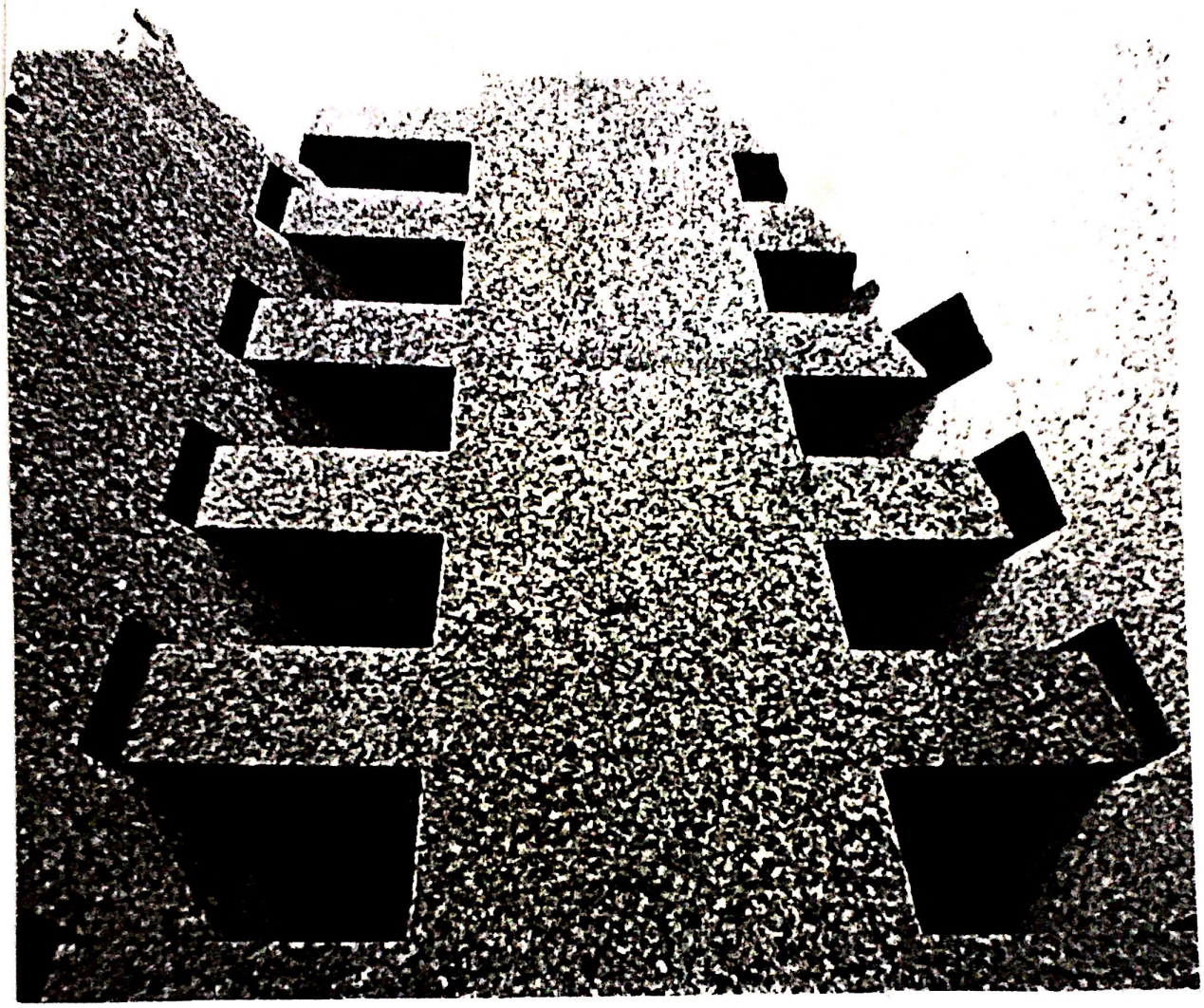
OU EXCELLENCE: A CLIMBER'S PERSPECTIVE

WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING

*Climbing on campus is **ILLEGAL** and can be extremely dangerous. **This guidebook is not a license to break the law nor is it intended to encourage climbing or any other life-risking activity which you may participate in.** If you get caught you **will** get a ticket or possibly detained!*
The following guide is intended for well-experienced and expert climbers ONLY who are willing to assume these risks and take full responsibility for their actions. Hence, this guidebook is only available to those who have participated in the printing costs and are fully aware of the inherent risk involved.
Furthermore:
*1) This is **not** an instructional guide. If you want to learn how to climb consult your local climbers club or store (while these may be hard to find in Oklahoma, they are out there.)*
2) Your safety is solely dependent upon a realistic assessment of your own climbing ability and the level of the climb or builder problem.
3) You are completely responsible for your own actions and your own safety.

The definition:
The word "buildering" is a derivation of the word "bouldering" coined by John Gill some 40 years ago. Bouldering is the act of climbing short rock sections including boulders and short cliff sections usually under 30 feet. Buildering then is the act of climbing short sections or "problems" on buildings. Buildering requires many of the same techniques as bouldering with a few twists.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This guide is dedicated to those climbers who have lived the legendary tales that drive us to push our own limits. Thanks for the encouragement.

INTRODUCTION

Climbing on the OU campus is not a recently invented idea. Since the 70s, and perhaps earlier, Oklahoma climbers have sought refuge from the flatlands and the mundaneness of campus life by seeking new heights on the surrounding buildings. Most every building on campus has been climbed to some extent. Dale Hall tower saw its first ascent some 20 years ago. And Hal Neimann wall has been a popular place to climb for as long as it has existed.

There is such a wide variety of climbs on the OU campus and each offers a unique variation on the techniques required to climb them. Chimneys, lie-backs and mantels are common moves on many builder-problems. Rather than finesse, many of the routes require raw strength and difficult balance. Most of the problems should be climbed in sneakers so that you can jump off safely. There are few crimpers or textured areas on the buildings, you will more likely find yourself pulling on sharp-edged brick holds smearing or dangling your feet. Exceptions to this are the ornate concrete bricks found on the

dorms, the OCCE Administration buildings, George Lynn Cross Hall, and the dorms.

Sometimes the techniques used to climb a particular route are unlike any rock climb and requires specific moves unique to that climb; for example: the balance problem up the white-wing wall on Ellsworth Collings Hall. Others are very much like a rock climb and apply similar skills, like the continuous crack climb in Owen Stadium and the protruding bricks on Hester Hall.

