PALIMPSEST: THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF CAMP KILMER
ON LIVINGSTON CAMPUS
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY – NEW BRUNSWICK

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For more than two hundred years, land management in the United States has often embraced taking a *tabula rasa* approach, through which the landscape has been successively cleared and manipulated to prepare it for reuse. Alternately adding and erasing layers has modified the landscape, often irreparably. While efficient and cost-effective, this tactic dismisses the concept of the landscape as an historical product consisting of layers of events and actions. Furthermore, a *tabula rasa* approach does not recognize and celebrate this historical legacy, nor does it offer an opportunity to either engage the members of the Rutgers community and the larger community beyond the boundaries of the campus with the importance of this history, or to integrate the academic mission of Rutgers University as a future plans for the site are developed.

Through this thesis, I chronicle the transition of a site with a hidden history on the Rutgers University’s Livingston Campus by following the historical development of its natural and cultural landscapes with the objective of identifying opportunities to express these narratives. Inspired by the concept of “palimpsest” in both its literal definition as physical evidence of historic reuse, and the academic premise outlined by André Corboz
in his consideration of landscape as form, process, and product, I document the site’s evolution through archival research, anecdotal narratives, personal interviews, and photography. This research has revealed critical but underappreciated historical contexts that have not been previously acknowledged, including the considerations that led to the selection of the location of Camp Kilmer, the first and largest U.S. Army staging camp of its kind during World War II; its later use as a refugee camp following the Hungarian Revolution; its reuse as Kilmer College for returning G.I.s; and its subsequent acquisition for a campus by Rutgers University.

In light of the University’s current 2030 master plan, which does not address the historical significance of Camp Kilmer with more than a passing reference, this study concludes with a series of questions and potential considerations that could be contemplated in order to prevent erasure of the site’s cultural legacy. This includes examination of the concept of “preservation,” and its context in relation to forward-thinking solutions presented through more experimental approaches to its preservation and interpretation.
Almost every landscape is a layered landscape. Through a combination of natural and cultural events, landscapes accumulate layers of history. These histories are inscribed physically - in soil horizons, bedrock layers, fossils, petrified wood, rotting stumps and decaying bones – as well as in pot shards, arrowheads, ancient hearths, bullets, rusting factories, stone walls, abandoned mines, and plumes of contaminated groundwater. Our minds and our memories also harbor layers of meaning tied to landscapes. Physical landscapes evoke and intertwine with social and cultural meanings, and through the active management of landscapes urban, rural, and wild, we foreground some layers and background to bury others.

Marion Hourdequin and David G. Havlick
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In July 2016, I took a break from my preliminary thesis work to explore a corner of Livingston Campus at Rutgers University-New Brunswick that I was, at the time, considering for a masterplan or design treatment.

The roads on this corner of the campus were unusual, with oddly simple names: Road 1, Avenue E, and Street 1603 – the last of which was nothing more than a pothole-filled stretch of dirt and broken asphalt that ran between a series of unassuming, single-story buildings. Most of the buildings appeared deserted, with a few having roofs that no longer provided protection from the elements.

It was a sultry, midsummer day. Water was still dripping from the downspouts, following an intense, yet brief afternoon thundershower. The large cumulus clouds were dazzling against the brilliant blue sky. I left my car on the hard-packed driveway and pushed through the wet grass of the overgrown space between two of the single-story, neglected gray buildings at this corner of Livingston Campus. Pant legs dampened, I experienced my first revelation among the derelict structures.

Unintentionally, the area around the buildings was becoming a test bed for pioneer species – birch, eastern cedar, goldenrod, little bluestem – and the buildings almost consumed by the young trees and underbrush. As I stood motionless, a doe and her fawn crept quietly from the underbrush to drink from a pool left behind by the storm. A small heron appeared at my other side, snatching up an unfortunate frog or toad. Underneath that azure sky, I immediately realized the potential for design interventions that might reintroduce natural systems, while also capitalizing on the space and structures in a way that embraced the educational mission of the university.
What was not immediately apparent to me was the historical significance of the site. My research about the history of these somewhat derelict and non-assuming structures uncovered a secret held in plain sight: They mark the original transportation depot for Camp Kilmer, a sprawling military facility and portal through which almost three million troops, prisoners of war, and refugees passed during World War II and the Korean conflict, beginning June 1941 and ending in 1957.

Following the decommissioning of the Camp in the mid-1950s, Rutgers University purchased a portion of the land in 1962 and, though removing almost all of the former Camp structures, retained its network of streets and infrastructure to serve as the foundation for its new Livingston Campus. In this way, the University inadvertently retained a segment of its cultural history. All that was needed was for someone to tell the story of Camp Kilmer and its layered landscape.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

*The land, so heavily charged with traces and with past readings, seems very similar to a palimpsest.*

André Corboz, “The Land as Palimpsest”

The Livingston Campus at Rutgers University-New Brunswick comprises 540-acres of the original Camp Kilmer. Acquired by the university in 1964, it represents roughly one-third of the total land originally dedicated to the U.S. Army military encampment. It sits geographically north of the Raritan River, almost directly across the waterway from the Rutgers College Avenue campus in New Brunswick. The Livingston campus shares a dedicated exit from Route 18, which connects both it and the adjacent Busch campus with the city of New Brunswick. New Jersey Transit rail service has a station stop in the town of Edison, approximately two miles east of the site, and the university’s expansive bus system offers extensive coverage across all campuses.

At the southern border of the campus, set behind a border of densely planted berms, grassy fields, and Eastern cedar-dominated wooded areas sits a wide chevron of single-story, nondescript buildings that serve as the hub for the university’s operations and maintenance facilities. (Figure 1.) Buffered by the Rutgers Ecological Preserve to the west, the university’s waste depository to the south, and a New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission Agency office to the east, this area tends to go unnoticed by many passersby. But these somewhat derelict and non-assuming structures belie a secret: they mark the original depot and arrival area for Camp Kilmer, a sprawling military facility and portal through which almost three million troops, prisoners of war, and refugees
Figure 1. The former Camp Kilmer warehouse district site on Rutgers Livingston Campus. View to the West. (Photograph by author, October 7, 2016).
passed during World War II and the Korean conflict, beginning June, 1941 and ending in July, 1953.

Similar to the other New Brunswick campuses of Rutgers University, Livingston Campus evolved in stages. Each installation of architecture and vehicular and pedestrian circulation impacted the landscape over time, superseding but never quite erasing what previously existed. Livingston Campus, in particular, capitalized on the original Camp Kilmer infrastructure – roads, sewer and electric lines – to define its current shape and development plan. After Rutgers acquired the site in 1962, the landscape transitioned from a war-time staging center to a point of growth for the university. More than 1,500 buildings and supporting structures were demolished to make way for a new vision of campus design but left the engineered infrastructure as a palimpsest.

i. A Place Where Decisions Must Be Made

In his essay, *The Land as Palimpsest*, André Corboz presented the idea of the urban center as having dominance and imposing its will over the adjacent countryside.² He based this on his observation of the late 18th-century period following the French Revolution, during which time the traditional “peasant” country continued to supply the urban city with resources. With its ability to dictate the law of the land, the city became the epicenter of power and continued to evolve, transform, and grow exponentially. Yet its co-dependency with its partner countryside remained essentially the same through the 19th century. This symbiotic yet unequal relationship would later inspire Farinelli to remark that these rural areas would remain “the place for executing decisions made within the urban area.”³
In some ways, the development of the area now encompassed by the Livingston Campus at Rutgers has followed a similar arc. The subjugation of a formerly rural, agricultural area, first by the will of the Dutch or English crown, followed by the federal government of the United States, and then most recently the leadership of Rutgers, a state university, demonstrates a similar relationship through which the nature of the landscape has evolved by fulfill the needs imposed by the more powerful “city.” With the arrival of the first Europeans, the original inhabitants of the land were forced to first accommodate these settlers. After the removal of the Lenni-Lenape, tribal lands were carved up into large estates granted by European royalty for white landowners. Industrialists in New Brunswick and Piscataway eventually supplanted many of these largely agricultural tracts and woodlands with railroad tracks, roads, canals, communities and factories for greater ease of manufacture and distribution. At the outset of the second World War, the U.S. Army applied a *tabula rasa* approach to carve space out of the still largely bucolic landscape to accommodate a massive staging area for troops. Eventually, Rutgers University would embrace the utilitarian nature of this existing landscape shortly after acquiring it. Endorsing a similar if less encompassing tactic, university decision-makers had the site cleared of most of the military buildings to make way for new campus construction. But by deciding to retain the Camp’s original infrastructure, the leadership at Rutgers inadvertently preserved visible records of the site’s cultural history.

ii. Concept of Palimpsest

Originating in the ancient Greek and Roman literary world, the term “palimpsest,” refers to a manuscript parchment from which the text has been largely removed, either by scraping or washing so that it may be reused, but continues to display traces of the
previous document.\(^4\) (Figure 2.) This practice was born of necessity, since Pergamene (“parchment”) made of lamb or kid skin was expensive to produce and therefore not easily obtained in the era before the invention of the printing press and paper.\(^5\) However, as a more durable material, parchment enabled the faint remains of the *scriptio inferior*\(^6\) – the “underwriting” – to reappear over time. It was this eventual legibility – gained either naturally or through the use of chemicals or scanning technologies – that became a critical tool that has allowed scholars to decipher original and ancient texts that would otherwise be lost.

The definition of the word has since evolved to generally indicate something that has unusually diverse layers or aspects that are apparent beneath the surface. In this way, it can be applied to traditional design practices that include “architecture, archeology, and geomorphology to denote and object made or worked upon for one purpose and later reused for another.”\(^7\) In a more contemporary sense, this practice also applies to the works within the fine arts, performance, and spoken or sung works as artists create original works through the manipulation, sampling, and layering of creative and intellectual material that preceded it.

As mentioned before, Corboz reiterates that the urban/country landscape as we know it exists as a result of three major processes or conditions. Natural transformations, such as the impact of the advance or retreat of glaciers over the earth’s surface, erosion, or extreme weather events have contributed to the ever-changing face and structure of the urban landscape. So, too, has the systematic exploitation of the land by man – from the deep impact of land-moving, terracing and infrastructure projects (construction of roads, bridges, canals) to more topographical impacts such as agricultural activity, land-clearing
Figure 2. The Codex Guelferbytanus 64 Weissenburgensis, with text of *Origins of Isidor*, partly palimpsest, with texts of earlier codices Guelferbytanus A, Guelferbytanus B, Codex Carolinus, and several other texts in Greek and Latin. (Source: Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbutterel Digitale Bibliothek (WDB). “The Wolfenbutterel Codez Guelferbytanus 64 Weissenburgensis.”)
and reforestation. The third condition is the impact of the people who inhabit or claim the space who, according to Corboz, develop a planning relationship with it and help to define how it will evolve.\(^8\)

Through each of these processes, the landscape is changed, with some features permanently erased and others still evident in its successive uses. While Corboz’s definition of the layered landscape includes both the abstract notion of mapping, as compared to the realization of its true form, as well as the tangible manifestation of nature as a construct,\(^9\) we are left with myriad ways to trace its historic, cultural and physical lineage.

In this way, Corboz concludes that nature is also how we define it.\(^10\) But this approach does not answer the question for contemporary planners, landscape architects, and urban archeologists who continue to grapple today with the challenge of determining how the urban landscape should be used. With its physical manifestation in the framework of the Livingston Campus, as well as the mapping compiled herein, the former Camp Kilmer site offers an opportunity to explore a mix of traditional and creative ways to reveal and interpret the landscape in all of its forms.

iii. Methodology

The original intent of my research was to acquire a basic understanding of the history of the former Camp Kilmer site on Livingston Campus in order to determine the potential implications on its preservation and future usage. The basis of my research was to create a factual foundation that would help inform a design approach for what appeared to be an under-utilized, neglected site at Rutgers University – New Brunswick. My thesis has since evolved to accommodate an academic paper designed to encapsulate
the natural and cultural history of the former military site, with the goal that it might engage landscape practitioners and university planners in a discourse about the considerations that should be included in evaluating a site earmarked for demolition and redevelopment.

When I initially undertook the research, I was unaware of the breadth of cultural history reflected in this landscape, nor the depth of research required in order to compile a cohesive record of what this site represents. It was apparent from the outset that the information about this site was not readily available nor well-documented. My research required obtaining materials and information through an expanded network of archival, military and institutional organizations across the country.

I utilized an integrated selection of qualitative methods, relying predominantly on documentary analysis for the majority of my research. This allowed me to obtain much of the recorded history of the campus location from existing documents that were located at a number of institutions, government agencies, and academic organizations across the United States. These materials, which included academic papers, military archives, contemporary press reports, personal interviews, maps, surveys, and architectural plans, revealed a great deal about the people and organizations who have dictated the use of this specific landscape, as well as the social context in which these decisions were made. Challenges to this approach included locating the various sources of these materials, which were scattered across multiple repositories across the country. Given the time period in which the major transformations on the landscape occurred, specifically World War II and thereafter, the potential for a lack of institutional or anecdotal history about Camp Kilmer was significant. There are only two known first-person accounts available
of the Camp Kilmer Post History, the earliest of which is held by the National Archives, another a photocopy of a later version can be found in the Rutgers Special Collections Library. Neither of these are properly sourced and can be considered more anecdotal than academic in nature. Architectural renderings and supportive material generated for military installations are not always retained by the U.S. Army, regardless of the relative cultural importance of the architect who drafted them. In this regard, I was fortunate that Rutgers University retained the original Camp Kilmer construction drawings, which are stored in the University’s own archives as part of its land acquisition documentation. It is unclear if additional research into recorded written and oral accounts of the time period will produce additional historical context or tactical information.

I supported this documentary framework with an assessment of archival research, which included written records and review of military communications conducted during the time period. When available, visual materials from commercial, institutional and government agency archives were reviewed, including historic aerials, maps, pamphlets, and architectural renderings. From this archival research, I developed a number of visuals, including maps, that tracked changes to the landscape from the time preceding Camp Kilmer, through the Camp Kilmer era, and on to its acquisition and use by Rutgers University. This allowed me to better understand the context of current day conditions as compared to the time period in which the campus site was used as a U.S. Army staging area.

My next step was to search for landscape architecture and design projects that could serve as case studies, with particular attention paid to former military campuses that had been acquired by either cultural organizations or universities and repurposed for
21st century and campus development and expansion. When evaluating these precedents, attention was paid equally to projects that took a more straight-forward preservation approach, such as OLIN’s work on The Presidio’s Parade Grounds, as well as those that repurposed and retrofitted existing barracks and facilities for contemporary use and land preservation efforts, as was done at California State University-Monterey Bay (CSUMB). Additional research was focused on former military sites converted to university campuses that now also encompass public open space and cultural sites, such as the CSUMB’s affiliation with the Ford Ord National Park and the Texas A&M University Riverland Campus.

When available, I collected anecdotal narratives to lend additional context to the research I collected. Gaps in the historical timeline of Camp Kilmer are common and therefore require a certain level of reliance on anecdotal material and references. This included meeting with members of the University’s Office of Planning, Libraries and Archives, Department of Ecology, the Metlar-Bodine House Museum, the New Brunswick Historical Society and the Piscataway Historical & Heritage Society. Additional anecdotal information was collected from discussion with family members of Antonin Raymond, the architect most closely associated with the design of Camp Kilmer, and the executive director of the Raymond Farm Center for Living Arts & Design, the newly formed non-profit foundation supporting the architect’s former home and body of work.

Overall, this thesis research, through its use of documentary information such as university and military records, establishes an abbreviated history of the landscape currently encompassed by Rutgers University’s Livingston Campus. As such, this
research can provide a strong foundation for future outreach and campus development opportunities for Rutgers-New Brunswick as well as a methodological framework for academics conducting research on similar landscapes with past military uses.
CHAPTER TWO:
CULTURAL HISTORY OF LIVINGSTON CAMPUS AND SURROUNDING AREA

Given its location at the heart of a major transportation corridor along the mid-Atlantic seaboard, the Piscataway/New Brunswick has served as a historic crossroads for the country since before the first European settlers arrived from Europe. The history of this area is manifested in the way the land and its use has been changed over centuries, bending to the inexorable forces of nature while simultaneously evolving to accommodate the ever-changing needs of the people who live upon it. From shifting riverbeds to architectural encroachment, evident traces of these historic periods abound. But to understand and appreciate the current conditions of Rutgers-New Brunswick’s Livingston Campus, one needs to look back at its cultural history.

i. Natural History: Foundation of the Site

Despite being one of the smallest states in the country by total area, New Jersey has a remarkably diverse geology and a geography that is unique in the Mid-Atlantic region. Of the four distinct physiographic provinces in the state (Figure 3.), Middlesex County in New Jersey straddles the geologic boundary between the Piedmont Province (in the north and west) and the Great Coastal Plain (in the east and south)."1 The greater Piedmont is a distinct plateau area, beginning in New Jersey and culminating in central Alabama, that rests between the Atlantic Coastal Plan and the main Appalachian mountain range. (Figure 4.)

The Township of Piscataway, in which the former Camp Kilmer site is located, sits solely on the Piedmont Province – the soils and rocks of which reflect their prehistoric legacy. Dating from the late Triassic and Early Jurassic ages (230 million to
Figure 3. New Jersey Geology. (Source: Geologic Index-Map of New Jersey Showing Distribution of Systems, 1940. State of New Jersey Department of Conservation and Development, Division of Geology and Topography. Bulletin 50, Plate I. Baltimore. Lith A. Hoen & Co. 1940.)
Figure 4. Land Type Areas of New Jersey (Source: G.A. Quakenbusch and J.C.F. Tedrow et al. “Land Type Areas of New Jersey (1954).” New Jersey Experimental Station, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service.)
190 million years ago), the Piedmont is marked by “interbedded sandstone, shale, conglomerate, basalt, and diabase (that) underlie a broad lowland interrupted by a long, generally northeast-southwest trending ridges and uplands.” A large, elongated crustal block runs underneath the entire Province, sloping downwards towards toward the Atlantic Ocean. These series of crustal blocks, several of which are situated in Eastern North America, form rift basins into which sediment from the adjacent uplands has been deposited over millennia. This sediment collected along the rivers and lakes along the basins and eventually formed the conglomerate, sandstone, siltstone, and shale for which the Piedmont is known. The resulting distinct, reddish-brown “brownstone,” as well as the copper that had collected within the sandstone and shale has contributed to the county’s local economy. Though generally poor material for aquifers, the sedimentary Piedmont rock is capable of yielding quantities of water, the locations of which contributed to eventual human settlement. Today, the predominant topography of the Piedmont is also evident in the Township of Piscataway, where gently rolling hills eventually plateau and slope downwards towards the fairly flat shoreline of the Raritan River. One of the state’s largest rivers, the Raritan River’s name was derived from the native Lenape/Algonquin population who lived along its banks, its original name “Naraticong” suggesting the “river behind the island.” With a watershed that drains into the Raritan Bay near Staten Island, the Raritan is considered to be the origin of the course of the mouth of the Hudson River before the end of the last ice age.

As one of the most significant waterways in both the state and New York Bay, the Raritan has been an important transportation route and geographic feature for millennia. Native peoples paddled its length and out into the New York Bay on their way to fish,
hunt, and trade with neighboring tribes. Its ease in navigability from the Raritan bay to the Piscataway/New Brunswick area was a key factor in driving European settlement in the 15th and 16th centuries along its shores. During colonial years of conflict, the Raritan River enabled troop conveyance for both sides of military operations. In the years following the American Revolution, the river also supported much of the early industry around New Brunswick and enabled the transport of agricultural goods from central New Jersey. Opening in 1834, the 36-mile Delaware & Raritan Canal fueled the area’s industry – primarily by its use for transport of coal from Pennsylvania to New York City during the Industrial Revolution. The river has ultimately helped to define the 18th and 19th century municipal landscape, forming part of the border between Middlesex and Somerset counties.

