

Raitt and Savery Halls Summary of Historical Research

Prepared by:

**Cathy Wickwire
Cultural Resource Specialist**

Prepared for:

**Arai Jackson Ellison Murakami LLP
2300 Seventh Avenue
Seattle, WA 98121**

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HISTORY OF RAITT AND SAVERY HALLS

When the University of Washington relocated to its present campus from downtown Seattle in September of 1895, the heavily wooded site possessed great potential with its almost 360-degree sweep of vistas, encompassing the Olympics, Lake Union, Portage Bay, Lake Washington, the Cascades, and Mt. Rainier. Denny Hall, the first building constructed on the new campus, had been built at the top of a knoll overlooking Lake Washington to the southeast but not sited according to any overall master plan. The new campus also included an observatory, a gymnasium and drill hall building, a water tower and a small power house on Lake Washington. Although there was ample room for expansion, the university grew slowly over the first ten years on its new campus, adding two dormitory buildings in 1899, a new power plant in 1901, and a science building in 1902. An early campus plan, the 1898 "Oval Plan" by A.H. Fuller, sought to direct the course of this development on the upper third of the campus before the university hired the Olmsted Brothers landscape firm of Brookline, Massachusetts in August 1903 to create a comprehensive plan for the full site. However, before the 1904 Olmsted Plan could be implemented, the firm was hired in 1906 to develop plans for the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition to be held on the lower two thirds of the mostly undeveloped campus. Although most of the exposition buildings were to be only temporary structures, the Olmsted Brothers' design created a permanent infrastructure planned around the open-ended axis of Rainier Vista and included the construction of some permanent facilities for future use.

The fair opened on June 1, 1909 and ran for 138 days before closing on October 16, 1909, after which time the Board of Regents of the University of Washington selected the structures and features that would remain. These included four permanent structures as well as numerous temporary structures that were retained in order to meet the increasing needs of an overcrowded campus. In 1911, the Olmsted Brothers were hired to prepare a new plan that would incorporate the existing campus with the area developed for the fair grounds and guide future growth. In January of 1914, the Board of Regents accepted the 1914 Olmsted Plan in its general features, but acting president Henry Landes appointed a faculty committee to study its details before giving final approval due to dissatisfaction over specific elements. In November of that year, the faculty committee submitted its report to the regents, who approved the committee's recommendations and selected Seattle architect Carl F. Gould of the firm of Bebb & Gould to create a new plan. The following year in 1915, the Board of Regents adopted Gould's "Revised General Plan of the University of Washington," which included a Liberal Arts Quadrangle or "Quad" as one of its primary features. Commonly known as the "Regents Plan," it directed all development on the university campus and dictated the use of the Collegiate Gothic architectural style in the construction of all future buildings.

The Collegiate Gothic style is a late adaptation of the Gothic Revival style popularized in the 19th century and based on the late Gothic architecture of England and France. Boston architect Ralph Adams Cram vigorously promoted the style for college campuses in the early 20th century. Cram believed that the Collegiate Gothic style, which used medieval English universities as a model, symbolized the old ideals and sound principles of these traditional centers of learning and suggested the permanence of these educational institutions. Because he believed that art, religion and education were inseparable, Cram disliked the classical and secular academic architecture embodied by Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia. With Cram's persuasive support, architects and academicians favored the Collegiate Gothic style during the first half of the 20th century, making it widely popular for collegiate campuses.

In order to fund construction of the new campus buildings proposed in the plan, the Washington State Legislature passed a tuition bill in March of 1915. This bill instituted the University of Washington Building Fund composed of receipts from the lease of the old university campus and a portion of tuitions paid in by students. At the same time, the Legislature made a direct appropriation of \$150,000 from the General Fund for the construction of a new "Home Economics Building," the first on the Liberal Arts Quad. In November of 1915, the Board of Regents awarded contracts for the Home Economics Building designed in the Collegiate Gothic style by Bebb & Gould. While construction proceeded on this building, the Regents awarded contracts for the Quad's second building, Commerce Hall, in March of 1916. Bebb & Gould also designed this building, the first to be constructed with funds provided by the new building fund. In September of 1916, the Home Economics Building was completed at a cost of \$151,000 and initially occupied by the Home Economics Department, the College of Education, and the German Department. A year later, Commerce Hall was completed at a cost of \$203,000 and initially occupied by the School of Business Administration, the Law School, and the Department of Journalism.

After the passage of the 1915 legislation to fund new campus buildings, the university planned to have a new building under construction each year in order to meet the needs of a growing student body. However, the First World War delayed construction of the new Philosophy Hall off the end of Commerce Hall because all available building materials and labor were being directed towards the war effort. It was not until December 1919 that the Regents awarded contracts for the Quad's third building, also designed by Bebb & Gould. In October of 1920, Philosophy Hall was completed at a cost of \$388,000 with \$140,000 from the UW Building Fund and \$248,000 from the General Fund and initially occupied by the Departments of Philosophy, Psychology, and Mathematics as well as the Art Department. Constructed over a five-year period, these three buildings enclosed the upper or northern side of the new Liberal Arts Quad and established the Collegiate Gothic style as the dominant architectural style on campus.

Subsequently, the three buildings were renamed to honor the memories of longtime University of Washington faculty members after their deaths. In May of 1946, the Home Economics Building was renamed Raitt Hall in honor of Effie Isobel Raitt, who directed the department for more than thirty years until her death in 1945. The following year in June of 1947, Philosophy Hall was renamed Savery Hall in honor of William Savery, who headed the Philosophy Department for more than forty years until his death in 1945. Commerce Hall was renamed Guthrie Hall in honor of Edwin R. Guthrie after his death in 1959. Prof. Guthrie was a faculty member of the Psychology Department from 1914 to 1956, dean of the Graduate School from 1943 to 1951, and executive officer of academic personnel from 1947 to 1951. Savery and Guthrie Halls retained their individual identities until 1972 when they were combined into one building and renamed Savery Hall.

Since their construction more than eighty years ago, the three buildings have each undergone extensive interior renovations and remodelings. However, the exteriors have remained largely intact with the exception of window replacements and the construction of a small addition on the rear of Raitt Hall. In December of 1954, the Regents authorized a \$309,100 remodel of Raitt (Home Economics) Hall but did not award contracts for the work until December of the following year. By this time, the total cost of the project was expected to be \$439,000, which included replacement of the heating, plumbing, ventilating, and electrical systems and modernization of the Commons cafeteria, classrooms and laboratories. By January of 1957, the remodeling of Raitt Hall was nearly completed and the building partially reoccupied. In May of 1958, the Regents authorized a \$295,000 remodel of Savery (Philosophy) Hall scheduled for the summer and autumn quarters. Four years later in January of 1962, the Regents authorized a \$350,000 remodel of Guthrie (Commerce) Hall and approved final working drawings. This work was completed within a year and the building reoccupied by January of 1963. The work on these three buildings was necessary to update the original systems, which had remained largely untouched since their initial construction. More recently, Raitt Hall underwent a \$3.3 million renovation initiated in the summer of 1981.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE OF RAITT AND SAVERY HALLS

As noted above, there have been few exterior alterations to the buildings. However, the application of a coating to the architectural terra cotta elements on each structure has resulted in a major modification to the exterior appearance. The coating has a chalky opaque appearance that obscures the original color and details of the terra cotta. Since its application, the coating has deteriorated to the extent that it is flaking off the terra cotta surfaces and washing onto the adjoining brickwork. In addition, environment testing has revealed that this coating contains asbestos, further necessitating its removal. It is not known exactly when the coating was applied. It is believed to be an aluminum roof coating manufactured by Republic Powdered Metals Inc. under the name of "New Sensation."

The coating may have been applied as part of a preventive maintenance program conducted by the university's Physical Plant Division beginning in 1957. As part of the program, scaffolding was installed around buildings so that the masonry exteriors could be cleaned, repointed, and sprayed with a water repellent agent. Sandblasting was one of the methods used to clean the exteriors. According to a March 1964 *UW Daily* article, John W. Harding, the director of the division, anticipated that it would take ten to fifteen years to finish all the buildings on campus with each building taking a couple of months. However, the actual length of time for each building depended entirely on its condition. The article noted that a

permanent crew worked full-time on Savery and Guthrie Halls (now known together as Savery Hall) for an “unprecedented year” after running into “extensive problems on the terra cotta structure.” The total cost for this work was \$29,000. Despite the unsatisfactory conditions associated with the coating, Raitt and Savery Halls retain the highest levels of historic integrity and architectural character. The historic and architectural significance of these distinctive structures makes it imperative to conduct the treatment necessary for the long-term preservation of these structures.