Buildering could never replace climbing but it does make a nice substitute for those days when you would like to be on the rock but simply can not be.

This guide provides information for many but not all of the buildering problems on the Norman Campus area with the addition of a few other places around Norman.

The art of stealth:

It is important to maintain a **low profile** status when climbing any building at any time. Most people have no idea what you are doing in those funny shoes with that little bag hanging off your butt so it scares some people to see others climbing up the face of a building. Many times the result of this is a call to the HEAT. Pick times when you know there will be less traffic on campus and choose areas that are not highly visible to others. If someone happens to see you climbing, be polite and smile, then at the first chance you get, hop down and bolt like lightning!

Season:

Semester-round.

Ratings:

Screw'um. If you care about ratings in buildering here's some for you: **easy** & **hard**. These may vary among individuals.

Risk Assessment:

While I do not believe in ratings for buildings I think it is important to realize the possible dangers involved in climbing a building. For this reason the following danger ratings have been applied:

S= reasonably safe---a spot should always be used to be extra careful.

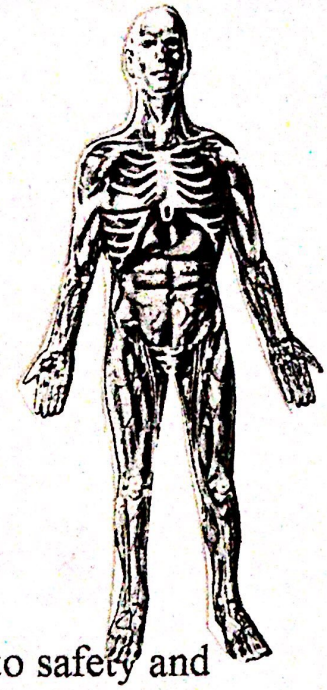
Ankle = a fall of about 10 feet; short builder problem.

Leg(s) = a fall of about 20 feet; long builder problem.

Neck = over 50 feet in height; a solo.

Obviously these ratings are purely artificial. There are many variations to this rating scale. For example it is possible to break a wrist along with an ankle. Or you could break a leg and an ankle and fracture your neck. What I'm saying is there are infinite combinations of breakage, you should keep in mind that you can be severely hurt even at very low heights. For this reason it is best to always have a spot and don't be too stupid.

Meet the Mr. Visible Man...



he is here to guide you on your way to safety and knowledge...pay close attention to him before each route description; he is a good indication of what could happen to you...be aware of the dangers.

Descents:

Descents are not given in the route description. There are various ways to get down: trees, jumping, down-climbing, doors, ladders, stairs, elevators....make sure you know your way down before you go up.

Ethics:

Issue 1) Chalk- use it if you want.
Issue 2) Pitons/Bolts- probably not a good idea to have fixed placements on university buildings.
Issue 3) Defacement of private property- make sure this NEVER becomes an issue. And, if you pull out a brick on accident, certainly don't tell anyone about it (unless it makes a cool problem).

Access:

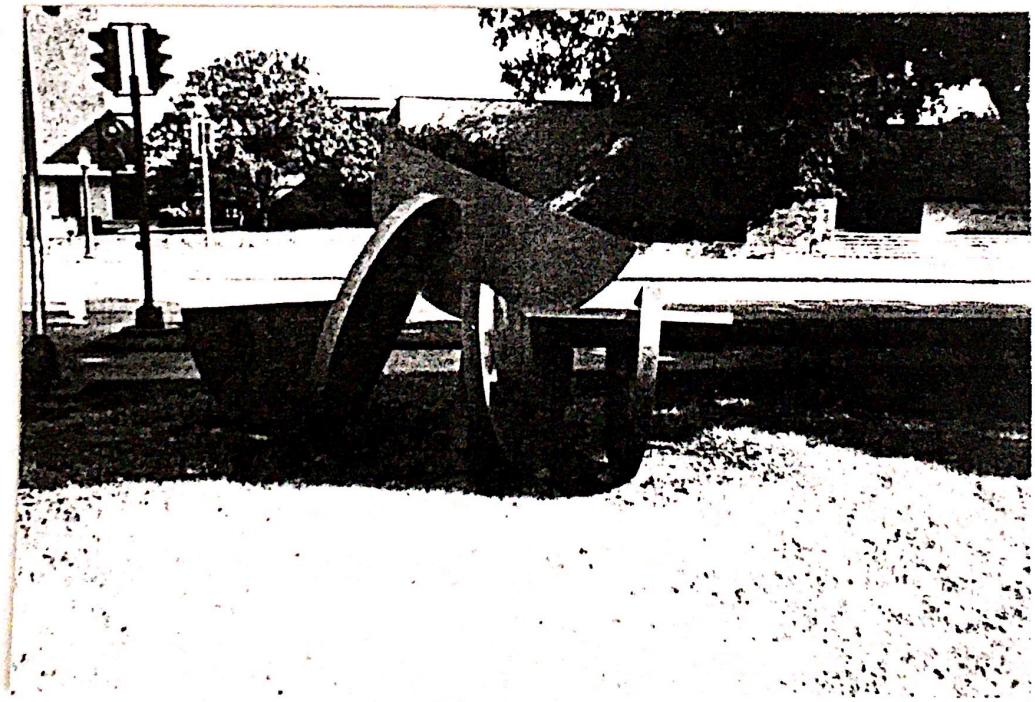
Essentially none.

Flora and Fauna:

