



North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Pat McCrory
Secretary Susan Kluttz

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

January 26, 2016

Gregory G. Bean
Director of Public Works
US Army Installation Management Command
2175 Reilly Road, Stop A
Fort Bragg, North Carolina 28310-5000

gregory.g.bean@us.army.mil

Re: Determination of Eligibility of the Smith Lake Dam, Fort Bragg, Cumberland County, ER 16-0003

Dear Mr. Bean:

Thank you for your letter of December 18, 2015, concerning the above-referenced undertaking. We have reviewed the Determination of Eligibility Report and offer the following comments.

Fort Bragg plans to demolish and replace the Smith Lake Dam spillway and construct a low-level outlet and emergency spillway to decrease the risk of downstream flooding. The dam was recently evaluated for its association with military recreational activities at Fort Bragg and was determined ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The current report explores the dam's potential eligibility for its association with the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center and its construction by soldiers in the 981st Engineer Construction Battalion during World War II. We concur with Fort Bragg's determination that Smith Lake Dam is not eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C and the demolition of the spillway will have no effect on the property.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-807-6579 or environmental.review@ncdcr.gov. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Renee Gledhill-Earley".

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "for Ramona M. Bartos".
for Ramona M. Bartos

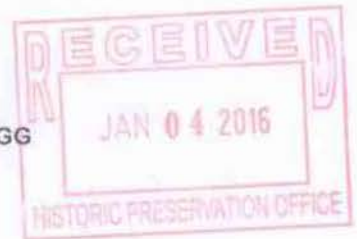
cc: Charles Heath, Fort Bragg

charles.l.heath.ctr@mail.mil



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY GARRISON, FT BRAGG
2175 REILLY ROAD, STOP A
FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA 28310-5000



December 18, 2015

Ms. Renee Gledhill-Earley
State Historic Preservation Office
Department of Cultural Resources
4617 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4617

16-0003

S. 325 LETTER
1/21/16
PEX

Dear Ms. Gledhill-Earley:

Due 1/27/16

In accordance with Section 106 and Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program (CRMP) staff has evaluated the Smith Lake Dam, located at Fort Bragg, Cumberland County, North Carolina to determine its eligibility for listing on the Nation Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The Determination of Eligibility (DOE) study was initiated because Fort Bragg plans to demolish and replace a portion of the dam (the existing spillway), add an emergency spillway, and add a low-level outlet. In addition, the project includes clearing vegetation, root balls, and other hazards from the dam's earthen embankment. The proposed project is in response to a 2012 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) inspection report finding that the dam is in "poor condition", and lacks an emergency spillway; the dam is considered a high hazard structure because of the risk of downstream flooding. Under the cover of this letter, we are submitting the results of the CRMP staff's evaluation, a final draft of the DOE report, for your review and comment as per 36 CFR 800.

In summary, the current dam spillway, a replacement for an earlier constructed and failed structure, was built ca. 1943 as part of a troop training exercise by soldiers stationed at the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center (FARTC). But, Smith Lake predates the ca. 1943 construction, and parts of the currently extant earthen embankment may pre-date the twentieth century. The lake was originally created when Big Cross Creek was impounded as part of a nineteenth century mill operation. In the early twentieth century the lake and dam became the property of the Lakewood Club, a fishing club and country retreat for wealthy Fayetteville businessmen. After the demise of the Lakewood Club in the late 1920s, the lake property was eventually purchased by Michael G. Smith, a U.S. Army officer on staff at the FARTC, who then leased the land to the Army for training during World War II (WWII). Mr. Smith sold the property to the Army in 1952. In the mid-1950s, the lake became a recreation area on Fort Bragg and continues to be managed by the Directorate of Family, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (DFMWR) as the Smith Lake Recreation Area. Based on the findings detailed in the enclosed report, the CRMP staff recommends the structure as not eligible for inclusion on the NRHP.

The dam is not eligible under Criterion A for Entertainment/Recreation in the early twentieth century. Because no period structures or archeological evidence of structures remain, the site does not retain integrity as an early twentieth century recreation area. The dam is also not eligible under Criterion A for Military Community Planning and Development or Military History and Recreation.

The ca. 1943 spillway is closely associated with operation of the FARTC; however, since Simmons Army Airfield was built in 1952, Smith Lake is physically disconnected from the former FARTC area. The dam does not convey significance as a training site without the relationship to the FARTC area, and most of the WWII temporary buildings constructed in that area have since been demolished.

In the mid-1950s, two bathhouses were built in the vicinity of the lake as it transitioned to a recreation area. These buildings were determined ineligible for listing on the NRHP in 2008. Newer facilities built at Smith Lake since the 1980s, including a cable water skiing apparatus, a new fishing dock, playgrounds, and campgrounds, compromise the dam's integrity of setting and feeling. The dam and two ca. 1954 bathhouses are not enough to convey significance as a mid-twentieth century military recreation area.

The dam is also not eligible under Criterion B for association with Lt. Col. Michael G. Smith (1897-1993) because Smith is not an individually significant figure in the history of the FARTC. Additionally, the dam is a standard earth embankment dam with an open-chute, reinforced concrete spillway of a generic design, typical for the period of construction, and is not eligible under Criterion C for engineering design/construction.

Should you have any questions on the enclosed report or the planned undertaking on the Smith Lake Dam, please contact Mr. Charles Heath, Interim Architectural Historian and Staff Archaeologist, at (910) 908-4284, email charles.l.heath.ctr@mail.mil, or Mr. Paul G. Humphrey, Chief, Environmental Management Branch, at (910) 396-6518 or paul.g.humphrey2.civ@mail.mil.

Sincerely,



Gregory G. Bean
Director of Public Works

Enclosure

**Smith Lake Dam, Fort Bragg, Cumberland County, North Carolina:
Determination of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places**



Jessica R. French

**Cultural Resources Management Program
Environmental Management Branch
Directorate of Public Works
Fort Bragg, North Carolina**

November 2015

This project was supported in part by an appointment to the Environmental Management Participation Program for the U.S. Army Environmental Command administered by the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) through an agreement between the U.S. Department of Energy and USAEC.

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Introduction

The Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program (CRMP) is responsible for the identification and evaluation of cultural resources located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina (NC). Fort Bragg Military Reservation includes Pope Army Airfield, Simmons Army Airfield and one satellite installation, Camp Mackall. Under Section 106 and Section 110 of the NHPA, the CRMP staff initiated a project to evaluate the Smith Lake Dam for eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Fort Bragg plans to demolish and replace a portion of the dam, build an auxiliary spillway, and add a low-level outlet. Work also includes clearing vegetation, root balls, and other hazards from the dam's earthen embankment. A 2012 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers inspection report indicated that the dam is in poor condition and is classified as a high hazard structure because of the risk of downstream flooding.¹ These proposed modifications will result in significant alterations to the circa (ca.) 1943 structure. Fieldwork and background research activities for the project were executed by Jessica R. French (ORISE) and Charles L. Heath in 2015.