An important source of drinking water, the Raritan has also historically supported a rich diversity of wildlife and flora, though that landscape has changed as the waterway’s uses have evolved. Back in the early 1600s, what is now a dense, suburban area surrounding Rutgers’ New Brunswick and Piscataway campuses was largely undeveloped forest and river plain. The abundance of fish species that could be found in the Piscataway/New Brunswick area are still prevalent today: largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, trout, catfish, and American eels. Nesting birds and water fowl can be found along its length, either nesting on its shores or capitalizing on its rich diversity of food sources. Larger mammals, such as deer, beaver, mink, fox, coyote, and bear, were singularly important resources for the native population for food, furs, and skins – which led to brisk and easy trade with the European settlers.

The woodlands, meadows, and wetlands of the Raritan River basin have long
since given way to the sprawl of highways, cul-de-sacs, and architecture in the 21st century. The numbers of wildlife native to the area has long been truncated to those species that have been able to adapt to the fragmented urban built environment.

ii. Cultural History: The Lenni-Lenape, Dutch/European Settlement

Modern-day New Jersey bears little resemblance to Scheyichbi,⁶ the land of the native Lenni-Lenape, the “Original People,”⁷ who had settled in the area thousands of years ago. Piscataway was officially incorporated by the New Jersey Legislature on February 21, 1798 as one of the state’s initial group of 104 townships.⁸ The fifth-oldest municipality in the state, Piscataway was officially founded on December 18, 1666,⁹ when John Martin, Charles Gilman, Hugh Dunn and Hopewell Hull bought the land from Daniel Pierce “for 30 pounds’ sterling.”¹⁰

By many accounts, the founding of Piscataway was an important early link in the chain of European settlements that developed along the Atlantic seacoast. The Township of Piscataway served as a gateway to the colonization of the greater Raritan Valley, and also contributed to the establishment of later settlements that eventually ceded from the original land grant. The townships of Bound Brook, Franklin, Kingston, Millstone, New Brunswick, Princeton, and Somerville were either in part or in entirety carved from the vast land-holding of Piscataway.¹¹

The community grew from Native American lands acquired from the indigenous Lenni-Lenape (“Men of Men”),¹² whose historical territory of Lenapekoking¹³ included present day New Jersey, the Delaware Watershed, and much of the area along western Long Island and the Lower Hudson Valley basin.¹⁴ (Figure 5.) According to the current
Figure 5. New Jersey, 1656. Redrawn from a Map of Adrien Vandderdonck. This map also records the earliest record of “Rariton Village,” of the Sanhican tribe, which became Piscataway in 1666. (Source: Walter C. Meuly. History of Piscataway Township: 1666-1976. Piscataway Bicentennial Commission, 1976, 9.)
day Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape, their ancestors were a nation of kindred people and, collectively, one of the most ancient tribes from which many other tribes of the Atlantic Seaboard originated. Called “grandfathers” or “ancient ones” by the Native Nations, the Lenni-Lenape were known as skilled warriors, though they much preferred peace and excelled in mediation skills.

The Raritan Valley offered year-round succor and sustenance for the Lenape, who were predominantly a sedentary people, moving between campsites with the seasons. They augmented their hunting and gathering by cultivating vegetation through companion planting varieties of beans, corn, and squash. The local bays ensured easily accessible quantities of fish and shellfish. Their sophisticated hunting tactics coupled with their ability to manage their natural resources allowed the population to thrive. By some estimates, there may have been as many as 80 settlements housing more than 15,000 Lenape around much of current day New Brunswick and Piscataway, and throughout what is now the New York Harbor.

European exploration of the Mid-Atlantic region dates back to the voyages undertaken by Giovanni da Verrazano, a Florentine navigator who is reportedly the first European to reach the New York-New Jersey coastline. His written account from April 1524 includes a report of the New Jersey shoreline as “very green and forested, but without harbors and with some pleasant promontories and small rivers,” of Hudson River Bay, he noted “between two prominent hills a very wide river flowed out to sea.” It was in the Lower New York harbor that Verrazano was met by Lenape in canoes, who paddled out to meet the explorer.
One of the next documented accounts of interaction with the native people was not until 85 years later. With the financial backing of the Dutch East India Company, Henry Hudson reached the Hudson River Bay in his attempt to locate a northwest passage to the Orient. In 1609, Hudson dropped anchor near current-day Sandy Hook, New Jersey. According to his log books, Hudson’s reconnaissance party came across a large congregation of natives, who gave them “tobacco and dried currants” and who were dressed in “some mantels of feathers and some in skins of diverse sorts of good furres. They had red copper tobacco pipes and other things of copper they did wear about their necks.”

Hudson’s descriptions of the landscape were equally illustrative. Noting initially that the shoreline was a “pleasant land to see,” his records of forays into Newark Bay reported a landscape that was “pleasant with grasse and flowers and goodly trees as any they had seene and very sweet smells came from them.” After surveying the region for several weeks, Hudson recorded in his logs that several landings were made along the Hudson River – which included accounts of trading with the natives – before he sailed back to Europe.

The first Dutch, French, and English settlers arrived from Europe soon after, following the advent of cartography and a promise of haven within a “New World.” Puritans, Quakers, Baptists, and other fundamentalist Christians, who were at odds with the established Church of England, fled religious persecution in their country after several decades of religious reformation and political turmoil. Though not permitted by the Crown to immigrate, these congregants often fled to neighboring countries before sailing to the Americas.
The Mayflower Pilgrims, who set sail from Leyden, Holland in 1620, were originally intent on landing in the Hudson Bay area – but inclement weather required them to reconsider their charted course, as émigré William Bradford’s journal recounts:

After some deliberation had amongst themselves and with ye master of ye ships, they talked aboute and resolved to stande for ye southward to finde someplace aboute Hudson’s River for their habitation. But after they had sailed yt course aboute halfe ye day, they fell amongst deangerous should and roring breakers, and they were so farr intangled ther with, as they conceived them selves in great danger.26

The Plymouth Colony was established in Massachusetts over the course of the next 10 years, with successive Puritan settlements extending further west and northward into native territory, reaching as far north as the Piscataqua River in the region that would become New Hampshire and Maine. The Lenape were slowly displaced over the course of the ensuing decades, as more European settlers arrived in the area. Having no natural defenses to illnesses brought by the new arrivals, coupled with unfamiliarity with English concepts such as land ownership that upset their way of life, the populations of the native people dwindled as they succumbed to illness and lost their lands – often for simple items such as buttons and blankets – through the many transactions conducted with them by the English. (Figures 6 and 7.)

To residents of the Old Country, the mid-Atlantic region beckoned with its promise of freedom and relative wealth. A promotional manuscript from 1684, designed to encourage potential settlers to move from European cities to the region that became Piscataway, offers a vivid account of the rich resources touted at the time:

For Fishery, the Sea-Banks there are very well stored with many other sorts of flat and small Fish. Also Sturgeon, Great Basse, Eels, and Shell-fish, as Oysters etc. in great plenty and easie to take. The Countrey is well stored with Wild Deer, Conies, and wild Fowl of several sorts; as, in Turkeys, Pidgeons, Partidges, Plover, Quail,
wild Swans, Geese, Ducks etc. in great plenty. It produceth variety of good delicious Fruits; as, Grapes, Plums, Mulberries, Apricocks, Quinces, Water-Melons etc.…

Enterprising pioneers who had already settled the wilderness of the northern Atlantic region used the trails established by the indigenous peoples to reach New Jersey. The extensive trail system of the Lenape leveraged the landscape for efficiency in travel, but were often not engineered beyond the width of accommodating a single traveler at a time. Over time, these rudimentary, yet time-worn, trails were widened for horse and wagon, and later further widened and paved to become major travel routes – many of which are still used today. When the English took the New Jersey territory from the Dutch, one such path became the King’s Highway and crossed the state from Philadelphia to New York City. Today, this road passes through Woodbridge and Piscataway townships. This road crossed the Raritan River at Inian’s Ferry – currently known as present-day New Brunswick. (Figure 8.)

iii. The Branching Point

Several accounts indicate that Quaker and Baptist settlers originating from the northern Puritan colony of Piscataqua may have been responsible for naming the community of Piscataway. Quakers and Baptists arrived in the Raritan Valley area in 1666, after fleeing the intolerant Puritan colony on the Piscataqua River, the coastal border between present-day Maine and New Hampshire. By calling their new home on the Raritan River “New Piscataqua,” these transplants likely named their new settlement after their original home.

Numerous possible definitions for the name “piscataqua” exist, most often suggesting that it could represent a marriage of the Lenape words “peske” (branch) and
“tegwe” (strong tidal river),\textsuperscript{33} or the word for “Great Deer” (later disputed and disavowed).\textsuperscript{34} However, Portsmouth, New Hampshire historian Ralph May’s proposed alternative definition, one based on a combination of both speech and interpretive movement, is intriguing.

The Abenaki, an Algonquin-speaking Native American tribe and First Nation of Maine and the Atlantic Coast, used this word specifically to describe the place where the Piscataqua, the third fastest-flowing river in the world, separates into two or three branches.\textsuperscript{35} In 1966, Robert May self-published a twenty-page booklet, that suggested that non-Native interpreters and researchers all too often interpreted the native language literally, as one would for a written language such as English. Supported by twenty years of his own research with native-speaking tribespeople, May argued that the Abenaki language was far more nuanced and complex because it was frequently combined with the use of facial expression, tone, and body language – all of which were almost never considered in English translations.\textsuperscript{36}

According to May, the native Abenaki people often spoke the word “piscataqua” while simultaneously “extending an arm with two or three fingers splayed apart to illustrate the concept” of the diverging branches of the river.\textsuperscript{37} In his account of May’s explanation, J. Dennis Robinson later described this confluence metaphorically as “a place from where people take their separate paths, and in reverse, a place where they come together – a sort of prehistoric airport or bus terminal.”\textsuperscript{38} Most significantly, May perhaps came closest to the root of the word by explaining the difference between direct translation and implied understanding, which is how the native language may have often
functioned. “The branching point of this swift flowing river is both a visual and a
spiritual description. It is the point where decisions must be made and families
must part.”  

While the Raritan River that runs along the southern border of Piscataway did not
exhibit the same turbulent features of its namesake, ample correlations of its significance
to the Native population and European settlers can be made. Piscataway became an
important crossroads in the formation of the original American colonies, becoming an
important gateway along the Atlantic seaboard that would later translate into a
strategically significant transportation corridor during the American Revolution.
Centuries later, Piscataway would become another conduit for American troops with the
opening of Camp Kilmer in 1942, and eventually the launching pad for generations of
students attending Rutgers University, starting in 1963.

iv. A Landscape in Transition

According to Meuly’s chronicle of Piscataway, the first grant to new settlers was
made in December, 1666 by Governor Carteret, which awarded more than 100 square
acres to Daniel Pierce, John Pike and seven others from Newbury, Massachusetts for the
sum of 80 pounds. The tract they were awarded ran roughly from the northern bank of the
Raritan River from its border with Woodbridge (referenced as the area on Woodbridge
Avenue beyond Route 1, now part of Edison Township), as far as Bound Brook, New
Jersey.  

By 1670, the native Lenni Lenape were noticeably struggling to survive. “How
strangely the Indians have been deceast by the hand of God,” wrote early land promoter
Daniel Denton. “For since my time where there were six towns they are reduced to two small villages.”

Local records show that the native population made one last attempt for better compensation for the lands that they had deeded to the Europeans and, in so doing, inadvertently provided historians and researchers with an idea of how much the landscape had changed from wooded river lowlands since the arrival of the settlers. As Meuly notes, the Lenni Lenape claimed that “the land from Kent’s Neck (3 miles upriver from Perth Amboy) to Saconck (Bound Brook)” had, in fact, not been sold. In 1677, a deposition given by settler John Worth describes how Europeans had repurchased the transformed area:

He remembers a great Combustion between the Indians and the People of Piscataway and Woodbridge, the Indians alledging that the English cut their Trees, mowed their Meadows, and took their Lands from them; they threatened to burn the Houses of the People of Piscataway; after the Combustion the People of Piscataway agreed to purchase what the Indians said was not before purchased.

Following the settlement of the Lenni-Lenape’s complaints, the Township of Piscataway deeded individual 120-acre tracts of land to the settlers that provided detailed descriptions of the land. Meuly’s book contains a typical tract description as thus:

Beginning at a Dogwood Tree standing upon the Side of hill near a Small Swamp, Extending itself from thence upon a S: S: West line Sixty Chains to Stake within forty rods of a Small Brook; from that Stake Extending itself upon a W: W: N: West line forty Chains to a Black Burnt Oak, marked with three Noches and a Cross with a Stake pitched up By it; … from there… to a White Oak with three Noches and a Cross … to the afore mentioned Dogwood Tree.

According to town records, each warrant of survey also suggests the original tidal nature of the area, as each grantee was also apportioned “meadows (salt meadows) in proportion.”
As evidenced by a registry of ear marks in the Piscataway Town Book, the settlers primarily cleared the land for building, farming and communally grazing sheep, horses, cattle and swine, which was necessary for identifying ownership of livestock.  

(Figure 9.) Once the land had been cleared for the initial settlement and resulting small village, the landscape evolved to reflect a preponderance of individual farmsteads dispersed over a large area. A first-person account from 1685 describes the landscape at the time:

There are several Plantations all along the Northside of the River and some are on the Southside … Up higher on Rariton River, near the falls which hare about three miles over Land (from Piscatawaytown) there are severall Plantations, a good big vessel loaded may goe up to the falls (Landing Lane). About the falls, there are several tracts of lands, some upon one side, some on the other side of the River…”

Tracts of land were typically granted in roughly consistent geometric shapes, as evidenced by historic map of New Brunswick of the time period. (Figure 10.) As Meuly notes, by the mid-1700s a number of these estates were consolidated to housed “gentlemen” farmers who’d amassed considerable wealth, reflected by a number of stately homes.

The Metlar-Bodine House, built before 1750, still exists on River Road, and the owners of long-gone Ross Hall reportedly hosted General George Washington, perhaps serving some of the fine wine for which the property was noted for producing.  

This assessment is consistent with the findings recorded by the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources at Rutgers University – New Brunswick that currently manages the Rutgers Ecological Preserve that sits adjacent to the former Camp Kilmer site. According to Professor Rick Lathrop, Jr., Ph.D., Director of the Rutgers Ecological
Figure 9. Ear marks pictorial representation in the Piscataway Town Book from 1750. Ear marks were used from 1682 until 1830, with pictorial representation appearing sometime before this entry. (Source: Walter C. Meuly. History of Piscataway Township: 1666-1976. Piscataway Bicentennial Commission, 1976, 42.)
Figure 10. Historic Map of New Brunswick showing original colonial land grants. Similar grants were made across the Raritan River in Piscataway and Woodbridge. (Source: “A Map of Rariton River Milstone, South River… (1685),” Library of Congress, Accessed September 15, 2016, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3812r.ct000074.)
Preserve, the department’s ongoing studies of the existing landscape indicate a healthy mix of old and new growth forest in the areas that were not developed into residential or academic purposes, which suggests that the farm fields were eventually abandoned to natural succession. While the area encompassing “Kilmer Woods” hosts a mix of mature, old-growth red, white, and black oaks with beech, maples and hickories, the surrounding area is dominated by more pioneer species of red cedar, pin oak, white ash, and red maple trees. Professor Lathrop and his students have also observed additional clues to the area’s agricultural past, which include tree stumps with evidence of charring that suggests controlled burning. In some areas, trees grow in linear and perpendicular directions across the landscape, indicating where property lines were likely once delineated and now long overgrown. Historical aerial photography confirms how the natural conditions evolved from 1930 through present day, with the period of greatest upheaval occurring in conjunction the building of Camp Kilmer. As a landscape in transition, the area offered an ideal setting for two future landmarks that would transform the function and cultural significance of the site.

v. A Palimpsest Reflected in the Livingston Campus Landscape

The natural and cultural history of the Livingston Campus site, before its transition into a formidable staging area for the U.S. Army, is most evident in the current form and function of the landscape that surrounds it. The quality of the earth beneath the site, its mineral content and mix of elements was defined long before man began to shape its topological features. The Raritan River, and many of the small streams that feed it, continues to define the landscape that surrounds the Livingston Campus. A number of the original footpaths made by the Original People still exist. Now paved, they continue to
allow us to traverse the landscape and connect us as a society. It is particularly evident in the naturalized areas around the campus and specific site, which continue to be outlined and defined by rows of trees that once marked the property lines of gentlemen farmers. Also connecting us to this past are the colonial-period structures that remain in the community. They are a testament of the strength of the settlers who once began a new life here, and who helped to define the area’s land use – a factor that directly contributed to the area’s eventual selection by the Army as a pivotal site in the ramp-up to World War II.
Figure 11. Welcome to Camp Kilmer. (Source: “Camp Kilmer pamphlet #1: Information for all personnel returning from overseas.” United States Army, Army Service Forces. New Brunswick, NJ: 1945).
CHAPTER THREE
CAMP KILMER AND THE MILITARIZATION OF THE LANDSCAPE

The most apparent material evidence of the Livingston Campus site’s previous history is evident in the depot buildings still standing in the “warehouse area” on Livingston Campus. They mark the 20th century era in which the site was the location for one of the largest embarkation points for World War II. Though most of the original 2,000 buildings are no longer a part of the landscape, they are evidence of a bygone time in which creativity, ingenuity, and sheer force left indelible the American “can do” attitude and aptitude for achievement. (Figure 11.)

The period during and immediately following the Second World War was a turbulent time – one that marked a significant shift in global economies, political alliances, and social structures both abroad and in the United States.

Though the global war lasted from 1939 to 1945, with a number of years of conflicts in Europe leading up to the formal European allies’ declaration of war, the U.S. did not formally enter the conflict until a surprise military strike conducted by the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service against the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor. At 7:48am on December 7, 1941, more than 350 Imperial Japanese aircraft heavily damaged or destroyed eight battleships and hundreds of cruisers, destroyers and aircraft. More than 2,400 Americans were killed and another 1,178 were wounded – all of whom were considered “non-combatant” because there was no state of war declared between the two countries at the time of the attack. (Figure 12.)

Although the Pearl Harbor attack was intended by the Japanese to serve as a pre-emptive strike to deter the U.S. from becoming involved in Japan’s efforts towards a
Southeast-Asian Pacific conquest – the result was the exact opposite. With a Declaration of War made on December 8, 1941, just one day after the attack in Hawaii, the response by the United States was swift and decisive. This brutal military action by the Japanese galvanized the nation, virtually dissipating what was left of domestic support for non-interventionism. In his recent article in The New York Times, Jonah Engel Bromwich recounted the country’s reaction:

The attack on Pearl Harbor shocked and outraged the nation and led it into war at a time when Congress and the American people had been split on the response to an already embattled world.

News articles from December 8 (1941) reflected a sudden shift in the national mood. According to New York Times articles from December 9 and 10, 1941, thousands of men rushed to sign up to serve in the United States armed forces, pushing enlistment to new highs.

The country’s delayed, yet prompt, entry into the conflict also required that the United States Department of War create a new approach to military logistics. This new strategy incorporated an integrated approach that capitalized on several required areas of specialization: design, development, acquisition, storage, distribution, maintenance, evacuation, and disposition of materiel (military materials and equipment), transport of personnel, acquisition or construction, maintenance, operation, and disposition of facilities, acquisition or furnishing of services, and medical and health service support.

Prior to World War II, the United States’ military operations were situated throughout the country as a network of installations that included military bases, camps, posts, stations, yards, centers, homeport facilities, joint training centers, and technical information bases. However, with the immediate need for activation of troops, a new approach was considered: the construction of large-scale staging areas at strategic
locations on both the East and West coasts, through which troops, supplies and munitions could be efficiently funneled to both the European and Pacific fronts.

A staging area is a well-used military tactic through which troops or equipment in transit are assembled or processed. The U.S. Department of Defense defines them as follows:

(DOD) 1. Amphibious or airborne-A general locality between the mounting area and the objective of an amphibious or airborne expedition, through which the expedition or parts thereof pass after mounting, for refueling, regrouping of ships, and/or exercise, inspection, and redistribution of troops.