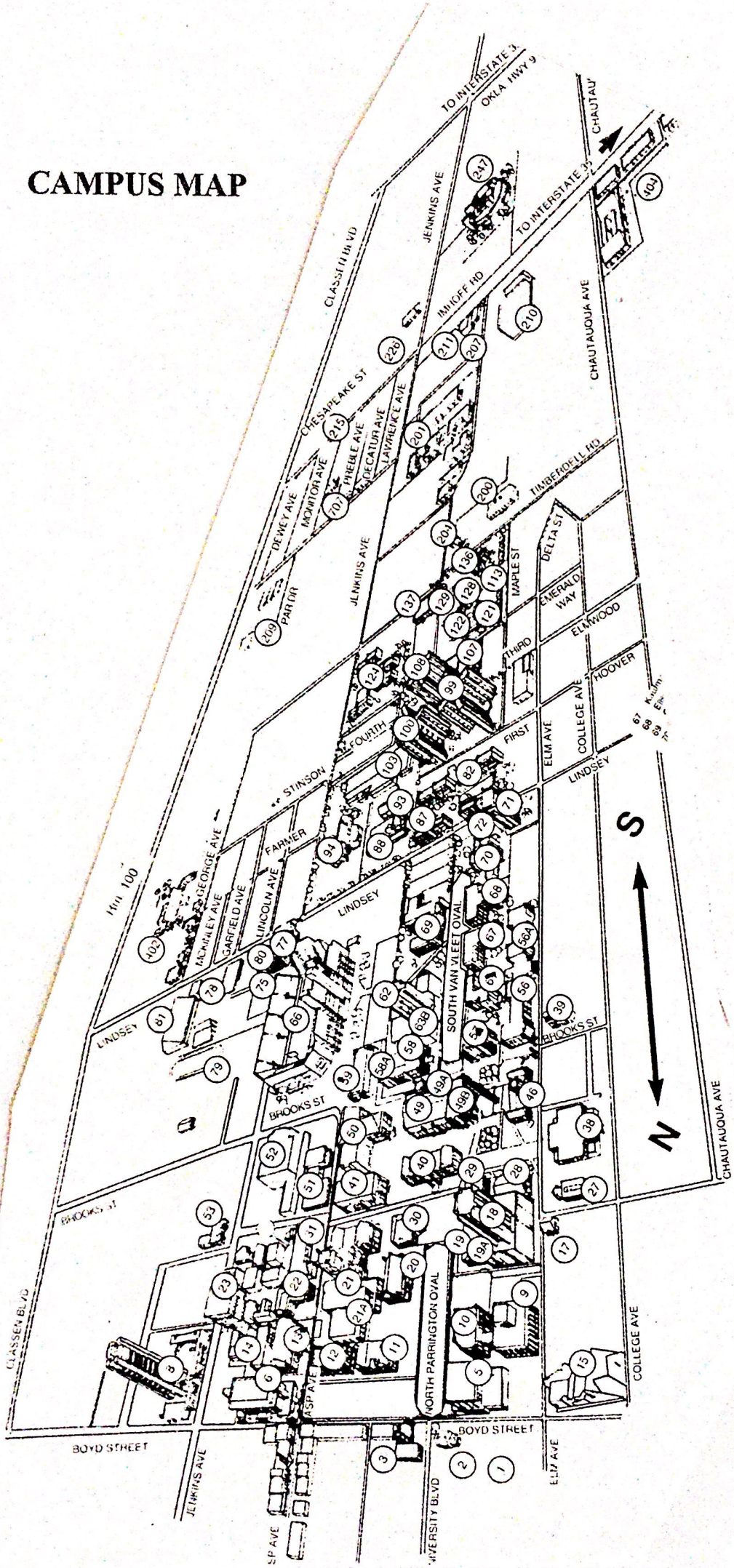
At any time you may encounter bird feces on any building...just beware.

Food:

After a long day of campus climbing retire to the luxury of the Union and feast at one of their many fine establishments...or just go home and eat raman noodles.