Smith Lake Dam impounds a section of Big Cross Creek on Fort Bragg Military Reservation in Cumberland County, North Carolina. Smith Lake was originally dammed as part of a nineteenth century mill operation. At the turn of the twentieth century, the lake was used for recreation by the Lakewood Club, a hunting and fishing organization based locally in Fayetteville. The U.S. Army purchased the lake and the surrounding 1,200 acres in 1952, but earlier leased the land for training during World War II (WWII). Smith Lake is now primarily a recreational facility and has been principally used for recreation by the Army since the 1960s. The dam structure was previously evaluated as part of the *Simmons Army Airfield Inventory and National Register of Historic Places Evaluation* and determined ineligible for the NRHP.² However, this evaluation only considered the dam in the context of the development and use of Simmons Army Airfield (SAAF), and both the dam and the lake predate the development of SAAF. Additionally, two recreational support buildings in the present Smith Lake Recreation Area were surveyed for eligibility for inclusion on the NRHP as part of Fort Bragg's *Historical Architectural Resources Survey Update: 1951-1961* and determined ineligible.³ The present study will consider the dam in the context of the history prior to the construction of SAAF and Smith Lake's use as a training and recreation area in the 1950s and 1960s apart from SAAF.

¹ Dawn M. Wetzel and Susan M. Bruns, "Periodic Dam Inspection Report: Smith Lake Dam, Fort Bragg, North Carolina," USACR-ERDC, 2012. Report on file, Directorate of Public Works, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

² Duane Denfeld and Michelle Michael, *Simmons Army Airfield Inventory and National Register of Historic Places Evaluation*, Fort Bragg, North Carolina: Cultural Resources Management Program, 2004. Report on file, Directorate of Public Works, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

³ Heather McDonald, Michelle Michael, and Lauren Miller, *Historic Architectural Resources Survey Update 1951 - 1961: Fort Bragg Military Reservation Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Moore, Richmond and Scotland Counties, North Carolina*, Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program, 2008. Report on file, Directorate of Public Works, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Historic Context

Fort Bragg purchased Smith Lake and 1,200 acres of land surrounding the lake in 1952 from Michael G. Smith (1897-1993), an officer in the U.S. Army.⁴ The Army leased the land from Smith during WWII for training. Prior to Smith purchasing the property in 1941, the lake was known as Lakewood or sometimes Lake Wood.⁵ It was named in 1896 by the Lakewood Company, a corporation comprised of business and civic leaders from Fayetteville who started a fishing club. The tract contained a mill pond which was then renamed Lakewood. In 1941 –1942, the lake was still under private ownership by Major Smith, but was leased by Fort Bragg for training soldiers from the neighboring Field Artillery Replacement Training Center (FARTC). The dam was built in ca. 1943 under the direction of Smith, then the commander of the 16th Battalion, 5th Training Regiment of the FARTC, using troop labor.

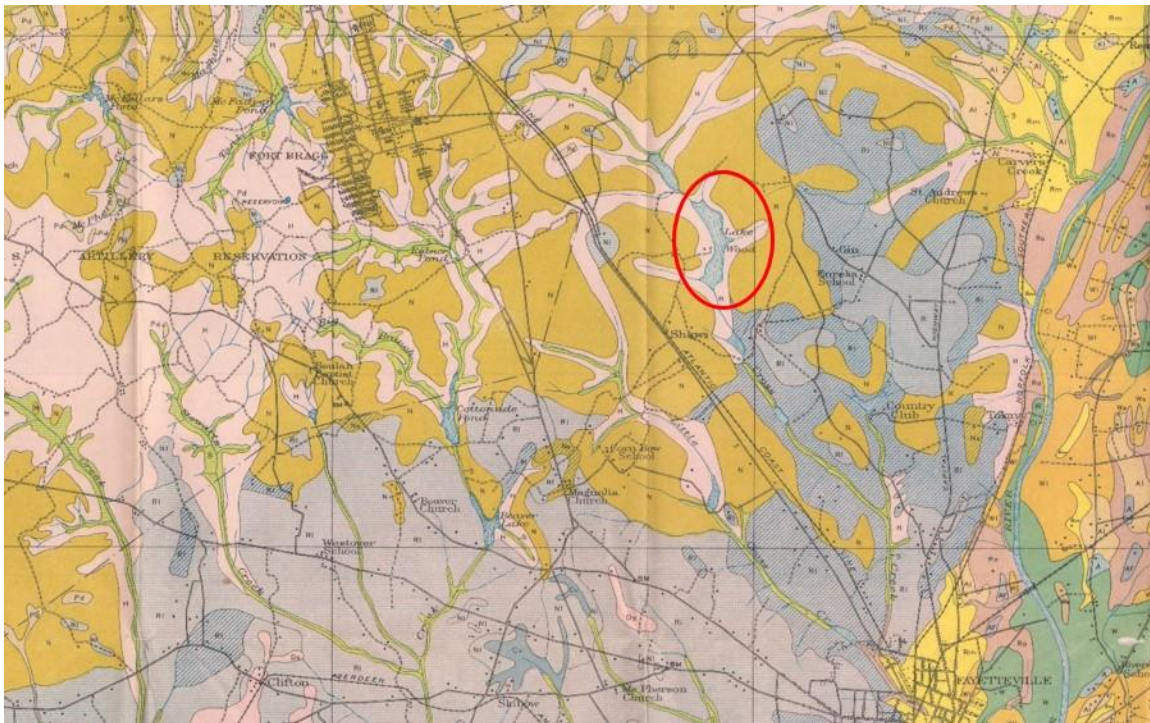


Figure 1. Excerpt from 1922 Soil Map, Cumberland County, North Carolina. Lake Wood is circled in red. The lake is approximately six miles northwest from the center of Fayetteville.

The Lakewood Company, a corporation comprised of fourteen businessmen from Fayetteville, purchased 1,400 acres of land from James R. Williams to create a hunting and fishing club. Williams previously purchased that tract of land from William N. Williams in January 1896.⁶ Both James R. and William N. Williams were stockholders of the Lakewood

⁴ Michael G. Smith and Zelma D. Smith to United States of America, deed of sale, 20 November 1952, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Book 600: 48.

⁵ Cumberland County Soil Map, 1922, United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Soils, North Carolina Department of Agriculture, Experiment Station.

Company. They, along with Walter L. Holt (1859-1913), Edwin C. Holt, and Edwin H. Williamson, were among the prominent textile manufacturers in Fayetteville. Other Lakewood Company stockholders included Malcom McIntyre Matthews, proprietor of the Lafayette Hotel, and bankers H. W. Lilly and William A. Vanstory.⁷

The rise of textile mills at the turn of the twentieth century shaped the growth of Fayetteville, adding large factory buildings, mill housing, and new suburbs, like Haymount to house wealthy business owners.⁸ Fishing, hunting, and other country retreats built for the recreation of this new class of business owner also shaped the outlying areas of the county. The Lakewood Club is a smaller scale example of the type of clubs that flourished across North Carolina at the turn of the century. Another sports club located in both Cumberland and Harnett counties was the Croatan Club of Manchester. Formed on 20,000 acres by a group of northern industrialists in 1906, the club was eventually transformed into a family retreat for the Rockefeller family known as Overhills.⁹

The Lakewood Corporation erected a clubhouse on the grounds of the existing millpond, purchased several boats, and issued fishing privileges. Lakewood was served by a railroad station along the Fayetteville-Sanford branch of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (formerly the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway). In 1910, Walter L. Holt successfully petitioned the railroad to add a siding at Lakewood Station to better serve the landowners in the area. The siding added a freight tariff and pre-pay station and also allowed trains to pass each other between Fayetteville and Manchester.¹⁰

Guests from across the region were hosted by the company stockholders at the lake. Many of the visitors were connected to the company members' various business interests. The *Fayetteville Observer* reported that an executive of the Continental Tobacco Company from Danville, Virginia, touring the Planters Warehouse in Fayetteville, also visited Lakewood for an afternoon.¹¹ Other reports praised the "model clubhouse" furnished "in excellent style" as well as

⁶ W. N. Williams to James R. Williams, deed of sale, 06 January 1896, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Book 99: 486.