(DOD) 2. Other movements-A general locality established for the concentration of troop units and transient personnel between movements over the lines of communications. Also called SA. See also airborne; marshalling; stage; staging.

Historically, these strategic locations have been known as points d’appui (French for “support point” or “fulcrum”), are often situated on high ground and may at times be associated with a cultural or natural landmark. They are often later marked by a monument to commemorate notable battles. Unlike normal military bases, they are usually temporary in nature – largely due to the fact that they are designed to accommodate many more troops and materiel than what would be considered necessary during peace time.

The U.S. Army would employ a similar strategy to undertake the massive mobilization that was required in order for the country to enter the war expediently. By selecting a few key strategic locations across the Eastern Seaboard and the West Coast, the Army could quickly undertake mobilization efforts, consolidating existing and incoming troops in a more streamlined fashion. This required an unprecedented undertaking in research, acquisition, construction and labor of these temporary sites, one
of which would ultimately change the physical, political and societal landscape of the Mid-Atlantic region surrounding the New York Bay.

With its greater access to natural resources and a large, morally energized workforce, the United States entry into the war in late 1941 created significant financial, human and industrial advantages for the Allied military operations. With the majority of its factories and labor largely safe from attack, the U.S. was able to undertake a large scale, industrial approach to the war, applying the assembly line technique of mass production – which dovetailed ideally with military regimen and resulted in a number of technological and systematic advances.

i. Setting the Stage for the Stelton Staging Area

When World War II began in Europe in 1939, the only formally operating Port of Embarkation on the U.S. Atlantic seaboard was in New York. A “port of embarkation” (POE) was not simply a shipping terminal. According to military historian Chester Wardlow, an Army POE “was a command structure and interconnected land transportation, supply and troop housing complex devoted to efficiently loading overseas transports.” The scope of the World War II POE is summarized in Army Regulations: AR 55-75, par. 2B, 1 June 1944:

The commanding officer of a port of embarkation will be responsible for and will have authority over all activities at the port, the reception, supply, transportation, embarkation, and debarkation of troops, and the receipt, storage, and transportation of supplies. He will see that the ships furnished him are properly fitted out for the purpose for which they are intended; he will supervise the operation and maintenance of military traffic between his port and the oversea base or bases; he will command all troops assigned to the port and its component parts, including troops being staged, and will be responsible for the efficient and economical direction of their operations. He will be responsible for the furnishing of necessary instructions to individuals and organizations embarked or debarked at the port … He will be responsible for taking
the necessary measures to insure the smooth and orderly flow of troops and supplies through the port.¹⁸

Throughout the Second World War, the New York Port of Embarkation (NYPOE) was the largest of eight U.S. bases of command during the war effort, with San Francisco as the second largest. Other bases were located in Boston, Charleston, Hampton Roads (Virginia), Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Seattle. These POEs were critical supply centers for the war effort, shipping a total of more than 7.2 million passengers and 125 million tons of cargo over the course of the war effort, but the NYPOE bore most of the demand with nearly 44% of all troops and 34% of all cargo being directed through the New York harbor to Europe from December 1941 through August 1945 (Figure 12.) ¹⁹

Upon the Declaration of War, the most important function of the POE was to ensure the availability of troops and supplies in order to meet ship availability.²⁰ The convoy cycle and sailing dates were determined in Washington, DC by the U.S. Navy and War Departments and ultimately coordinated through the U.S. Navy.²¹

Embarkation camps played a significant role in the logistics of supplying troops and supplies to the POEs. As with previous points d’appui, these staging areas were built as temporary collection points to house and prepare the men who originated from various military installations across the country. (Figure 13.) On average, troops were held at these camps from one to two weeks;²² at NYPOE, the average amount of time in camp ranged from 7.1 to 11.7 days.²³

The largest embarkation camp in the Mid-Atlantic region was Camp Kilmer, which operated under the direction of the New York Port of Embarkation. Originally named the Stelton Staging Site after the unincorporated community at the center of the
proposed site, Camp Kilmer would ultimately be located on land that is now owned by the townships of Piscataway and Edison, and Rutgers University. With a daily troop capacity that began at 37,500 and topped 50,000 at the height of the war, Kilmer was the final stop on many servicemen’s trip to the NYPOE, before they were moved by rail to Jersey City, New Jersey to board ferry boats for the embarkation piers and troop transports located at the U.S. Army’s Brooklyn command station.24 It would be the first camp of its kind and, eventually, Camp Kilmer would be the key location for processing troops both heading to the European front as well as returning from conflict. The camp also functioned during the war years as an internment camp for more than 1,000 prisoners of war from Germany and Italy. Little known was its ancillary function to accommodate the growing needs of the 19 Nike missile batteries sited in strategic areas along the

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port</th>
<th>Number of Passengers</th>
<th>Tons of Cargo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Ports</td>
<td>7,293,354</td>
<td>125,787,875</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boston Port of Embarkation</td>
<td>740,705</td>
<td>8,927,363</td>
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<tr>
<td>Searsport Cargo Port</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>470,584</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York Port of Embarkation</td>
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<td>37,799,966</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Cargo Port</td>
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<td>5,883,199</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation</td>
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<td>12,521,868</td>
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<td>Baltimore Cargo Port</td>
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<td>New Orleans Port of Embarkation</td>
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<td>San Francisco Port of Embarkation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seattle Port of Embarkation</td>
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<td>10,204,760</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portland Subport</td>
<td>31,827</td>
<td>1,689,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Rupert Subport</td>
<td>30,904</td>
<td>940,272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Northeast Corridor from 1954 until 1974, in response to the Cold War. In total, almost three million soldiers and civilians would pass through this war-time gateway.

ii. Site Selection: NPOE Camp Kilmer

According to Camp Kilmer historian, Lt. Col. Albert D. Mann, in August 1941, with the threat of the United States being drawn into the European war becoming more of a concern, “the NYPOE named a Board of Officers to make a preliminary survey and recommendations for a site of a proposed staging area. This action was taken in accordance with the Secretary of War.”

Approximately three miles east of New Brunswick and a similar distance west of Metuchen, Stelton was originally one of a number of sites along the Eastern seaboard that were considered for development by the U.S. Army. The purpose of the camp was to “service the entire New York Port of Embarkation from Perth Amboy to the Hudson River and Brooklyn Docks by train and boat.” According to documents and maps housed at the National Archives and Record Administration of the United States in College Park, Maryland, the requirements for site selection indicated that the area must have sufficient acreage for the buildings, that it be within 50 miles of the NYPOE, and that its location be between the Port and “area of greatest troop concentration allowing troop movements to flow with traffic toward the Port” with maximum efficiency. The area needed to be well connected by a strong network of transportation channels: rail, road, and water.

A mapped survey conducted by the U.S. Army of potential embarkation points and depots within 50 miles of the New York Port of Embarkation (Figure 14) clearly
Figure 14. Mapped survey of potential embarkation points and depots within 50 miles of the New York Port of Embarkation. Star inserted by author in red indicates site location selected: Stelton, New Jersey. (Source: “Survey of Staging Areas, Zone Two, August 30, 1941,” excerpted from “Staging Area Sites Within 50 Miles of N.Y.P.E.: Recommendation for Proposed Site Near Stelton, N.J.” Chief of Engineers (RG 77) series: Military Files, Folder # 7340-1091X, Location: 330/03/38/3-5, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.)
illustrates five main areas – indicated by the letters A through E – and 19 potential sites fell within this radius. These general areas were located within Piscataway township, the Cheesequake region south of Raritan Bay, the area surrounding the town of Somerville, Staten Island, and a few sites in Upstate New York and Long Island. Areas “A” and “B” have higher concentrations of site options, indicating that these two regions areas were of prime consideration. A number of criteria were considered essential to the selection process for the staging area’s location and Army personnel were thorough in their evaluation of each of the 19 sites identified as potential locations. Among the standard requirements of proximity to the NYPOE and access to mass transportation channels, the team also considered assets that would impact the project in both material and financial means. (Figure 15) Criteria included:

- Distance to nearest “large” city (in this case, New Brunswick) and its population;
- Distance specifically to Perth Amboy, home to the closest airport at the time;
- Means of access to the POE, including:
  - Railroads (Pennsylvania, Lehigh Valley, Reading lines)
- Whether overpasses and bridges would be required;
- Amount of available area on which to build (minimum requirement being 900 acres);
- The general character of the terrain, the soil, presence of “rocks” and notable landmarks and features;
- The current elevation of the land (ranging from 40 feet to 134 feet above mean sea level) and whether “over lot” grading would be required;
- Availability of natural drainage and standing water (“swamps”);
- Average cost of land per acre;
- Access to a water supply, the amount available, and its wholesale cost;
- Availability of an existing sewage system and electrical infrastructure;
- Largest source of fuel;
- Relative availability of local labor.
Figure 15. Chart of 19 sites considered for the site of the staging area, including the criteria considered in its selection. The Stelton area is highlighted. (Source: “Survey of Staging Areas, Zone Two, August 30, 1941,” excerpted from “Staging Area Sites Within 50 Miles of N.Y.P.E.: Recommendation for Proposed Site Near Stelton, N.J.” Chief of Engineers (RG 77) series: Military Files, Folder # 7340-1091X, Location: 330/03/38/3-5, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.)
With its location near New Brunswick, New Jersey, centered between the main lines of the Pennsylvania Railroad to the south, and the Lehigh Valley and Reading railroads to the north (now all a part of Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor service), the formerly agricultural unincorporated township of Stelton was determined to be the ideal location due its general site conditions (“high, open site that is well-drained, having good soil”) which would require moderate land cost (including clearing and grading), as well as its proximity and to a good network of highways that pre-dated and are now supplanted by the New Jersey Turnpike, proximity to other government stations, and the potential transit opportunities offered by the Raritan River waterway. Relatively easy access to existing infrastructure was an additional incentive:

- Transportation: Location between the main lines of both the railroads and highways – literally adjacent to four tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad main line – as well as access to a nearby airport;
- Resources: Access to the Elizabethtown Water Company mains water supply, with sewage outfill to the Raritan River

According to the survey records, the only disadvantage listed was that transports would “have to cross main traffic arteries in order to reach the harbor,” a challenge that was immediately addressed by the fact that there were “two local underpasses on (the) Penn. R.R.”

iii. An Unprecedented Undertaking

The demands on the Camp would be significant. More than 1.3 million service men and women would pass through Camp Kilmer before embarking to the European theater. Returning troops and the injured would be de-processed and healed at the Camp. An additional population of prisoners of war were interred there until the end of the war.
In total, Camp Kilmer would have to accommodate up to 50,000 troops on any given day at the height of the war.\textsuperscript{30}

The large-scale construction that was required to execute the camp design was an unprecedented undertaking that would forever change the landscape of the immediate region. Yet one of the biggest challenges to the project wasn’t its projected cost or scope – instead, time was the largest factor against which the government agency had to work. Entry into the war simply could not wait.

The quick response to the attack at Pearl Harbor meant that the military coordination of resources needed to be undertaken immediately. According to Mann’s account: “upon the Declaration of War, the War Department directed the construction of the Stelton Staging Area by Statutory Authority, Title II of the First War Powers Act, 1941, Act of December 18, 1941 (Public Law 354 – 77\textsuperscript{th} Congress) and Executive Order No. 9001, dated December 27\textsuperscript{th}, 1941, and letter OCE to Division Engineer NAD-1/13/42. Additional authorization came under Directive Consecutive T-17, and under appropriation Eng.-24219 P-99-A-0540-23. Contracts were therefore let to Architect-Engineers and General Contractors and work was started on January 19, 1942.”\textsuperscript{31}

The first challenge was the acquisition of the land. The proposed plan required 1554.48 acres of land to be acquired and developed. Appraisals of local property began on January 1, 1942 and were completed within one month. In total, 792 parcels of land were acquired from 47 owners (Appendix A.), a total appraised value of $485,432.00.\textsuperscript{32} Later, tracts totaling an additional 362.28 acres were acquired from another 52 owners in order to accommodate the required railroad extensions/ connections as well as the addition of two new sections for troop barracks. Many of the landowners represented
Land Acquisition: Original Owners of the Land Purchased for Camp Kilmer

- 15th Ave & 50th St. Corp
- Agincourt Land Court
- Naomi B. Allen
- Aletha P. Alston
- Alfonso Avallone
- James Beckett
- Estate of Eva Belloff
- Anthony Benesch
- Josephine C. Bessonett
- Johanna Betts
- Celina Marguerite Jullien Binard
- John W. Bold
- Philip R. Borman
- George F. Brennan
- Helen Mary Brown
- Lucy Burke
- Louise J. Carpenter & Helen J. Rutgers (6 tracts)
- Catharine Cohme
- Max Cooper
- John & Mary Cosgrove
- Frank P. Cullen
- Clara Davis
- Nellie DeRuzie
- Sigmund Deutel
- Ines Dickens
- Joseph L. Eckel
- Minnie S. Eckel
- William Eugene
- Anna Mowbray Fay
- Melita Feldman
- Kathleen Helena Fenn-Whiteside
- Emma Fisher
- Katia Forostovsky
- General Investors
- Thomas Hanewald
- Ferdinand Harms
- Mabel J. Haun
- Regina Herskovitz
- C. W. Hicks
- Helen W. Hicks
- George Hofbauer
- Robert Hoppe
- Julietta Horalinda
- Iskander Hourwich
- Kenneth Hunt
- Michael O. Inglevitch
- Dorothea M Isquith
- Jersey Central Power & Light Corp.
- Benjamin Johnson (1 tract)
- R.W. & J.S. Johnson (194 tracts)
- Willam H. Karalake
- Grover C. Kearney
- William E. Kinsman
- Bertha Kruger
- Estate of Richard Linder
- Morris Lipschitz
- Paul Louis
- Henry Marchak
- August Mayboon
- Mercer Corp. (2)
- August Meyer
- Joseph Mills
- Frank Mitchell
- Mary E. Monahan
- Estate of Elizabeth D. Moran
- William Moss
- Percy D. Nason
- William U. Osborn
- Elizabeth Palette
- Lucy Pannuto
- Charles F. Peters & Henriette Peters
- Felix Petrone & Rose Petrone
- James Petrone
- Piscataway Township
- Charles & Helen Platner
- Carl W. Radiger
- Raritan Township
- Rita & Philip Reuben
- Pasquale Rigolino
- Ryther Purdy Lumber Co.
- Minnie Schenck
- Estate of David M. Schmidt
- J. Stahl
- Alice L. Stockman
- H.T. Treacy
- Triangle Rose Builders
- F. Henry Tripp
- Walton B. Turner
- Henry Ulmar
- Frank Valincenti
- David Watts
- Frederick M. Weber & Nettie Weber
- A. Weinhold
- Harry Weintraub
- M. Schaberhorn Wellman
- Dora Wesselhoft
- David L. Whiteside
- William W. Wood
- Mary Elizabeth Woodcock
families who were long-time residents or descendants of some of the first European settlers to the area.\textsuperscript{33}

Once construction began, it would take 16 contractors, most working 72-hour weeks with 11,400 union workers at the peak of construction to complete the task at hand.\textsuperscript{34} When completed, a spur to the Pennsylvania railroad had been built, along with more than 310 acres of railroad connections laid, as 28 miles of roads. Acres of landscape were re-contoured and waterways were hidden below ground. More than 1,100 buildings were erected. In total, the project took just nine months to complete – from authorization in December, 1944 to welcoming the first troops in July, 1945. (Figure 16.)

iv. Camp Design

The design of Camp Kilmer represents a number of important departures from what was considered traditional military post design up to that point in time. As the first modern military encampment in the United States constructed exclusively for the staging of troops, Camp Kilmer’s requirements diverged from those of traditional army camps, which were designed to house and train servicemen for combat and remain in active service over a long period of time. As a staging area, Camp Kilmer was built quickly; it was not intended to fulfill expectations of training, nor was it intended to remain in service for any period longer than that of the current conflict. With an escalating pace of involvement in the war, the NYPOE leadership immediately authorized the construction of a second such camp, Camp Shanks in Upstate New York, before Kilmer was completed. Soon after the completion of Shanks, a third staging area near the Monterey Bay area outside of San Francisco was established (Ford Ord). All three were designed for the singular purpose of serving as staging areas for troops who were being deployed to the fronts in Europe and Asia.

According to Mann’s *Post History*, the land upon which Camp Kilmer was to be situated was divided into three development areas before any of the design work was begun:

The land on which the camp is situated was separated by the Engineers and Contractors into three categories. The so-called “Original Tract” for the “Stelton Staging Site” covers the heart of the post. It consists of 282 parcels of land, covering 1182.20 acres and appraised at $332,141.

The “Camp Kilmer Extension” category refers to the “Theater of Operations” area, divided from the “Original Tract” by a thoroughfare known as Plainfield Avenue. The barracks in this area are of a different type of construction from those in the “Original Tract” section of camp. The “Camp Kilmer Extension” consists of 100 parcels of land, covering 51.35 acres and appraised at $22,459.
The third category is the property acquired for railroad connections with the Pennsylvania, Port Reading and Lehigh Valley Railroads. This land, divided by the Engineers and Contractors into Zones 1 and 2, consists of 410 parcels of land, covering 310.93 acres and having a total appraised value of $130,832.\(^{35}\)

In an uncommon turn of events, the Stelton Staging Area would be renamed in honor of the soldier-poet and New Brunswick native Joyce Kilmer, who had become famous for his poem, “Trees,” and who would later be killed in action during the first World War. (Figures 17 and 18.) The local Joyce Kilmer Post of the American Legion petitioned the Army to have the new encampment named in his honor, a departure from the normal naming process.\(^{36}\) According to the U.S. Army Center of Military History, the tradition of naming military posts began during the era of the Continental Army when they were named for the camp commander or supervising engineer for high-ranking officers,\(^{37}\) both living and those who were killed in combat. With the scale of mobilization required by the First World War, naming rights became the purview of the regional commanders and the Department of War, and usually reflected a local affiliation, such as Fort Apache in Arizona. It wasn’t until the period between the two World Wars that the Department of War considered submissions made from the localized regions, both from within the military and the general public. An official policy was established in 1939, through which deceased distinguished officers could be memorialized – regardless of the branch of service in which they served.\(^{38}\)

It was unusual at the time to rename a base at the behest of non-profit organizations and advocacy groups. The request came from a wartime veterans’ organization, \(^{39}\) not a post commander or other high-ranking official.

Their request was buoyed by significant public support, which commanded a lot of influence on the government in the period leading up to the Second World War.

v. The Militarization of Suburbia

*World War II did not arrest architects' work; it reformulated architecture's tasks.*

Richard Anderson
"US/USSR: Architecture and War"
*Grey Room* (2009)

There was profound involvement by the architectural design communities during the Second World War, who were called upon to use their expertise in this massive mobilization. Enabled by a financially-empowered Department of War, which simply did not have the manpower to handle the scale and scope of work that was required for the undertaking, these professionals put into practice their knowledge of materials, form, color, and process to assist the military with designing everything from transport vehicles, weapons, military attire, and installations.

It would take a Modernist master’s approach to design a camp that would defy established guidelines and create an installation that would unlike earlier military camps. For the Camp Kilmer project, the Army retained the services of the New York City-based firm co-founded by Antonin Raymond, a practicing architect with international ties and a highly reputable portfolio grounded in impressive work done in Tokyo, Japan with mentor and colleague Frank Lloyd Wright. (Figure 19.) Raymond, who would later be credited with bringing Modernism to post-war Japan, found an ideal collaborator in the military. Economy of materials and the efficiency of pre-fabricated buildings assembled on site dovetailed with his design ethos, which included a commitment to the use of poured concrete and easily accessible, local construction materials.
In 1942, Raymond formed a partnership with civil engineer Arthur Tuttle, structural engineer Elwyn Seelye, and mechanical engineer Clyde Place. Raymond selected his partners carefully and the New York City-based architecture/engineering firm of Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond presented a formidable force, as each member had previously accomplished a number of prominent large-scale, government-driven engineering projects in the New York City area. According to Kurt Helfrich and William Whitaker in their biography of Antonin and Noémi Raymond:

Tuttle had overseen the construction of the Queens Midtown Tunnel, Seelye had worked on the New York State Thruway and Connecticut Turnpike. The New York City-based architecture/engineering firm of Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond specifically focused on the war effort, securing contracts with the U.S. Army both during and after World War II. 41

The firm was called upon to create a network of military installations along the East Coast, which included arsenals, staging areas and surface-to-air missile installations, covering an area that ran from western Pennsylvania to Upstate New York. 42 (Figure 20.)