CAMPUS MAP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CHAUTAUQUA
JENKINS AVE
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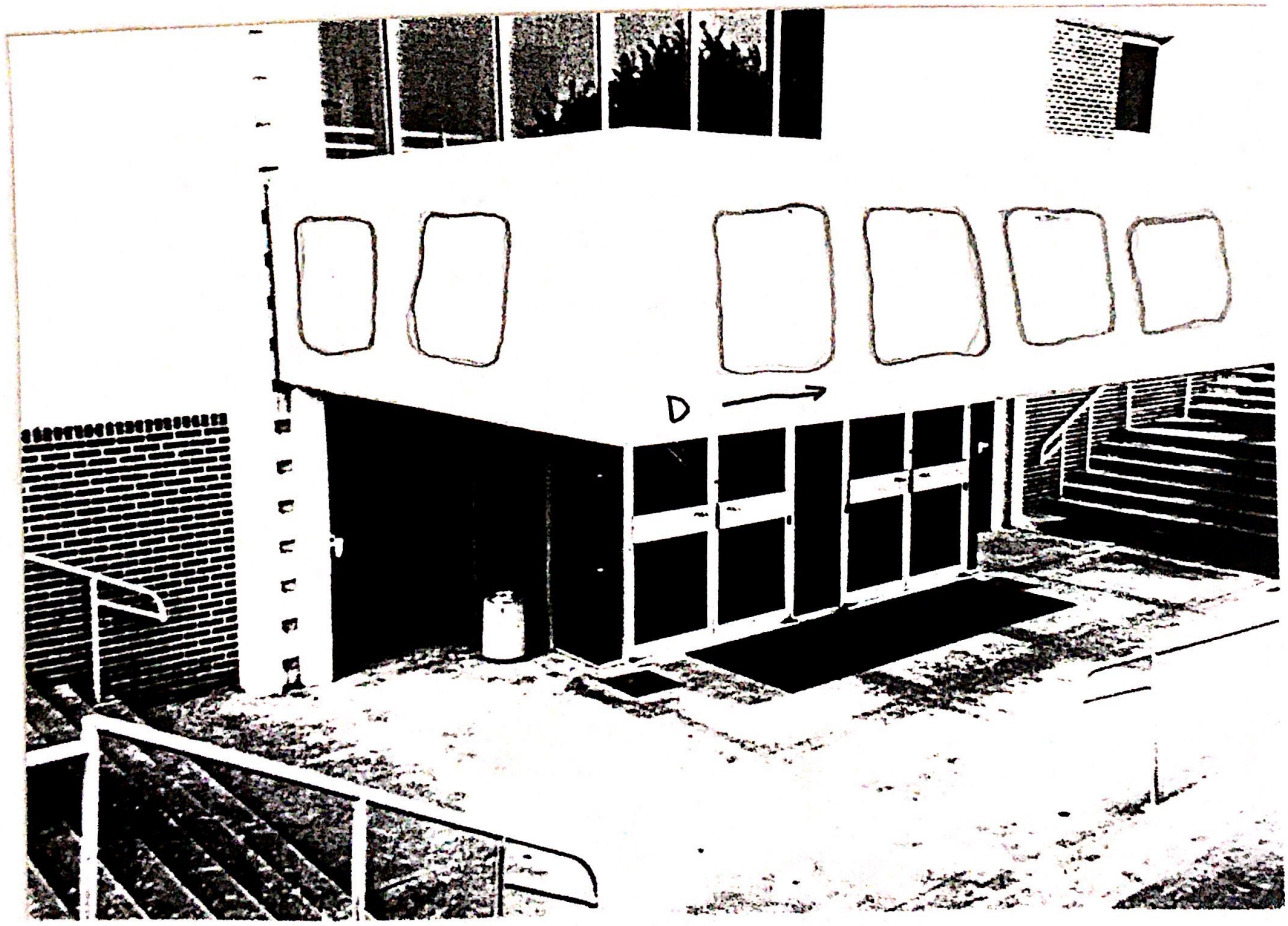
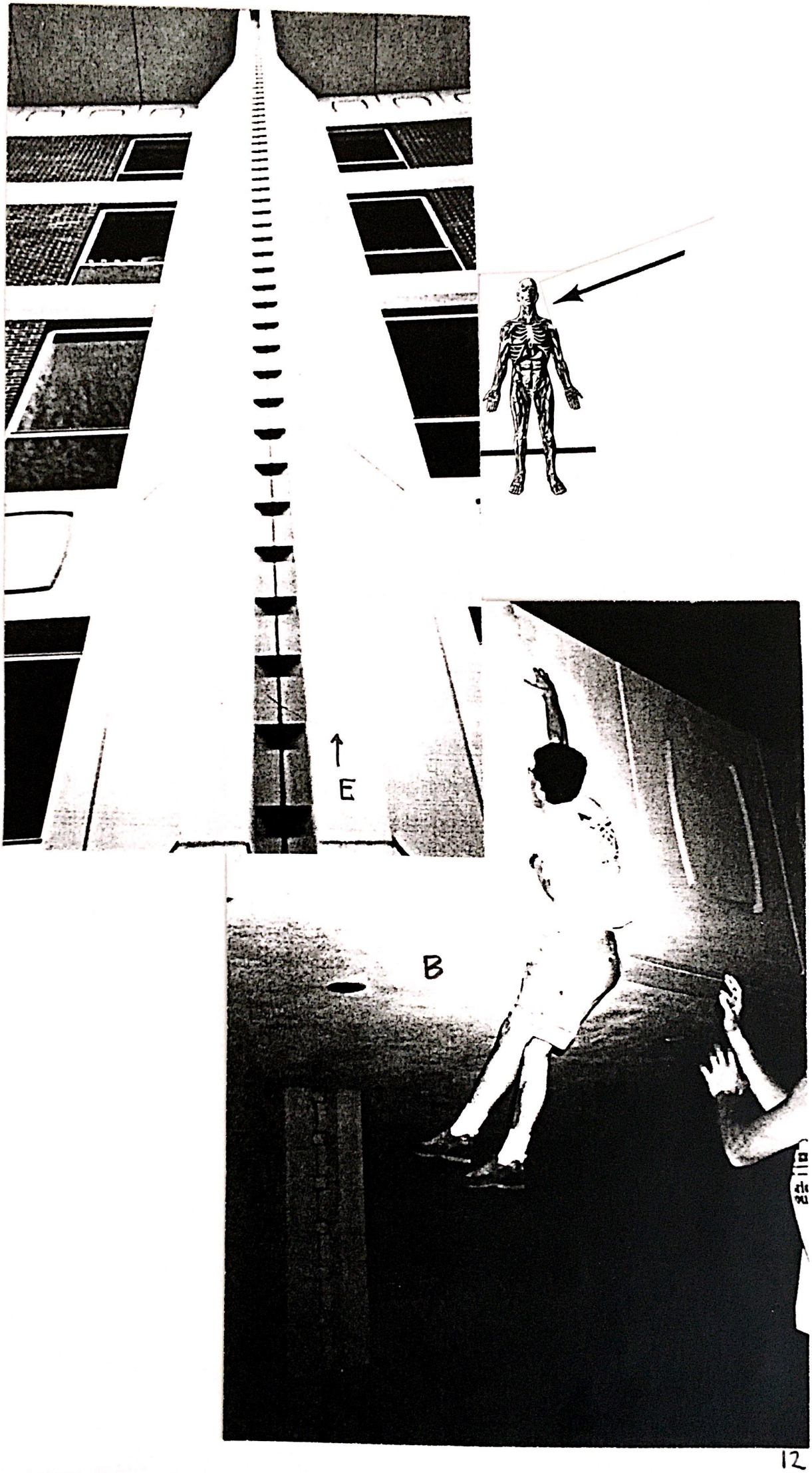
LAWRENCE AVE
CHAUTAUQUA AVE
TIMBERDELL RD
DELTA ST
MAPLE ST
EMERALD WAY
ELMWOOD
PARTLOW
THIRD
HOOVER
FOURTH
FIRST
ELM AVE
COLLEGE AVE
STINSON
LINDSEY
FARMER
GEORGE AVE
McKINLEY AVE
GARFIELD AVE
LINCOLN AVE
Hill 100
SOUTH VAN VLEET OVAL
BROOKS ST
NORTH PARRINGTON OVAL
BOYD STREET
JENKINS AVE
UNIVERSITY BLVD
S
N

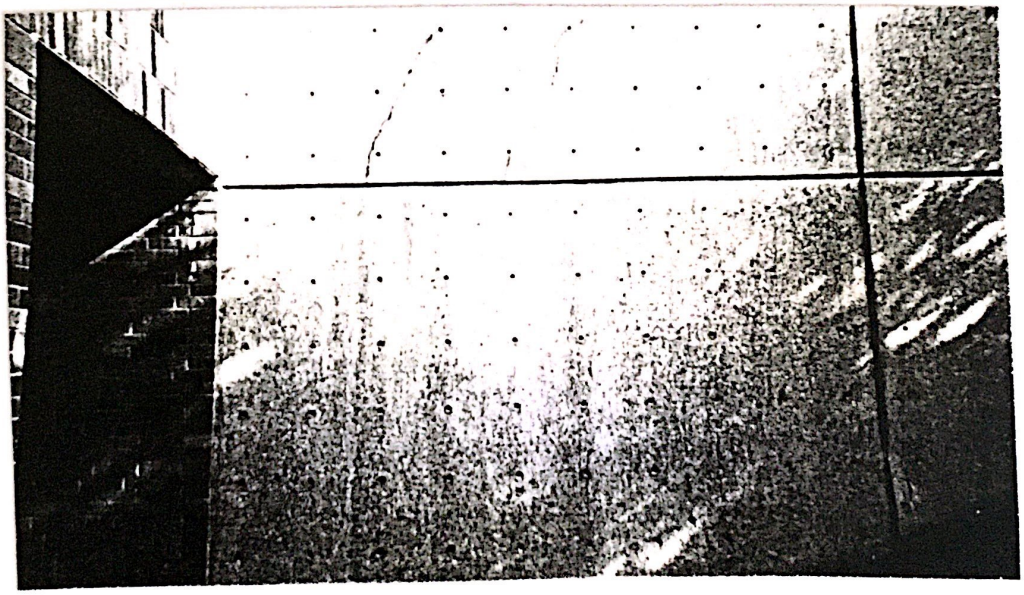
Areas covered:

