

#11 Main Laboratory

Construction of the Main Laboratory was completed in 1913 and the lab opened in 1914. The wood-frame building consisted of a half-basement and two- and one-half stories. The building had a mansard roof, three dormers on the north and south elevations, and two large interior chimneys. The building included several offices, six labs, a museum, a photographic room, a library, dormitory rooms, storerooms, packing rooms, a dining room, and a kitchen as well as a furnace room, boiler, and coal bin. The Laboratory along with all the records was burned to the ground in 1917. The second lab, built on top of the first lab, opened in 1920 and was constructed from brick, concrete, and stone to ensure it would be fireproof. The second lab consisted of two and one-half stories and a full basement and had a similar number and type of rooms as the original lab. This lab remained operational until the 1930s when mussel propagation at the station ceased in favor of hatchery operations.

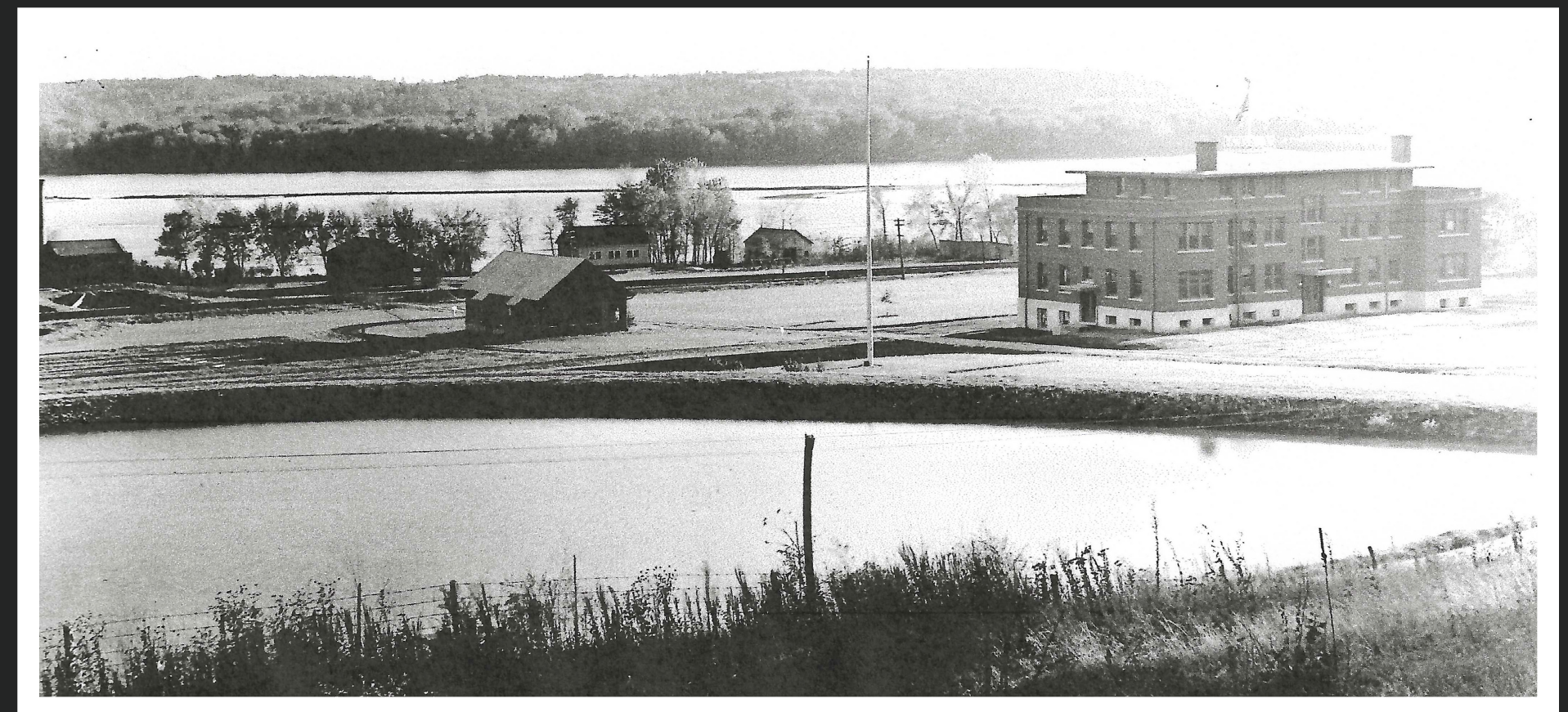
From the mid-1930s until 1945, the Main Laboratory was rarely occupied or utilized. In 1941 the National Youths Administration occupied the building when youths assisted with facility maintenance. In the winter of 1945, officials of the H.J. Heinz company requested the War Manpower Commission to allow them to use German POWs at the plant to alleviate labor shortages. To accommodate the prisoners, the laboratory was converted to a barracks and an 8-foot barbed wired fence constructed around the compound. Between April and November 1945, 310 POWs were housed at the Fairport compound. Although the majority of POWs worked at the Heinz factory, some POWs worked on farms on the "Island" or in canning factories in Wapello. By late November of 1945, the last of the POWs were transported back to Camp Algona. Following their release, some men elected to remain in Muscatine and continued to work at the Heinz plant until their retirement.



Overview of Main Laboratory circa 1914, facing southwest.



Main Laboratory in 1920 during dedication ceremony, facing southeast.



Overview of Reservoir and Main Laboratory in 1920, facing southwest.



SCAN ME