Because of the coating, it is difficult to determine the original colors and appearance of the terra cotta and brick exteriors of the buildings. The numerous historic photographs in black and white give a sense of the contrast between the terra cotta and brick but not the colors. Fortunately, some clues can be found in the written record. In a November 1915 *Washington Alumnus* article entitled “Collegiate Tudor is Type of New Building,” campus architect Carl F. Gould described the new Home Economics Building that would soon be under construction. Gould noted that some of the characteristics of Denny Hall would be recalled in the new building despite the fact that it would have a Collegiate Gothic design. In addition, care would be taken to ease the transition between Denny Hall and the new Liberal Arts Quadrangle so that the two would “appear to be related and not isolated in their general effect.” The following month, the December 1915 issue of *The Washingtonian* published another article by Carl Gould, this one entitled “The Future Campus.” Gould again described the new Home Economics Building under construction but also detailed the new campus plan adopted earlier that year. Gould noted that the new building would be a reinforced concrete structure with a base clad with “stone similar in color to Denny Hall” and walls covered with “terra cotta and brick of a light buff color with considerable texture.”

The following year, in March of 1916, Carl Gould penned a second article for *The Washingtonian* entitled “The New Campus Architecture,” which provided his rationale for choosing the Collegiate Gothic style. Gould acknowledged that the design of the Home Economics Building, and consequently the entire Liberal Arts Quadrangle, would be reminiscent of the English Tudor Gothic but adapted to “new conditions of construction and materials.” Because of this, Gould used a “rough texture buff brick” in order to “bring the group into a harmonious relationship with the prevailing color of existing buildings on the campus.” Gould also thought that the buff brick gave a “greater effect of solidity.” After the three buildings had been completed and a fourth, Miller Hall, was under construction, Carl Gould wrote another article for *The Washington Alumnus* in April of 1922 entitled “The New Campus.” While the previous articles described Gould’s plans for the future, this article detailed the conditions present after seven years of nearly continuous construction. Although he included the entire campus, Gould focused on the “totally new series or group of buildings” near Denny Hall, which featured “green roofs and pinkish buff exteriors with variegated brick.” From these descriptions, it appears that there was an initial intent to harmonize the new buildings with Denny Hall and the existing campus despite the fact that they would have a completely different design. However, it seems that the colors actually chosen diverge somewhat from this original intent as evidenced by the descriptions in the 1922 article.

An examination of the original specifications for the three buildings shows that Carl Gould intended to harmonize their exterior appearances through the use of matching colors and materials. For the first structure, the 1915-16 Home Economics Building, Gould specified that the face brick would be “selected by the Architects at the proper time.” In terms of the color and finish of the terra cotta, Gould specified that “samples shall be submitted to the Architects showing the color and also the various surface finishes” and that “the work as executed must equal the samples chosen in every respect.” For the second building, the 1916-17 Commerce Hall, Gould provided the same specification for the face brick. However, in specifying the mechanical finish and color of the terra cotta, Gould demanded that both “exactly match” the terra cotta in the New Home Economics Building. For the third building, the 1919-20 Philosophy Hall, Gould was more specific in his choice of face brick. He indicated that the Far West Clay Co.’s “Rug Face” brick be used and that it “match both in size, color and texture the brick used in the recently completed “Commerce Building.” For the terra cotta, Gould specified that the surface finish and color “exactly match the terra cotta in the New Commerce Building.” However, specifications for the subsequent buildings constructed on the Liberal Arts Quadrangle made no reference to matching the materials on the first three buildings.

The Board of Regents’ Biennial Reports from 1915 to 1921 also provide information on the materials used in the construction of the three buildings. The Fourteenth Biennial Report of January 1917 described the

new Home Economics Building as having a “pinkish buff brick of variegated texture and depth of tone.” This gave the building a “unified color scheme” and brought it “into line with the existing permanent buildings on the campus.” Because every effort was made to use Washington-made materials in the construction, the Northern Clay Company of Auburn, Washington manufactured the terra cotta, and a Tacoma company manufactured the “Falken tapestry brick.” For the construction of Commerce and Philosophy Halls, the Denny Renton Clay & Coal Co. of Seattle supplied the terra cotta, and the Far West Clay Co. of Pierce County company supplied the facing brick. Both buildings also used Wilkeson sandstone quarried locally in Pierce County.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE FEATURES OF RAITT & SAVERY HALLS

Historic drawings and photographs provide virtually the only documentary evidence of historic landscape features of Raitt and Savery Halls. A 1916 rendering of Raitt Hall, drawn from a perspective within the Liberal Arts Quad, shows the building set on a raised grassy plinth with no adjacent plantings. This remained the case immediately after construction as shown in a ca.1916 photograph. However, by about 1919, a series of trees had been planted around the perimeter of the building within the raised plinth fronting onto the Quad. The trees were positioned at regular intervals below the vertical brick piers separating the window bays trimmed with terra cotta. At this time, the lawn of Denny Yard sloped all the way down to the other side of the building as evidenced by a ca.1920 photograph. An asphalt access road now cuts a steep embankment through the base of the slope. The photograph also shows that the trees were not planted on this side. While it is difficult to determine the type of tree in the early photographs, holly trees can be clearly identified in later photographs, which show them growing progressively larger until they are quite overgrown by the late 1950s.

A 1919 rendering of Philosophy Hall, which comprises the southwestern portion of Savery Hall, shows the building set on a raised grassy plinth similar to that shown on the earlier one of Raitt Hall. However, this drawing shows what appear to be cypress trees planted along the perimeter in regularly spaced positions flanking the window bays. This serves to emphasize the vertical brick piers separating the window bays. A 1922 photograph is evidence of the fact that this landscape plan was not implemented, as it shows the building without any foundation plantings within its bare raised plinth. By about 1926, the building had received the same landscape treatment as the neighboring Raitt Hall: a series of trees, most likely holly, planted around its perimeter. Subsequent photographs show these trees also grew progressively larger until they were quite overgrown by the late 1950s.

Although subsequent landscaping has been added to the areas adjacent to Raitt and Savery Halls, the holly trees and the raised plinths remain significant historic landscape features. The trees planted along both buildings were more prominent landscape features of the Quad prior to 1964 when the cherry trees were transplanted to this location from their original site in the Arboretum due to the construction of SR-520. Until this time, the Quad contained only a few mature trees within a largely vacant and grassy expanse of lawn crossed by intersecting paths. Because of this, Raitt and Savery Halls, set on their raised plinths, also enjoyed a greater visual prominence and sharply defined the enclosed space.

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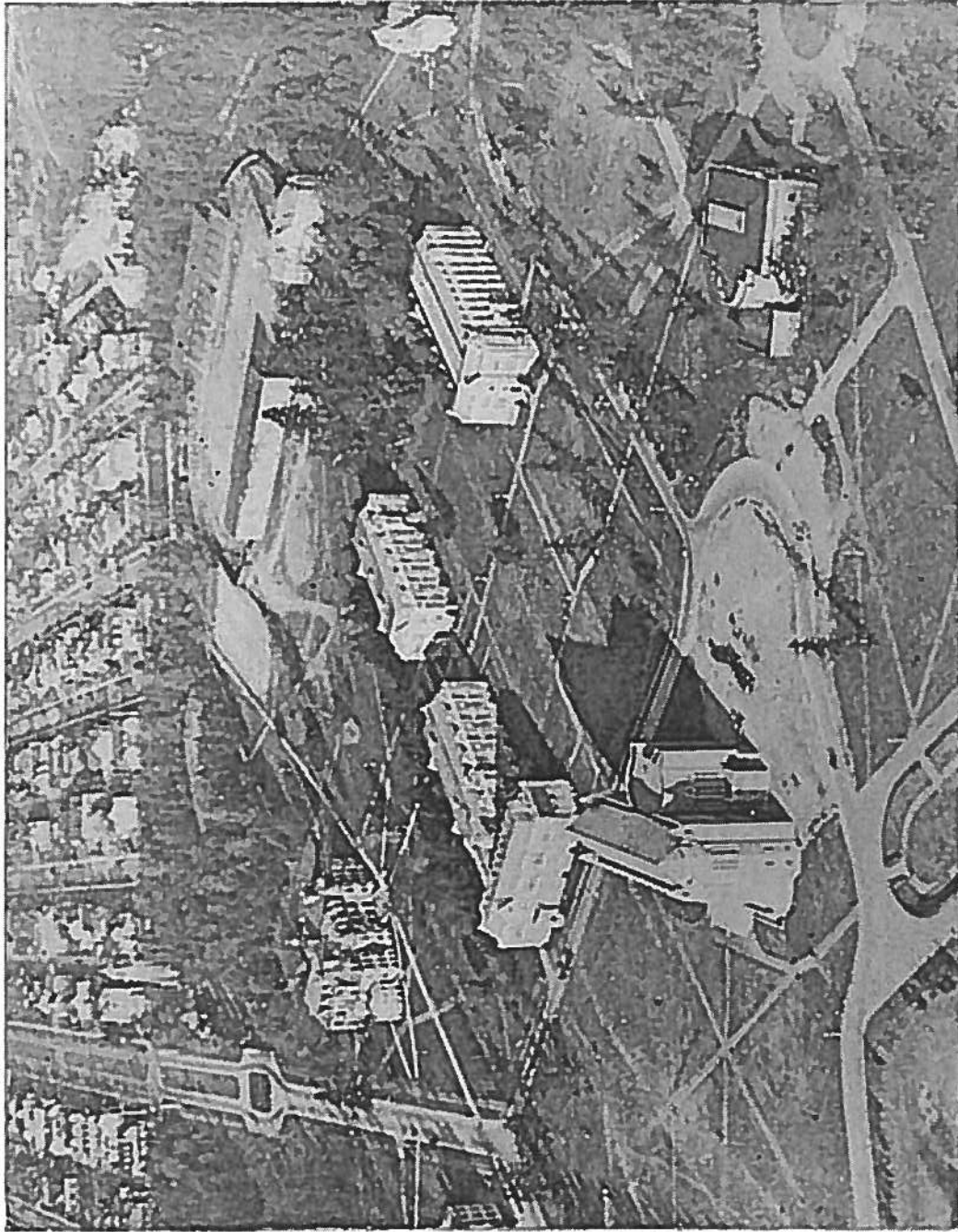
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HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS

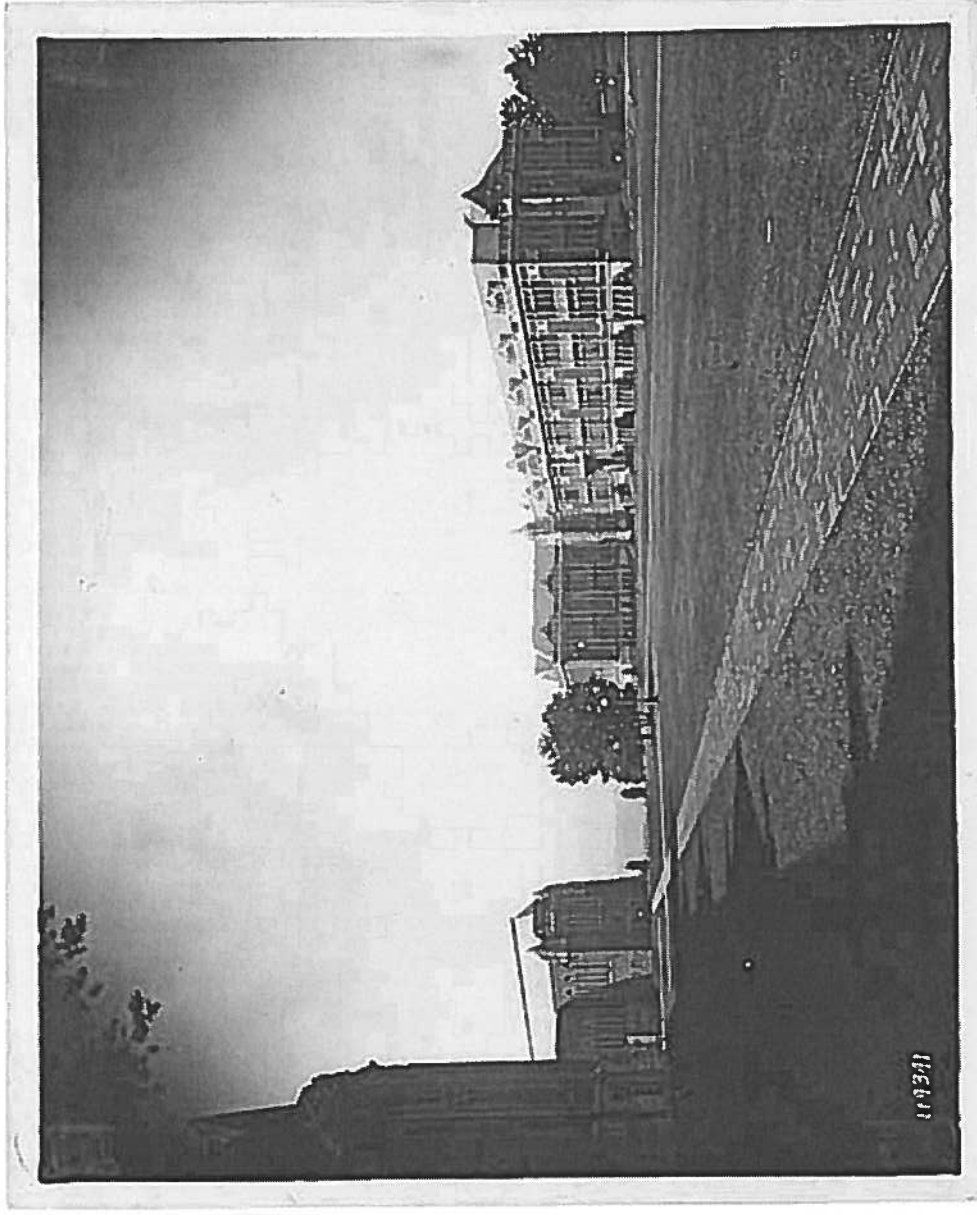


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LIBERAL ARTS QUAD

Aerial of campus taken from the south, University of Washington, ca. 1926

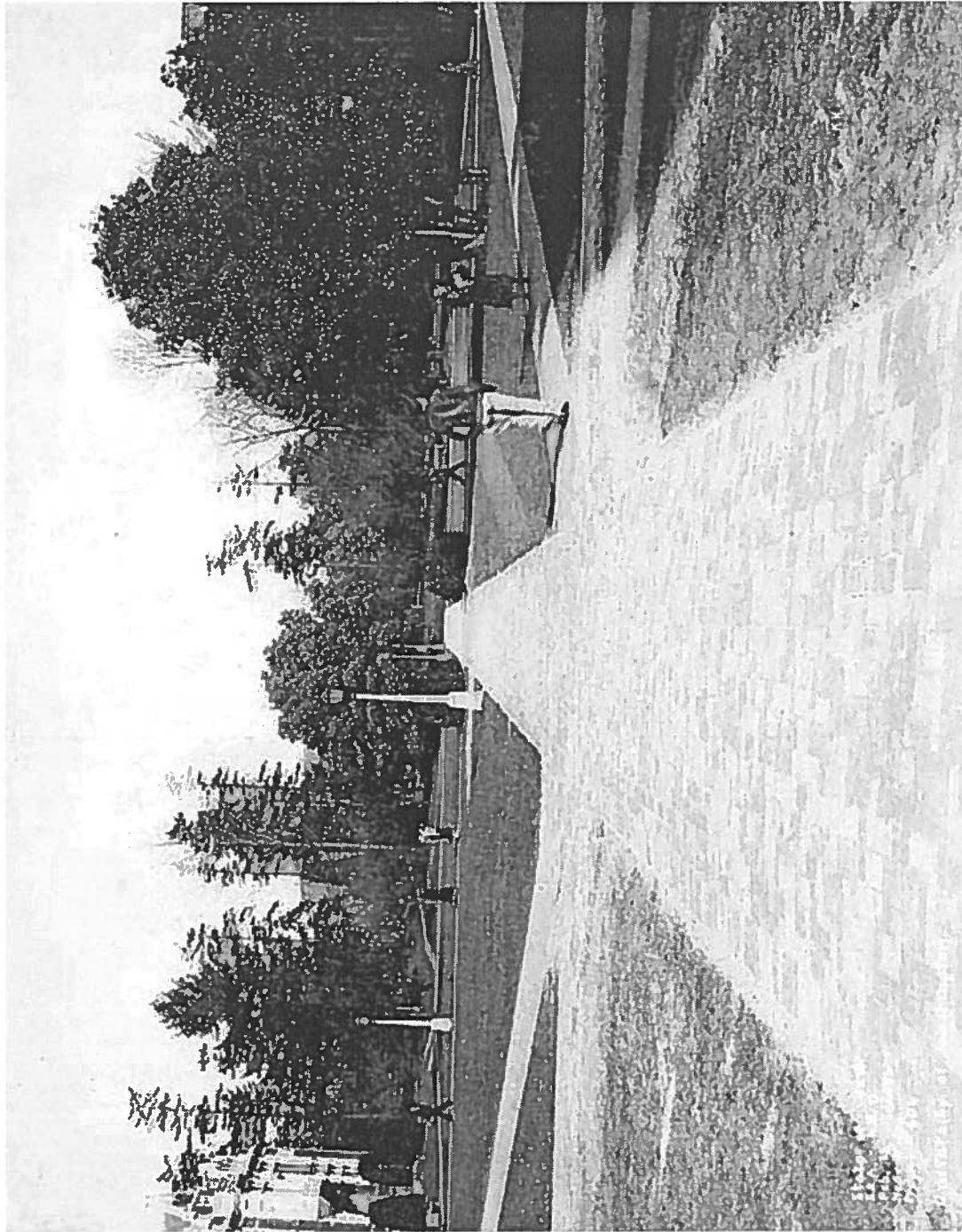
U. W. Quadrangle no. 47