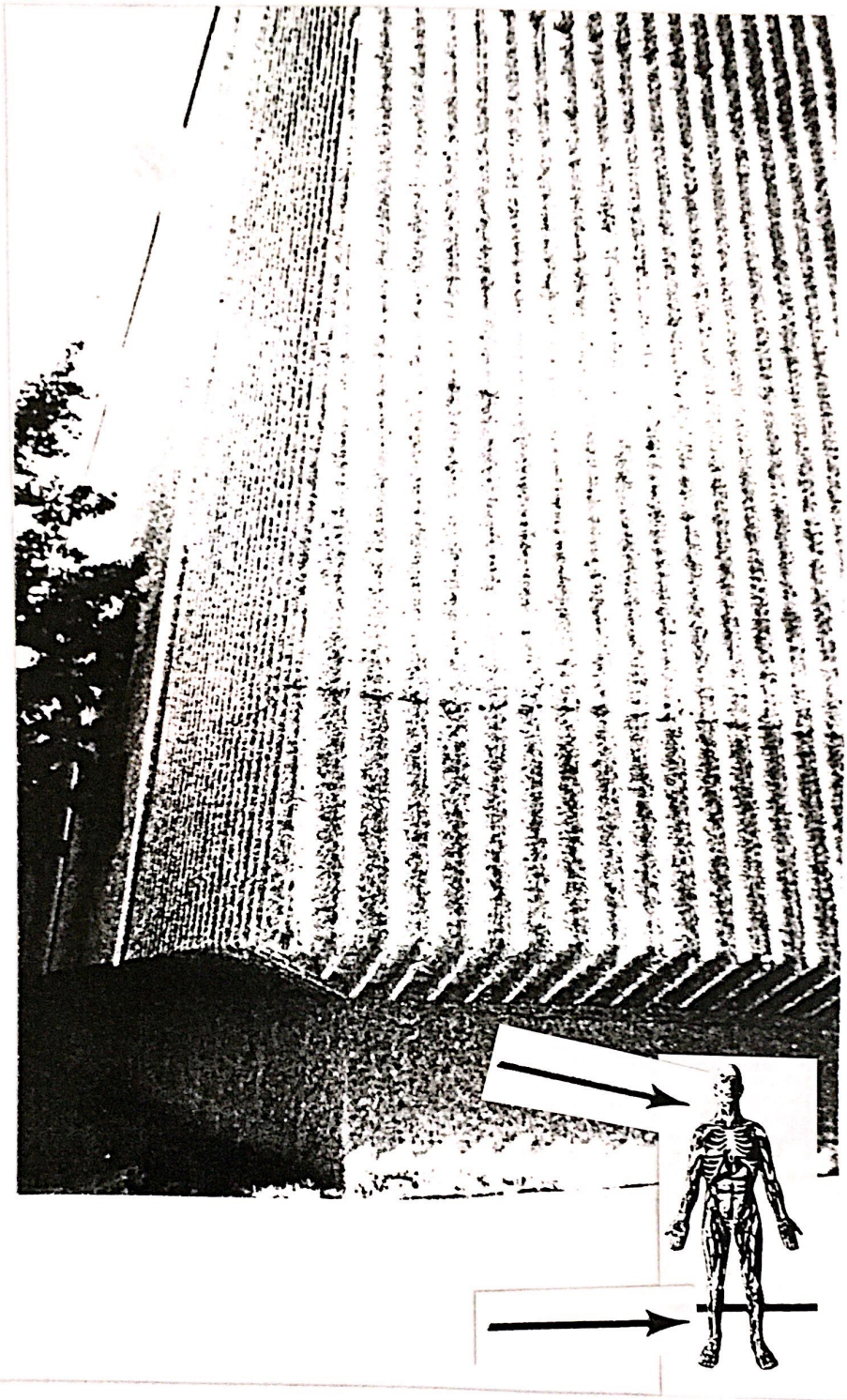
6. **Carson Engineering Center:** What makes this building so cool are the rectangular-like engravements that line the roof over the entrances to the North and South ends. These provide powerful no-feet edge traverses and a massive dyno move spanning over three feet!
A) (S) On south side. Climb directly up the three rectangular engravements to a metal lip.
B) (S) The DYNO: On south side (or north side). Jump to first edge and power up to the next edge. Match and grab the top.
C) (S) South-side traverse. Start by standing on the small brick wall at the top of the stairs. Grab the bottom edge of the first engravement and traverse across to the other brick wall.
D) (S) On the north side. Jump to the first engravement and traverse across all 7 without feet. E) (Neck) Climb directly up one of the line of bricks.