- Bound Brook Holding Point (Bound Brook, NJ)
- Brooklyn Army Terminal Maintenance Shop (Brooklyn, NY)
- Camp Belle Meade Service Forces Depot (Belle Meade/Hillsborough, NJ)
- Camp Kilmer Staging Area and Hospital (Shelton, NJ)
- Camp Shanks Staging Area and Hospital (Orangeburg, NY)
- Camp Upton (Yaphank, NY)
- Defense Housing Project (Bethlehem, PA)
- Fort Dix Airport and Housing (Fort Dix, NJ)
- New York Defense Area Surface-to-Air Missile Installations (7 sites)
- Picatinny Arsenal Munitions Command Headquarters (Wharton, NJ)
- Port Johnson Terminal (Bayonne, NJ)
- Schenectady General Depot Warehousing (Schenectady, NY)
- Watervliet Arsenal (Watervliet, NY)

Many of these installations had to be built within existing communities, often literally woven into the suburban fabric where they would function almost seamlessly with the local populations.
Figure 20. An East Coast Network for World War II; Map indicating locations of several military installations designed during World War II by Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond. (Source: Map by author. Data sources: Google Maps, 2017; Antonin Raymond & L.L. Rado Architects; Antonin Raymond, *Antonin Raymond: An Autobiography* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972], 348-349.)
It is reported that a young James C. Rose, a Modernist landscape architect and one of the “Harvard Three,” designed the entire camp layout over the course of a single weekend.\textsuperscript{43} Modernism, as a whole, had a major impact in the early- and mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century, heavily influencing practitioners in art, architecture, design, film and landscape design. Each in their own way, James C. Rose, Dan Kiley, and Garrett Eckbo sought to move the practice of landscape architecture forward by incorporating modernist ideas into the profession while at Harvard in the 1930s. (Figure 21.)

Rose was invited to join the firm in 1941 after Raymond reportedly had seen some of Rose’s modular garden designs in a series of articles that Rose had written for \textit{Pencil Points} in 1938 and 1939. Raymond is reported to have seen the potential in these designs to correlate with designing large-scale, war-related projects.\textsuperscript{44} There is some indication that Rose worked on the Camp Kilmer project, which may have influenced the layout of the camp buildings. Noted Rose authority, Dean Cardasis, FASLA, obtained a first-person account of the frenetic pace of the camp’s creation from the renowned landscape architect in his later years. His account follows:

The one and only office job which Rose has ever held was for Tuttle, Seelye, Place, and Raymond, architect-engineers, a New York firm, hastily organized in 1941, only a few months before Pearl Harbor, in response to the government’s demand for military construction in preparation for the imminent war. In the unbelievable state of unpreparedness, no one—not the military nor architects nor engineers nor any other group—had the faintest notion about building large-scale military installations. Apparently nothing of the kind had been built since 1918, and the first demand of the government Was for the erection of a Staging Area, at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, to house thirty thousand men in ten anti-aircraft regiments. The demand was further complicated in that a Staging Area houses troops in rotation with new troops coming in as old ones leave the port of embarkation at intervals of ten days or a week. Furthermore, the government demanded that this be built from scratch to troop occupancy within ninety days from the time of letting the contract with an expenditure of ninety million dollars—more money than had ever, at any time, been spent on construction in so short a period.
There is no question that Antonin Raymond, the most famous and colorful member of the firm, had a knack for handling people and getting more out of them than they realized they had in themselves. He first came in contact with Rose through Rose's early articles and garden designs which appeared in "Pencil Points." When the situation of war work arose, he was able to see the potential of the peculiar ability behind these designs for large-scale planning. Not the least of Raymond's talents lay in running his office like a game; a situation which suited Rose to a "T." The game had simply changed from gar-dens to anti-aircraft and was played on a larger field. Rose played the game especially hard for two days and two nights in a row without stopping, and in the early hours of the morning of the third day he left a scheme in a drawer of Raymond's desk with a note on top explaining that he had gone to bed and would be back when he woke up. When he did return, in the afternoon of the next day, the office was "humming like a beehive" in developing the scheme "under the crack of Raymond’s whip." No one was able to break the scheme as a working formula or come up with a better one, and in ninety days the troops marched into it as a reality at Camp Kilmer.\(^45\)

According to Cardasis, this was one of the only commercial commissions that Rose undertook with Raymond and his firm. Unfortunately, none of the original drawings by Rose have yet been located by this author. However, the construction drawings and brownlines by Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond currently stored in Rutgers' University Records Management Department – many bearing Anton Raymond’s signature – indicate that a number of changes were made to the camp design over the course of several years, both by the architect and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, starting in 1942 and through to the early 1960s.\(^46\) Throughout, the efficiency in the design is immediately apparent.

vi. An Analysis of the Camp’s Design

Camp Kilmer was designed in three months. Plans and specifications for the original Camp Kilmer parameters were started January 6, 1942 and were completed April 16, 1942. The footprint of the camp expanded when the demand for more troops resulted in additional plans and specifications created for the addition of 1,600 “colored” Corps Area Service Command troops, additional warehouses, nurses’ quarters and a mess hall.

were started June 8, 1942 and completed roughly a month later. In October of the same year, authorization was given to build additional housing for a Women’s Army Auxiliary Corp (WAAC), which converted to full active service in the summer of 1943.47

The Camp’s design was driven by the civil engineering principals of the U.S. Army, which prioritized efficiency over art. This antecedence could perhaps also be inferred by the very name of the company that Raymond assembled: listed last as the sole architect in a team of engineers. The design of the landscape appears to have been informed by the purpose and construction of the military buildings.
The resulting design was a very large campus comprised of 21 areas for regiments, five motor fuel depots, three CASC areas, one warehouse area, as well as others dedicated to utilities, a hospital, stockade, incinerators, administration, officers’ quarters, several disposal plants and a railroad yard that also accommodated troop landings (Figure 22.)

The design originates from the point of camp entry for most troops: the depot area at the south-eastern end of the camp. In addition to centralizing much of the post utilities here, the design called for both a railroad plaza and a troop landing area, through which all troops would have been processed. From there, buildings are outwards from the depot area like a pin-wheel, with 10 barracks “villages” centralized around their mess hall hubs. Officers’ accommodations and clubs are separate from the enlisted barracks, as are specialized services areas, entertainment venues, and operations offices. The hospital is arranged at the furthest point to the northwest from the arrival area, appearing like a series of suburban homes much like those of the adjacent, formalized residential developments. Later, additional barracks for the African American regiments would be added to the furthest point to the northeast from the arrival area. (Figure 23.)

The design called for the topography of the original landscape to be flattened into a large plateau to accommodate the maximum 2% slope for trains, and still allow for drainage. It was here that a series of 12 long, single-story buildings ran parallel to the railroad tracks that originated from what is today the train station in Edison, New Jersey. This spur includes individual tracks that split from the main arterial rail line at the troop landing area and terminate between alternating sides of the depot buildings that abut Road 2, which still exists today. Freight truck traffic would have been accommodated on
Figure 22. New Jersey Bell Telephone Company brochure, illustrating that Camp Kilmer was comprised of 21 areas and functioned as a self-contained city. (1950) (Source: New Jersey Bell Telephone Company and Camp Kilmer (N.J.), “Your Camp Kilmer Guide.” (New Brunswick: Camp Kilmer, 1950), Rutgers Special Collections, Rutgers University Libraries.)
Figure 23. Original plan drawing of Camp Kilmer. (Source “Scan of the Original Plan Drawing of Camp Kilmer,” 1960, University Planning and Development, Institutional Planning and Operations, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.)
the opposite side of each building, which is apparent from the differing heights of the platforms: One side would accommodate the height of a truck bed, the other a rail car. The Camp Kilmer rail terminal had the capacity of fifteen 20-car troop trains, with track leading to the rights of way of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Lehigh Valley Railroad, and the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad. Trains would have had to either back out from the terminus to a point just east of the camp, or simply pull into a large circular turn-around in order to head back to the NYPOE. A second, equally large turnaround was located further down the Pennsylvania railroad line, just west of the camp. (Figures 24 and 25.)

The Camp Kilmer turnaround is still evident today; Cedar Lane was built on top of it. The curve in the road near the remaining depot buildings simply follows the original track line. Many of the original tracks still remain within this wooded area, now used as a dumping and storage area by the university, and are visible from Cedar Lane. Some are hidden in the woods that have sprung up since the Camp’s closure, but can be hiked to the current day Amtrak train tracks south of the site and just above the Raritan River. Still others continue to run along the front of the buildings that house many of Edison’s public works, including The New Jersey Department of Motor Vehicles building where Cedar Lane in Piscataway becomes Kilmer Road in Edison.

From the troop landing area, troops would have been processed and brought to one of the 10 central “villages” that would temporarily house them, marked in white on the illustration depicted in Figure 26. Each of these compounds was essentially comprised of the same number of buildings and laid out in the same relationship to each other: A central mess hall served as a hub, with a series of four rows of barracks set on a

Figure 25. The curve in Cedar Lane reflects the original train turn-around for Camp Kilmer. The still-existing circular tracks are visible by the line of Eastern cedars and other pioneer plants that have grown up around the tracks. View towards the West. (Photograph by author, October 7, 2016.)
Figure 26. Camp Kilmer Buildings and Land Use. (Diagram by author. Data sources: “Scan of the Original Plan Drawing of Camp Kilmer,” 1960, University Planning and Development, Institutional Planning and Operations, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.)
vertical axis to it. However, deviating from the standard cross axis layout of traditional encampments, each village did not run parallel to one another. Instead, each village appeared to either be slightly shifted off axis from the others or turned, almost in pinwheel fashion – using the troop landing area as point of origin.

Camp Kilmer did not have a formal parade ground; instead, the series of open spaces interspersed throughout the central area of the camp were used for team sports and other recreation. Football, baseball, handball, and track and field were all incorporated into the activities offered the troops and the facilities are widely distributed throughout the camp.

These design deviations also meant that housing for the camp’s military leadership was decentralized. Instead of being positioned at the edge of an open space intended for marching in formation, the camp’s commanding officers were located along roads that appeared much more residential in nature.

Camp facilities and service buildings were distributed equally around the camp, including the dentist, chapels, and officers’ clubs. The hospital, located at the far northwestern edge of the camp, was not constructed as a single, large building. Instead, the hospital was constructed as a series of individual barracks, another camouflage technique and preventative design decision to avoid aerial attack. Nurses and other hospital staff were housed within the immediate area, for proximity.

While only a small number of the original Camp Kilmer buildings remain, each appear to follow the same principle of efficiency in design that appealed to Raymond’s modernist sensibilities at the outset of World War II. Influenced by both Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier, the former his mentor and the latter his idol, Raymond
endorsed the machine-driven culture and aesthetic of modernism. Already recognized for his buildings of reinforced concrete, poured in situ, Raymond embraced modern industry and construction techniques, which emphasize the geometric form and materials used.51 This philosophy married well with military efficiencies. Precisely designed, modern structures could be constructed in a factory and then shipped to the building site for assembly or finishing – a tactic that allowed Camp Kilmer to be constructed in its vastly abbreviated timespan – featuring locally sourced materials and constructed in efficient post-and-beam design. The use of poured concrete as a main construction material is evident throughout the camp, from the raised platforms buffering the depot buildings, to the remaining handball courts on Livingston Campus and in Edison, and the bare, flat foundations upon which long-gone buildings once sat.

Other examples of the military’s World War II “temporary construction” building type still exist, particularly at Fort Cronkhite in the Marin Headlands outside San Francisco, California. As one of the few remaining mobilization posts in the country, its barracks, mess halls and other buildings remain as a preserved tribute to American ingenuity as well as its ability to create and mass produce quickly – all while under an enormous and unprecedented level of pressure.

In 1939, the U.S. Army boasted only 200,000 enlisted soldiers in its ranks, who were stationed and housed at bases across the country. However, with the imminent threat of engagement drawing closer, the ranks grew substantially as the military began drafting young men for the army and navy. By 1944, almost six million men had entered the service – all of whom needed to be housed.
Acknowledging that the current accommodations and mobilization capabilities as being entirely insufficient, the U.S. Army completely overhauled their approach to construction. To accommodate this unprecedented demand and compressed timetable, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Quartermaster General, the Army’s two construction divisions, established new principles to guide mobilization plans: speed, simplicity, conservation of materials, flexibility, and safety. These guidelines allowed the two divisions to draw up standardized plans for building simple wood-frame structures. Made with both inexpensive and/or pre-fabricated materials, these buildings could be quickly and easily shipped by truck or train to the location at which they would be built – where they could be erected in the assembly-line method by which American industry had been thriving for almost 100 years. With these standardizations, construction materials and plans could be bundled into packages that would include barracks, mess halls, recreation buildings and supply depots. Each bundle could accommodate a company of 125-men, and offered such contemporary luxuries as central heating, interior showers and latrines.

vii. Camouflage: An Army Base in Suburbia

*The first principle which all great architecture teaches us is to regard local conditions as the one known basic factor from which to start, and to allow the structure to take the most logical shape dictated by these local conditions. Flowers and animals do so in different climates.*  


It is believed that Camp Kilmer was the first Army establishment on the East Coast to make use of camouflage as a defense strategy, though Mann posits that it may have been the first in the United States. This was achieved through the application of several novel approaches.
First, the camp was organized into ten “Disposition Areas,” or sets of barracks each clustered around a central hub that offered communal services. This design veered from the typical axis and row arrangement traditionally associated with encampments and, when coupled with its curving, winding roadways and barren, open spaces that stretched out in certain sections of the camp in order to relate to the area’s adjacent agricultural fields, the camp more closely mirrored the suburban developments that were becoming prevalent in nearby Highland Park and other residential communities in the surrounding area. Even the addition of a colonial-type spire on the main chapel contributed to the effect.\textsuperscript{54}

More dramatically, the architects employed a modified form of dazzle camouflage across all camp structures which, when viewed from above, purportedly made the massive base appear as if it were a prototypical suburban neighborhood. (Figures 27 and 28.) Bright, contrasting colors were used on shingled roofs, unlike previous camp design. Instead, roof and wall planes were broken up by strategic patches of color and the barracks had no uniform color scheme. The intended result: that the perceived scale of the buildings was dramatically reduced. (Figures. 29, 30 and 31.)

According to Camp Kilmer Post Historian Lt. Col. Arthur D. Mann, the concept behind the disruptive coloration approach was intended to make it difficult for an enemy air strike. While there is no proof of the effectiveness of this tactic, buildings in alternating and somewhat random patterns were a departure from the crisp, white walls conjectured that the patterning and layout would at least likely delay the bombardier from identifying the potential targets long enough that they would overshoot the camp entirely.\textsuperscript{55}

Figure 28. Dazzle camouflage was used in both World Wars as a means of visually confusing enemy submarines to assist Allied ships with crossing the ocean. (Source: Wikipedia.org, “SS Liberator (ID-3134) in dazzle camouflage in 1918,” accessed April 28, 2018, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SS_Liberator_(ID-3134)_in_dazzle_camouflage,_1918.jpg.)
Figures 29. Model of Camp Kilmer by Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond. (Source: Raymond & Rado Architects company pamphlet, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.)


Figures 31. The Rutgers-Livingston day care center retains one of the few remaining original roofs on Livingston Campus. View to Northeast. (Photograph by author, October 14, 2017.)
The combined effect of the disruptive camouflage was startling for military authorities of the day – particularly with the Camp’s backdrop of Piscataway’s softly rolling agricultural land. Pulitzer Prize-winning military journalist Hanson Weightman Baldwin marveled at its novelty in the July 9, 1942 edition of the New York Times:

A new Army camp – one of the first camouflaged camps in the country – which has risen in record time from orchard and meadow land in New Jersey was shown to representatives of the press yesterday. Camp Kilmer… presents a mottled picture in comparison with other Army posts. Its barracks are the regulation two-story dormitory-type wood structures that now dot the face of America, but they have no uniform color scheme; each is painted in two or three different shades. The colors run the gamut of the rainbow from black to white, with creams, grays, mauves, mustard yellows, pale pinks, light greens, dull browns and pates shades predominating.

Viewed from the ground – against the background of New Jersey orchards and the winding ribbons of dusty roads – the new color scheme seemed to make little difference on visibility, but the newspaper men did not see the camp from the air and it is possible that the camouflage would confuse, though not obscure. (Figures 32 and 33.)

viii. Life on the Army Campus

Designed and built in just nine months, Camp Kilmer at the time was touted as a model of efficiency and a showcase of military intelligence at its launch. Additionally, it was designed to offer the comforts of familiarity and normalcy to the enlisted during these years of conflict. As organized, Camp Kilmer operated more like a small city than a typical army facility. Similar to a metropolitan center, the Camp provided a number of on-campus diversions, including theaters, libraries, private clubs, and sports facilities that included softball diamonds, as well as volleyball and horseshoe courts. In fact, the Camp hosted exhibition games between its own baseball and football teams as well as dances and movies.
Figure 32. The camouflaged camp: Camp Kilmer in the heart of Piscataway (1951).
Figure 33. The future Livingston Campus, outlined in red by author against the camouflaged camp. (Source: “Historic Aerials – Piscataway, New Jersey,” 1957, accessed March 18, 2016, Historicaerials.com.)
One of the key goals of the camp, aside from providing temporary housing and a seamless transition to the war front, was to keep the troops calm and happy before and after their tour of duty, which was achieved through several services located in different areas around the camp:

- 1 gym
- 2 post offices
- 3 libraries
- 3 service clubs (two in the “Original Tract” and one in the “Theater of Operations Area”)
- 4 telephone centers
- 5 large War Department theaters
- 7 chapels
- 9 post exchanges
- Several officers’ and non-commissioned officers’ clubs
- Dozens of tennis courts and playing fields for intramural and semi-pro play

These diversions and services were complemented by a regular program of entertainment and activities that were held every weekday evening. These included talent shows, WPA and USO variety shows, Community Sings and dances. Periodically, USO events were held at the Camp’s Kilmer Bowl, featuring such entertainment luminaries as Betty Grable, Bob Hope and Red Skelton. Community outreach organized by camp leadership also resulted in access to local civilian events, including Rutgers University athletic functions, Jewish and Christian community centers such as the YMCA, social clubs including the Knights of Columbus, and the Negro Service Men’s Center.57 (Figures 34, 35 and 36.)
Figure 34. Diversions at Camp Kilmer included USO performances (Source: “Diversions at Camp Kilmer included USO performances,” Records of the Office of the Chief of Transportation, “General Correspondence,” Camp Kilmer, NJ, U.S. Army, RG 336, 1945, National Archives, New York, NY.)

ix. A Time and Place Where Decisions Must Be Made

The original definition of Piscataway’s name suggests another point of distinction for Camp Kilmer. Unlike any earlier camp, Kilmer was a lightning rod for issues of social equity, race and gender equality during its operation. These issues continue to be topical, as relevant today in the early 21st century as they were then.

This likely occurred as a direct result of having disparate regiments and functions needing to be accommodated in one place at the same time. Prior to the war, installations would have been gender and race exclusive. However, the need for more recruits to ship to the front line meant that issues needed to be addressed in real time, given the compressed timeline of the troops’ stay at the Camp, and perhaps the extended timeframe of the war itself.