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LIBERAL ARTS QUAD

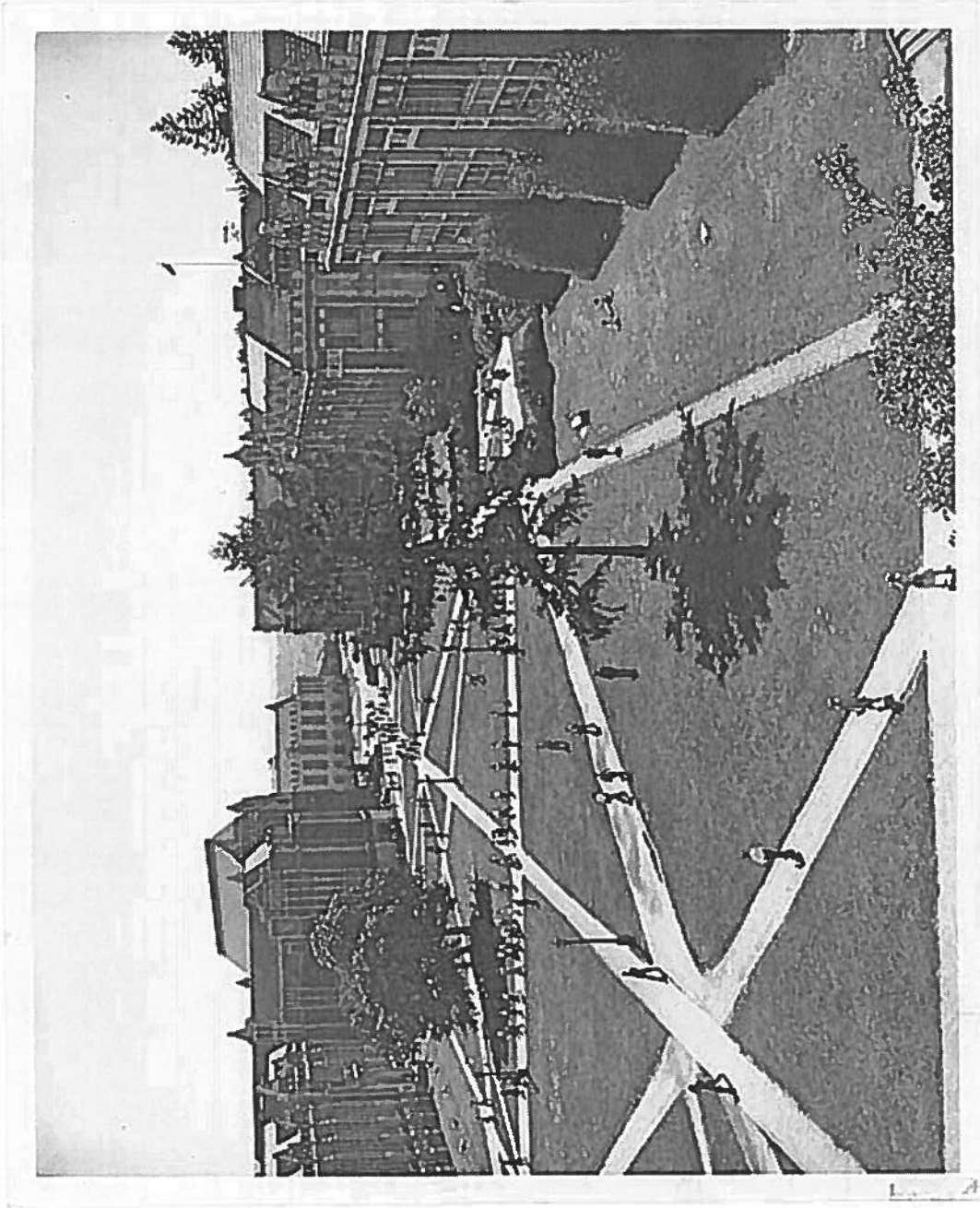
Liberal Arts Quadrangle, looking southwest, University of Washington, ca. 1926



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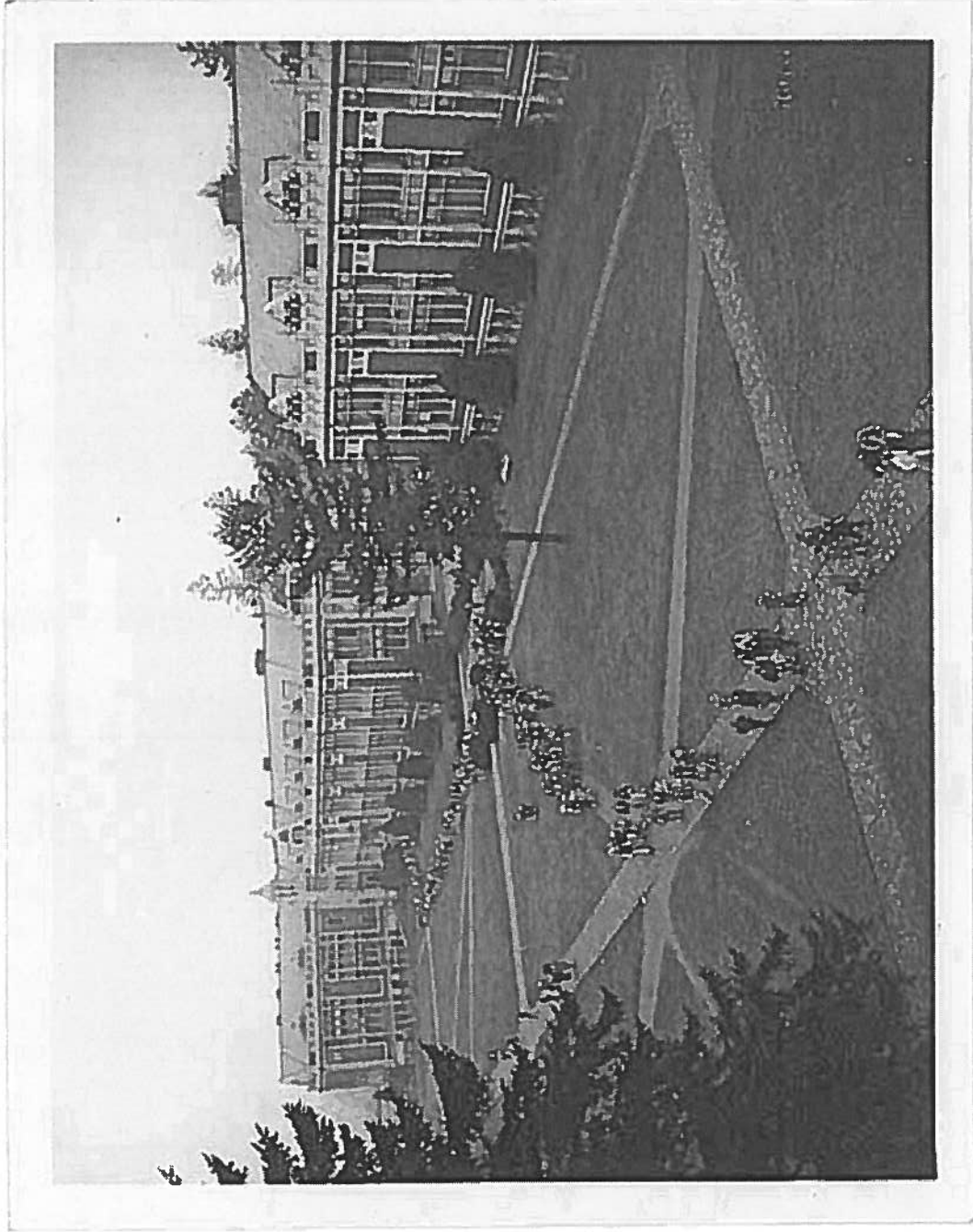
LIBERAL ARTS QUAD

