alva Edison's death in 1931. Although still standing for many years thereafter, it finally had to be taken down in October 1963 due to its condition of general deterioration, with resulting safety hazard. Measured drawings of the structure were made before such removal by an EODC architectural team in the summer of 1962.

Reconstruction of this building as an essential part of physical appearance on the Laboratory Unit scene is proposed under PCP No. B-3, submitted June 2, 1964, at an estimated total cost of approximately \$5,800. This cost estimate includes funds for construction of an inner masonry room to serve purposes of safe storage for paints and like inflammable materials, as described in the "Architectural Data" section of this report. Having such a room will help very much to improve the overall Safety Program at the Laboratory Unit. The proposed reconstruction, and the design of the interior masonry room, was worked out by Exhibits Specialist (Restoration) Gordie Whittington on the basis of the measured drawings and photographs, and is delineated on the attached drawing prepared by EODC Student Architect Ernest C. Dreher in the summer of 1964.

This office recommends that Building No. 7A be reconstructed as proposed in this report and the related PCP No. B-3, thus contributing to restoration of the Laboratory scene as it was when Thomas Edison died in 1931.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT - PART I

BUILDING NO. 7A, WOOD STORAGE BUILDING

"HISTORICAL DATA"

Prepared by

Benjamin Levy
Supervisory Historian

June 15, 1964

Historical Data

The one-story wood frame structure identified as Building No. 7A at the Laboratory Unit, and known today as the Wood Storage Building, was erected in 1919 (see Exhibit No. 1). This year of erection is determined by two maps. One of these, dated February 10, 1919 (see Exhibit No. 2), does not show the building. The other, dated December 27, 1919, does show it, between the rear sections of Buildings Nos. 3 and 4, labeled as a "Shed" (see Exhibit No. 3). The logical inference is that Building No. 7A was constructed between these inclusive dates.

On yet another map, presumably also of December 27, 1919, Building No. 7A is identified as a "Wood Storage Shed" (see Exhibit No. 4) and that it was used for the purpose implied by this name is certain from the lumber storage racks still in place before the structure was recently taken down for reasons of safety (see Exhibit No. 5).

Building No. 7A appeared different in 1963, before its removal, than in 1939, as may be observed by comparison of Exhibits Nos. 6 and 7. The windows shown in the 1939 photographs of the southwest side, facing Building No. 6, were only partially in evidence by the later date, the right-hand section having been boarded up after 1939. The 1939 photograph probably shows Building No. 7A as it appeared in the last years of Edison's life, since the old Laboratory group was shut down shortly after the inventor's death in 1931.