The “black question,” in particular, seems to have been at the forefront of concerns for military leadership. While the Second World War marked the beginning of the end of all-black segregated military units, these units would not be eliminated until more than a decade later. There are ample documented accounts within the national record of the ongoing debate regarding the inclusion of black enlisted men in combat alongside their white contemporaries. Ultimately, the decision was made to accommodate black troops – including at Camp Kilmer – as long as they were kept segregated from the main population. (Figure 37.)

The on-site Public Relations department at Camp Kilmer realized the significance of this situation, and promoted and recorded the camp leadership’s efforts for a progressive race policy: A significant contribution toward cementing the national unity which is so desired was made August 13, when Negro newspapermen toured this post. Whereas stories about race riots and discrimination at other Army posts have filled many of their pages, they saw at Camp Kilmer white and Negro soldiers performing their duties without friction. Headlines in the large Negro papers proclaimed this race harmony at Camp Kilmer in succeeding editions as an example
Figure 37. African-American troops on the Parade Grounds at Camp Kilmer; note the camouflaged buildings in the background, and how they were constructed to look like suburban residences. (Source: “Officers and men of the 3372nd Quartermaster Truck Company on the Parade Grounds at Camp Kilmer,” Records of the Office of the Chief of Transportation, “General Correspondence,” Camp Kilmer, NJ, U.S. Army, RG 336, 1945, National Archives, New York, NY.)

of how an Army post can be constituted with an eye towards victory at home as well as abroad.61

Subsequent headlines recorded by the Post Historian were glowing: “Race Strife is Unknown at Kilmer”; “Negro Press on Inspection Tour of Camp Kilmer Find Negro and White Soldiers Treated Alike.” 62 There is not one mention of the fact that the black
population were housed on two segregated tracts at the eastern end of Camp Kilmer, in the Piscataway area that is now home to the Timothy Christian School and residential communities that include Victoria Park, Rivendell, the Spring Hills Senior Community, and Edison Hollows Condominiums.

At the same time, women reported for active duty. The Women’s Army Corps (WAC) was an auxiliary unit of the United States Army that was created on May 15, 1942 by Public Law 554. This women’s branch converted to full active status on July 1, 1943. Despite the need to fill non-combat roles within the ranks, which included switchboard operation/communications, mechanics, and food preparation, the Army was faced with considerable backlash and a public smear campaign by both military personnel and a public that wasn’t ready to accept women as equals, or those who feared being sent into combat units if women took the “safe” jobs.

Despite the conservative opinions that abounded, the Army was reliant on both the African-American regiments and the WAC as critical support systems in the face of a shortage of white men. The leaders of Camp Kilmer endorsed an equally progressive policy towards women, who were both allowed to serve outside of the hospital, as well as given dedicated barracks at a consolidated area on the campus. (Figures 38 and 39.)

x. Post-World War II: Camp Kilmer as Humanitarian Center

Despite the changing military needs of the military in the post-World War II era, Camp Kilmer continued to find itself at the epicenter of a very public battle. Waged against the Eisenhower administration, Senator McCarthy’s attack on government policies would test a nation now considered a global leader in the new world order.

Soon after the end of World War II, tensions erupted in the divided Korean nation, a symptom of a larger Cold War that was developing between the Soviet Union and its satellite states and the Western Bloc that included the United States and its NATO allies. While no large-scale fighting occurred between the major players on both sides, the U.S. military engaged in the Korean Conflict in 1950–65—requiring an abbreviated form of Camp Kilmer’s staging facilities once more.

It was during this time that additional unrest was felt in other areas of the Western Bloc. Citizens of Hungary, long held under the political repression and economic decline of the communist state, were emboldened by a shift in political power in 1956 and an initially leaderless uprising was underway. The result was disastrous: The country’s government collapsed, and the Soviet government intervened. The Soviet intervention, codenamed “Operation Whirlwind” was swift and brutal. More than 2,500 Hungarians and 700 Soviet troops were killed. More than 200,000 Hungarians fled as refugees.

Sensing an “unprecedented opportunity for the collection of intelligence on a Soviet Block country,” the U.S. government repurposed Camp Kilmer to serve as temporary housing and intake center for 30,000 Hungarian refugees. The government simply presumed that they would be open to providing information in exchange for safe passage.

Senator Joseph McCarthy, a dedicated nationalist, was publicly opposed to this influx of immigration. Following a protected public battle, during which the Eisenhower administration received the backing of a number of public and non-profit agencies as well as former President Herbert Hoover, Vice President Nixon successfully oversaw the resettlement of these refugees at Camp Kilmer. (Figures 40, 41 and 42.) 
NIXON AT KILMER
GREETS REFUGEES

By MILTON BRACKER

CAMP KILMER, N. J., Dec. 27—Vice President Richard M. Nixon, who recently saw Hungarian refugees at the Austrian-Hungarian frontier, saw others today at the reception center here. There were differences in their faces.

Mr. Nixon and members of the President’s Committee for Hungarian Refugee Relief toured the former Army base where 12,485 Hungarians out of the authorized 21,500 have so far been welcomed to this country.

In connection with the tour and a meeting of the forefront-old committee on the center grounds, there were the following developments.

Mr. Foster was firm in denying that there was any infiltration into the center, or any evidence that the program might be exploited by Red leaders, to establish agents, or any suggestion that “secret agents” or other subversives were filtering into the center.

At the meeting with the committee, Mr. Voorhees was on hand, and so was Mr. Foster.

He said he would rely on Mr. Foster’s counsel in connection with the name of the center, which he suggested, be dropped even from the postmark “Camp Kilmer.”

Nixon at Kilmer Greets Refugees.

The New York Times (by Patrick A. Burns)

The Vice President and his party flew back to Washington from Newark this evening.

Mr. Foster was firm in denying any suggestion that “secret agents” or other subversives were filtering into the center, or any suggestion that “secret agents” or other subversives were filtering into the center.

Mr. Voorhees was present, and so was Mr. Foster.

He said he would rely on Mr. Foster’s counsel in connection with the name of the center, which he suggested, be dropped even from the postmark “Camp Kilmer.”

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Nixon at Kilmer Greets Refugees.

Figure 42. “At Camp Kilmer, where Hungarian refugees were temporarily housed, Bill Vestesy asks an MP if he has seen his mother and his brother among the refugees.” (Photograph by Frank Hurley, *The New York Daily News*, November 21, 1956, accessed February 15, 2017, https://hungarianrevolution1956.wordpress.com/2016/03/07/hungarian-refugee-photography/.)
Mercy” was one of the most significant European humanitarian airlift operations conducted to date.\textsuperscript{69}

This effort transformed the cultural population of New Brunswick, which has long been noted for its ethnic diversity. At one time, one quarter of the Hungarian population of New Jersey resided in the city; in the 1930s, one out of three city residents was Hungarian.\textsuperscript{70} Many of the immigrants who passed through Camp Kilmer remained there until the camp was closed in 1957, eventually settling in the thriving Hungarian American community that still exists in New Brunswick’s Fifth Ward neighborhood near Robert Wood Johnson University.

xi. Palimpsest in the Changing Cultural Landscape

In just the last 75 years, the Piscataway landscape has evolved dramatically. (Figures 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47.) What began as a predominantly agrarian landscape transitioned to a residential community, then an industrial hub and, most dramatically, a major military and transportation gateway. Its current incarnation as university campus still traces many of the boundaries of its predecessors – from waterways, to roads, rails, and former property boundaries. Today, the remains of Camp Kilmer within the Livingston Campus further illustrate the priority given to engineering of the site. The traces of the fully utilitarian landscape are evident in the campus roads, placement of the street lights along subterranean electrical lines, as well as the drainage infrastructure that abbreviates the warehouse district site. With such efficiencies clearly delineated, Camp Kilmer’s transition to a university campus are easy to understand. From an economic standpoint, it was much more efficient for campus planners to take an opportunistic approach to the landscape to get the campus built.
Figure 43. Future site of Camp Kilmer in Piscataway (1930). (Source: “Historic Aerials – Piscataway, New Jersey,” 1930, Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC., accessed March 18, 2016, Historicaerials.com.)
Figure 44. Future site of Camp Kilmer in Piscataway (1941) (Source: “Historic Aerials – Piscataway, New Jersey,” 1941, Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC., accessed March 18, 2016, Historicaerials.com.)

Figure 45. Evolution of Camp Kilmer site (1957) (Source: “Historic Aerials – Piscataway, New Jersey,” 1957, Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC., accessed March 18, 2016, Historicaerials.com.)
Figure 46. Transformation of Camp Kilmer site into a campus. (1972) (Source: “Historic Aerials – Piscataway, New Jersey,” 1972, Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC., accessed March 18, 2016, Historicaerials.com.)

The traces of Camp Kilmer that persist are perhaps the most visible layer of the site’s layered history. The original depot buildings, now iconic in their staying power, sit steadfastly in place on their thick concrete bases, commemorating the efficiencies of the military married with the ingenuity of an architectural master. Still visible running through the site – and beyond: railroad tracks that cannot be suppressed by asphalt and topsoil. Roads still carry the names they were given at their inception, and continue to support transportation connections through transition from camp to campus. Though less visible, the few roofs that still faintly sport their planar camouflage remind us of the uncertainty and unrest that a world war brought to our doorstep. Less obvious are the events and developments at the Camp that changed the face of the surrounding community – and the nation. New Brunswick became home to a larger, thriving Hungarian community following an infusion of desperate compatriots from the Old Country. And, while Rutgers University absorbed Kilmer College and the portion of the property on which it operated, Livingston Campus continues to endorse its commitment to education for all.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

The college has accepted a great responsibility in becoming a land-grant college of the state and in permitting the designation of the state university of New Jersey.

Dr. John Martin Thomas (1869-1952)
12th president of Rutgers University (1925)

Rutgers University’s expansive Livingston Campus is located in the township of Piscataway, in the northwest corner of Middlesex County. Originally known as Kilmer Campus, Livingston is one of largest of the five sub-campuses that comprise Rutgers University’s New Brunswick/Piscataway area campus. Since 2007, “Livi” has been the home of Rutgers’ undergraduate liberal arts colleges, which were consolidated into its School of Arts and Sciences. Looking at the burgeoning campus today, it’s hard to realize the struggle of successive university administrations that went into its success. (Figure 48.)

i. Rutgers; The Land-Grant Institution

The Morrill Act was introduced by Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont, who modeled his bill on the earlier resolution drafted by Jonathan Baldwin Turner, for whom education for the working class was an essential cause. Turner’s proposed legislation called for the funding of a system of state-specific industrial colleges in every state. The Morrill Act was deeply influenced by the politics of the time: Prompted by the need for trained military officers for the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln was easily able to sign the bill into law given the secession of many of the states that were not in favor of it, and it wasn’t until 1890 that an amendment to the Act was made to allow Confederate
Figure 48. Camp Kilmer in Relationship to Rutgers’ Busch, Livingston and College Avenue Campuses. (Source: Diagram by author. Data sources: GIS map composition by author, Projection: State Plane New Jersey (NAD 83); CAD drawing, Institutional Planning & Operations and University Facilities and Capital Management, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.)
states to participate – only after each state could demonstrate that race was not a criterion for admissions. States could, however, designate a separate land-grant institution for minorities in order to receive the funding.\textsuperscript{3} As defined, the purpose of the land-grant colleges was:

Without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactic, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.\textsuperscript{4}

In addition to agriculture and engineering, land-grant colleges were required to offer a number of programs that included a Reserve Officers’ Training Corps program in order to maintain their status.

Under the act, each eligible state received a total of 30,000 acres (120 km\textsuperscript{2}) of federal land,\textsuperscript{5} either within or contiguous to its boundaries, for each member of Congress that represented the state (as of the census of 1860). States were to use the land, or proceeds from its sale, to establish colleges in engineering, agriculture, and military science, and fulfill the provisions of the act as outlined above.

A subsequent component of the land-grant system came in 1887 with the passage of the Hatch Act.\textsuperscript{6} Enacted by the 49\textsuperscript{th} United States Congress, the Hatch Act allowed federal funds to be granted to land-grant colleges so that they could establish a network of state-specific agricultural experiment stations to focus specifically on the areas of soil, minerals and plant growth.\textsuperscript{7}

These experimental stations laid the foundation for state-specific cooperative extension services, enabled by the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, \textsuperscript{8} which created the current partnership between agricultural colleges and the USDA to support
agricultural extension work. These programs are designed to inform the general public about current developments in agriculture and food, home economics, the environment, community economic development, coastal issues, 4-H, and other related subjects. It also is designed to offer home instruction to help farmers learn new agricultural techniques.\(^9\)

Almost all of the 100 U.S. land-grant institutions are public institutions, with many evolving into comprehensive public universities with additional financial support from their respective state – including Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Founded in 1766, Rutgers is the oldest school that currently holds land-grant status. Originally, Princeton, Rutgers, and the State Normal School in Trenton competed for the designation of land-grant college in New Jersey. Rutgers College Professors George H. Cook and David Murray successfully lobbied the New Jersey legislature and,

in 1864, Rutgers was granted the designation. (Figure 49.) This led to the establishment of the Rutgers Scientific School in the same year. The school acquired a 100-acre farm from the estate of Rutgers College graduate and New Brunswick resident James Neilson (class of 1866) to serve as Rutgers’ experimental farm. As a student at Rutgers, Neilson studied agriculture and later became a pioneer in soil improvement, drainage, cattle breeding, soybean cultivation, and the use of chemical fertilizers. In 1880, he co-founded with George Cook the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers, which parlayed into the benefits of the Hatch Act that was passed several years later.

The estate, Woodlawn, today houses Rutgers’ Eagleton Institute of Politics at the heart of the George H. Cook campus of the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences.

ii. Leadership on the Banks of the Raritan River

I seem to see a great university, great in endowment, in land, in buildings, in equipment, but greater still-second to none-in its practical idealism, and its social usefulness.

Dr. Robert C. Clothier (November 1932)

In the years following the Great Depression, expansion was a necessary and inevitable goal for Rutgers – one that was achieved through the leadership of several university presidents over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century. The Agricultural College was designated the State University of New Jersey in 1917 and by 1925, the University Extension Division was established and provided educational services to over 40,000 New Jersey residents. Sitting university president Dr. John Martin Thomas undertook a dramatic campaign to become a leading public educational institution – one that would be challenged by limited state appropriations and Rutgers
dual role as private-public institution, both as “a collection of private colleges supported by tuition revenue and endowment funds but also an institution … that received funds dedicated to the Agricultural College, to the New Jersey College for Women, and to technical and scientific programs at the men’s college.”

The tenure of succeeding university president Robert C. Clothier coincided with the end of the Depression, the entire course of the Second World War, and the beginning of the Cold War era. Despite the economic and political challenges of this period, his accomplishments shepherded the university through to more promising prospects, laying the foundation for significant growth for the university. In addition to financial stability and economic growth, this included the expansion of educational services and land acquisition – including the eventual purchase of a tract in Piscataway that would be transformed from the military encampment, Camp Kilmer, to a progressive campus.

Rutgers had only recently become a university when Clothier assumed the presidency and was troubled by financial challenges and limited access to suitable facilities and staff. Clothier, however, was able to embark on a tremendous development program that included the development of a “graduate faculty, the building of much of the College of Agriculture, the establishment of University College, the founding of the University Press and the creation of the Department of Alumni and Public Relations.” Under his oversight, Rutgers would expand after World War II across the Raritan River to Piscataway with the acquisition of the 256-acre tract that would become the River Road Campus, later the Heights, and now known as Busch Campus.

Clothier also understood the financial and cultural implications of strategic
relationships with government agencies and non-profits. His partnership with the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) employed hundreds of men and women on the many projects that the growing university required -- instilling both community and civic pride in the process. The new River Road stadium was "dedicated (in 1938) on the occasion of the football victory over Princeton."\(^{20}\) (Figure 51.)

Clothier’s civic commitment was most apparent from the outset of the Second World War. In keeping with the university’s land-grant status, the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was set up on each campus, where enlisted personnel could receive short-term technical training.\(^{21}\) In addition, the university’s curriculum was tailored to the exigent circumstances of the war. While the ASTP helped address the severe drop in admissions to the men’s college, the curriculum of the women’s college was also expanded to prepare students for non-traditional and technical war-time roles.
The war required translators, engineers, and other roles – and Rutgers was proactive in addressing the need.

Clothier had also at this time shown a great deal of support for the troops stationed at Camp Kilmer, having taken an active interest in the work being done at the camp’s Kilmer College, which had been dedicated on September 12, 1945. A few barracks were functionally repurposed to serve as classrooms to accommodate returning enlisted men who sought continuing education via the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, also known as the G.I. Bill. (Figures 52 and 53.)

Signed into law by President Roosevelt on June 22, 1944, the G.I. Bill provided a range of benefits for returning World War II veterans, including tuition and living expenses to attend high school, college or vocational/technical school, as well as low-interest mortgages and business loans. Following the war, more than 19,000 veterans attended Rutgers through the benefits of the G.I. Bill.
Figure 52. “Rutgers President, Dr. Robert Clothier, speaks at the Kilmer College’s dedication in 1945.” (Source: Records of the Office of the Chief of Transportation, “General Correspondence,” Camp Kilmer, NJ, U.S. Army, RG 336, 1945, National Archives, New York, NY.)

Figure 53. G.I.s after classes at Kilmer College. (Source: Records of the Office of the Chief of Transportation, “General Correspondence,” Camp Kilmer, NJ, U.S. Army, RG 336, 1945, National Archives, New York, NY.)
A Campus Emerges: Livingston

By 1963, after the Camp Kilmer’s closure in the decade prior, much of its property was sold and dispersed to local municipalities and organizations, and a substantial acreage was purchased by Rutgers for the creation of its Livingston campus. (Figures 54 and 55.) Rutgers, still under pressure to grow as an elite institution of higher education, saw potential in the opportunity to both expand its holdings in Piscataway and consolidate its liberal arts curriculum into a new campus.

The acquisition was negotiated through proposal to the U.S. Army (Figures 56, 57 and 58.) and, in 1964, Rutgers acquired from the federal government 540 acres of the former Camp Kilmer army base for the sum of $2,920,000.00.²⁴ (Accounts suggest that Rutgers superseded rival Princeton University in this goal.) One of the requirements of the acquisition by the Army was that the land must ultimately be used for educational purposes.²⁵ This was further enforced by a clause in the contract that Rutgers had to report to the Army annually for a period of twenty years in order to prove that the land was being developed immediately and that the use would conform to this stipulation. Violation of these terms would allow the government to reclaim the land from the university.²⁶

According to Rutgers University historian Paul G.E. Clemens, the new campus would begin a new chapter of innovation at the university:

The founding of Livingston College on the former site of Camp Kilmer a disused military installation, was marked by a fresh approach to teaching within the ever-growing university, an approach that recognized the difficulties of creating community within a big research university. The program was an almost utopian-scheme for creating small liberal arts colleges (called “unit colleges”) on the 540-acre site in Piscataway.”²⁷
Figure 55. Camp Kilmer: Building and Land Use in Relation to Current Campus (Source: Diagram by the author. Data sources: GIS map composition by author, Projection: State Plane New Jersey (NAD 83); CAD drawing, Institutional Planning & Operations and University Facilities and Capital Management, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; “Camp Kilmer Construction Drawings,” University Records Management, Institutional Planning and Operations, Project Services – ORG 567 – Barcode # 10549018.)
Figure 56. Property map from the purchase proposal. (Source: “Proposed acquisition of Camp Kilmer property for Livingston Campus by Clarke and Rapuano Incorporated,” Office of Campus Planning, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.)
Figure 5. From the purchase proposal: Land Use Outlined. (Source: “Proposed land use of the parcel by Clarke and Rapuano Incorporated,” Office of Campus Planning, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.)
Figure 58. Final land acquisition/distribution of former Camp Kilmer site. (Source: Marie DeFabritis, Office of Planning, Development & Design, Institutional Planning and Operations, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey).
One of the most significant achievements of the new campus and its contemporary curricula was that it promoted racial and cultural diversity and thereby drew attention to the under-served communities of New Jersey, for many of whom higher education in some ways remained out of reach. At the time, the university “announced a major commitment to disadvantaged students, along with a focus on urban problems.”