⁷ James R. Williams to Lakewood Company, deed of sale, 13 June 1896, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Book 100: 190.

⁸ Michelle Michael, *Municipal Survey of Buildings, Sites, and Structures*, City of Fayetteville Planning Department and Historic Resources Commission and the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, 2001, <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/surveyreports/FayettevilleMunicipalSurvey-2001.pdf>, E13-E14.

⁹ Frances Alexander and Richard Mattson, "Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report: Overhills Tract, Fort Bragg, Harnett and Cumberland Counties, North Carolina, Final Report." Charlotte, NC: Mattson, Alexander and Associates, prepared for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, May 2000, Report on File, Directorate of Public Works, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 11.

¹⁰ Case #3493. Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Co. To the Commission, 1910, Utilities Commission Record Group, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

¹¹ "A Big Tobacco Buyer Here," *Fayetteville Observer* October 21, 1899, 1.

the “splendid grounds” surrounding the lake.¹² Despite these rosy reports, the Lakewood Club was short-lived. The lake was well-used for fishing, and overfished, prompting a notice in April 1900 that all fishing privileges were revoked. No one was to use the lake without being accompanied by a club member.¹³ The club also ran into financial difficulty. The Lakewood Dam was damaged and the estimate to fix or replace the dam was \$150. However, the club was \$700 in debt and could not afford the repairs.

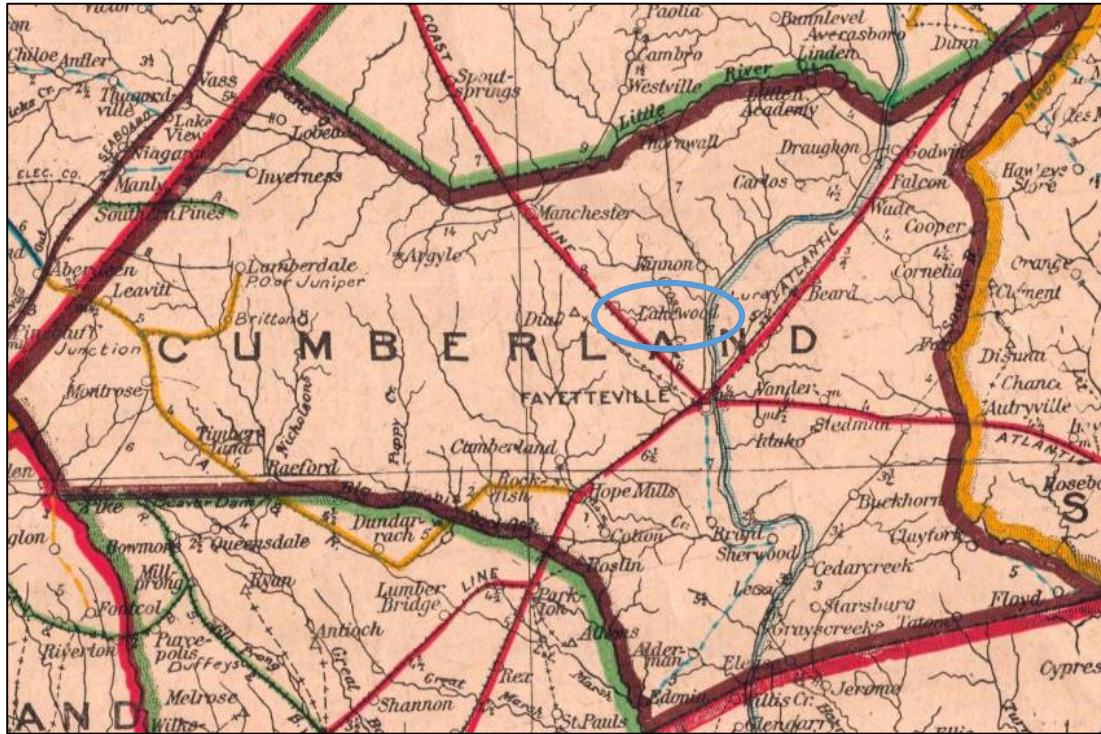


Figure 2. The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad stopped at Lakewood (circled in blue) on the Fayetteville-Sanford Branch. Excerpt from *New Survey Map of North Carolina*, Atlanta, Georgia: The Hudgins Company, 1904.

The club property was sold at auction in January 1902 to Lakewood stockholder Walter L. Holt. Holt and his family were among the leading textile manufacturers in North Carolina. His father, James H. Holt, and grandfather, Edwin M. Holt, owned and operated numerous mills in Alamance County. Walter started his career as a bookkeeper and clerk in one of the mills his father owned. Eventually he opened his own mills, including Elmira Mills and Lakeside Mills in Alamance County, in partnership with his brothers Ernest Holt and Samuel Holt. After moving to Fayetteville with his family in 1895, Holt opened four mills in the area, including the Holt-Morgan Mills and the Fayetteville Lakeview Mills. Holt resided in the Haymount suburb of Fayetteville in a colonial-revival style house he built in 1897, and also owned a country retreat at

¹² “Pleased With Lakewood,” *Fayetteville Observer* May 22, 1900, 4; “At Lakewood,” *Fayetteville Observer* November 24, 1896, 1.

¹³ “Notice,” *Fayetteville Observer* April 26, 1900, 6.

Bonnie Doone, just a few miles from the Lakewood property.¹⁴ The *Observer* reported that Holt hoped to buy a piece of land with a fishing pond between Bonnie Doone and Lakewood, securing three prime spots for fishing near Fayetteville.¹⁵

Although the Lakewood Company was officially dissolved after the sale of the corporation's property, Holt continued to run Lakewood as a fishing club. After his death in 1913, the lake and surrounding property was held in trust by C. C. McAlister for three years, until it was sold to Paul W. Schenk and Lawrence J. Duffy, via the Fayetteville Insurance and Realty Company, in November 1916.¹⁶ The *Observer* described Schenk and Duffy as "Greensboro Capitalists." Schenk was an insurance agent, while Duffy was treasurer of the Greensboro Morris Plan Company.¹⁷ Morris Plan banks offered a new type of year-long installment loan to middle-class customers that required only letters of reference and proof of earning a wage to secure a loan. Duffy and Schenk planned to divide the 1,275 acre Lakewood property into small farms, reserving the lake, clubhouse, and surrounding support buildings for fishing club purposes. The pair estimated that about 1,000 acres of the tract was flat and suitable for farming, while the remainder could be used for raising fruit trees and berries as in other sections of the Sandhills.¹⁸ This plan never came to fruition and the 1,275 acres that composed Lakewood remained intact.