EXHIBIT NO. 1

Edison Laboratory Boundary Survey

November 20, 1955

Negative No. 6688

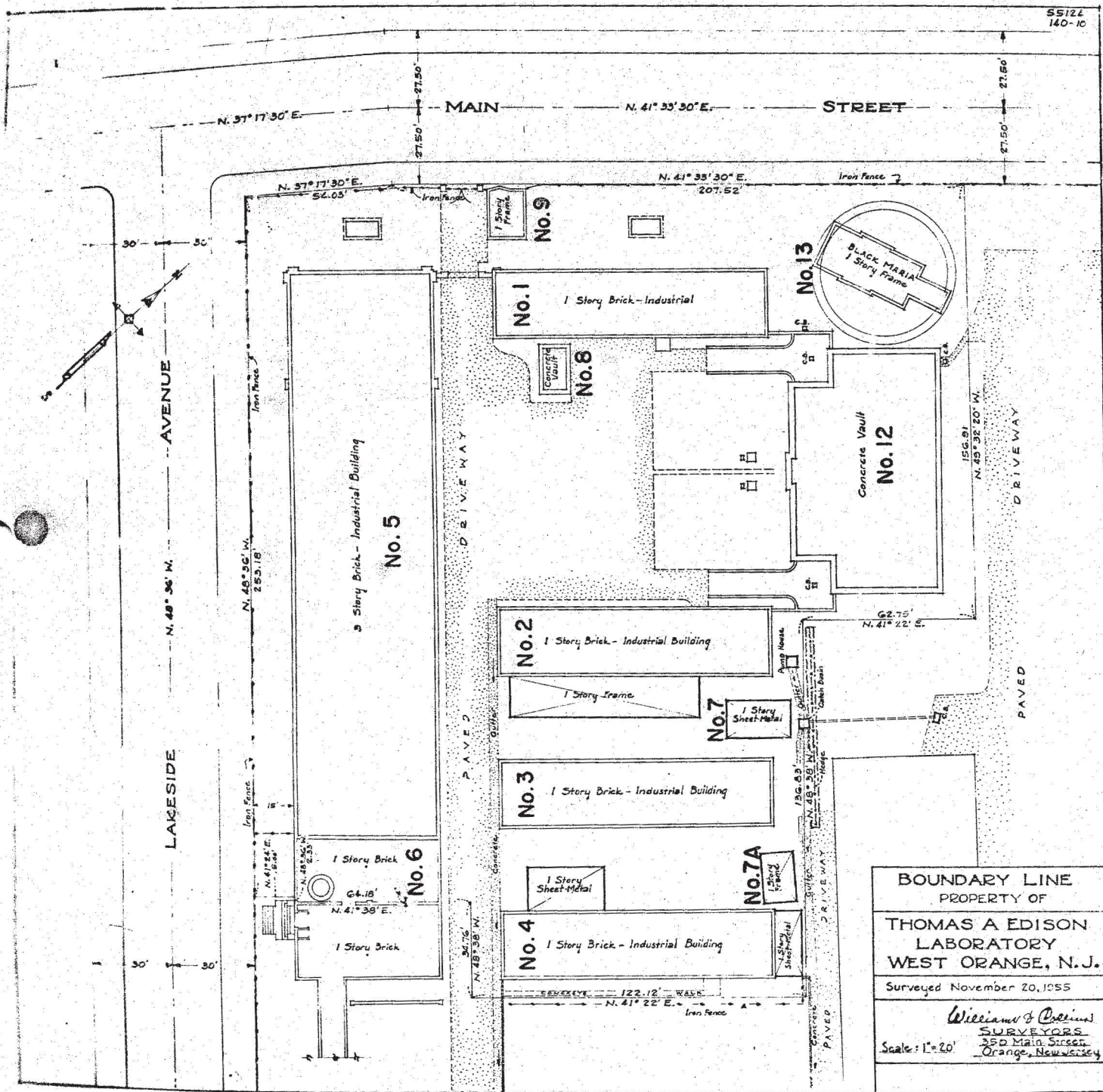


EXHIBIT NO. 2

Partial Section from

"Map of the Edison Interests - Real Estate",
dated February 10, 1919, Catalog No. E-6387

60.0'

AVE.