E
B

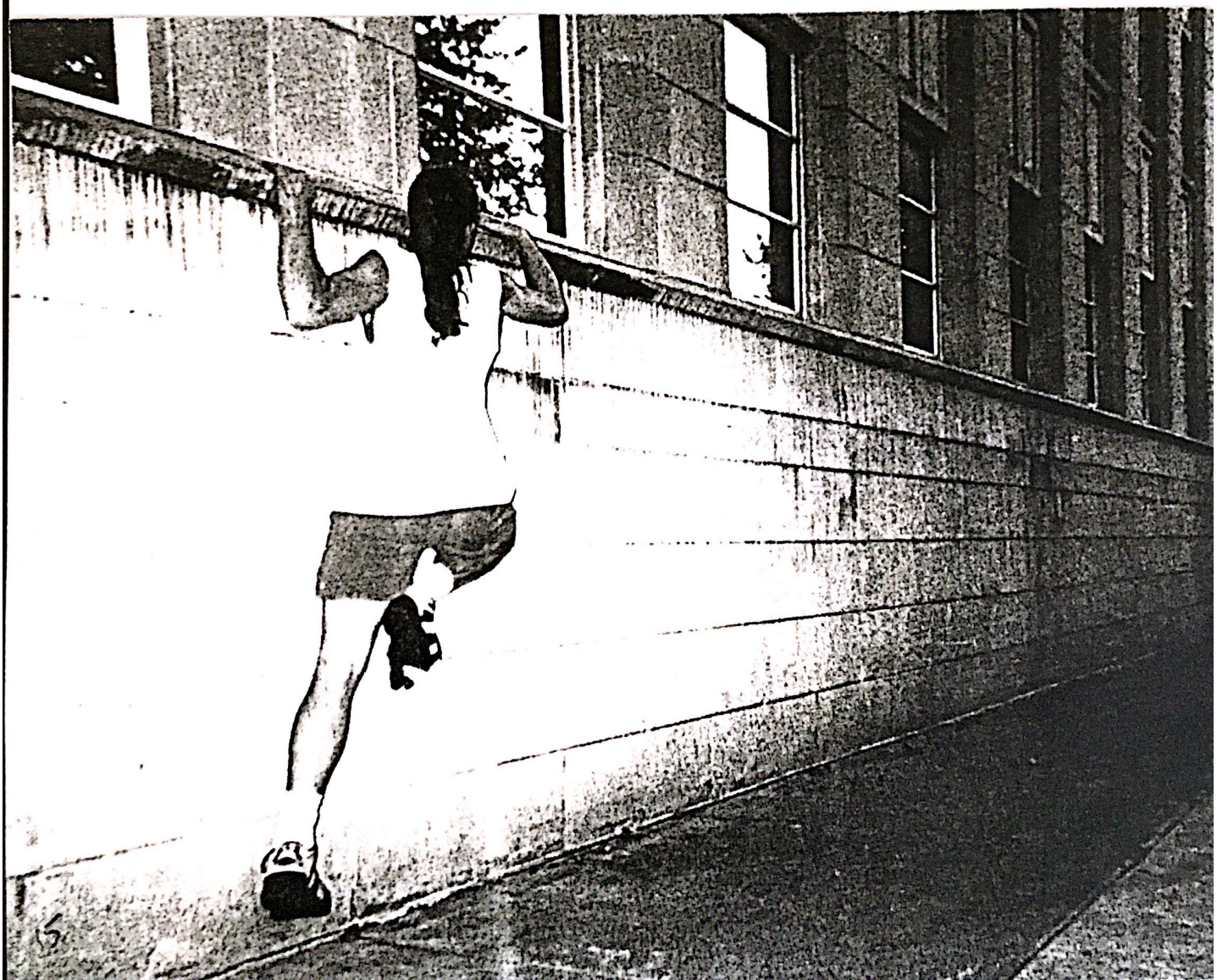
8. **Sarkey's Energy Center:** (S) Difficult climbing on various concrete walls. Climb the mono pockets to the top of the wall or use the edge in between.