Although it is unclear exactly what prevented the two businessmen from selling the land, perhaps the possibility that a military camp would be located at Lakewood changed Schenk and Duffy's plans. During World War I (WWI), an investigative party from the Army, led by Major General Leonard Wood, visited Fayetteville in August 1917 to look at two possible locations for a military training camp. One possible site was south of Fayetteville near Big Rockfish Creek and the second included much of the land currently encompassed by Fort Bragg north and west of Fayetteville. The area surveyed for the latter started just east of Lakewood and stretched west about 30 miles and was approximately 8 miles in width from north-to-south. Major J. W. Haselhurst, an engineer who was part of the investigatory party confirmed that Lakewood would provide more than enough fresh water to supply a camp.¹⁹ Despite reports by the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce that the Lakewood site would likely be chosen because it was suitable

¹⁴ J. H. Myrover, "Walter Lawrence Holt," *Biographical History of North Carolina*, eds. Samuel A. Ashe, Stephen B. Weeks, and Charles L. Van Noppen, vol. vii, Greensboro: Charles L. Van Noppen, 1908, 216-218; Linda Jasperse, "Holt-Harrison House," National Register Nomination, 1982, <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/CD0181.pdf>.

¹⁵ "Hay Street Made Beautiful," *Fayetteville Observer*, March 22, 1900, 2.

¹⁶ C. C. McAlister to Paul W. Schenk and Lawrence J. Duffy, deed of sale, 11 November 1916, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Book 192: 219.

¹⁷ "Lakewood" *Fayetteville Weekly Observer*, November 9, 1916, 1; 1920 U.S. Census, Guilford County, North Carolina, population schedule, Greensboro, Ward 1, sheet 11B, Lawrence Duffy; "Starting off Fine" *Greensboro Patriot*, January 25, 1917, 8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ "Gen. Wood's Visit to Fayetteville," *Fayetteville Weekly Observer*, August 15, 1917, 1; "Plenty of Water," *Fayetteville Weekly Observer*, August 15, 1917, 1.

for a camp, Fayetteville did not receive a military installation that year. A few months after the camp issue was presumably resolved, Schenk sold his half interest in the 1,275 acre property to Duffy.²⁰

Just a year later, in June 1918, the Army sent a second investigative team to Fayetteville to find a space where field artillery training could be conducted year round. They settled on western Cumberland County and eastern Hoke County, but this time Lakewood and the surrounding 1,275 acres were not included in the footprint of the proposed camp. Instead, the property remained just outside of the camp's eastern boundary. Camp Bragg was officially established in September 1918 after initial leases to the land were obtained and construction got underway on the camp's cantonment.²¹

During this time Duffy continued to operate the Lakewood Club and issue fishing privileges. But it appears he made little money in this effort. In 1921, Lakewood was listed at auction by the Cumberland County sheriff because of the \$82.80 in delinquent taxes Duffy owed.²² The property ultimately did not get sold. Instead, Duffy took out a mortgage on the land in 1922. However, he was forced to sell in 1926 when he defaulted on the loan. William F. Ross, a realtor from Greensboro and business associate of Duffy, purchased the property.²³ He owned Lakewood for just over a year, before he resold to Brigadier General Albert J. Bowley, then the post commander of Fort Bragg. Bowley served as commander between 1921 and 1928 and is credited with overseeing the post's transformation from a temporary camp, Camp Bragg, to a permanent, modern post, Fort Bragg. He sold Lakewood less than a year after his purchase, likely because in March 1928 he moved from Fort Bragg to Fort Sam Houston.²⁴

The Fox Rock Development Corporation purchased the property from Bowley. The group may have purchased the land with the intent to subdivide and develop the property, but these plans never came to fruition. Although the pace of permanent building construction at Fort Bragg continued throughout the 1930s, the Great Depression probably thwarted whatever development was planned by investors for the Lakewood area. The Fox Rock company was incorporated in Delaware and based in New York, but Bryant P. Sandlin, a Fayetteville real

²⁰ Paul W. Schenk to Lawrence J. Duffy, deed of sale, 23 January 1918, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Book 197: 665.

²¹ Chawla, et al., "Fort Bragg and Camp Mackall Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan FY 2007 to 2011," June 2007.

²² "Sale of Land for Taxes," *Fayetteville Observer*, April 25, 1921, 5.

²³ L. J. Duffy, Mortgage to W. F. Ross, deed of sale, 30 June, 1926, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Book 332: 572; Greensboro Real Estate Board, advertisement, Greensboro, North Carolina City Directory, 1927.

²⁴ W. F. Ross to Albert J. Bowley, deed of sale, 23 November 1927, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Book 346: 148; Albert J. Bowley to Fox Rock Development Corporation, deed of sale, 12 January 1928, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Book 337: 21.

estate developer acted as the local agent for the company. When they sold the Lakewood property in 1941, it was transferred to Sandlin first, then immediately to Michael G. Smith.²⁵

Smith was an officer in the Army stationed at Fort Bragg at the time of the purchase. Born in Texas in 1897, Smith attended West Point beginning in 1915. His class was commissioned a year early to support Army operations during WWI. However, by the time the officers arrived in Europe the war had ended. Instead of returning to the United States, the class spent their final year traveling and studying the battlefields in Europe before officially graduating in 1919. Smith then attended the Officer Basic Course at the U.S. Army's Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma to become a Field Artillery officer. He was first stationed at Fort Bragg around 1936 where his son was born. He transferred briefly to Fort Sill again around 1940, but returned to Fort Bragg shortly thereafter to join the leadership of the Field Artillery Training Replacement Center.²⁶

When Smith purchased the Lakewood property in 1941, the Army was in the midst of the massive build-up of Fort Bragg in preparation for participation in World War II. The creation of the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center was part of this build-up. During WWII, the Army created Replacement Training Centers (RTC) for each of its combat branches in order to train civilians inducted into the Army through the Selective Service System. Training at the various RTCs was typically conducted on thirteen week cycles. Two Field Artillery Replacement Training Centers were opened, one at Fort Sill and the other at Fort Bragg. The FARTC area at Fort Bragg was located on the eastern boundary of the installation between Bragg Blvd. on the west, Murchison Rd. and the Atlantic Coast Rail Line on the east, Honeycutt Rd. to the north, and Gruber Rd. to the south, partially bordering the 1,290 acre Lakewood property. Smith purchased the property just as the training center was preparing to accept its first class of recruits. The cadre began arriving in February 1941, while the first class of trainees began arriving in March. Construction was only complete on one regimental area in February, but building proceeded at a rapid pace and the first FARTC class officially began March 25, 1941, ten days after the initial estimate of March 15.²⁷

The FARTC was organized into five regiments with each regiment consisting of three battalions. The 5th Training Regiment included a segregated, African American unit, the 16th Battalion. Unlike other African American units stationed at Fort Bragg during WWII, the soldiers in the 16th Battalion did not live in the post's "Spring Area," but instead in a separate

²⁵ Fox Rock Development Corporation to B. P. Sandlin, deed of sale, 15 February 1941, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Book 427: 363; Bryant P. Sandlin to Major Michael G. Smith, deed of sale, 15 February 1941, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Book 427: 357.