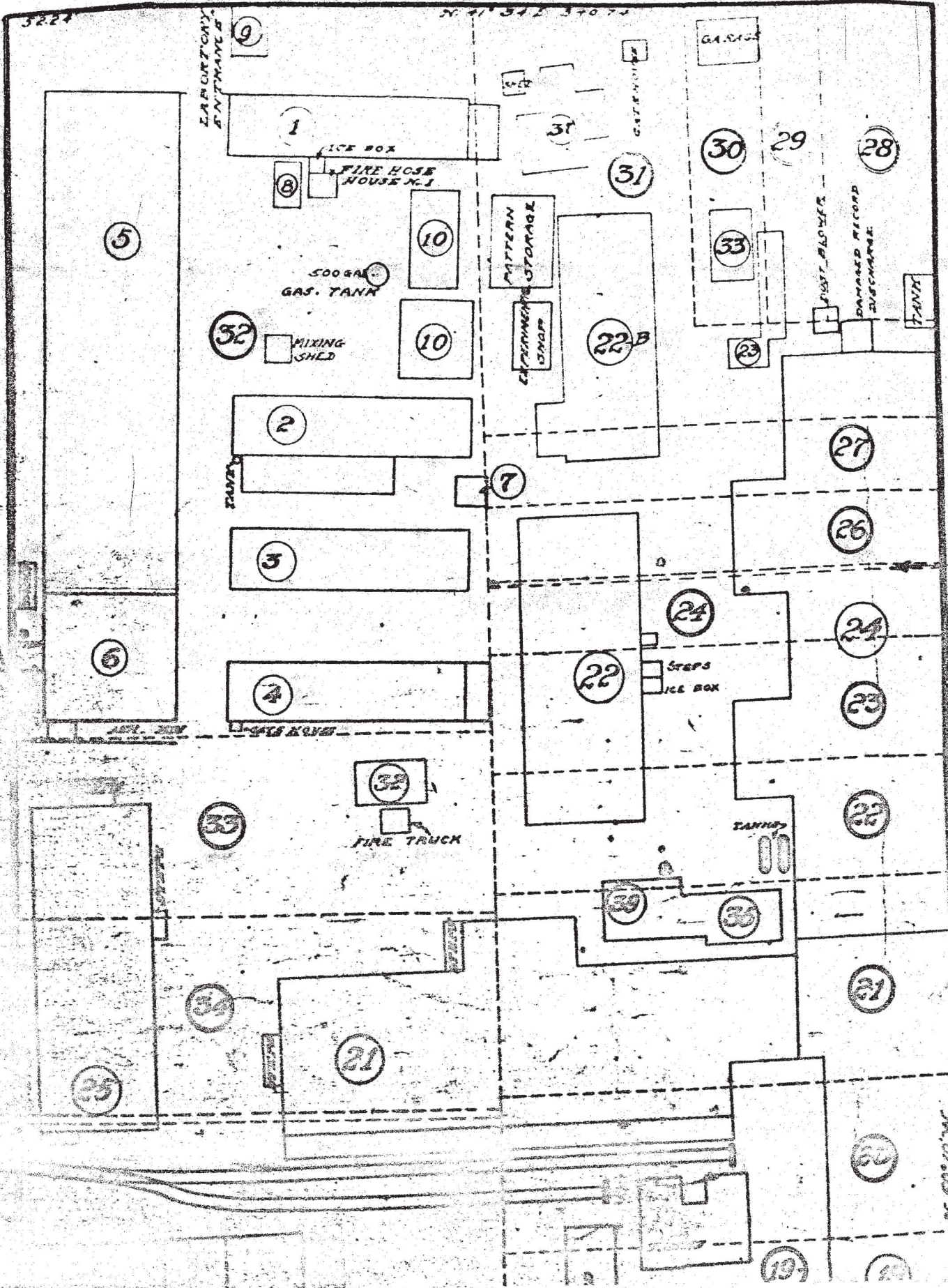


EXHIBIT NO. 3

"Map of the Edison Companies Water Supply System,"
dated December 27, 1919, print made from glass
Negative No. J-23.

EXHIBIT NO. 4

Print made from a map photostat
(Plate I) in Album E-5006-4. The
date of December 27, 1919, was
determined from the last plate in
this album.

LAKESIDE

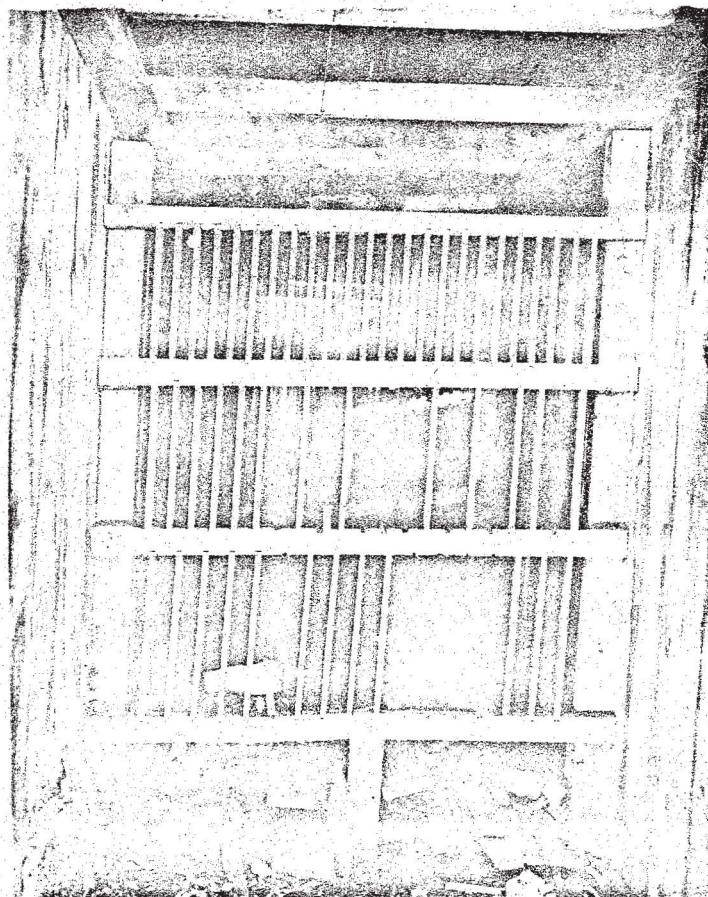
ANAL.

EXHIBIT NO. 5

Photographs of the interior of
Building No. 7A, showing racks
for storing lumber, taken on
October 23, 1963, Negatives Nos.
O-1378 and O-1379.