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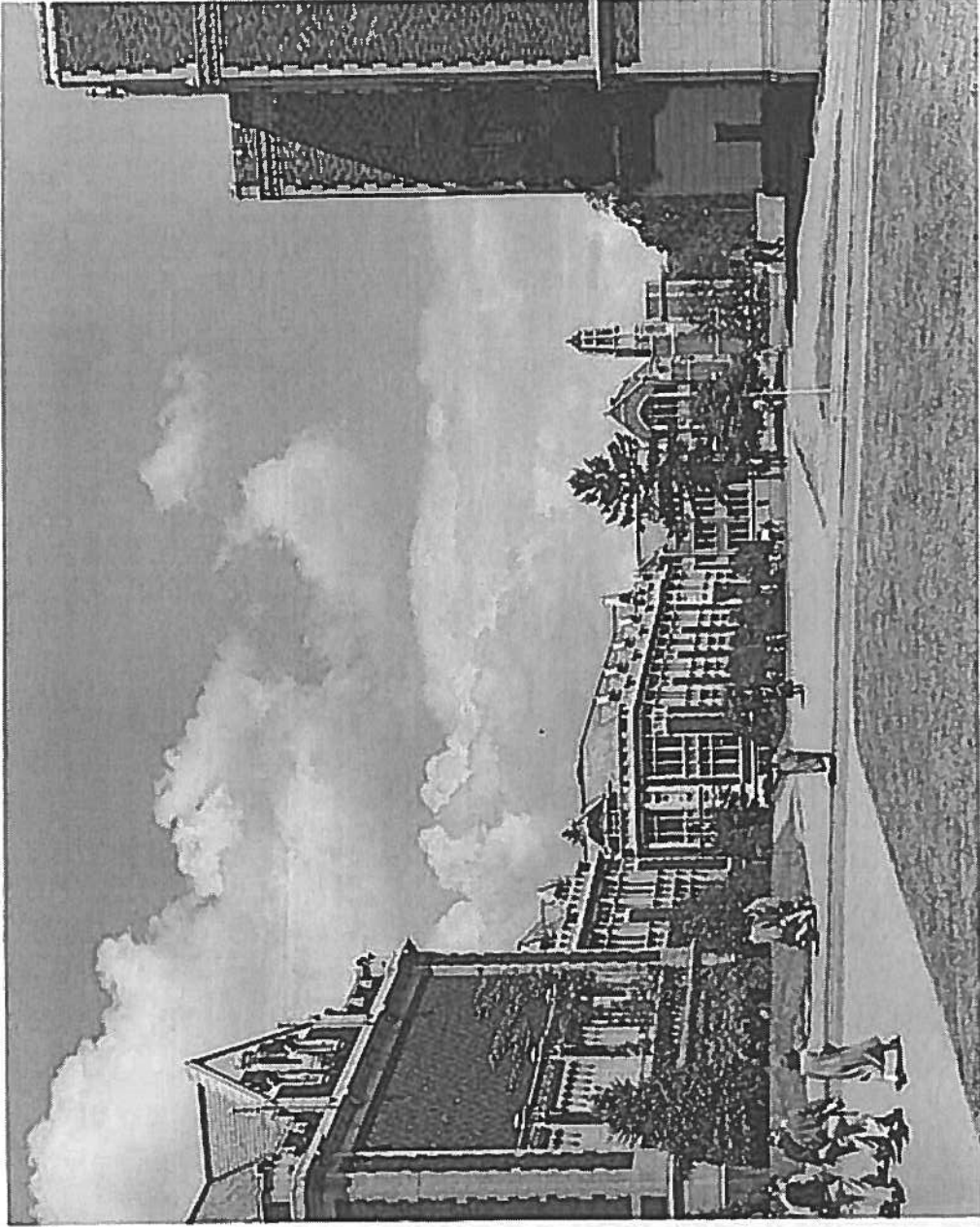
LIBERAL ARTS QUAD
Liberal Arts Quadrangle, University of Washington, May 1949



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LIBERAL ARTS QUAD

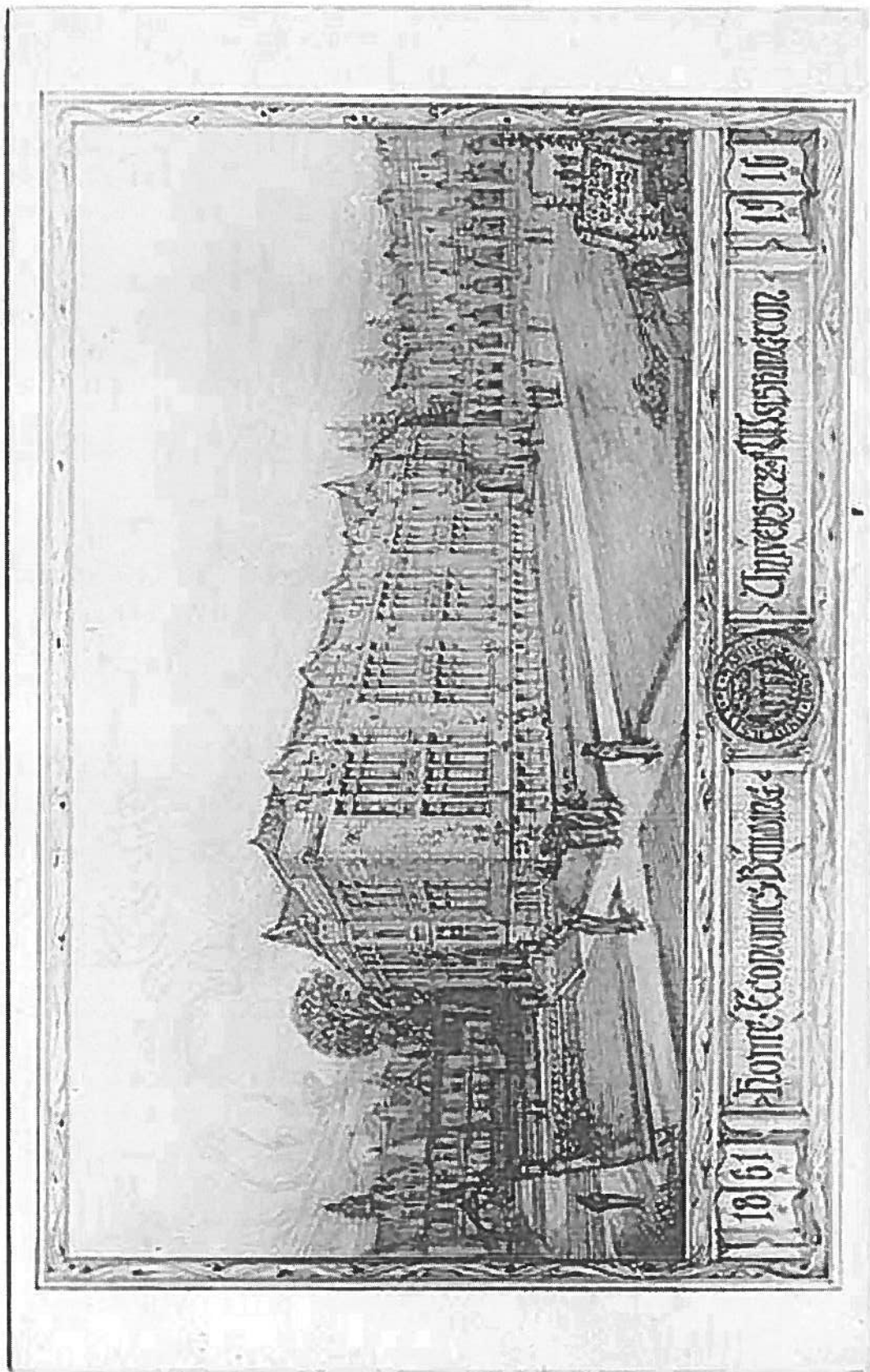
Liberal Arts Quadrangle, University of Washington, January 5, 1954



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LIBERAL ARTS QUAD

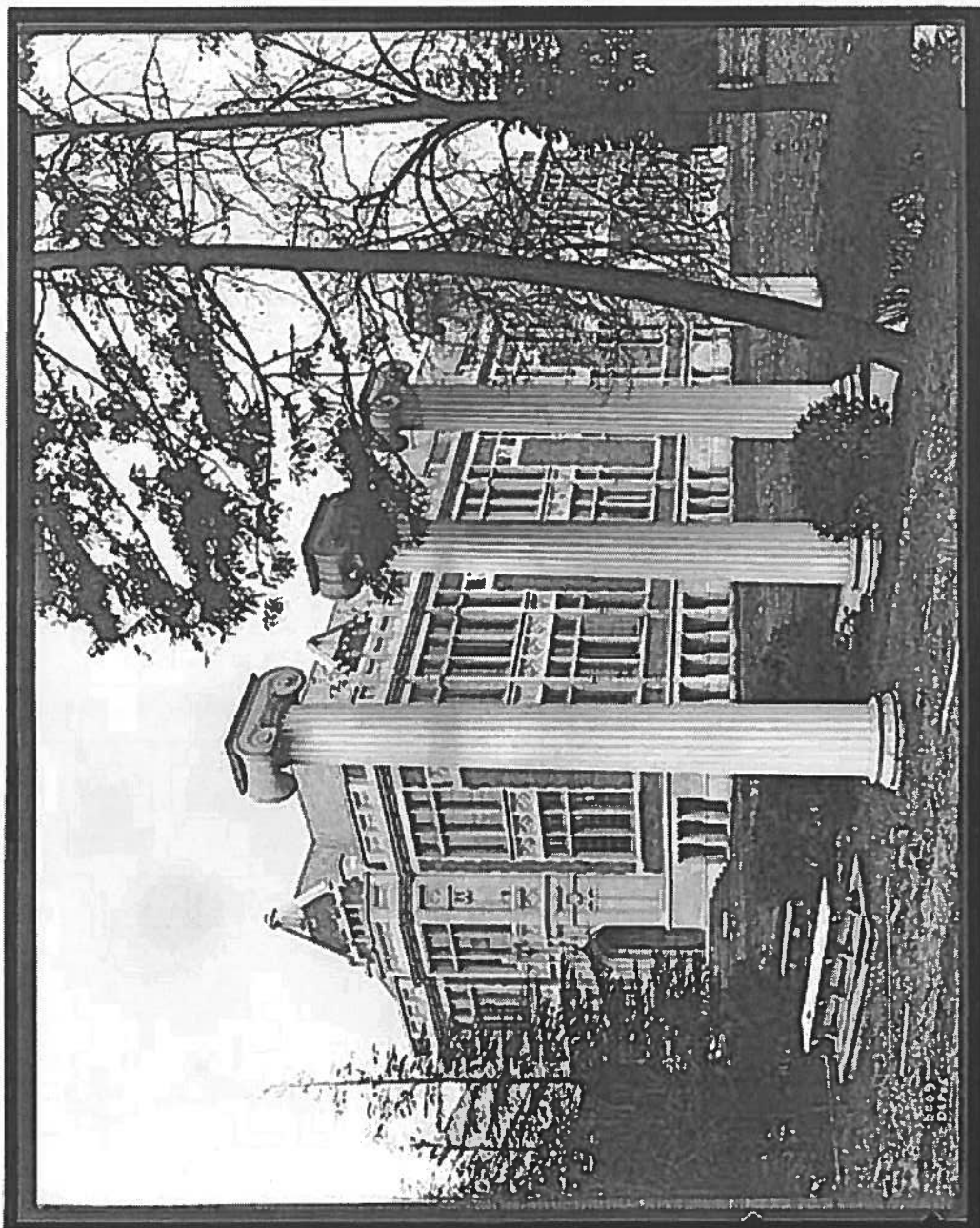
Liberal Arts Quadrangle, looking north, University of Washington, ca. 1954