To support this ambitious program, university leadership originally intended to create three campuses on the acquired tract. However, the university was not able to support this ambitious goal financially. As Clemens recounts:

In 1965, university officials spoke of three colleges, (Figure 59.) which together would house nine thousand students and accommodate a few thousand commuters. By 1967, they talked about Livingston College I and II, each for three thousand. (The buildings that current students know as Lucy Stone Hall and Lynton Towers were originally conceived of as part of Livingston II, and Livingston III was never begun.) The project was finally reduced to one college with a total of three thousand beds, fifteen hundred of which were in the dormitories known as Quads I, II, and III.

Despite having to abbreviate the scale of the project, university leaders were committed to making Livingston a campus that would epitomize their innovative approach beyond academics and social equity. They also opted for a physically structural approach that was proving to be revolutionary at the time in the way universities were looking to improve undergraduate education. (Figure 60.)

In his 1963 book, *The Uses of the University*, Clark Kerr articulated several of the challenges facing higher education at the time, in light of the new social order that was forming in the United States. More specific to the concerns of designing the new Livingston Campus, he indicated that making “the university seem smaller even as it grows larger” to be key among them. One of the solutions embraced by other state
Figure 59. “Trans-Raritan Campus Master Plan 1968-70,” by Clarke and Rapuano with red circles by author of proposed Livingston campuses and red star of realized campus. (Source: Photocopy. Date unknown, Office of Campus Planning, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey)

Figure 60. Undated photo of Rutgers University president Ernest Lynton (far left) and members of his staff examining the model showing the full three-campus build out of the Kilmer area. The depot area, one of the last remaining Camp Kilmer building groups, is visible on the left side of the model. (Source: Paul G. E. Clemens, Rutgers Since 1945: A History of the State University of New Jersey, [New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015], 153).
universities was the “cluster college” concept, an experimental approach to administration that dated back to the 13th and 14th century campus design of England’s Oxford University\textsuperscript{31} that was being applied to campus design in the 1960s in new and novel ways.\textsuperscript{32}

In the Oxford model, the university is comprised of many smaller colleges, each one having a level of its own independence. Faculty and the academic programming was similarly managed separately within the confines of the specific school. However, since these schools are all situated on the same campus, they are able to share common resources and have a more cooperative interaction with each other.\textsuperscript{33} The difference with American institutions was that this structure was designed almost exclusively to support undergraduate programming. Of the two types of cluster college – sub-college and federated college – Rutgers opted for the later model in its approach for Livingston College,\textsuperscript{34} since the individual colleges would all benefit from the combined advantages and existing resources of the larger research university.

Claremont Colleges and Harvard, Yale and Atlanta University had been following the Oxford format since the 1920’s.\textsuperscript{35,36} In 1965, Livingston Dean Ernest Lynton and his colleagues visited the Santa Cruz and Irvine campuses of University of California as well as Claremont in order to determine the model they would follow at Rutgers.

These decisions would play a large role in the decision as to how the former Camp Kilmer land would be developed. The goal was to establish a community of students and faculty; the intimate scale of the smaller colleges within a larger campus would allow students and faculty advisors of the same disciplines to live and study together. This would largely govern the direction of campus housing design. It is said
that Lynton kept at hand for reference a copy of Kerr’s 1964 article, “Building Big While Seeming Small,” as it included a number of the buildings from the University of California–Santa Cruz.\textsuperscript{37} Designed by Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons, the Santa Cruz quads recalled the dorms at Oxford, and Rutgers followed suit by building low-rise quadrangles on its new campus, designed by the firm Anderson, Beckwith, and Haible,\textsuperscript{38} with the aim that they would “provide spontaneous contact between students and staff without formally organizing this and without destroying individual privacy.”\textsuperscript{39}

In some ways, this design approach and planning strategy perhaps unintentionally mirrored that of Camp Kilmer. (Figures 61 and 62.) The new campus design forewent the long rectangular forms of the traditional quad, and the buildings were relatively low-rising. In the layout of these initial campus buildings, an academic building and a dining hall were set a short walk from the housing – much like the centralized mess hall hubs serviced the troops housed in the surrounding single-story barracks. The first Livingston Campus buildings were erected on the Kilmer-area campus, where Livingston College opened in 1969.\textsuperscript{40} Despite breaking ground for the new campus, Rutgers did not immediately, nor all at once, remove all of the Camp Kilmer buildings. Over the course of two decades, former military buildings across the purchased tract were bulldozed from the landscape once they were no longer useful for classrooms or until newer facilities could be funded and built. Successive masterplans called for a number of solutions to best use the former Kilmer space, including the adjacent Johnson tract, which was acquired by the university in stages prior and concurrent to the Camp Kilmer purchase. Since 1976,\textsuperscript{41} this 360-acre wooded tract has since been retained as a naturalized
Figure 61. Detail: “Campus Master Plan 1974”, Zion and Breen. (Source: University Records Management. Institutional Planning and Operations, Project Services, ORG 567, Barcode # 10549018, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey).

Figure 62. Detail of the model of the three Quads, illustrating the intimate outdoor courtyard and proximity to Tillett academic building. (Photo dated April 30, 1966.) According to Clemens, the Quads were a reinterpretation of the quadrangular colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.\(^{40}\) (Source: Paul G. E. Clemens, Rutgers Since 1945: A History of the State University of New Jersey. [New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015], 153.)
ecological preserve, and is used for recreation and as a natural teaching area for the university’s School of Environmental and Biological Sciences.

iv. Kilmer Woods: The Rutgers Ecological Preserve

Adjacent to the former Camp Kilmer site, the Rutgers Ecological Preserve – also called Kilmer Woods – is a 360-acre wooded preserve that is used both for recreation and as a natural teaching area for the university’s School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. Rutgers acquired the land in stages, starting in 1954 through 1963 from various landowners. This group included members of the Johnson family, who had originally purchased the land along River Road with the intention of building a series of family estates away from their city homes and their factories across the river in New Brunswick. The estates never materialized in any meaningful way, and the land was sold parcel by parcel to various buyers, including Rutgers (Figure 63.)

According to anecdotal accounts, the Johnson family had hoped that the last and largest tract available along Cedar Lane would be purchased by Middlesex County for a hospital. This purposed aligned well with the heritage of the family, who had century-long ties to the New Brunswick area where they produced medical goods on the shores of the Raritan River since the Spanish-American War and may likely have supplied personal first aid kits and bandages to the troops stationed at Camp Kilmer. However, the site at the time appeared to be too far removed from the more densely populated city and town centers that could benefit from such an investment. The land was subsequently sold to Rutgers with the hope that it would be developed into a campus. Several Rutgers University masterplans since the early 1970s have proposed expansion of housing and other facilities into Kilmer Woods, but in 1988 faculty, local residents and students were
able to successfully petition the university that the land remain naturalized and be used as a living laboratory.\textsuperscript{46} The Johnson family now endorses it as a naturalized woodland and continue to contribute to the Rutgers University educational mission by supporting its maintenance and research.\textsuperscript{47}

In 1976, the Rutgers Board of Governors formally established the Rutgers Ecological Preserve and Natural Teaching Area with the goal of preserving the natural ecological characteristics of the property and permitting it to serve as an outdoor teaching area for the university. According to Rick Lathrop, Director of Rutgers Grant F. Walton Center for Remote Sensing & Spatial Analysis and Director of the Rutgers University Ecological Preserve, present day management of the EcoPreserve tries to “maintain this balance between preserving, if not restoring, the area’s ecological system and natural values while continuing to expand the EcoPreserve’s role as an educational, recreational and aesthetic resource for University students, faculty and staff as well as local citizens.”\textsuperscript{48}

The vast majority of buildings and markers of Camp Kilmer have long been removed, with fewer than 15 remaining. There are many remnants of the camp still evident – including at two edges of the preserve. The current “White Trail” within the preserve, accessed from the parking lot of the depot building area, follows the original Kilmer road to the munitions bunkers. The bunkers were kept off site at the western border of the camp, away from the barracks to comply with Army regulation AMC-R385-100, which established the inhabited (IBD) – the safety distance for explosive munitions – at 1200 feet (365 meters) from the barracks and other service buildings.\textsuperscript{49}
Figure 63. Sections of the area now comprising the Rutgers Ecological Preserve were acquired parcel by parcel from 1954 through 1965. Gold identifies the properties acquired and overseen by the Rutgers Board of Governors; green areas indicate areas that fall under the purview of the University’s Board of Trustees. (Source: Marie DeFabritis, Office of Planning, Development & Design, Institutional Planning and Operations, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey).
Two of these earthen berms remain on this trail, where they sit abutting the original asphalt parking lot, one now deeply gouged from use by mountain bikers. Access to this area is marked by a steel gate off the trail, which is marked by a university sign that indicates the location as being part of the former Camp Kilmer site. Very near these berms runs a chain link fence and the remains of several wooden telephone poles – most of which are now rotted down to just stumps with pieces of oxidized wire. (Figure 65.)
Figure 65. World War II era chain link fence; a reminder of the EcoPreserve’s military past. (Photograph by author, October 14, 2017.)
v. Evolution of Kilmer Woods: The Natural History of the EcoPreserve

At 316 acres, the Rutgers Ecological Preserve (“EcoPreserve”) is one of the largest forests in New Jersey. (Figure 66.) Its numerous fresh water streams feed into the Raritan River and provide sustenance and habitat for a number of wildlife and plants. While the depot site remains devoid of all but a few mature trees and several small stands of pioneer and exotic species such as Eastern cedar and alianthus, a native wildflower meadow barrier has been established by Professor Lathrop’s ecology students and maintained by the students and staff responsible for the basic upkeep of the EcoPreserve around its western/northwestern boundary. (Figure 67.) Some of the native species observed on-site include:50

- American ash (*Fraxinus americana*)
- American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*)
- Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*)
- Pin Oaks (*Quercus palustris*)
- Red Maples (*Acer rubrum*)
- Shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*)
- Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*)
- Trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*)
- White Oak (*Quercus alba*)
- Mayapple (*Podopystium pendulatum*)
- Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*)
- ‘Jack-in-the-Pulpit’ (*Arisaema triphyllum*)

Throughout the area, various types of moss and fungi are also evident. What appears to be missing from this landscape is a true woodland border ecosystem. In particular, the existing mix of plants evident in the forest and on-site might benefit from the incorporation of more spring ephemerals as part of a future planning and planting
Figure 66. Dominant Tree Species in EcoPreserve Tree Canopy. (Source: Map by Lauren Palatini, Grant F. Walton Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis (CRSSA), October 21, 2016, Rutgers Ecological Preserve.)
Dominant Species

Figure 67. Dominant Plant Species in EcoPreserve Understory. (Source: Map by Lauren Palatini, Grant F. Walton Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis (CRSSA), October 21, 2016, Rutgers Ecological Preserve.)
strategy. The addition of this “edge” would more seamlessly blend the transition between the proposed design site and the natural systems that surround it.

Wildlife found within the EcoPreserve includes turtles, wild turkeys, pileated woodpeckers, salamanders, foxes, raccoons, red tailed hawks, and a number of migratory songbirds. Recently, evidence of major predators such as coyote and black bear have reportedly been sighted on the Livingston Campus. A number of fish and American eel (at the elver stage) inhabit the area’s streams and riparian zones.

vi. Archives as Palimpsest

At times, the only legible traces of the history of a place appear in the annals of the institution that owns the land upon which the site is located. Acquiring land units over time, Rutgers University leadership has instituted policies to ensure the continued preservation of Kilmer Woods – the naturalized ecological preserve that abuts the site.

By actions such as this, the University has laid the foundation that will allow successive years of research, each contribution taking inspiration from the work that came before and contributing to additional research. This base of knowledge has a traceable history, through which the work of faculty and students continue to contribute in the form of research papers and theses that reflect the myriad areas of study taught at Rutgers.

Often, with land acquisition comes opportunities to engage the community. Nurturing relationships with benefactors such as the Johnson family and their namesake global enterprise can lend financial support to preserve structures, spaces, and programs.
Successive years of support can demonstrate how these commitments can shape the land or contribute to an oral history of used places and spaces.

The most visible evidence of Rutgers leaders’ policy decisions is the campus design itself. Borrowing elements of other state-run, land-grant institution campuses, such as the University of California – Santa Cruz, allowed them to achieve their goals of producing a highly integrated campus that supported the changing social mores and civic upheaval associated with the 1970s and 1980s. While the warehouse area remains largely left in its original configuration and is largely unmaintained, through analysis of master plans, photographs, and other records, one can trace the lineage in the design of the buildings and their organization on Livingston Campus. (Figure 68.)
Figure 68. Evolution of land use of the Camp Kilmer site from 1930 through 2012.
To better understand the site’s evolution as a built environment, as just illustrated, this
diagram traces the deconstruction of Camp Kilmer in relation to the current plan of the
campus, and the proposed 2030 plan. (Diagram by the author. Data sources: GIS map
composition by author, Projection: State Plane New Jersey (NAD 83); CAD drawing,
Institutional Planning & Operations and University Facilities and Capital Management,
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; “Camp Kilmer Construction Drawings,”
University Records Management, Institutional Planning and Operations, Project
Services – ORG 567 – Barcode # 10549018.)
CHAPTER FIVE
CURRENT CONDITIONS AND POTENTIAL DESIGN INSPIRATIONS

Preservation is not about capturing and “freezing” the moment. It is, instead, at least in part, about how that moment can continue to generate curiosity, wonderment. ¹

Johnny Golding
Experimental Preservation (2016)

In his 2016 book, Experimental Preservation, Jorge Otero-Pailos suggests that “the words ‘experimental’ and ‘preservation’ have, until very recently, been kept a safe distance from each other. ‘Experiment’ suggests the dangerous possibility of failure, something to avoid when working on valuable historical and cultural objects. To experiment directly on these objects is a very risky endeavor because one could damage the qualities that make them so valuable.” ²

Practitioners within the emerging field of experimental architecture are upending old ideas about cultural heritage, choosing objects once considered aesthetically insignificant, or displeasing, or unsavory – and therefore typically excluded by official narratives. ³ But, in my opinion, this fledgling area of practice holds great promise for the discipline of landscape architecture, as well as this site located on Livingston Campus.

The buildings of the Livingston Campus “warehouse area” were never meant to stand the test of time. These nine buildings are non-descript, with no aesthetic element or style compelling a preservation argument. But they have become iconic by the very fact that they still remain in silent testament of the importance of this site during an important period of conflict and transition in the United States. Inspired by the philosophy of experimental preservationists, and in the spirit of experimentation practiced by the School of Environmental and Biologic Sciences, I believe that an innovative, interpretative
approach should be taken with the remains of the former Camp Kilmer site on Rutgers’ Livingston Campus.

i. Precedent: Part of the Master Plans

The notion of retaining the few remaining of the original 1,500 buildings is not solely mine, nor is it the first time that preservation has been considered as an option. The area has been considered an integral part of the campus throughout several iterations of master plans – both proposed and realized.

Beginning with the initial proposal to purchase the segment of the Camp Kilmer property by Clarke and Rapuano in 1964, through the evolution of design, layout, and structure beginning with the “Trans-Raritan Campus Master Plan in 1968, the master plan drafted by Zion and Breen, through to the current 2030 campus master plan by Richard A.M. Stern Architects (RAMSA) and Sasaki, the “warehouse district” has managed to remain a necessary fixture at the southern end of the Livingston campus.⁴ (Figures 69, 70 and 71.)

In each master plan still available for review, the exact future uses for the site have not been specified, which begs the question: Why have these buildings been allowed to linger? While it is easy to assume that they’ve been fulfilling basic needs that do not have larger spatial requirements, there is also the question about the financial and physical feasibility of removal. Perhaps the concrete platforms upon which these buildings sit has been a deterrent? A combination of factors may have contributed to the low priority it has received as a site for development on the campus. Its location with regard to proximity to the center of the Livingston campus, site and ecological conditions could also have contributed to its current unconsidered, unmaintained status.
Figure 69. Zion and Breen Livingston Campus master plan (1968). Warehouse area outlined in red by author. (Source: Project Services, ORG 567, Barcode #10549018, University Records Management, Institutional Planning and Operations, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.)

Figure 70. Zion and Breen Livingston Campus master plan (1988). Warehouse area outlined in red by author. (Source: Frank Wong, University Planning and Development, Institutional Planning and Operations, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.)
ii. An Analysis of the Warehouse District

*We have got to bring the natural world back to the people, rather than have them live in an environment where everything is paved over with concrete.*

Walter Hickel
Former Secretary of the Interior and Governor of Alaska, 1969

Critical to the warehouse district’s development are the site’s adjacencies, and the evolving financial and spatial needs of both the university and those who live around it. With a proposed emphasis on the educational mission of the university, this site offers an opportunity to engage the campus with the local community by creating a variety of destinations and experiences encapsulated in a series of green spaces, programmed activity areas, living laboratories, and a greenway seam that knits together adjacent residential developments, the Livingston campus, and the larger communities of Rutgers, Highland Park, Piscataway and Edison, New Jersey.

The Livingston warehouse area is located at the southern-most point of Livingston Campus, where it is situated along Cedar Lane. Starting from the west and moving clockwise, the site is buffered by two residential communities (the Treetops and Cedar Lane apartment complexes), the Rutgers EcoPreserve, the Livingston Campus picnic grove and playing fields, and the New Jersey Motor Vehicles Commission at the intersection of Road 2 where Cedar Lane transitions to Kilmer Road. Directly to the south and across the C-curve of Cedar Lane, a plot of open space for the university was originally intended as, and continues to be used as, a waste storage area. Here, scrubby underbrush and pioneer species have clustered tightly, offering refuge for deer, rodents, birds, and the occasional coyote. (Figure 72.)
Figure 72. Site orientation of the warehouse area on Livingston Campus. The main campus is due north/northeast of the warehouse district site. (Source: Photograph by author from drone, view to the west, October 14, 2017.)

The nine remaining buildings at the warehouse location at the south of Livingston Campus represent 2/3 of the twelve original, prefabricated wooden depot buildings that were originally built to receive goods and servicemen during Camp Kilmer’s activation. (Figure. 73 and 74.) This location was the nerve center of Camp Kilmer; in addition to major transportation connections, it also housed much of the operations and facilities required to run the camp. Today, one of these long structures have been abandoned and has fallen into terrible disrepair; several roofs have areas that have caved in, leaving gaping holes that allow the building interiors to be exposed to the elements. Surrounding vegetation has been only moderately managed through periodic mowing.
Figure 73. The warehouse district of Livingston Campus (Source: University Planning and Development, Institutional Planning and Operations, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, accessed September 28, 2015, https://masterplan.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Rutgers%202030%20Volume%201%20-Rutgers%20University%20New%20Brunswick%20C%20Rutgers%202030.pdf.)
The buildings still in use by the University today fulfill very different roles. Buildings #13 and #27, on Road 1 near the intersection of Road 2 and Cedar Lane, and those along Warehouse Road, between Road 1 and Street 1604, are used primarily as storage facilities for several different departments. Buildings at #74 and #4101 Street 1603 and #4099 Warehouse Road house the university’s Departments of Transportation, Maintenance and Operations teams. Building #93, closest to the EcoPreserve along Road 1, houses both the Rutgers women’s crew team’s practice facilities as well as Rutgers’ Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation Asphalt Pavement Lab and the Geology Department’s rock and soil cores storage facility. (Figure 75.)

While some have been renovated to better serve these purposes, there is still evidence within these structures that reveal their original military purpose. For example, the camp’s original pilot house still sits with its covered windows at the center of the site, at the corner of Streets 1604 and Road 1.