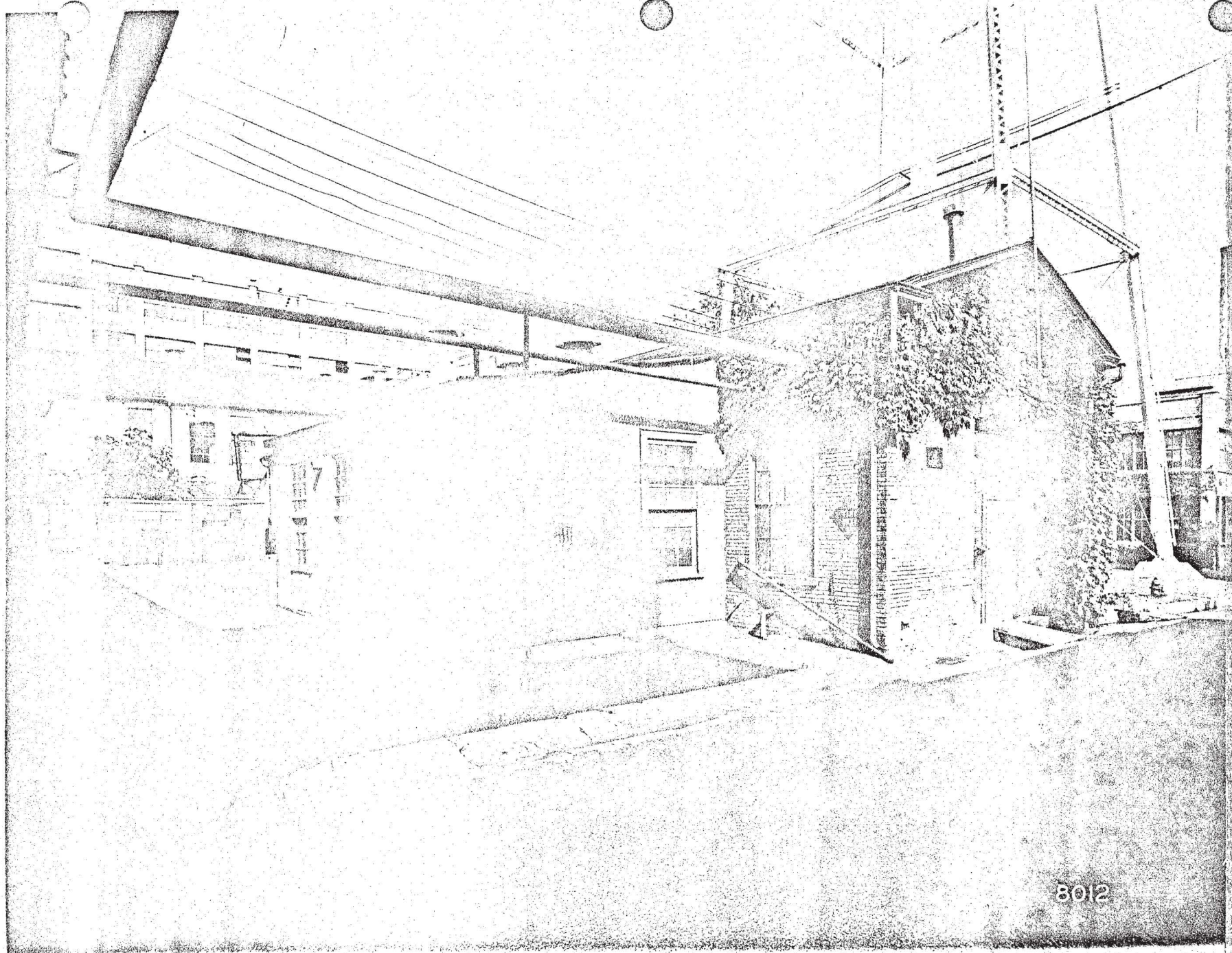
0-1378



0-1379

EXHIBIT NO. 6

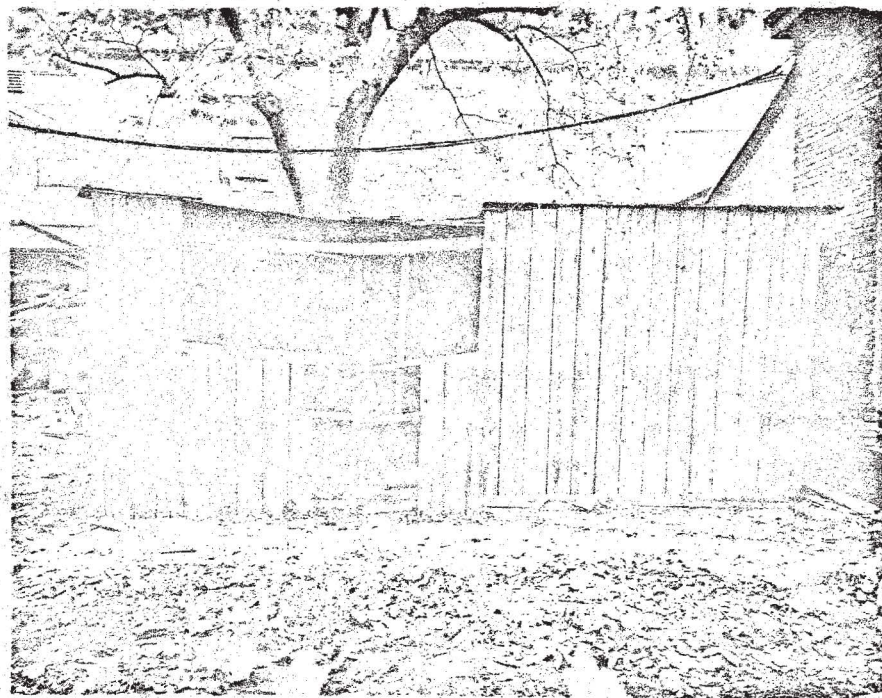
Photograph of exterior of Building No. 7A,
at left and far rear, taken September 7,
1939, Negative No. 8012.



8012

EXHIBIT NO. 7

Photograph of the exterior of Building No. 7A,
taken October 25, 1963, Negative No. C-1380.



0-1380

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT - PART I

BUILDING NO. 7A, WOOD STORAGE BUILDING

"ARCHITECTURAL DATA"

Prepared by

Gordie Whittington
Exhibits Specialist (Restoration)

July 24, 1964

REPORT ON PHYSICAL CONDITION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECONSTRUCTION
OF BUILDING NO. 7A, WOOD STORAGE BUILDING.

A. Physical Condition:

Building No. 7A, Wood Storage Building, was taken down on October 24-25, 1963.

This structure was used for storage of woods needed in patternmaking and other fine cabinetwork required to produce the first working models of many Edison inventions.

Photograph No. 1, dated September 1939, shows the building as being in good condition. By comparison Photograph No. 2, dated September 1956, shows the right-hand window boarded up, and all vertical wallboards, beginning at the lower left-hand side of the window to the right-hand side of the structure, have been replaced. By the time Photograph No. 2 was made, decay was well on the way again. Note the roof sagging, as also the sash, one wallboard missing, and the trim across the lower edge of the window has let go (note the shadow in Photograph No. 2).

A thorough study of the building necessitated removal of non-historical patterns by the dozen and several hundred board feet of partially decayed lumber before one could enter the structure without risk of being trapped should the contents shift. Note Photograph No. 3 dated October 22, 1963, just prior to removal of the debris from inside. This shows rotten plate, sagging roof, fallen door, tar paper over missing wall boards and