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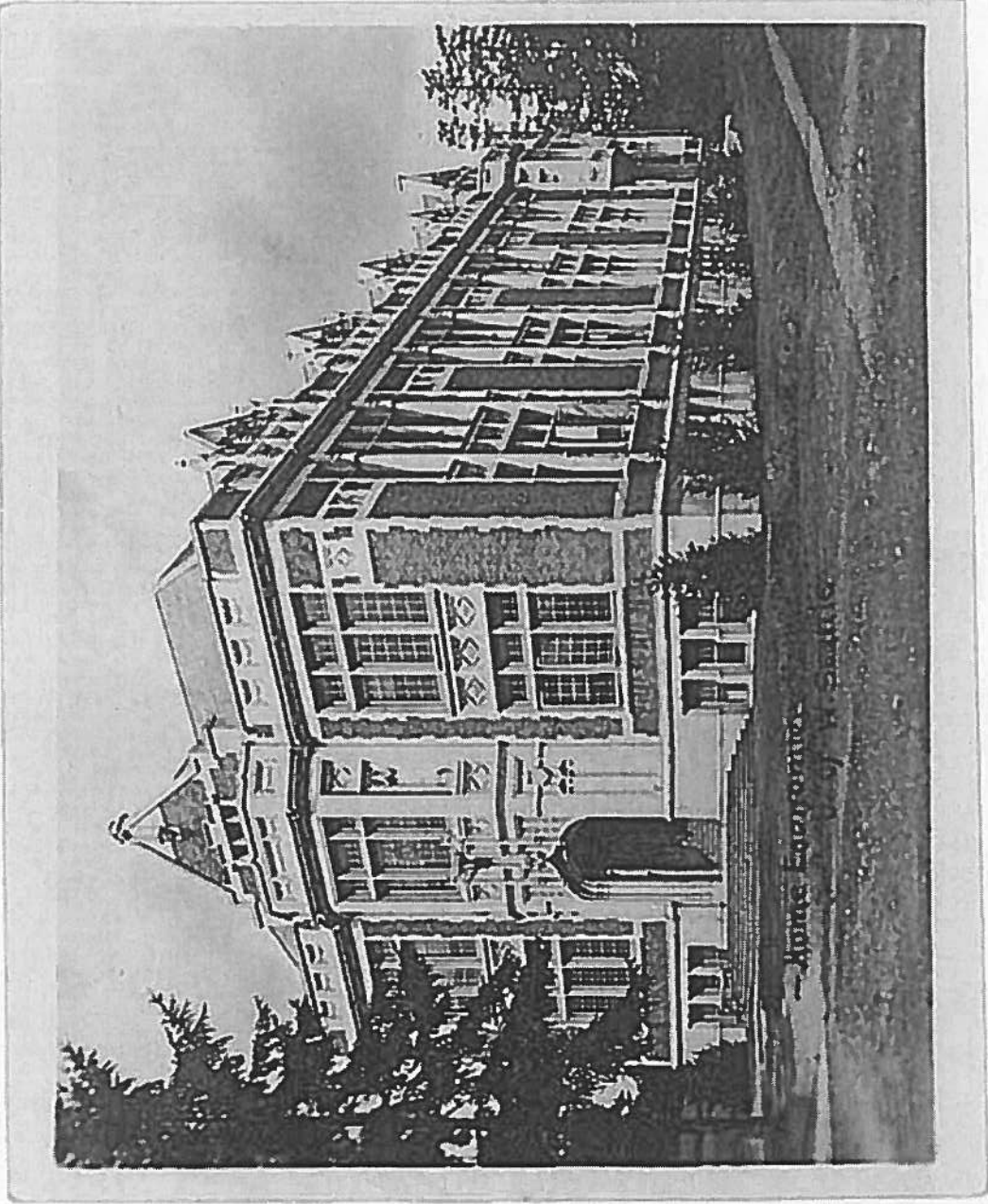
RAITT HALL

Raitt Hall, University of Washington, 1916



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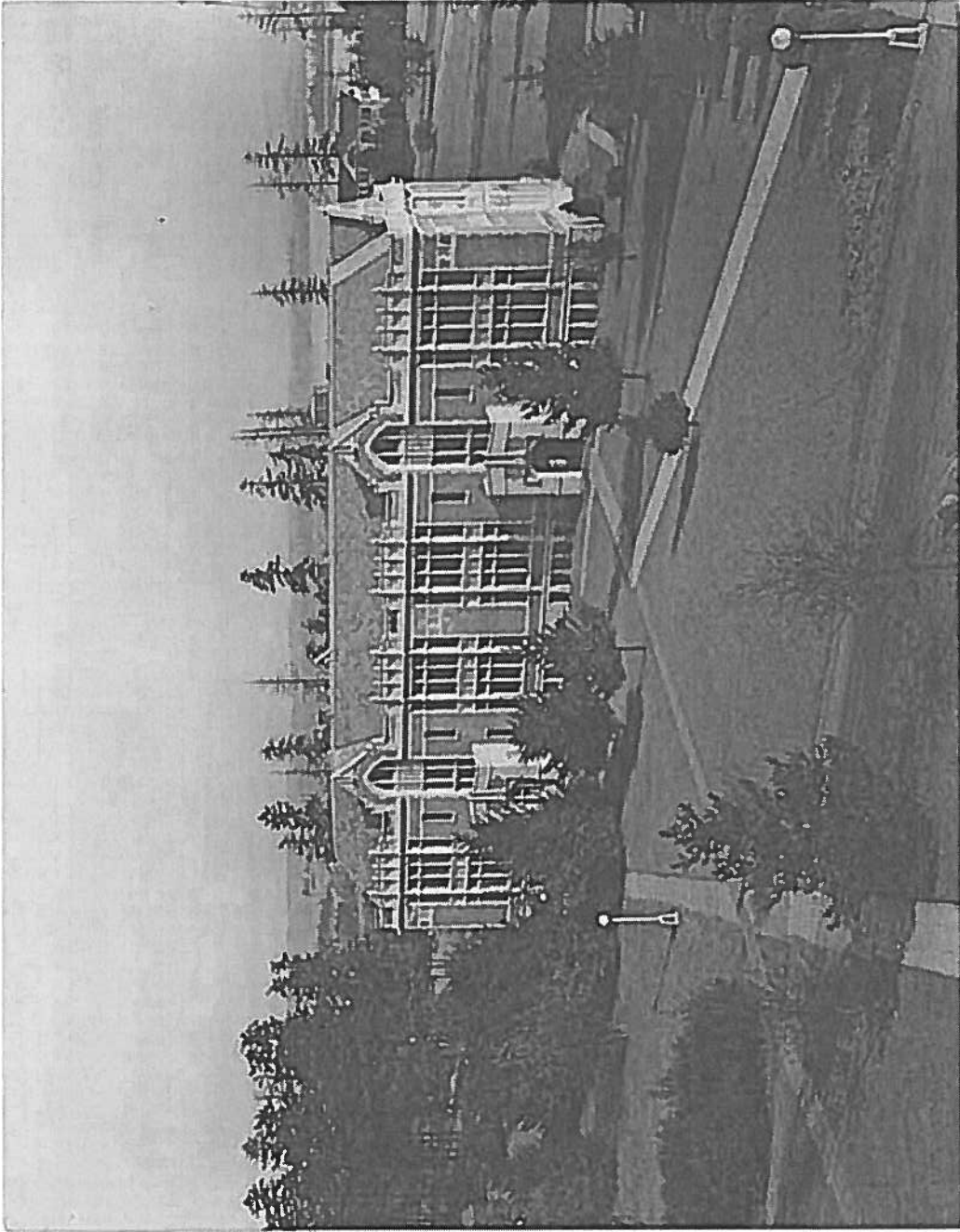
RAITT HALL
Home Economics Building, University of Washington, ca. 1916