Two relatively small areas of the original Camp Kilmer land parcel overlap the Rutgers Ecological Preserve. Looking at current aerial images, the ten-acre remains of the outer-most circulation route for the camp’s hospital compound are visible between Metlars Lane and Hospital Road, the original route of which resumes across Avenue E. To the southeast of this location, and just west of the intersection of Roads 1 and 3 and Street 1604, is the “White” hiking path – the repurposed access road to the Camp’s ordnance bunkers. The bunkers sit on less than an acre of land, more than a quarter of a mile away from the warehouse district, and only accessible by this path.
Figure 74. Camp Kilmer Buildings Still in Use on Livingston Campus and in Piscataway, New Jersey. (Diagram by the author. Data sources: GIS map composition by author, Projection: State Plan New Jersey (NAD 83); CAD drawing, Institutional Planning & Operations and University Facilities and Capital Management, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; “Camp Kilmer Construction Drawings,” University Records Management, Institutional Planning and Operations, Project Services – ORG 567 – Barcode # 10549018.)
Looking at the original drawings done by Antonin Raymond’s firm, Tuttle, Seelye, Place & Raymond, and by overlaying the original Camp Kilmer plan over the current Livingston Campus plan, it is apparent that the university’s planners chose to use the existing roads originally created for the camp. This would support the practice of reusing existing infrastructure, instead of removing the camp’s original drainage, sewers, electrical conduits and lighting system, which was likely done as a cost-savings measure given the University’s financial situation in the 1960s. In an inadvertent act of preservation of the former Camp Kilmer, the roads around the site have retained their military designations, despite previous attempts by university leaders to change them — though, today, almost none of the buildings located within the warehouse area are marked.

iii. Making Tracks: A Forgotten Railway in Plain Sight

While some effort was made by the university to remove much of the original rail yard, many of the original rails and buffer stops remain in place. (Figure 76.) Within the Livingston warehouse area, many of the rails were simply paved over or pushed aside, but are clearly visible where they can be seen protruding from the earth or roadways. Cedar Lane marks the original curvature set down with the Army’s need for a railyard roundabout; if you cross the street heading south from the warehouse area, the rails are visible in the undergrowth and are clearly delineated by the crop of pioneer Eastern Cedars that grew up between the tracks.
Figure 75. Current Use: Remaining Camp Kilmer Buildings on Livingston Campus. (Diagram by the author. Data sources: GIS map composition by author, Projection: State Plan New Jersey (NAD 83); CAD drawing, Institutional Planning & Operations and University Facilities and Capital Management, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; “Camp Kilmer Construction Drawings,” University Records Management, Institutional Planning and Operations, Project Services – ORG 567 – Barcode # 10549018.)
iv. On-Site Ecology of the Warehouse District

The former environs of Camp Kilmer present an environmental hazard after years of military-grade industrial use. The warehouse district and, to some extent, portions of the Ecological Preserve are soiled with numerous contaminants, which include PAHs, VOCs, SVOCs, PCBs, asbestos and heavy metals. All affect the groundwater, surface waters, and the soil – and could present a dangerous situation for visitors without remediation. Suitable mitigation treatments will need to be incorporated into any development plan for this landscape.

According to the Rutgers EcoPreserve website, the area is “dominated by a beautiful stand of mature red, white and black oaks along with beech, maples and hickories and is known locally as Kilmer Woods. By the 1940’s, any remaining farm fields were abandoned to natural succession. Those portions of the EcoPreserve are dominated by red cedar, pin oak, white ash and red maple woodlands.” Tracking successional growth and introducing new plants into the area could be studied for ecological benefit as well as habitat construction for animal species who make the wooded area their home.

v. A Treatise to Preserve the Remnants of Camp Kilmer

In response to the current Rutgers University 2030 master plan, there is an opportunity to develop a plan for a new community district through careful consideration of the university’s current and future needs, program placement, and the public realm. It is also an opportunity to endow the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences with the resources to allow the site to serve as an educational forum for additional study.

Opportunities exist within this location to create a new campus gateway and
Figure 76. Original rails run through the university’s property, on towards the hub connection at the regional rail station in Edison, New Jersey. (Photograph by author, facing west, March 30, 2017.)
greenway, sites for commemoration that might include memorials to mark the original
Camp Kilmer or the Hungarian refugees, as well as environmental testing and planting
strategies. A signature landmark, perhaps serving as a contemporary pont d’appui, could
function as a new social hub for both members of the Rutgers community and the
surrounding townships. A historic trail/walking tour led by a downloadable app could be
developed to mark the various locations of former Camp Kilmer buildings and
landmarks. Rail-to-trail program and transit routes for bicyclists and pedestrians, with the
potential to re-integrate a light rail system, may also be considered.

Each of these major layers is open to reinterpretation and could be explored as a
cultural touchpoint. (Figure 77.) In the following pages, I will present potential design
solutions that could be considered, the basis of which is supported by case studies that
include the University of Southern California – Monterey Bay, another public university
that has benefitted from the acquisition from the U.S. Army of a similarly historically,
ecologically and culturally significant site.

vi. Design Inspirations

The Park, as the most recognizable landscape typology within the civic realm, positions
the designed landscape within the public imagination: it is at once neutral territory and
layered with personal and collective histories. It is also a place where highly engineered
natural systems are integrated to perform ecological functions. This interplay of cultural
meaning and regional ecology makes the Park fertile ground for transformative design.

Thomas Woltz, Nelson Byrd Woltz

Since my first visit to the Livingston Campus warehouse district that summer day,
I’ve been struck by the potential design opportunities the site suggests. Rather than
considering the site and its buildings for traditional preservation, instead, its current condition of curated neglect inspired thoughts of reuse that would retain the feeling of its less defined borders that blend together its cultural past, current nature, and promising future. It feels important to draw people to this site to experience the insights that can be gained here, yet also retain areas within for quiet contemplation. Engaging the university and the local community could engender a sense of ownership among these groups, thereby sustaining its future.

With its physical transformation from military camp to university campus, the legacy of Camp Kilmer was allowed to shape the physical layout and spatial organization of the Livingston campus, a testament to the planners’ ability to capitalize upon the pre-existing form to create an innovative future. While fewer than twelve Camp Kilmer buildings remain in this remote corner of Livingston Campus, thoughtful and sensitive design interventions would similarly embrace what remains of this tangible and intangible heritage to present a more connected foundation from which relationships to the university’s academic body and the community at large may benefit.

With its blend of constructed and natural green architecture, this site could achieve several goals including creating a new campus hub that will integrate the academic, social and natural systems on campus. (Figure 78.)

In keeping with its original purpose, the warehouse area presents an opportunity to create a second major entrance to the Livingston campus, literally and figuratively opposite from that of the university’s contemporary business school. This natural setting would effectively serve as counterbalance to the school’s grandiose, business school building that currently serves as an architectural gateway and centerpiece of the 2030

Figure 79. Selgano’s Office in the Woods demonstrates a lower impact insertion into the setting that provides their staff to engage with the natural world. (Source: ArchDaily.com. “Selgas Cano Architecture Office by Iwan Baan,” April 30, 2009, accessed March 20, 2018, https://www.archdaily.com/21049 selgas-cano-architecture-office-by-iwan-baan/.)
Rutgers Master Plan. Enhanced parking and site signage would encourage visitors to take advantage of the natural setting offered by the EcoPreserve.

By integrating natural and green spaces, and in keeping with the University’s commitment to integrating green infrastructure throughout its campuses, there is also an opportunity to strengthen its ecological resources and support the University’s educational mission. A permeable, planted boundary between the Ecological Preserve and the warehouse district could blend the naturalized setting and introduce better ecological systems to the site itself. Adaptable and flexible learning environments could be incorporated within the space and the adjacent Kilmer Woods Ecological Preserve. (Figure 79.) Test beds that function as living laboratories could delineate the locations of original Camp Kilmer architecture. (Figure 80.) Achieved by incorporating elements of the existing architecture and infrastructure, the design could serve as a model of cutting-edge reuse that offers opportunities for experimentation to myriad disciplines beyond those of the University’s School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, such as students of urban planning, performance, cartography, and fine art. Daylighting the still-existing rail lines and cutting paths through native and naturalized meadow plantings on the former Kilmer site can suggest its dense network of transportation options. This would accommodate botanical research test beds while allowing visitors to easily explore the site and its former connections to the surrounding community.

With original streams long ago re-routed or sunk far beneath the massive, earthen plateau built to accommodate train traffic in and out of the depot area, the warehouse district will require a custom intervention to reintroduce this element to its grounds. Daylighting these waterways may have to become more of an exercise in
expression than literal restoration. (Figure 81.) Passive water features can suggest original routes, and create central areas for commemoration, reflection, or play. Improved vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation throughout the warehouse area and the locale along its pre-existing roads and remaining rail lines could enhance connection with the Rutgers campus system as well as the community at large. Conversion of these transit routes to improved bicycle and pedestrian paths, or a light rail system, would encourage
Figure 81. Nelson Byrd Woltz day-lighted the Cockril Spring in Nashville’s Centennial Park, which traverses the landscape via concrete rill and is aided with the installation of wetlands and a fountain. (Source: Nelson Byrd Woltz, accessed March 10, 2018, http://www.nbwla.com/projects/park/centennial-park.)
better visitor traffic to the site along the Cedar Lane/Kilmer Road corridor, where it might also benefit residents of Edison and the local housing complexes seeking to access the public services located along Kilmer Road to the Edison train station.

By creating a distinct sense of place, the site would become a destination in its own right. By recognizing the site as palimpsest, design interventions could be tailored to support and showcase specific layers of the site’s history and significance. In this way, a number of historical narratives could be realized, such as those of the original Native People, the early European settlers, or World War II veterans, their families or enthusiasts.

Through the course of my research, an impressive number of people expressed their connection to Camp Kilmer, by recalling family members who passed through the gates of Camp Kilmer either heading to or returning from the front. By recognizing the site’s significance in the context of World War II or the Hungarian Revolution, and to those for whom they represent major historical milestones, outreach to national and local military units and community groups could lead to its recognition as an important site within the international network of historic World War II sites, memorials and monuments. Cues could be taken from a project recently completed by Nelson Byrd Woltz, who created a sustainable landscape in Brooklyn, New York that honored the 200-year history of this former Naval Cemetery by providing a design that offers visitors a retreat from the urban fabric, and an opportunity to disengage in remembrance. Höweler + Yoon appears to be taking a similar approach to their project for the University of Virginia. Integrated into the University’s UNESCO World Heritage Site campus, this memorial will recognize the work and individual lives of the enslaved laborers who built and sustained the early years of the University. (Figures 82 and 83.)

Figure 83. The memorial planned for the University of Virginia. (Source: “Memorial to Enslaved Laborers at UVA,”. accessed September 25, 2017, http://www.howeleryoon.com/projects/UVA.Höweler + Yoon.)
The potential to create an accessible open space with a mission of social engagement cannot be underestimated. Local residents’ lack access to green space, with the closest park located a half-mile away at the foot of Cedar Lane and River Road, offers an opportunity to capture a local audience and engender usage. Enhanced parking and accessibility, and better wayfinding signage around the warehouse district and around the greater Livingston Campus would encourage visitors to explore. Bicycle lanes, walking paths, and repurposing of existing rail lines offer enhanced access. London’s newest pocket park, Handylane Gardens in King’s Cross, is the most recent example of an urban revitalization project that leveraged remnant rail lines in the landscape. However, instead of a literal representation of the original rail lines within established walkways, like the High Line in New York City, the designer Dan Pearson represented the rail lines as water rills formed of CorTen® steel, that followed the original arc of the lines and captured the industrial spirit of the site. (Figures 84 and 85.) Reconnecting the warehouse district with the land set off from it, across Cedar Lane, will reunify the original Camp Kilmer property and creates an opportunity for another recreational or ceremonial space.
Figure 84. Aerial view of the High Line. (Source: NYC Parks, “The High Line,” accessed April 28, 2018, https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/the-high-line/photos.)

Figure 85. Handyside Gardens, London’s newest pocket park and first public garden at King’s Cross, was inspired by the railway long associated with this location. (Source: New London Development, “Handyside Gardens,” accessed March 10, 2017, http://newlondondevelopment.com/nld/project/handyside_gardens.)
CONCLUSION

The land no longer has precedence over the map, nor survives it; from now on the map has precedence over the land.

Jean Baudrillard ¹

To maintain its reputation of academic and scientific excellence, Rutgers University must expand. Under the auspices of the Rutgers University 2030 Master Plan, university leaders are considering the reuse of portions of the former Camp Kilmer site on Livingston Campus. The plan includes removal of some of the remaining original depot structures and a *tabla rasa* approach to open space abutting the Rutgers EcoPreserve in order to make way for a new research compound and student residences. The expansion of “Livi” will unknowingly continue to obliterate an important cultural connection to the past.

This feels like a disservice. While the military structures were never intended to remain as architectural landmarks, it is how they function today – and there is merit in considering preserving elements of this significant site in light of the impact of the war and its effect on generations of Americans. By relegating these buildings to decay and a perpetual status quo, the University could be missing out on an opportunity to embrace its historical significance and also bring to life the educational mission of the University.

In the face of change proposed by university’s 2030 master plan, the camouflaged, culturally-rich history embedded in the landscape of Livingston Campus represents a challenge that is familiar to contemporary planners and landscape practitioners. What, if any, efforts should and can be undertaken to preserve a site’s legacy? Is the decision tantamount to picking one extreme over the other: preservation in
the traditional sense versus the benefit of economic realization? There are myriad solutions by which both can be realized.

In “The Land as Palimpsest,” Corboz suggested that the landscape can and should be defined by more than simply its material being. As mankind has reached ever outwards from his urban centers to develop the country landscape that surrounds these cities, the land serves as signature of this influence. With every molded layer of terrain, architectural intervention, and natural change, the landscape becomes less of a natural setting and more of a constructed object. But it is the layering of these successive uses that imbues the landscape with a cultural legacy and historical interest. In this way, it transcends definition by a single criterion.

Similar to the concept of “map” that Corboz illustrates, the Rutgers University 2030 Master plan serves as representation of how a map can express the landscape as an abstraction. The utilitarian nature of the map lends itself to most efficient way of transforming the landscape, because it can prescribe changes instead of being forced to anticipate them. But the masterplan is defined by the limitations of its medium. It cannot account for the passage of season, the sensory qualities of the natural environment, or changes in the landscape through spontaneous weather events that include flooding, frost heaves, or changes created by living creatures. In its current incarnation, the Rutgers 2030 Master plan cannot delineate the artifacts of Camp Kilmer currently buried under earth or asphalt that tends to not remain so. Without the tangible, sensory engagements, it cannot connect as inherently with the people who will ultimately reside, play, or work within the space.
Through the lens of Reason, Corboz argues, “Nature” (during the 19th century) is considered a common good available to humanity which men “can, and even must, exploit for their own profit.” The danger in this approach is that the natural environment stands the risk of being irreparably overtaken and converted into a constructed ideology that is neither natural, nor sustainable. At the other extreme, sentimentality when it comes to the traditional preservation, the goal of which is to return to a single static moment in time, can produce an unsustainable result. Preservation for the sake of preservation, without consider alternative methods to communicating the spirit of place, can challenge evolving user interpretations of the spirit of a place and engender an emotional disconnection.

The exciting prospect of this challenge is that it presents us with a number of questions that should be considered prior to any future development of the former Camp Kilmer site on Livingston Campus:

- How can preservation be defined?

According to the National Park Service (NPS), preservation in the traditional sense is the practice of sustaining an object or landscape by keeping it intact and safe from demolition or deterioration. Under the auspices of the NPS, the goal is to sustain cultural and natural resources in perpetuity, most often using more traditional forms of preservation that include elements frequently considered as part of a cultural landscape report: research, planning and stewardship.

But the former Camp Kilmer site is far removed from its original condition, having been deforested, filled-in and leveled by the U.S. Army prior to the Camp’s construction. During planning, the U.S. Army did not consider a strategy for the time
period following the war. The camp was built without an end date in mind, thus there was no real intent to preserve it beyond its usefulness as a military base of operations.

This offers significant latitude for university planners to incorporate inventive means of signifying the spirit of site’s historic past. For example, long-buried streams on this section of Livingston Campus cannot be returned to their original condition or stream beds. But inventive physical manifestations of these natural waterways could be suggested in the landscape, through decorative water features, rain gardens, and swales. Existing drainage infrastructure could be amended to suggest these original flows while also offering pronounced irrigation opportunities to the rest of the site.

Tensions within the landscape could also be defined by utilizing practices suggested by practitioners of Experimental preservation. By endorsing the liberties offered by this movement, the university could explore varied, non-traditional media to communicate and preserve the site’s legacy. From installations, to record-keeping, art, and performance, the university could engage a broader academic base among both the university’s many disciplines and appeal to the wider community.

- Can the elements of the site be preserved, reinterpreted, or reused in a way that can communicate their history while also presenting an economic benefit to the university?

Part of my research included reaching out to other state universities that capitalized upon former military sites for campus development. These include the California State University at Monterey Bay, built on lands acquired from the U.S. Army’s former Fort Ord and incorporate a national park (Appendix D), and Texas A&M which is currently transforming a former U.S. Air Force into a more cohesive campus master plan. As with Camp Kilmer, the design of these encampments was driven by civil
engineering that ultimately dictated the layout and architecture of the site, and has led to campuses that follow the original military footprint in similar fashion to Rutgers’ Livingston Campus.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to working with former military sites. Environmental impacts from military use are common and must often be addressed through remediation. Despite well-meaning intentions to preserve elements of these sites, military architecture cannot always be easily or cost-effectively repurposed for campus housing or offices. The architecture may not meet current energy or building industry standards, or they may have deteriorated to a point where saving them is impossible. While capitalizing upon existing infrastructure is cost-effective, it does not necessarily allow the campus to live in symbiosis with the natural environment.

The CSUMB planning office preserved a number of former military buildings with the intent that the campus be able to demonstrate its cultural history. These buildings were retrofitted with HVAC and other energy systems so that they could be used for university offices. They support their preservation efforts through downloadable applications and maps, and invite the community to participate in open campus days and historic tours.

The fragmentation and dereliction of the former Camp Kilmer site on Livingston campus recalls the original stasis of Benjamin Franklin’s former home in Philadelphia. (Figure 86.) Reinterpreted architecturally through a metal framing structure, the original historic structures are identified and communicated in manner that provides both a physical and intellectual experience for visitors to the site. On Livingston Campus, this approach could be similarly utilized by retaining certain architectural elements of the
remaining Camp Kilmer buildings, such as their formidable concrete platforms, brick fire walls, and asbestos doors. So, too, could the interpretive structures be integrated into the EcoPreserve to delineate the footprints where original bunkers and hospital structures once stood. Using materials typical of military-style construction would make a connection to the site’s military past and benefit the new landscape narrative.

With Texas A&M, the most important benefit of endorsing the site’s prior military function into its master plan is that it allows the university to create more cohesion across its existing campus. (Figures 87. and 88.) As well, the plan offers additional open space for student recreation and university activities. The surrounding community will be invited to take advantage of new hiking, biking and running trails, as well as a formalized nature preserve within its boundaries. This is goal is in alignment with Rutgers’ own goals for the EcoPreserve.

Designed and built in just nine months, Camp Kilmer in 1941 was touted as a model of efficiency and a showcase of military intelligence at its launch. Camp Kilmer offered the comforts of familiarity and normalcy to the soldiers during these years of conflict. It is not difficult to draw parallels to the way the current Livingston Campus functions and supports and its student population. By honoring the area’s origins, there are opportunities to reactivate the landscape in a way that reconnects the site to Livingston Campus, the university, and the larger community.
Figure 87. Bryan Air Force Base, leased to Texas A&M University by the United States Air Force in 1962, now houses the University’s RELLIS Campus. (Source: Texas A&M University Riverside Campus Plan Steering Committee, Division of Administration, Office of Facilities Coordination, Center for Heritage Conservation, February 2013).