window opening. In Photograph No. 4 dated October 24, 1963, just after the contents were removed, part of contents may be seen in the left background. It should be noted here that the window sash was removed by the writer at an earlier date for reproduction purposes, while enough material could be salvaged to make reproduction possible. Two sashes are on hand to be installed in the reconstructed building.

By the fall of 1963 the building was so deteriorated that it was depending upon its contents for support. It started swaying dangerously when the contents were removed. It became apparent at this time that only a light wind would topple the structure. Therefore a decision to take the building down before someone could be injured was reached by Superintendent Weig and the writer. Photographs were made of the interior first, and then the building was easily pushed over by hand. Photographs Nos. 5 and 6 were made with the camera at level. Note amount of sway in the walls.

B. Recommendation for Reconstruction

Of the many buildings at Edison National Historic Site one would think adequate storage space for almost any kind of material should be available. However, this is not the case, in fact, none of the buildings is ideally suited to storing inflammable or volatile materials. Three of the buildings in the Laboratory Unit are reinforced concrete, built to store such items. Building No. 3 is used for storage of ledgers and account books; Building No. 12 is the Main Archives and Museum Storage Building; and Building No. 33 was constructed to store cylinder phonograph masters, but at present is fairly well filled to capacity with old motion picture film (some nitrate), and other artifacts pertaining to Mr. Edison. The contents of these buildings are vital to the Edison story and each building should continue its existing function. Besides, altering the buildings to provide safe storage of inflammable materials would not be practical.