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RAITT HALL

Raitt Hall taken from the south, University of Washington, ca. 1919



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RAITT HALL

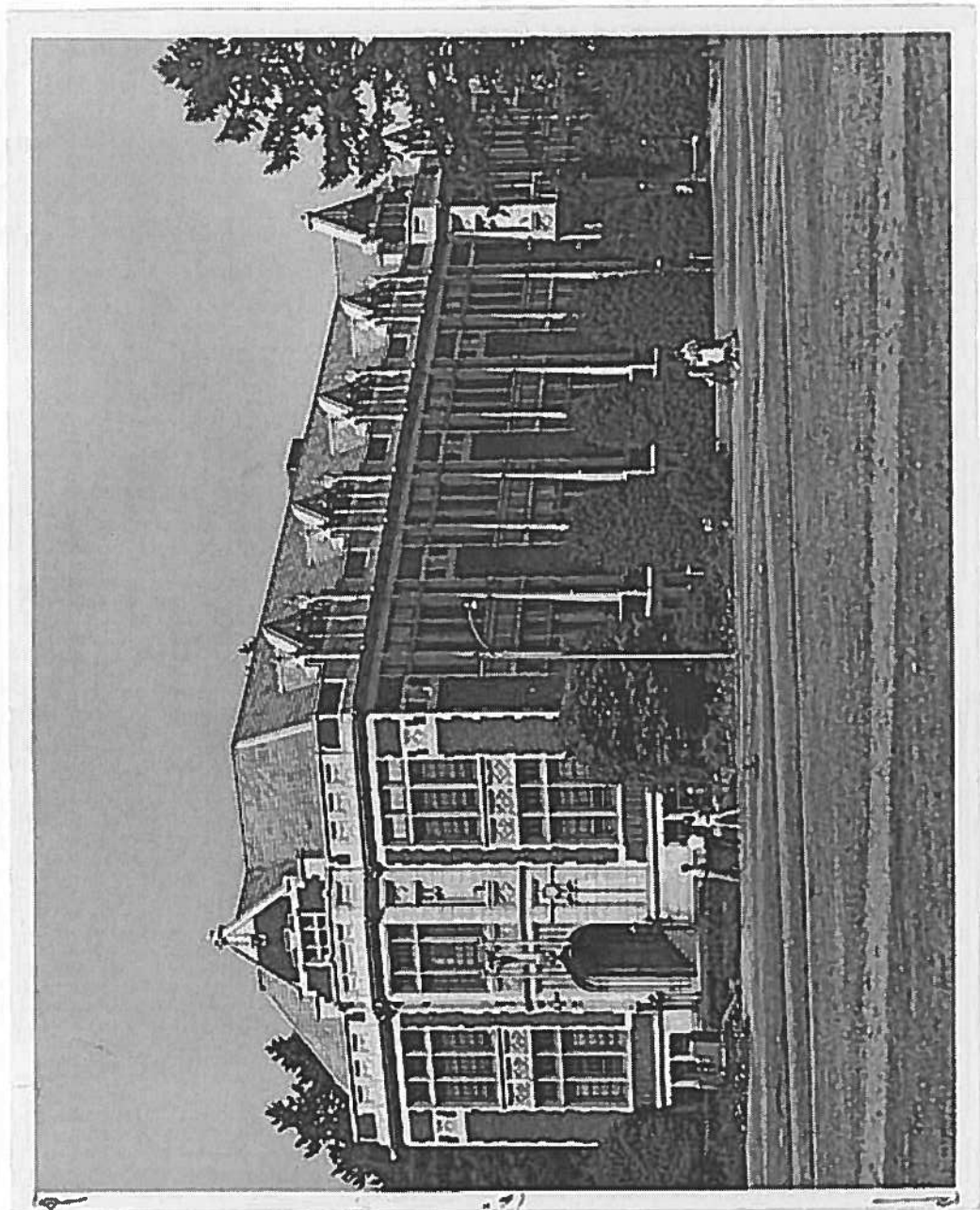
Home Economics Building exterior viewed from the west, University of Washington, ca. 1920



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RAITT HALL

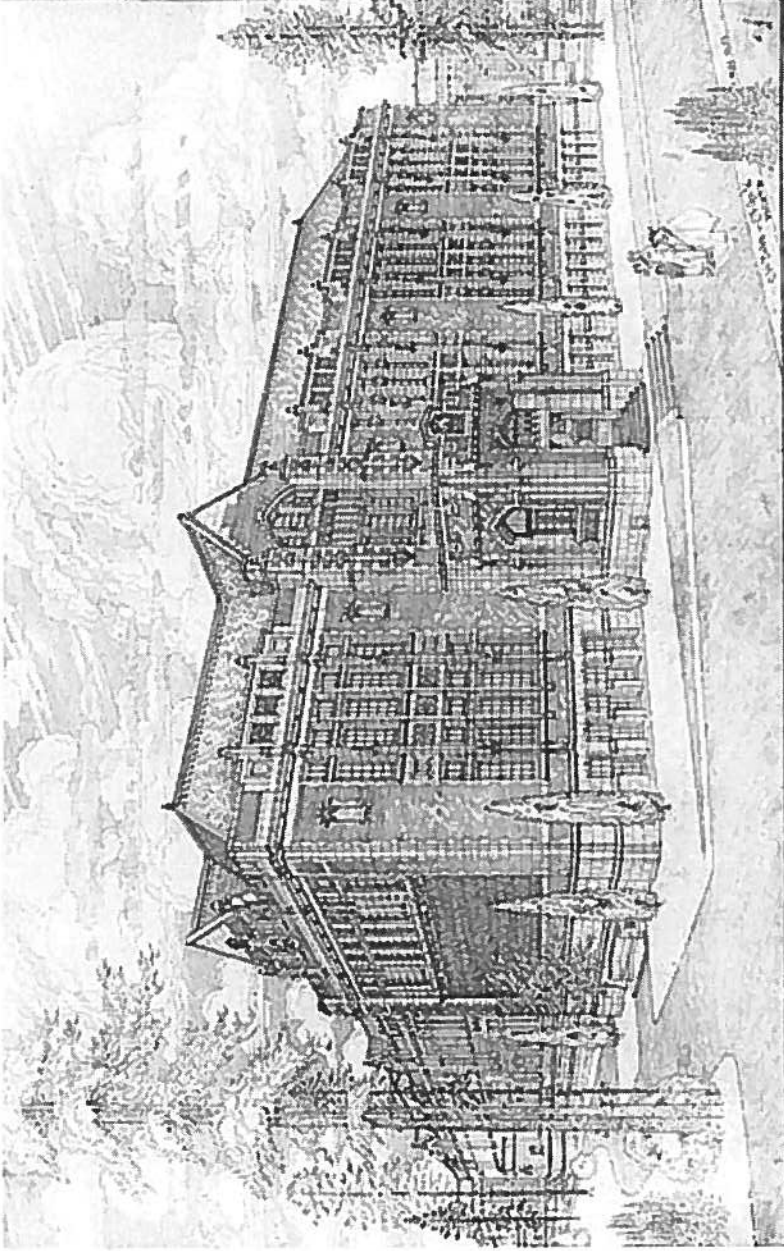
Raitt Hall taken from the southeast, University of Washington, ca. 1926



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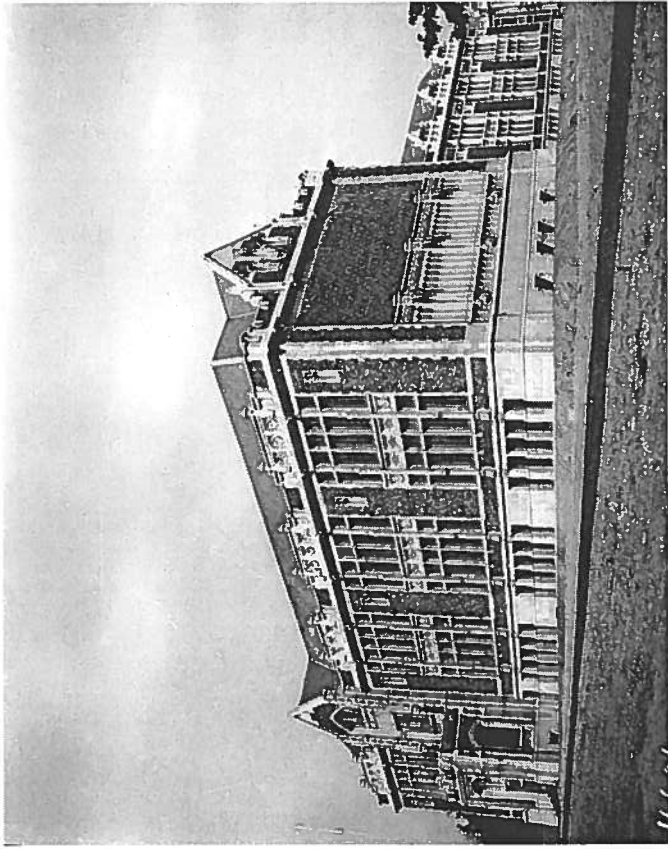
RAITT HALL