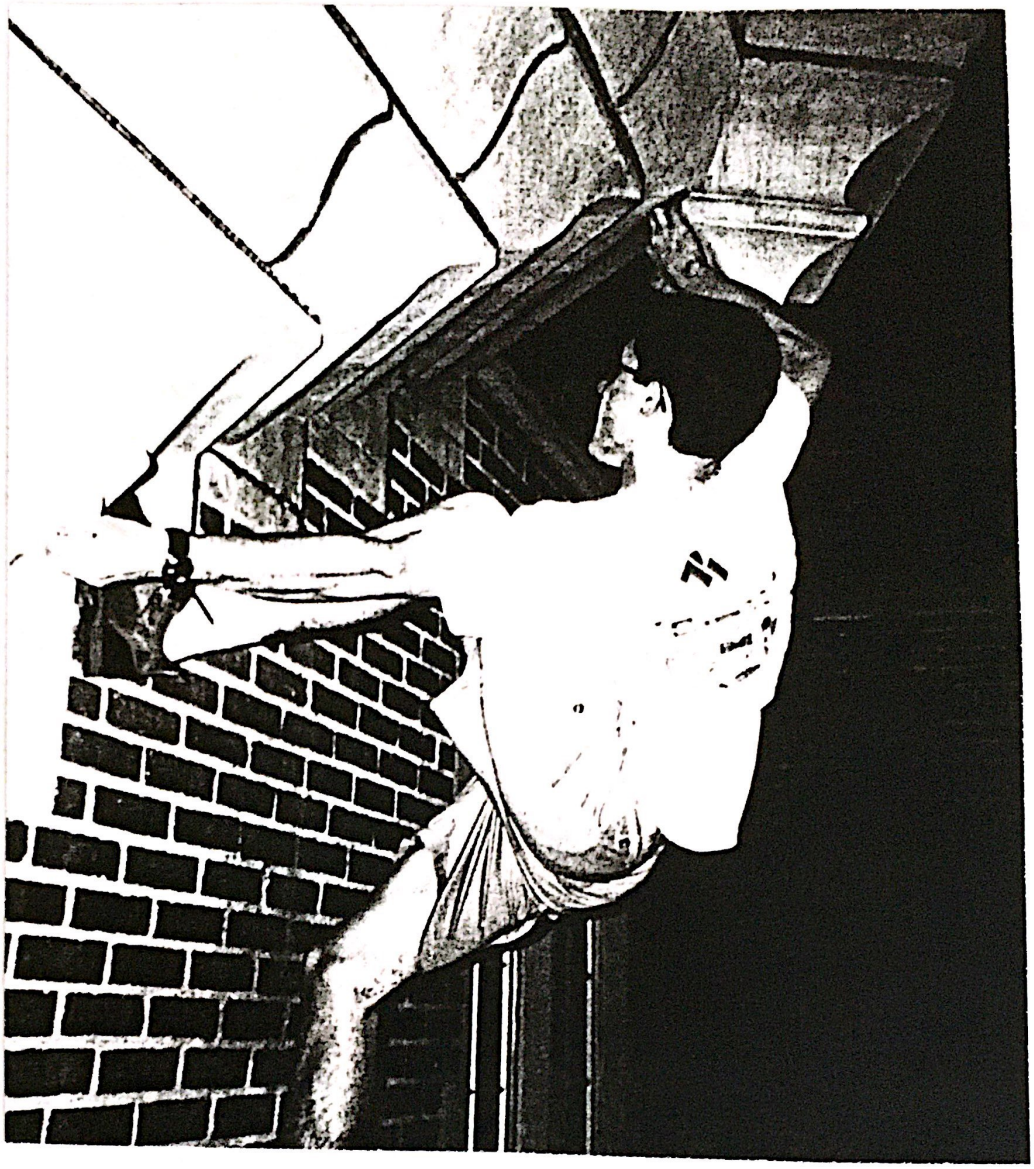




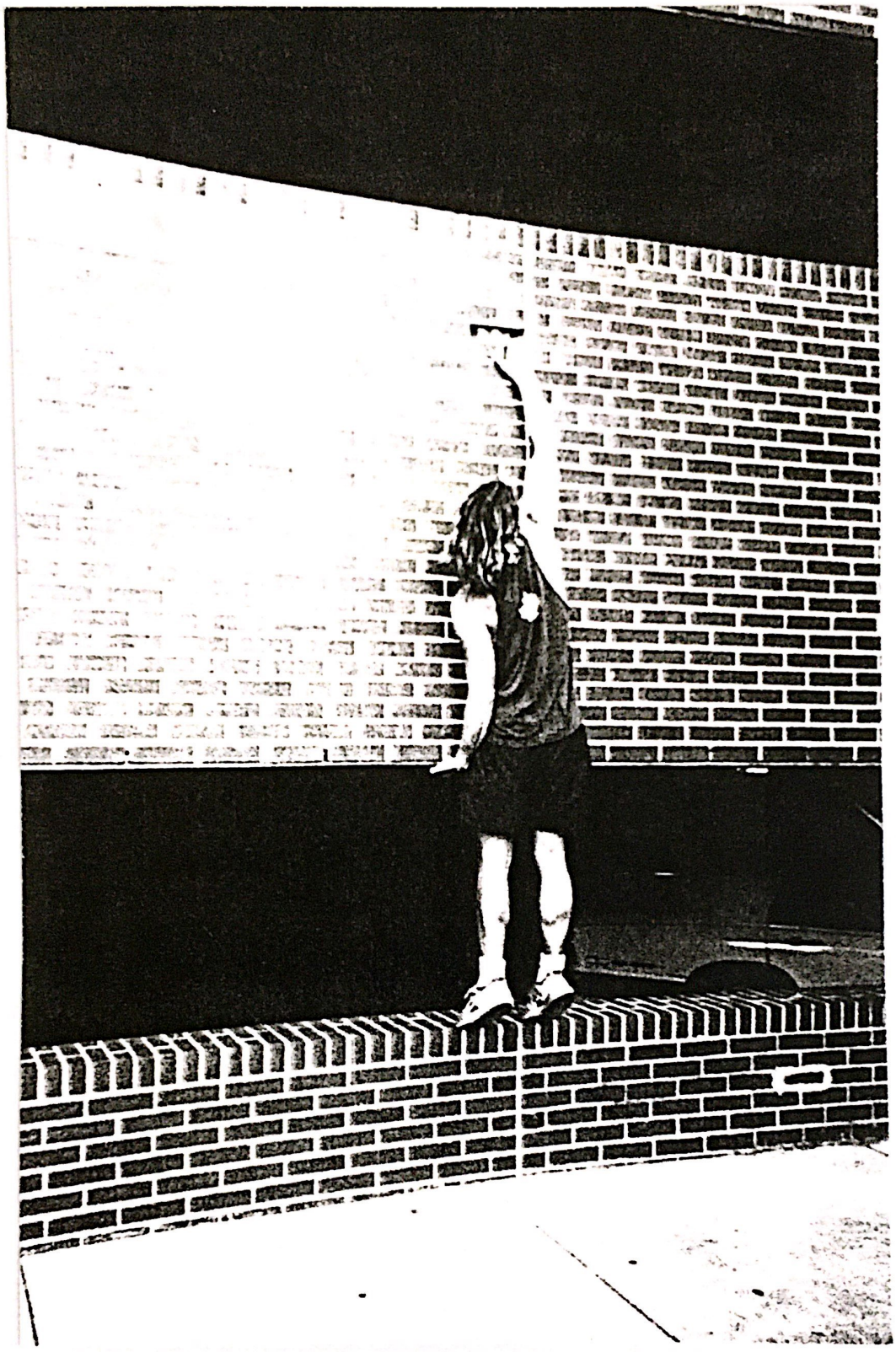
18. Physical Science Center: (Ankle-Neck) I've heard stories of one person who has climbed this; (DR). I don't know if it's true or not. This climb is quite a feat. The southwest corner of the building looks to be the most likely line...but who really knows? (Ideally a top-rope should be set up on this...someone should look into that.)

20. **Monnet Hall:** (S) Ten-windows traverse. Start at the south end of the west side. Traverse north beneath ten windows on slopey window sills. Let me give you a hint on the sequence: slap, slap, iron cross, slap, slap, iron cross, slap, slap, iron cross.....oh, and don't forget to smear your feet.