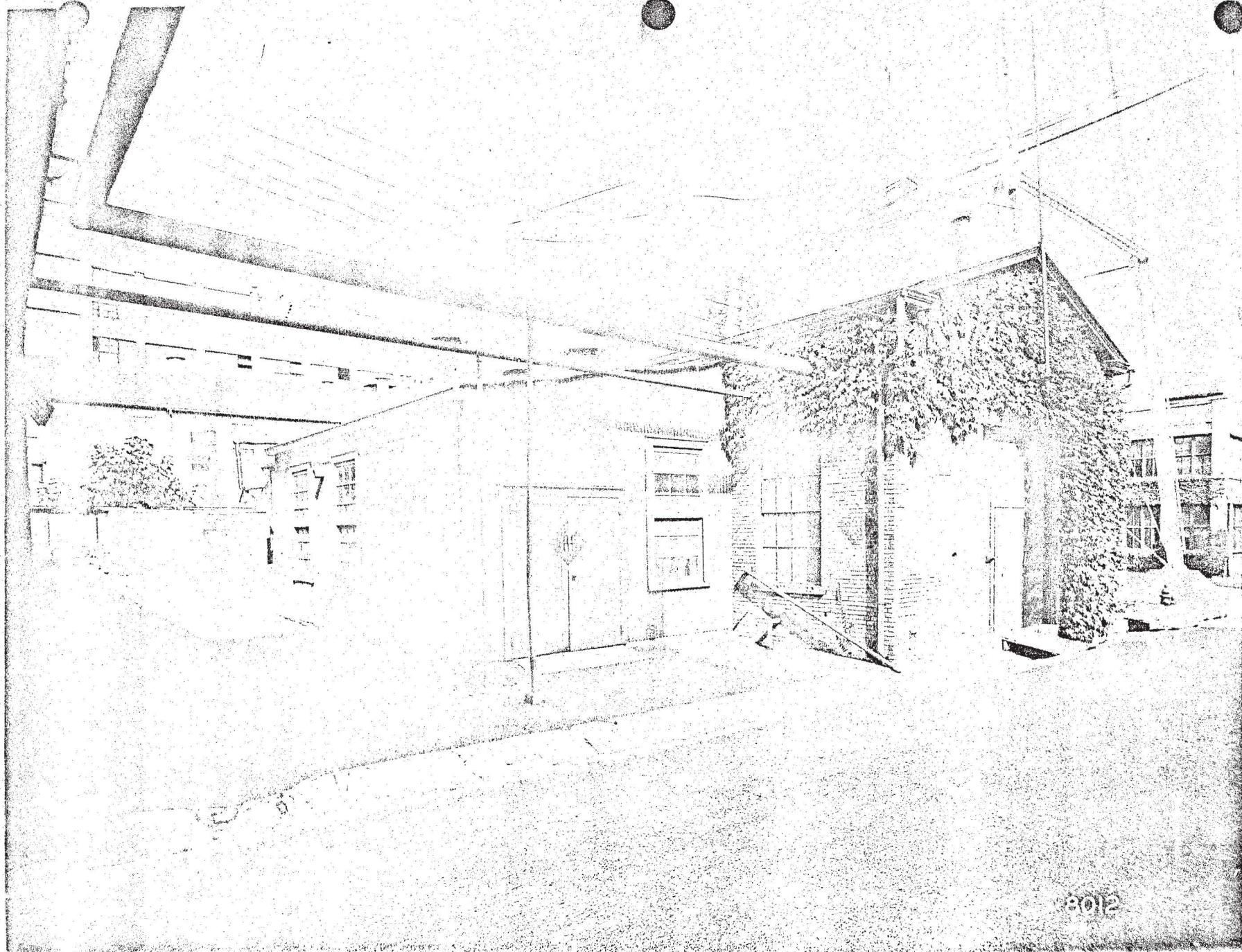
Leanto No. 43 attached to the northeast end of Building No. 4 is fire-resistant, yet far from fireproof, and does not adapt itself for practical access. To make use of this leanto one must either pass through the main part of Building No. 4 or enter from the alley behind the leanto which is approximately 18" above the floor level and requires going via Edison Industries' streets and alleyway to approach with anything too heavy to carry by hand.

I recommend a wood shell to look the same as the original Wood Storage Building be constructed around a masonry room with fireproof doors and vents that close automatically in case of fire.

The proposed reconstruction of the wood shell and masonry room inside are as recommended on the attached drawing by Student Architect E. C. Dreher, July 1964.