²⁶ John Michael Smith, *Vital Statistics, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Vol. 24*, 882, 1936; 1940 U.S. Census, Cleveland County, Oklahoma, population schedule, Norman, Ward 4, sheet 3B, Michael G. Smith.

²⁷ *Historical and Pictorial Review, Fifth Regiment, Field Artillery Replacement Training Center: United States Army, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 1941*. Baton Rouge, La: Army and Navy Pub. Co, 1941, 6.

area within the FARTC area (see Figure 3). Smith was appointed commander of the 16th Battalion on February 1, 1941, his first assignment at the FARTC.²⁸

During the first training cycle, Smith suffered a knee injury and transferred briefly to Walter Reed General Hospital for treatment. When he returned midway through the FARTC's second training cycle, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and took command of the 15th Battalion. At the end of 1941, he returned as the commander of the 16th Battalion.²⁹

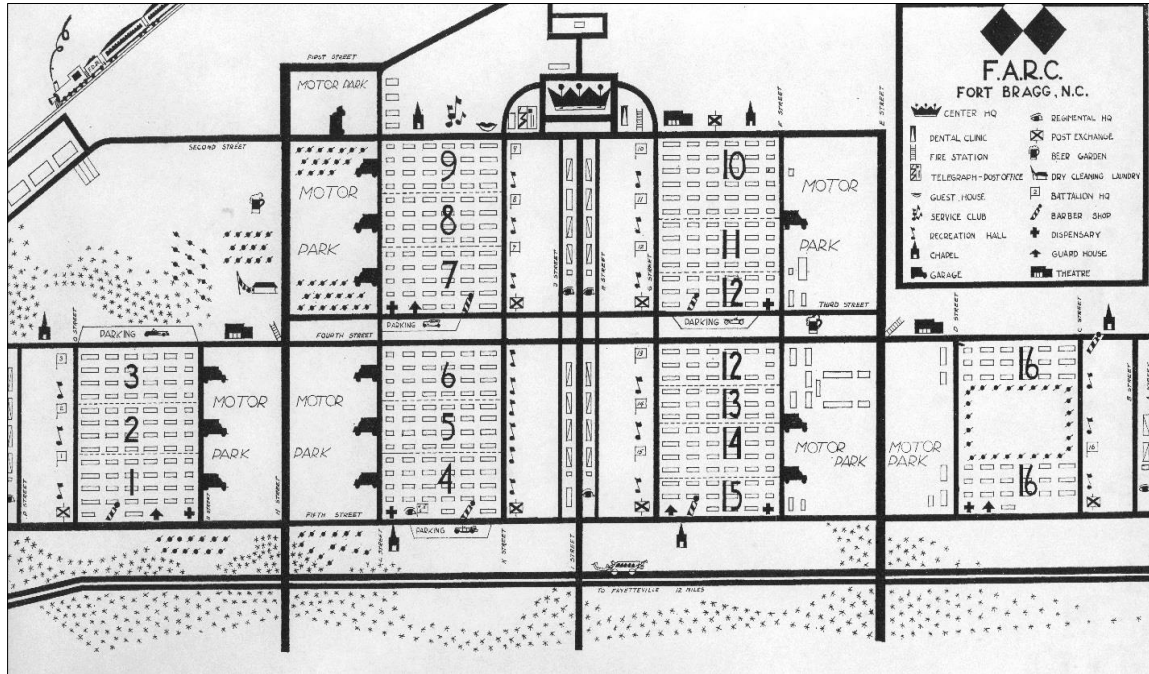


Figure 3. This map shows the placement of units at the Field Artillery Replacment Training Center. Note the footprint of the 16th Battalion at the bottom right.

Because of its placement at the eastern edge of the Fort Bragg cantonment, farther away from the post's training areas than other units, the Army made an effort to lease land to the east of the installation boundary, where Smith was the major property owner. The purpose was to reduce the number of times units needed to cross State Highway 87 (Fayetteville Road), now Bragg Blvd., for training. The growth of Fort Bragg created an enormous amount of traffic along the road, and the 5th Regiment yearbook claimed, "moving troops across the Fayetteville Road these days is a good deal like moving them across New York City."³⁰ Aerial photography from 1943 shows the boundary of Fort Bragg extending all the way east to include Lakewood/Smith Lake. Although, the property was still owned by Smith at the time, it appears he leased the entirety of the Lakewood tract to the Army (see Figure 5).

²⁸ Ibid., 25.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 5.



Figure 4. Left: Portrait of Lt. Col. Michael G. Smith in the 5th Training Regiment’s Yearbook. Right: Cartoon of Smith in the 16th Battalion’s newsletter, *Cannon Roar*. According to the newsletter, Smith had two nicknames around the battalion “Machine Gun” and “Butch”: the first “is suggested by his initials and symbolizes how withering and devastating a ‘chewing out’ can be when received from him” and the second “sprung from the inevitable cigar, which is the constant companion of Colonel Smith.”³¹

When Smith initially took command of the 16th Battalion, the FARTC area was still under construction. The 16th Battalion’s barracks were not complete and there were no indoor or outdoor recreation spaces. On the 2nd Anniversary of the FARTC, Smith was commended for overseeing the completion of the barracks, the construction and interior design of two recreation halls, the clearing of the drill field, and the construction of tennis courts and an outdoor arena. Soldiers particularly praised Smith and the battalion executive officer for “their diligent planning and artistic views in making the [recreation] hall a thing of beauty.”³² In addition to improving the battalion area, Smith also received credit for overseeing the building of the existing Smith Lake Dam. During this time, Lakewood became known as the Smith Area likely owing to Smith’s ownership of the land.

The previous dam at Lakewood likely failed sometime before the Army leased the property from Smith. In a 1943 aerial photograph of the area, the dam appears to have been built or is in the process of being built, even though the lake has not yet been flooded (see Figure 5). Although of benefit to Smith as a property improvement, the new dam was probably built as part of a unit training exercise. In a letter to the new cycle of soldiers entering the training center at Fort Bragg, the commanding general of Field Artillery listed the many skills that each soldier

³¹ “Former 16th Co Commands Regt.” *Cannon Roar*, Vol. 4, no. 11, 1.