NOTES

EPIGRAPH


CHAPTER ONE


2 Ibid., 14.


4 Dictionary.com Unabridged, Random House, Inc., “Palimpsest,” accessed August 29, 2017, http://www.dictionary.com/browse/palimpsest. For the purposes of this thesis, palimpsest is defined as follows: “Deriving from the Latin palimpsestus, which derives from the Ancient Greek, παλίµψηστος (palimpestos, "again scraped"), a compound word that literally means "scraped clean and ready to be used again." 1655-65; < Latin palimpsēstus < Greek palimpestos (rubbed again) (pālin + psēstos [scraped, rubbed] verbid of psān [to rub smooth]).”


7 Corboz, “Palimpsest,” 17.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 34.

CHAPTER TWO

1 Walter A. De Angelo, A History Buff’s Guide to Middlesex County (Middlesex County, New Jersey: Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 2007), 4.


6 Kelly-Bly, “Indian Place Names.”


9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 3

11 Ibid.

12 The Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Meuly, History of Piscataway, 25.


19 Meuly. History of Piscataway, 2.

20 Ibid., 3.

21 Ibid.
Native speakers and language scholars alike suggest that the Lenape language, as well as most native languages, is comprised of words that express things or objects, rather than ideas.

The bulletin from the Federal Writers’ Project of the Works Progress Administration explained that “A name for an animal or place was in itself a description of the thing it identified. When the Lenape used his word for horse, he was really saying “four footed animal carries on back;” to him, cow was “animal walking on flat split hoof.”

32 Kelly-Bly, “Indian Place Names.”


39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.


43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 40.

45 Ibid., 47.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., 44.

48 Professor Richard G. Lathrop, Jr., Ph.D. (Johnson Family Chair in Water Resources and Watershed Ecology, Faculty Director Rutgers Ecological Preserve and Natural Teaching Area, Department of Ecology, Evolution & Natural Resources) in discussion with the author, October 2016.


50 Ibid.

51 Historicaerials.com, a division of Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC., [NETRonline].

CHAPTER THREE


2 Ibid.


7 Albert K. Weinberg, "The Historical Meaning of the American Doctrine of Isolation," *American Political Science Review*, 34, no.3 (1940), 539-547


16 Ibid., 95.

17 Ibid., 95-111.

18 Ibid., 106.


22 Ibid., 112.


25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 “Survey of Staging Areas, Zone Two, August 30, 1941.” Excerpted from “Staging Area Sites Within 50 Miles of N.Y.P.E.: Recommendation for Proposed Site Near Stelton, N.J.,” Chief of Engineers (RG 77) series: Military Files, Folder # 7340-1091X, Location: 330/03/38/3-5., National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Mann, *Post History*, 8.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.


34 Mann, *Post History*, 31-38.


36 Ibid., 12.


38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.


43 Helfrich and Whittaker, *Crafting a Modern World*, 53.

44 University Facilities & Capital Planning, Project Services, ORG 567, Barcode # 10549018.

45 Helfrich and Whittaker, *Crafting a Modern World*, 53.


47 Ibid.

48 Mann, *Post History*, 15.

49 Ibid., 18.


51 Helfrich and Whittaker, *Crafting a Modern World*, 75.

52 Ibid.

53 Mann, *Post History*, 18.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., 20-21.


58 Mann, *Post History*, 122.


60 “General Correspondence,” Records of Headquarters Army Ground Forces, RG 337, Volume I, Section 114, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

61 Ibid.

62 Mann, *Post History*, 144.

64 Mann, *Post History*, 106.


72 Ibid.


CHAPTER FOUR


5 “Investment of Proceeds of Sale of Land or Scrip.,” U.S. 7, § 13-304 (1890).
6 Transcript of the Morrill Act, Sec. 1.

7 U.S. 7, § 314-361 (1887).

8 Ibid.


10 “Cooperative Agricultural Extension Work; Cooperation with Secretary of Agriculture,” U.S. 7, §13-342.

11 “Rutgers, the Land-Grant University of New Jersey: Cementing Its Role in Research and Outreach as the State’s Agricultural Station,” *150th Anniversary of the Land-Grant College Act*, accessed August 15, 2017, http://morrill150.rutgers.edu/rutgers-landgrant.html.


15 “Hall of Distinguished Alumni.”


20 Ibid.


26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 13.
28 Clemens, *Rutgers Since 1945*, 151.
30 Clemens, *Rutgers Since 1945*, 152.
38 Ibid., 152.
39 Ibid., 155.
42 Ibid.
44 Interview with Professor Richard G. Lathrop, Jr., Ph.D. (Johnson Family Chair in Water Resources and Watershed Ecology, Faculty Director Rutgers Ecological Preserve and Natural Teaching Area, Department of Ecology, Evolution & Natural Resources), October 2016.
45 Interview with Margaret Gurowitz (Senior Historian, Johnson & Johnson), October 2016.
46 Interview with Professor Lathrop, October 2016.
CHAPTER FIVE


3 Ibid.

4 Rutgers Facilities & Capital Planning, “Camp Kilmer.”


7 Rutgers Facilities & Capital Planning, “Camp Kilmer.”


CONCLUSION


3 Ibid, 22.

4 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Texas A&M University Riverside Campus Plan Steering Committee, Division of Administration, Office of Facilities Coordination, Center for Heritage Conservation, “Riverside Campus Plan” (Texas A&M University, 2013).


APPENDIX VI


3 Ibid.


5 Foundling and Warner, Fort Ord, 8-12.


12 Josh Metz (Economic Development Manager, Fort Ord Reuse Authority), email correspondence on September 26, 2016.


16 Anya Spear (Associate Director of Campus Planning, CSU Monterey Bay), email correspondence dated September 14, 2016.


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Texas A&M University Riverside Campus Plan Steering Committee, Division of Administration, Office of Facilities Coordination, Center for Heritage Conservation. “Riverside Campus Master Plan.” College Station, TX: February 2013.


APPENDICES

The original “Post History” indicates the land parcels that were acquired for the development of Camp Kilmer, as well as other detailed information that includes the location, number and purpose of every building in the staging encampment.

There are only two copies of the hand-typed “Post History” located by the author. An original manuscript by Post Historian Arthur D. Mann, Lt. Col., T.C., was located at the National Archives of New York City. The Rutgers’ Libraries’ Special Collections and University Archives in New Brunswick has a photo-copy of a second edition, featuring materials later revised and edited by Camp Commander Col. Harold R. Duffie, dated September 26, 1946.

So, too, are there only two plan drawings of the camp that list all of the building numbers. University Facilities houses the remaining architectural and brownline drawings, dated from the 1940s through the 1960s.

The following pages in Appendices A and B are both taken from the first edition, dated October 31, 1942.
APPENDIX A
LAND ACQUISITION LIST FOR CAMP KILMER
Figure 89. Original plan drawing of Camp Kilmer. (Source “Scan of the Original Plan Drawing of Camp Kilmer,” 1960, University Planning and Development, Institutional Planning and Operations, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.)
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### STELTON STAGING SITE
(Camp Kilmer)

For Railroad Connections
Pennsylvania, Port Reading & Lehigh Valley Railroads Extensions

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**Stelton Staging Site**

**Pennsylvania, Port Reading & Lehigh Valley Railroad Extensions**

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<td>Inez Dickens</td>
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APPENDIX B
POST HISTORY: LIST OF BUILDINGS AND USAGE AT CAMP KILMER

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<tr>
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<td>SP</td>
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<td>Service Club</td>
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<td>Ward 2</td>
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<td>Dental Clinic</td>
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<td>C-7A</td>
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<td>Hospital Mes for 336</td>
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<td>Hospital Nurses Quarters</td>
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<td>XCO</td>
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<td>451 &quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>824</td>
<td>Grease Rack</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Bldgs. 64**

**Outlying**

- 871 SC - 3
- 872 PSB - 1

Regimental Area #8

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### Figure 112. “Utility Area #17.” Arthur D. Mann, Lt. Col., T.C., “Post History,” 1942.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1701</th>
<th>PCM - 1</th>
<th>1741</th>
<th>CSPH - 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1702</td>
<td>CS - 30</td>
<td>1742</td>
<td>Motor Repair Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1703</td>
<td>SH - 13</td>
<td>1743</td>
<td>15 Car Wash Rack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1704</td>
<td>SP - 11 (mod.) R.R. Shed</td>
<td>1744</td>
<td>2 Car Grease Rack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1705</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1745</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1706</td>
<td>Gas Station &amp; Pump House 10'-6&quot; x 15'-0&quot;</td>
<td>1746</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1707</td>
<td>SH - 13</td>
<td>1747</td>
<td>3 Oil Houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1708</td>
<td>SH - 13</td>
<td>1748</td>
<td>W.R. Pump House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1709</td>
<td>SH - 18 (mod.)</td>
<td>1749</td>
<td>5 Gas Tanks 12,000 Gal. Each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710</td>
<td>A - 10</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>15 Dispensing Nozzles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1711</td>
<td>SD - 18 (Mod.) Plumb. Shed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1712</td>
<td>SD - 18 (Mod.) Lumber Shed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total Bldgs. 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1713</td>
<td>SD - 18 Equip. Shed (Mod.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Outlying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1714</td>
<td>SP - 13 (Mod.) Paint Shop</td>
<td>1731</td>
<td>F - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715</td>
<td>SP - 13 (Mod.) Paint Storage</td>
<td>1732</td>
<td>DN - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1716</td>
<td>GERS - 1</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>PGS - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1717</td>
<td>SD - 18 Salvage Shed</td>
<td>1721</td>
<td>RR Service Bldg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1718</td>
<td>SP - 11 (mod.) (Blacksmith Machine &amp; S.H. Shop)</td>
<td>1722</td>
<td>RR Boiler House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1719</td>
<td>SP - 11 (Spec.) (arp. Shop)</td>
<td>1723</td>
<td>RR Switchmen’s Shanty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720</td>
<td>SP - 11 (mod.) (Plumb. &amp; Elec. Shop)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fence PE 2 w/5 gates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Utility Area #17.
APPENDIX C
THE LAYERED LANDSCAPE AS VISUAL EXERCISE
i. Experimental Preservation

The concept behind Experimental Preservation has only fairly recently been formalized into an academic practice, the controversial premise of which introduces the idea that there are many more ways of understanding and practicing preservation beyond those usually considered. Thought-leaders and practitioners who are pioneering this line of thinking are charting a new path to a progressive form of preservation and representation that in many ways manifests the hallmarks of the Rutgers’ academic mission: Creativity, innovation and collaboration.

Through this approach, preservation can be achieved through preserving that which is not usually considered something worth retaining, protecting attendant records of the space or structure to be preserved, or by adapting and reinterpreting existing architecture into applications and opportunities not traditionally considered as being required or fashionable.

By peeling back the many layers that this site represents and eliminating silos of practice, we can begin to explore design solutions that might involve several different areas of concentration beyond those that focus solely on history, architecture and the site’s environmental and biological functions. As with Rutgers’ commitment to cross-pollination of academic research, students and faculty can explore different perspectives of these disciplines within this semi-public space – from cultural studies and implications of race, to urban planning, education, engineering, and fine art and performance.
ii. The Layered Design Process

I began my design exploration through the concept of layering, loosely structured around the infrastructure of the site. In light of its role as palimpsest, my explorations were illustrated five major concurrent features and themes:

iii. The River

The Raritan River has served as a vital lifeline for the area – from the time of the Original People to the area’s industrial period, and a lifeline for conflicts and commerce. (Figure 118.) Even today, stormwater from the Livingston site runs towards it, channeled along streamlets and brooks that were forced underground to run under the earth through sewer pipes. Here, there is opportunity to daylight these waterways long buried underneath.

![Figure 118. The River (Source: Artwork by author.)](image)

iv. The Rail

The railways were perhaps the single most important mode of transportation for Camp Kilmer and the communities it served before the appearance of the installation. Most of the rail tracks have been removed – but many were simply paved over with
asphalt or covered with fill – including on the Livingston Campus site, where they periodically push up through the asphalt of Street 1603 and run through the deep grasses and undergrowth of the site’s eastern edge.

These tracks continue to define the space within the depot area – and can create additional connections within the campus and with the surrounding community at large. (Figure 119.)

Figure 119. The Rail. (Source: Artwork by author.)

v. People

Of course, generations of people who have worked or lived on this land have influenced how it has been utilized – from the First Nation Native Americans to the current Rutgers administration and student body. (Figure 120.) They’ll continue to play a vital role in how the space is used moving forward.
vi. Academics and Community

Academics has served as an underlying structural underpinning since the camp’s inception: Here, enlisted men and 2016 graduates underscore how this location has served as a launching pad for generations. (Figure 121.) Kilmer College, also located within the military facility served as an invaluable asset for returning troops who took advantage of the GI Bill once their tour of duty was done.

Figure 120. People. (Source: Artwork by author.)

Figure 121. Academics and Community. (Source: Artwork by author.)
vii. Structures/Efficiency in Design

Last, this Figure perhaps best reflects my design intent and that pivotal moment of discovery: (Figure 122.) It demonstrates the permeability of the edge between the built environment and the natural world that I initially observed. It’s an edge that becomes less defined as natural elements re-claim the field and it is here the I feel that the educational mission of Rutgers can be realized.

Figure 122. Structures and the natural world. (Source: Artwork by author.)
APPENDIX D
A SISTER IN ARMS: FORD ORD
The protection of the Fort Ord area will maintain its historical and cultural significance, attract tourists and recreationalists from near and far, and enhance its unique natural resources, for the enjoyment of all Americans.

President Barak Obama
Presidential Proclamation – Establishment of the Fort Ord National Monument.
(April 20, 2012)

i. Fort Ord: A Brief Overview

Soon after the completion of both Camp Kilmer and Camp Shanks on the east coast, Raymond’s firm was retained to construct Fort Ord, a staging area on the west coast. While the similarities of this U.S. Army encampment extend beyond its World War II-era military designers, there are a few notable differences.

Dwarfing Camp Kilmer with its more than 28,000 acres, Fort Ord was roughly the size of the city of San Francisco,¹ and became one of the largest military bases in California and on the West Coast. (Figure 123.) From this beachfront location, the U.S. military oversaw the mobilization of troops and equipment to the South Pacific front over a period of time that initially mirrored that of Camp Kilmer.² While Kilmer was a new construction project built within a largely developing urban/suburban area, Fort Ord was originally used as a maneuver area and field-artillery target range during the first World War, known then as Camp Gigling.³ The fort was eventually expanded and renamed, ultimately being recognized as Fort Ord. (Figure 124.) More than 1.5 million men and women would receive basic training at Fort Ord during World War II, and would ultimately be transported to the Pacific front via trains to the Port of Embarkation in San Francisco.⁴ (Figure 125.)

While Camp Kilmer would be closed in the 1950s, Fort Ord ultimately remained active through the 1980s for the extent of the Cold War, and provided military support for domestic issues that included the Los Angeles race riots of 1992. The Fort was officially closed in 1994.\(^4\)

With its location on Monterey Bay along California’s Central Coast, the fort is considered by many people – both military and civilian – to be one of the most attractive locations of any U.S. Army post. (Figure 123.) The microclimate of the bay area, coupled with its varied natural terrain and diverse wildlife, led to the federal government’s decision to set aside some of the land for the first nature reserve in the United States.\(^5\) This was predominantly driven by the work of civilian and non-profit groups, who petitioned for the protection and conservation of the fragmented habitat the fort’s landholdings represented for several endangered species, including the Smith’s blue butterfly (\emph{Euphilotes enoptes smithi}) - the first insect listed under the Endangered Species Act, Monterey manzanita (\emph{Arctostaphylos montereyensis}), and the threatened California tiger salamander (\emph{Ambystoma californiense}), which thrives in the site’s vernal pools.\(^6\) Recognizing that the tract as “one of the few remaining expanses of large, contiguous space in the increasingly developed Monterey Bay area,” in April 2012 much of the land was designed as the Fort Ord National Monument, by proclamation signed by President Barak Obama.\(^7\) Comprised of the land solely owned or controlled by the federal government, the Monument is now managed by the Bureau of Land Management within the U.S. Department of the Interior.\(^8\) (Figure 126.)

In 2009, another section of the former encampment became the newest state park in California and the Fort Ord Dunes State Park, together with the National Monument,
Figure 126. Aerial view of California State University at Monterey Bay. (Source: Google Maps, accessed September 15, 2017, https://www.google.com/maps/place/California+State+University,+Monterey+Bay/@36.6516485,-121.7978073/17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x808dfca8e761e057:0xcdbf437897f231fd8!8m2!3d36.6516528!4d-121.799996.)
underwent extensive remediation. The U.S. Army, working with the Environmental Protection Agency, identified the parkland as a Superfund site and established the Fort Ord Cleanup Project (FORA), which is organized into two programs: The Soil and Groundwater Contamination Cleanup Program, and the Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) Program.\(^9\) (Figure 127.) Today, the parks have become destinations for recreation, scientific research, outdoor education, and historical significance. It is ironic that the park owes its expansive tracts of open space to its role as a U.S. Army facility.

iii. An Extraordinary Opportunity: California State University at Monterey Bay

California State University at Monterey Bay (CSUMB) opened on the Fort Ord grounds shortly after the fort closed, as part of President Bill Clinton’s “peace dividends” program that leveraged military cost-cutting that coincided with the end of the Cold War.\(^10\) (Figure 128.) The CSUMB property was an Economic Development Conveyance from the Department of Defense to the California State University system, facilitated by Congressman Sam Far and then Chief-of-Staff Leon Panetta.\(^11\)

The current award-winning campus design was originally designed by Sasaki Associates, Inc.\(^12\) and incorporated a mix of renovated military buildings and new construction for the public university’s masterplan that was designed to accommodate the institution’s focus on natural systems and related technologies, such as remote sensing, ecosystem modeling, geospatial research for earth systems science and health.\(^13\) Research is conducted in coral reef monitoring, land use, carbon modeling and disease transmission.\(^14\)
Similar to Rutgers, CSUMB is currently in the process of updating its campus master plan which will outline the vision for campus growth for the next 20 years. (Figure 129.) The current challenges mirror those that were faced in the initial master plan, and can be related to those of the specific site on Rutgers’ Livingston campus upon which I am focusing:15

Re-use of existing (old) buildings: CSUMB has determined, as with Rutgers, that the space doesn't fit the current academic needs. The existing buildings may not be aesthetically pleasing, nor are they particularly energy-efficient. Reuse of many of the buildings would be costly to retrofit and/or may require remediation, resulting in higher maintenance costs;

Building/campus layout: The CSUMB campus features a large, open space at its center that essentially cuts off the residential area from the heart of the academic campus, which is not conducive to walking to class within a preferred timeframe of 10 minutes;
Figure 129. The CSUMB 2017 Master Plan including the East Campus Residences, consolidates the two main campus areas. (Source: California State University-Monterey Bay, accessed September 14, 2017, https://csumb.edu/campusplanning/draft-campus-master-plan-2017)

Circulation: Roads and parking lots in this case bisect campus, leading to unsafe or unpleasurable bicycle/foot/car traffic interactions;

Climate: Due to the Central Cost propensity for wind and fog, there remains a need to provide outdoor spaces that are protected from the wind;

Community spaces: Given the linear layout of the campus and military barrack footprint, the campus could benefit from the addition of more gathering spaces for students;

Existing landscape conditions: In general, the native sandy soil conditions preclude the types of planting schemes traditionally associated with campuses: Turf, lush flowering perennials, plants that require significant water use. There is also a challenge with local/traditional landscape knowledge of native dune/oak woodland/chaparral ecosystems and plant care.
One of the most potentially significant similarities of the two university campuses is CSUMB’s commitment to repurpose original architecture and infrastructure for its evolving campus. While 274 structures have been removed from the campus, CSUMB has been able to reuse sixty-six military buildings on the main campus, since the opening of the original campus and through successive iterations. Innovative efforts to reuse materials from several of the buildings that were cleared from the site were also implemented. For example, wood was salvaged from a former Army barracks to create the ceiling in the current Alumni Visitor Center. The Student Services Building is housed within a fully renovated “hammerhead” buildings. So, too, does CSUMB capitalize on the existing roads and infrastructure that were installed during the period in which the camp was expanded.