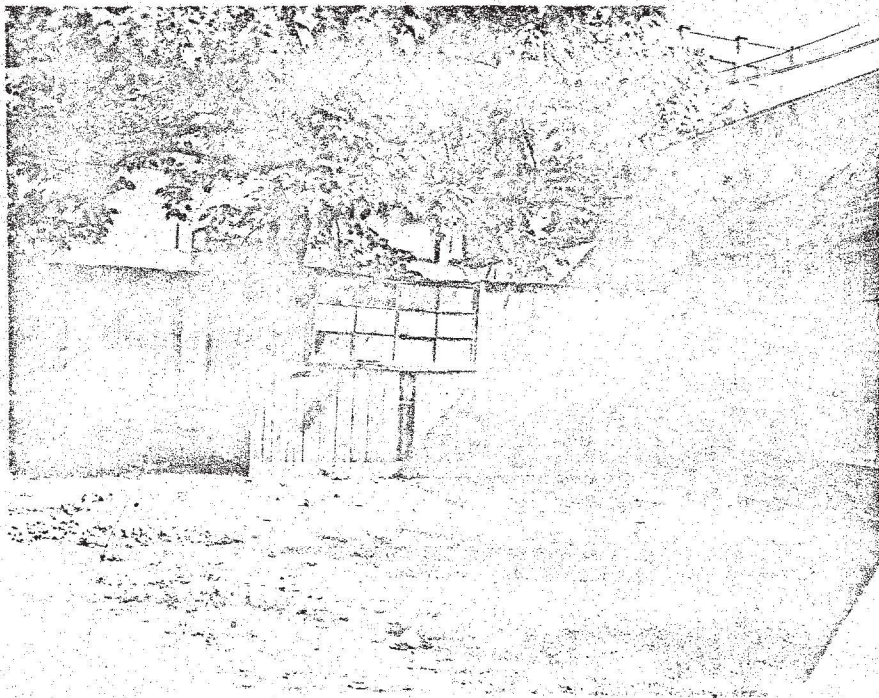
PHOTOGRAPH NO. 1

Building No. 4 at right, and Building No. 7A,
Wood Storage Building, at left rear, taken
September 7, 1939. Negative No. 8012.



PHOTOGRAPH NO. 2

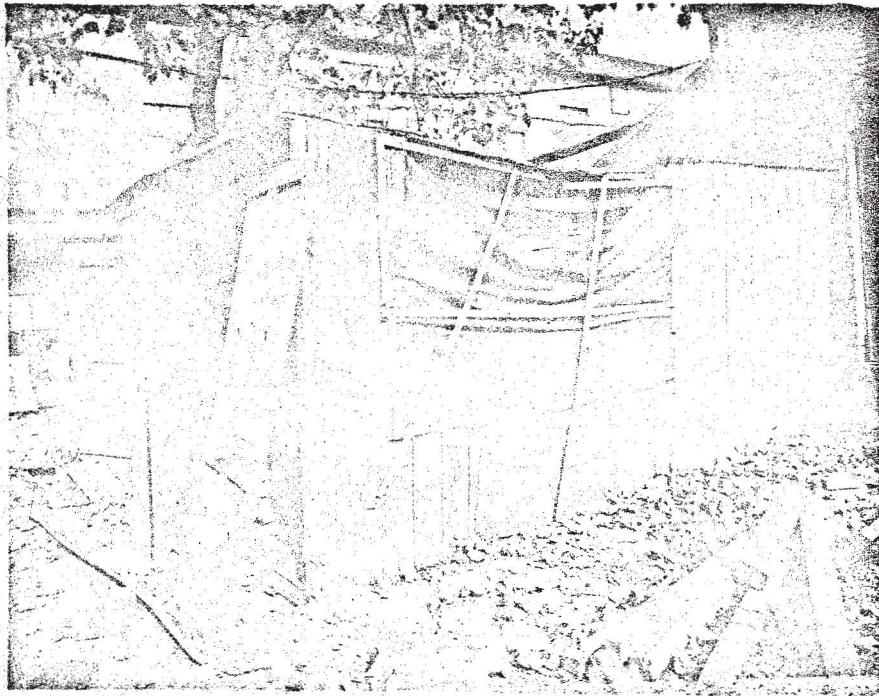
Building No. 7A, Wood Storage Building, as
it appeared September 19, 1956, some time
after alterations or repair. Negative No.
O-274.