³² *Field Artillery Replacement Training Center, Fort Bragg, Second Anniversary, 1943*; “Recreational Hall Nearing Completion,” *Cannon Roar* vol. 2, no. 38, December 21, 1942, 2.

would learn in addition to firing artillery weapons. Everything from hygiene to camouflage to repairing bridges was included in the list of many new things that soldiers might learn. Building a new dam fit two training purposes. First, the soldiers of the 16th Battalion learned the dam construction process. And, second, once the lake was flooded, it was used for training soldiers in later training cycles in swimming, small boat operations, and other water activities.³³

The Field Artillery Replacement Training Center closed in 1946 following the end of WWII and the subsequent downsizing of the military. Smith continued his military career after the war in South Carolina, serving as the commander of the Third district, Fourth Service Command of the South Carolina National Guard. He retired from the Army in May 1947 at the rank of Colonel after 28 years in the Army.³⁴

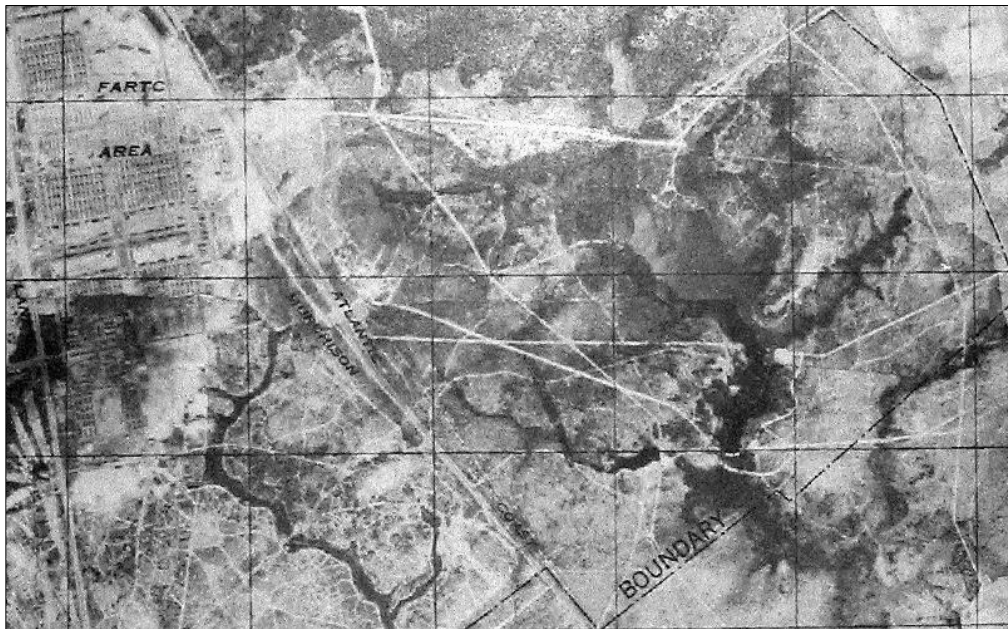


Figure 5. 1943 Aerial photograph showing the FARTC Area and the Lakewood Tract. Note that the installation boundary extends east of Murchison Rd. to include Lakewood, which became known as the “Smith Area.” The lake was not flooded at the time of the photo.

³³ *Historical and Pictorial Review, Fifth Regiment, Field Artillery Replacement Training Center*, 11.

³⁴ “States Guardsmen Solve Training Problem Here at Armory Last Sunday,” *Florence Morning News*, November 21, 1945, 5; *U.S. Army and Air Force Register*, vol. 2, Washington: U.S. Army and Air Force, 1948, 2439.



Figure 6. A postcard from the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center showing soldiers driving a tracked vehicle, towing a piece of equipment across water. Although unidentified, they are likely training on Smith Lake.

Figure 7. Engineers constructing a bridge across Smith Lake in 1951, NARA College Park, RG 111 SC WWII, Box 212, Photo SC376463.³⁵



Although the Army did not purchase the Smith Lake/Lakewood tract from Colonel Smith until 1952, military training continued in the area following the closing of the FARTC.³⁶ Several archived photographs from 1951 show engineer units conducting training exercises using pontoon bridges on the lake.³⁷ An accident during a training exercise on the lake in 1953 resulted in twenty soldiers from the 981st Engineer Construction Battalion drowning. The soldiers were

³⁵ Adam Smith, et al. *Military Training Lands Historic Context: Miscellaneous Training Sites*, USACE-ERDC-CERL, 2010, http://www.denix.osd.mil/cr/upload/DoDLegacy05-265_Miscellaneous_Training_Sites.pdf, 43-44.

³⁶ M. G. Smith and Zelma D. Smith to United States of America, deed of sale, 20 November 1952, Cumberland County, North Carolina, Book 600: 48.

³⁷ Smith, et al. *Military Training Lands Historic Context: Miscellaneous Training Sites*, 43-44.

on a raft formed by two sections of a pontoon bridge joined together and pushed by a propeller. The raft capsized and trapped some of the soldiers underneath. Only two soldiers survived the accident.³⁸

While the lake was used for training, the western section of the old Lakewood tract, between Murchison Road and Smith Lake, was developed into the Smith Lake Airfield during the early 1950s. The airfield became a center for testing and training of airborne delivered equipment and materials.³⁹ The first runway at the airfield was built in just ten days by 406th Engineer Brigade personnel as part of Exercise Test Drop in August 1952. The airfield's name was changed to Simmons Army Airfield in 1953 to honor Warrant Officer Herbert W. Simmons, Jr. who was killed in a helicopter accident near the field.⁴⁰ Eventually the runway was expanded and repaved and additional facilities were built to accommodate all of Fort Bragg's Army aircraft after 1956.⁴¹

In the mid-1950s former training land east of Smith Lake transitioned to a recreation area. At this time, recreation programs in the Army were run by the Special Services Division (SSD) located in the Army's chain-of-command under the Adjutant General's Office. The division got its start during WWII and was dedicated to providing a host of recreational opportunities to soldiers. At Smith Lake, two bathhouses were constructed near the eastern bank of the lake in 1954.⁴² Picnic areas were also established east of the lake by the SSD. An open house celebration held at Fort Bragg in May 1955 included demonstrations by many of the units on post and opened the Smith Lake picnic area to the public.⁴³ Evidence from other lakes at Fort Bragg used for recreation during WWII suggests that piers or swimming platforms were probably also added to the lake at this time.⁴⁴

In addition to its use as a military recreation area, the Smith Lake area was operated as a campsite by the Domestic Action Program of the XVIII Airborne Corps in the early 1970s. Underprivileged children from around the state were invited to attend the camp at Fort Bragg where they learned first aid, outdoor survival, and other life skills.⁴⁵ No permanent construction was associated with the use of the lake in this capacity.

³⁸ "Army Probes Ft. Bragg Mishap," *Statesville Record and Landmark*, September 3, 1953, 1.

³⁹ Denfeld and Michael. *Simmons Army Airfield Inventory and National Register of Historic Places Evaluation*, 6.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴² McDonald, Michael, and Miller, *Historic Architectural Resources Survey Update 1951 – 1961*, 2008, 95.

⁴³ "Army Plans Elaborate 'Open House,'" *The Robesonian*, May 13, 1955, 6.

⁴⁴ Jessica French, *Little Muddy Lake Dam at Camp Mackall, Scotland County, North Carolina: Determination of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places*, Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Management Program, 2015, Report on file, Directorate of Public Works, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 9.

Few modifications to the Smith Lake recreational area were made until the 1980s. In 1984 the Army created the U.S. Army and Family Support Center (FSC). The following year the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Division (formerly known as the Special Services Division) moved from under the Adjutant General's command to the newly created FSC. This move signaled a shift in the Army's morale programs from emphasis on serving soldiers to serving both soldiers and their families.⁴⁶ Around this time, Smith Lake received new support facilities including an operations center, ticket booth, bathrooms, and other facilities.⁴⁷ Today, the Smith Lake Recreation Area continues to be managed by the MWR Division and includes various amenities mentioned in the next report section (Setting).

⁴⁵ "Robeson Underprivileged Attend Ft. Bragg Camp," *The Robesonian*, July 3, 1973, 17.