Raitt Hall taken from the south, University of Washington, August 22, 1958

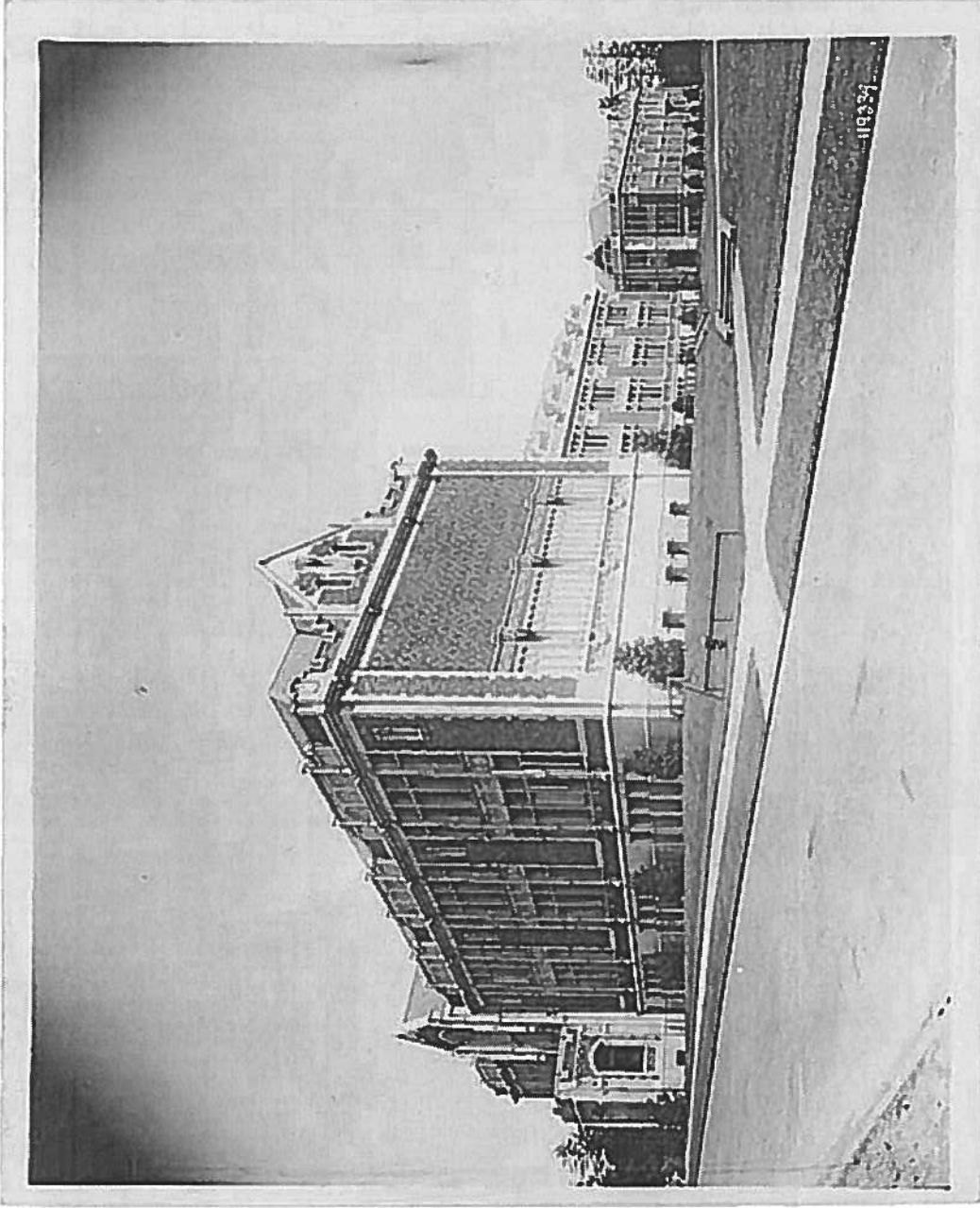


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SAVERY HALL
Philosophy Hall exterior, southwest entrance, University of Washington, 1919



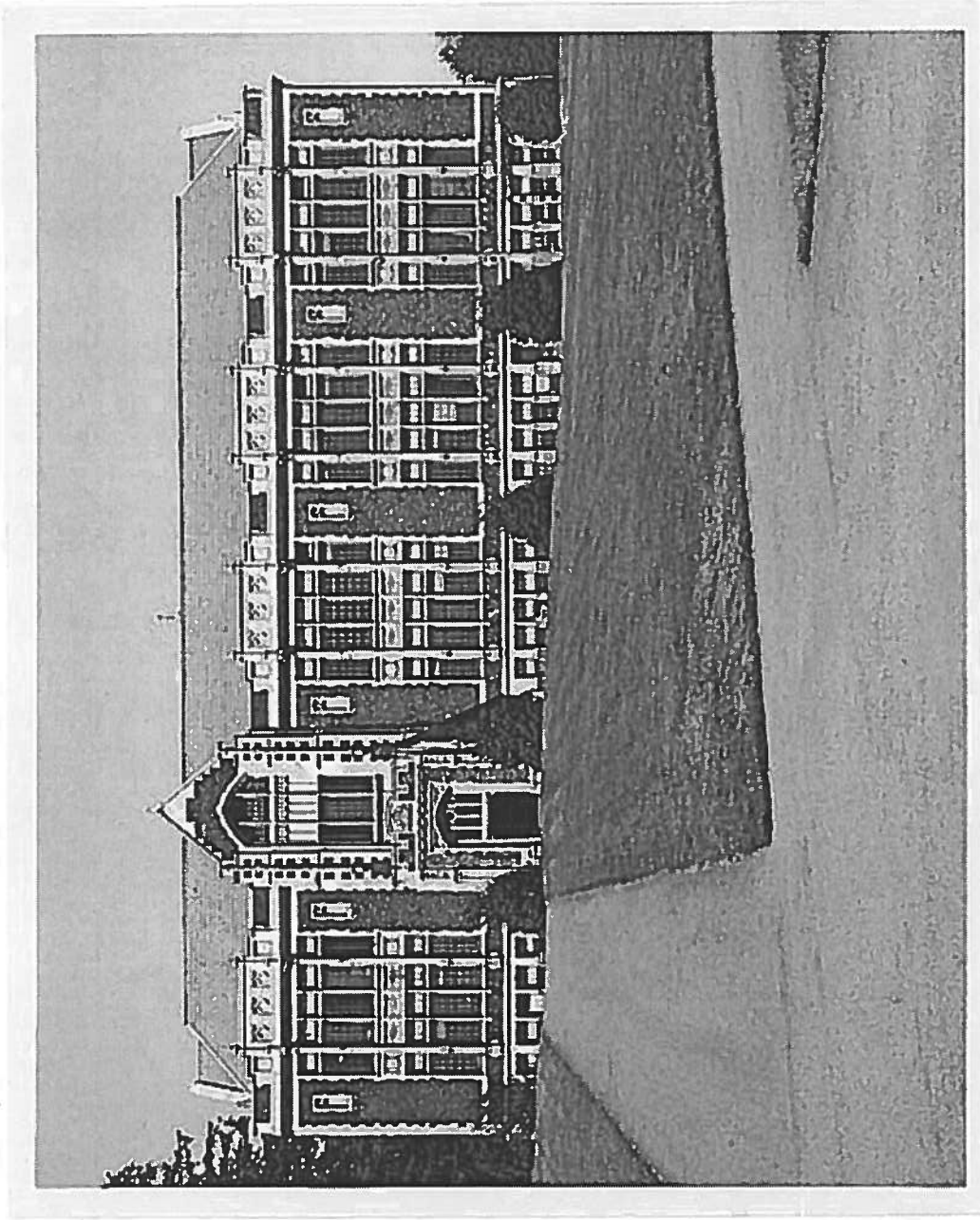
SAVERY HALL
Philosophy Hall, University of Washington campus, Seattle, 1922



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SAVERY HALL

Savery Hall taken from south, University of Washington, ca. 1926



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SAVERY HALL

Savery Hall showing southwest side, University of Washington, 1958