0-974

PHOTOGRAPH NO. 3

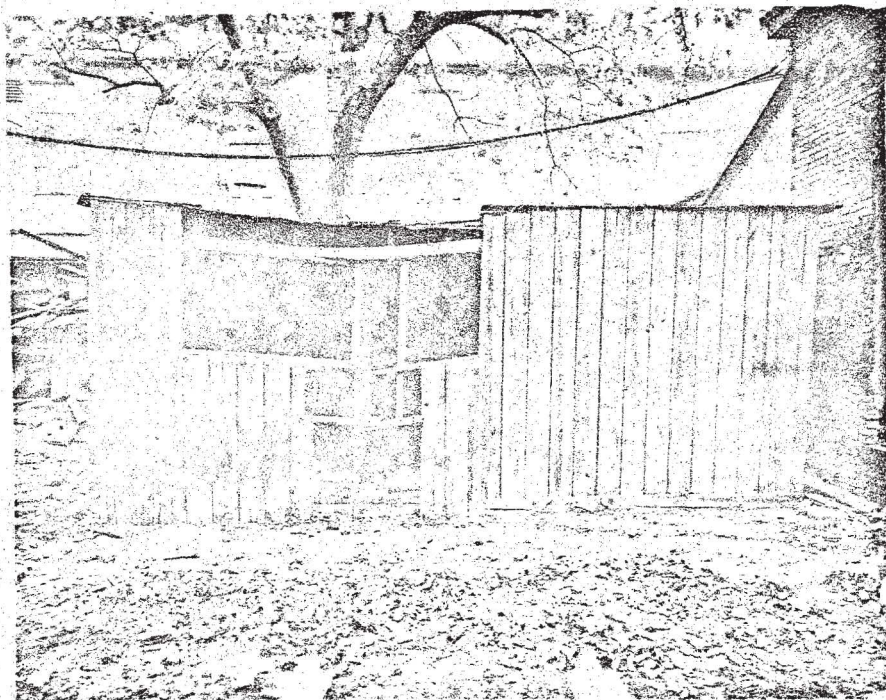
Building No. 7A, Wood Storage Building,
as it appeared prior to removal of its
contents, October 22, 1963. Negative
No. O-1382.



0-1382

PHOTOGRAPH NO. 4

Building No. 74, Wood Storage Building,
immediately after removal of its contents,
October 24, 1963. Negative No. O-1380.



0-1380

PHOTOGRAPH NO. 5

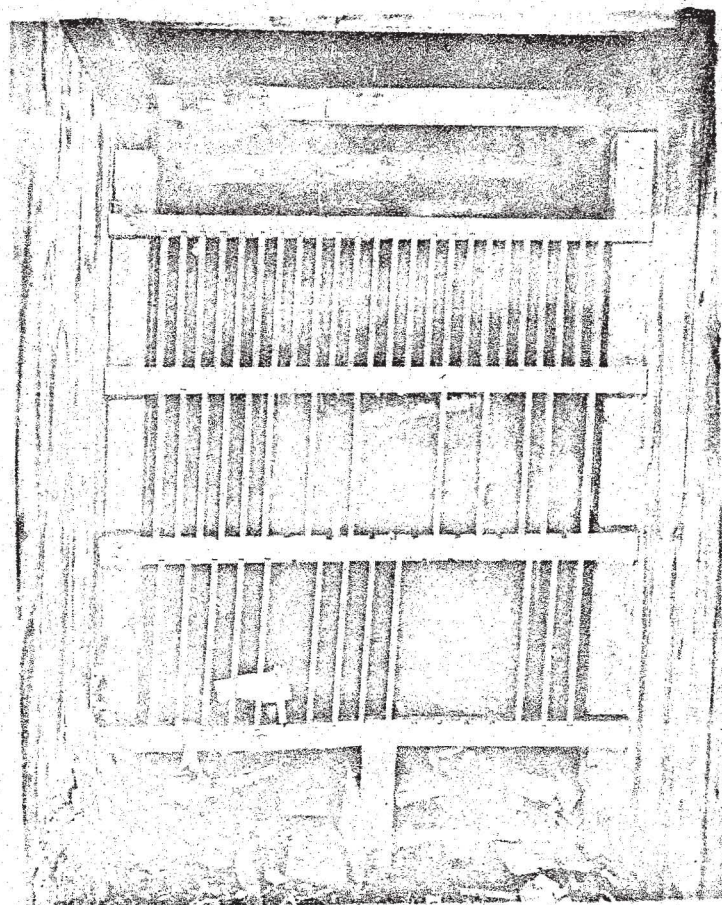
Building No. 7A, Wood Storage Building,
interior view of the earlier section
showing the lumber drying rack and also the
leaning condition of the structure. Picture
taken October 23, 1963, with camera level.
Negative No. O-1378.



0-1378

PHOTOGRAPH NO. 6

Building No. 7A, Wood Storage Building,
interior view of the addition showing lumber
drying rack and leaning condition. Picture
taken October 23, 1963, with camera level.
Negative No. O-1379.



0-1379