⁴⁶ Stephen E. Bower, *A Short History of the US Army Adjutant General's Corps, 1775-2013*, US Army Soldier Support Institute, 2013, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a587790.pdf>; "US Army MWR History," website, U.S. Army MWR, <http://www.armymwr.com/commander/aboutmwr.aspx>.

⁴⁷ Department of the Army, *Smith Lake Recreation Area Master Plan, Fort Bragg, NC*, Fort Bragg, NC: Prepared for DPW by Parsons Corporation under the direction of the USACE-Savannah District, 2011. Report on file, Directorate of Public Works, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 2-1.

Setting

Smith Lake is located in the southeastern section of Fort Bragg Military Reservation, Cumberland County, NC. The dam is located approximately 200 meters from the southern boundary of the reservation and Interstate Highway I-295. Simmons Army Airfield is located immediately to the west of the lake. Smith Lake Recreation Area is located north of the dam on the eastern edge of the lake. The recreational facilities consist of a beach area with two bath houses (previously determined ineligible for the NRHP), an administrative building, and a campground with several cabins and an RV parking area, as well as hiking and mountain bike trails, and both fishing and swimming areas. None of these facilities are immediately adjacent to the dam. The dam's earthen embankment was cleared of mature trees in 2015. Otherwise, only the designated beach area on the east side of the lake is presently clear of trees. Stands of mature trees, consisting mainly of longleaf pines, surround the lake on all other sides.

Although the lake was used for training during WWII and into the 1950s, its primary use in the early twentieth century was recreation, and since the 1960s, the area has primarily served as a recreational space for military personnel and their families. Recently, MWR has developed a master plan for the Smith Lake Recreation Area aiming to improve recreational facilities, maintain the natural setting of the lake and dam, and protect the area from incompatible development.⁴⁸

Architectural Description

The Smith Lake Dam consists of an approximately 470-foot long earthen embankment with a 12-foot wide, reinforced concrete, open-chute spillway. The spillway, near the center of the dam, has a stoplog gate structure to control the height of the lake.⁴⁹ The spillway structure appears to date to the re-building of the dam ca. 1943. The open-chute spillway is of a basic design, simply engineered to serve as both the inlet and outlet works for the dam. The concrete work is similar to other ca. 1940s infrastructure projects on Fort Bragg, including the original inlet and outlet works of Little Muddy Lake Dam at Camp Mackall, and the walls of several WWII era, observation post bunkers overlooking several of the ordnance impact areas.⁵⁰ Locally available stone from the surrounding Sandhills area was likely used as the base aggregate for the spillway's reinforced, cast-in-place concrete. The spillway consists of two wing walls (training walls) on the north side of the spillway (Figures 12 and 14), which direct water to the inlet, the chute with stoplog gate (Figure 10) that controls the height of the lake and carries water over the crest of the dam, and two wing walls on the south side of the dam which direct water downstream into Big Cross Creek (Figures 11 and 13). The dam construction is typical of small to medium sized water storage projects of the 1930s and 1940s consisting of a homogenous earthen embankment and a simple reinforced concrete spillway.⁵¹ Portions of the existing

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Wetzel and Bruns, "Periodic Dam Inspection Report Smith Lake Dam Fort Bragg, North Carolina," 2.

⁵⁰ French, *Little Muddy Lake Dam at Camp Mackall, Scotland County, North Carolina*, 8.

earthwork are likely older than the replacement spillway, dating to the previous iterations of the dam. A comparison of the current shape of the lake and that depicted on the 1922 soils map shows that the lake's boundaries are roughly the same, indicating that the dam was rebuilt at generally the same point along Big Cross Creek as the previous dam. However, some of the earthwork was likely repaired or replaced when the new spillway was constructed in the early 1940s.

In previous years, the spillway incorporated a wood deck/bridge with railing to allow pedestrian traffic to cross from one side of the embankment above the spillway to the other. The deck sills, now rotting, remain on the east and west walls of the chute. The wood deck was removed ca. 2014 because it no longer safely supported people crossing the spillway. As an interim measure, a rudimentary walkway consisting of three pieces of lumber lashed together has been placed across the spillway to allow pedestrian access to both ends of the dam (Figure 15).

Integrity

Smith Lake does not retain integrity as an early 20th Century recreation area for wealthy North Carolina businessmen. No buildings remain from the lake's Lakewood Club era. At a minimum the property contained a clubhouse and several support buildings, including a railroad station and a boat storage building. The lake likely also had a small pier or dock. The Smith Lake area has been systematically inventoried for archaeological resources and no evidence of these early structures remains. Only portions of the dam's earthen embankment possibly date to the Lakewood Club era. With no substantial structures remaining from this period of the lake's history, the site lacks integrity of design, feeling, and association. The dam's earthen embankment, alone, is not enough to convey the area's historical significance as a pre-WWI rural retreat.

The existing concrete spillway and earthwork are completely intact and have not been significantly modified since the dam was rebuilt ca. 1943. The removal of the rotted wood decking does not significantly impact the design of the structure as the deck is not integral to the functioning of the dam and was probably a later, post-1943 addition. The simple design of the dam with its open-chute concrete spillway and use of local materials reflects that the dam was built as a military training exercise. The ca. 1943 dam maintains integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship.

However, Smith Lake Dam does not retain integrity of setting. Rebuilt during WWII as part of a training exercise by the 16th Battalion from the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center, the dam and lake later served as a training area for all of the soldiers stationed at the FARTC during WWII. The "Smith Area" was leased by Fort Bragg specifically to provide more training land to FARTC officers and soldiers. During WWII access between the FARTC area and Smith Lake was essential to the training mission of the Center. Since the construction of Simmons Army Airfield in 1952, the former FARTC area has been physically disconnected from Smith Lake. Moreover, the former FARTC area consisted of temporary WWII buildings, most of

⁵¹ Perry Augustus Fellows, *Low Dams: A Manual of Design for Small Water Storage Projects*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939).

which have been demolished since the mid-1990s. Without the physical relationship between the two areas, Smith Lake Dam does not maintain its historical setting, at least in relation to WWII activities at Fort Bragg. The dam has lost its context as a WWII-era training site, the purpose for which the ca. 1943 structure was built.

The dam also does not maintain integrity of setting as a mid-century recreation area. Prior to the mid-1980s the recreation area consisted of a few, simple structures. These included two ca. 1954 bathhouses close to the shore of the beach area, probably accompanied by a swimming platform or pier, and other basic accessory structures. Since the mid-1980s, the recreation area has undergone several rounds of modernization that have introduced many more facilities and types of activities to the lake and its surrounds. These include a cable water skiing apparatus on the lake near the beach area, several playgrounds, volleyball and basketball courts, and cabins, among other amenities. The area no longer reflects its mid-1950s – early 1980s appearance as a comparatively austere natural area for swimming and picnicking. Thus, the recreation area does not retain integrity of setting or feeling.

Recommendation of Eligibility

Smith Lake Dam is recommended as not eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The dam is not eligible under Criterion C for Architecture. The structure is a standard earthen embankment dam with basic concrete chute spillway of typical design and materials for the period of construction.⁵² It does not represent a significant engineering innovation, nor is it representative of the work of a master.

The dam is not eligible under Criterion A for Entertainment/Recreation in the early twentieth century. The Lakewood Club is an example of rural recreational retreats associated with new businessmen and industrialists in central North Carolina during the period just before and just after WWI. However, no buildings or structures related to the ca. 1899-1926 fishing club remain at the lake. Portions of the earthen embankment of the Smith Lake Dam possibly date to the Lakewood era, but it is not enough to convey significance.

The dam is not eligible under Criterion A for Military Community Planning and Development or Military History and Recreation. The Smith Area was an important Fort Bragg training site during WWII and for several years thereafter, however, Smith Lake Dam no longer retains its WWII context. Simmons Army Airfield physically disconnects the dam from the former FARTC area, which has also lost most of its WWII buildings to demolition. Built by troop labor, the dam is closely associated with the FARTC and does not convey significance as a training site without the physical relationship with the FARTC area. Moreover, the FARTC complex and its remaining buildings were determined as ineligible for the NRHP in 2001.⁵³

⁵² Fellows, *Low Dams: A Manual of Design for Small Water Storage Projects*.

⁵³ M. Ruth Little, *Historic Architectural Resources Eligibility Report: Fort Bragg Military Reservation Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, More, Richmond, and Scotland Counties, North Carolina*, Raleigh: Long Leaf Historic Resources, 2001, 108. Report on file, Directorate of Public Works, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Since the 1980s, the Smith Lake Recreation Area has undergone several periods of modernization. Currently, only the bathhouses remain from its beginnings as an Army recreation area in the mid-1950s. The new facilities at Smith Lake compromise the dam's integrity of setting and feeling. The combination of the dam and two ca. 1954 bathhouses are not enough to convey the lake area's significance as a mid-twentieth century military recreation area.

The dam is also not eligible under Criterion B for association with Lt. Col. Michael G. Smith (1897-1993). The dam's construction is closely linked to Smith's career as a battalion commander at the FARTC. However, Smith's association with the FARTC is not historically significant. He was one among many officers who commanded the 16th Battalion of the FARTC. Because Smith is not an individually significant figure within the context of Smith Lake as a FARTC training area, the property does not meet the requirement to be considered eligible under Criterion B. Since the Smith Lake dam is not eligible for inclusion on the NRHP, we recommend no further documentation before the spillway is demolished and replaced, and that the dam not be further managed as a historic property.

Maps



Figure 8. Aerial overview of the Smith Lake and its surroundings, ca. 2014.

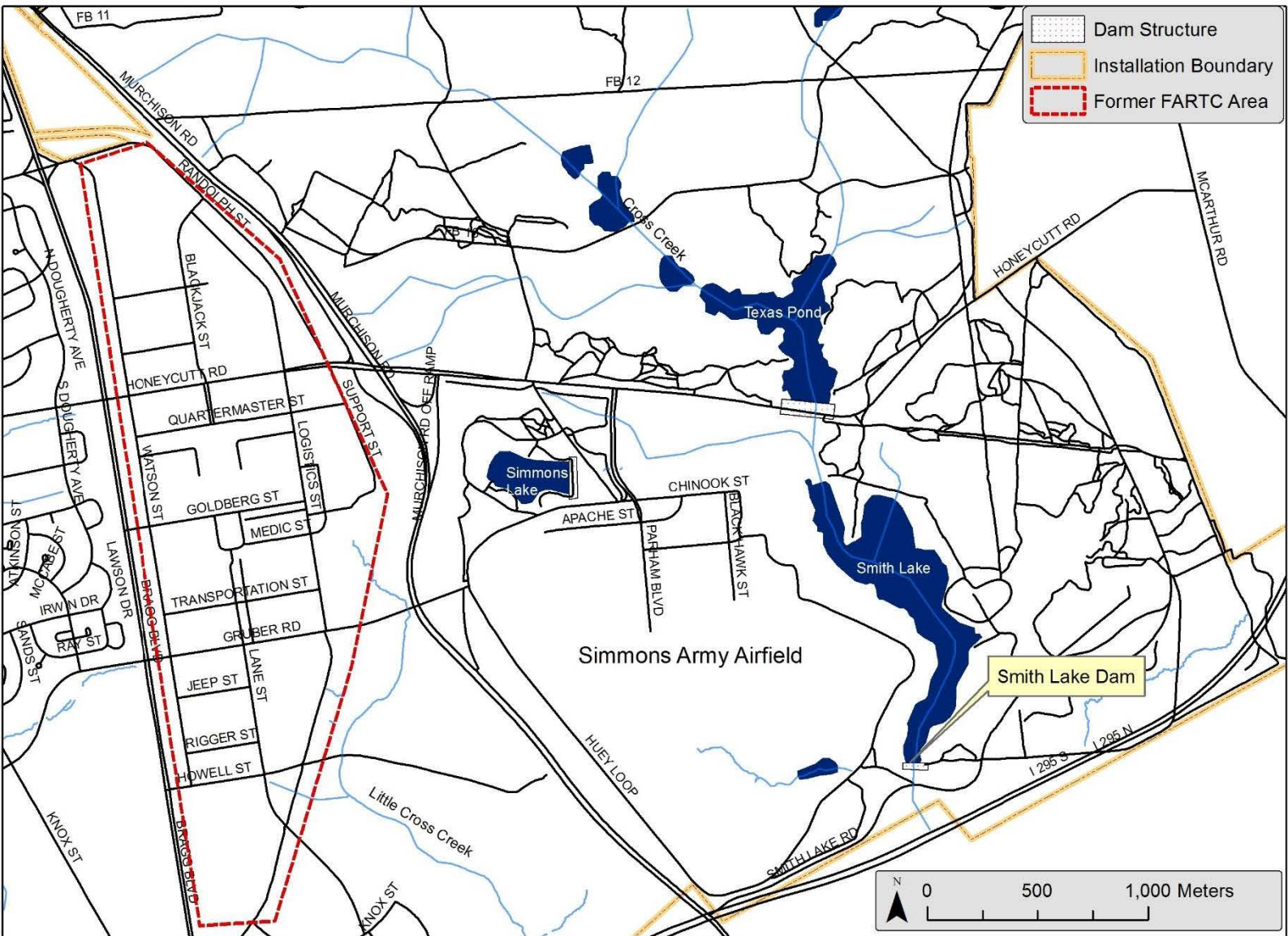


Figure 9. Thematic map of the eastern most portion of Fort Bragg showing installation road network, creeks, lakes, and other features.

Photographs: Current Conditions



Figure 10. The spillway from the downstream side of the dam.



Figure 11. A view of the downstream spillway training wall on the east side of the dam.



Figure 12. View of the upstream spillway approach wall on the east side of the dam.



Figure 13. A view of the downstream spillway training wall on the west side of the dam.



Figure 14. View of the upstream approach wall on the west side of the dam.



Figure 15. The wood sills running on either side of the dam spillway are all that is left of the wood access deck/bridge that crossed the spillway. It was removed ca. 2014 because of severe rot. The deck likely dated to the post-WWII era.



Figure 16. Big Cross Creek, downstream of the dam.



Figure 17. A view of Smith Lake from the crest of the dam.

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