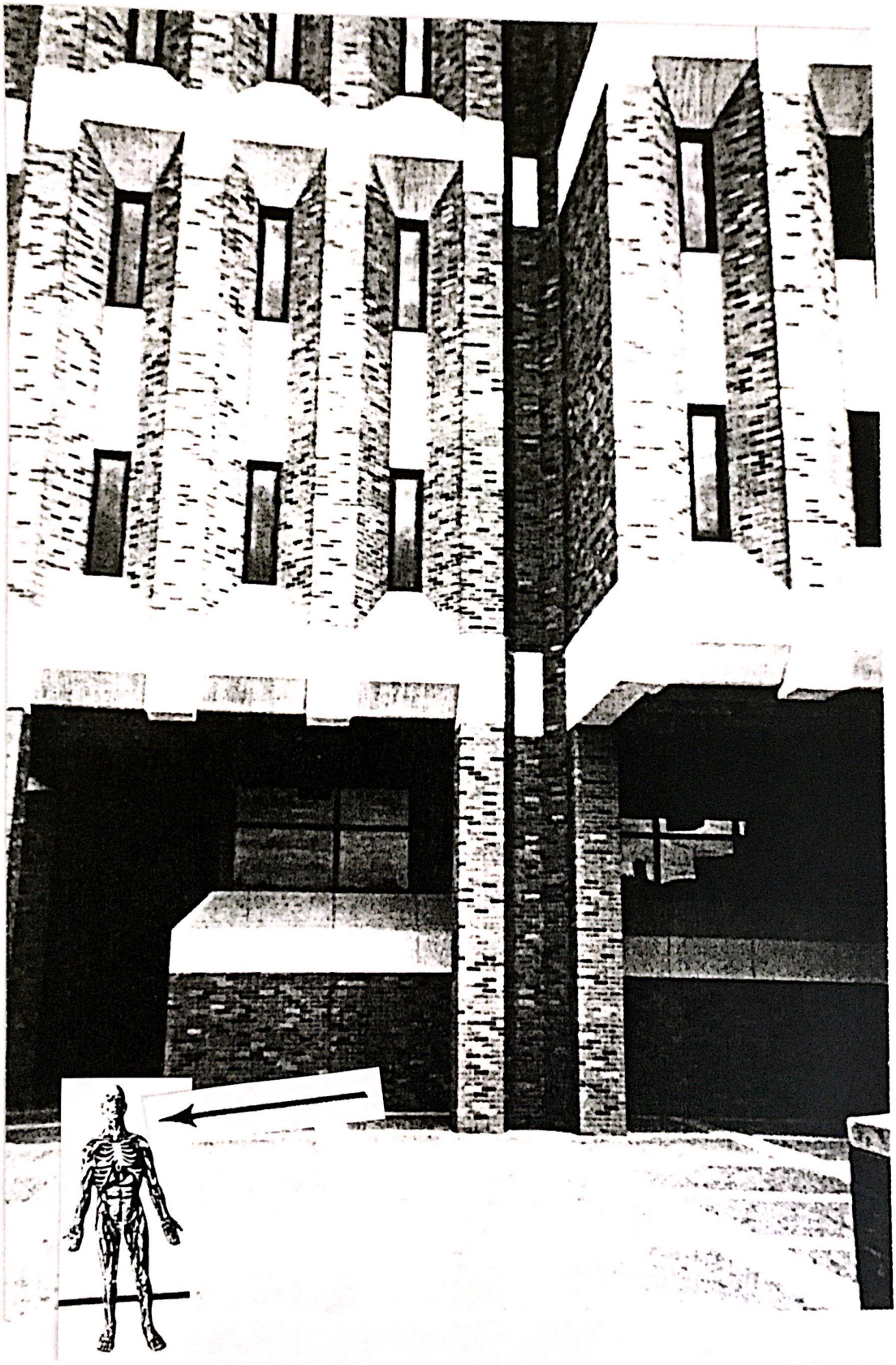
21. **The Student Union:** (S) On the east and west side of the Union are windows with wonderful concrete sculpturing. Traverse these from one end to the other. Or you can start directly underneath the window and reach out to the stalactite-like concrete piece, match on that, and pull up to the edge beneath the window. Several other variations exist...be creative.



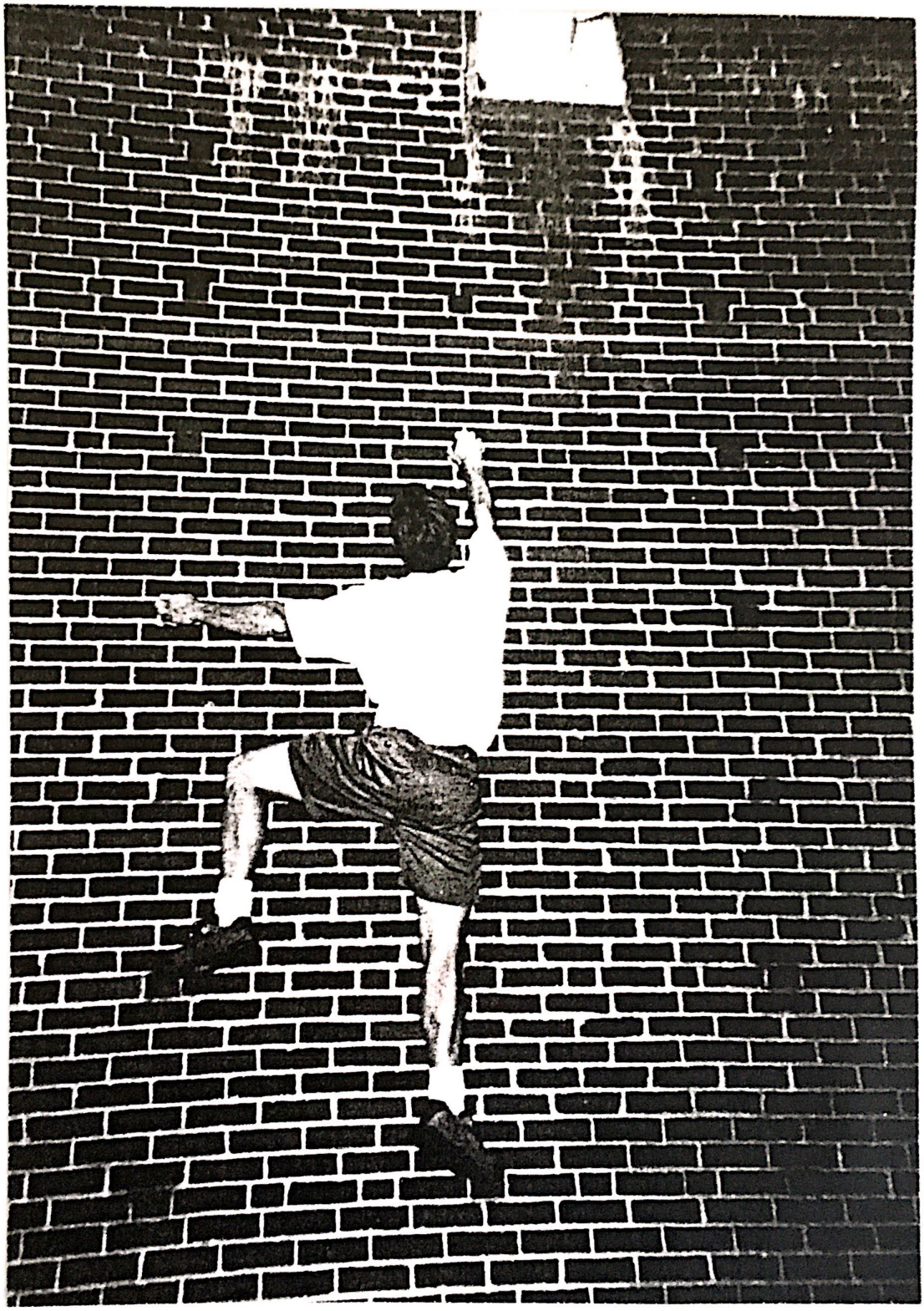
21A. **Parking Garage:** (S) The missing brick problem: A favorite for all. Undercling the small edge under the roof and reach to the missing brick hold. Match on this and reach to the top. Mantel up.

27. **Burton Hall:** (Legs) West side. Lie-back up the 25 foot wall to the small roof at the top. Two variations to this problem: one requires a longer reach out to the roof. South side. Climb up the slightly overhanging wall in between the windows.

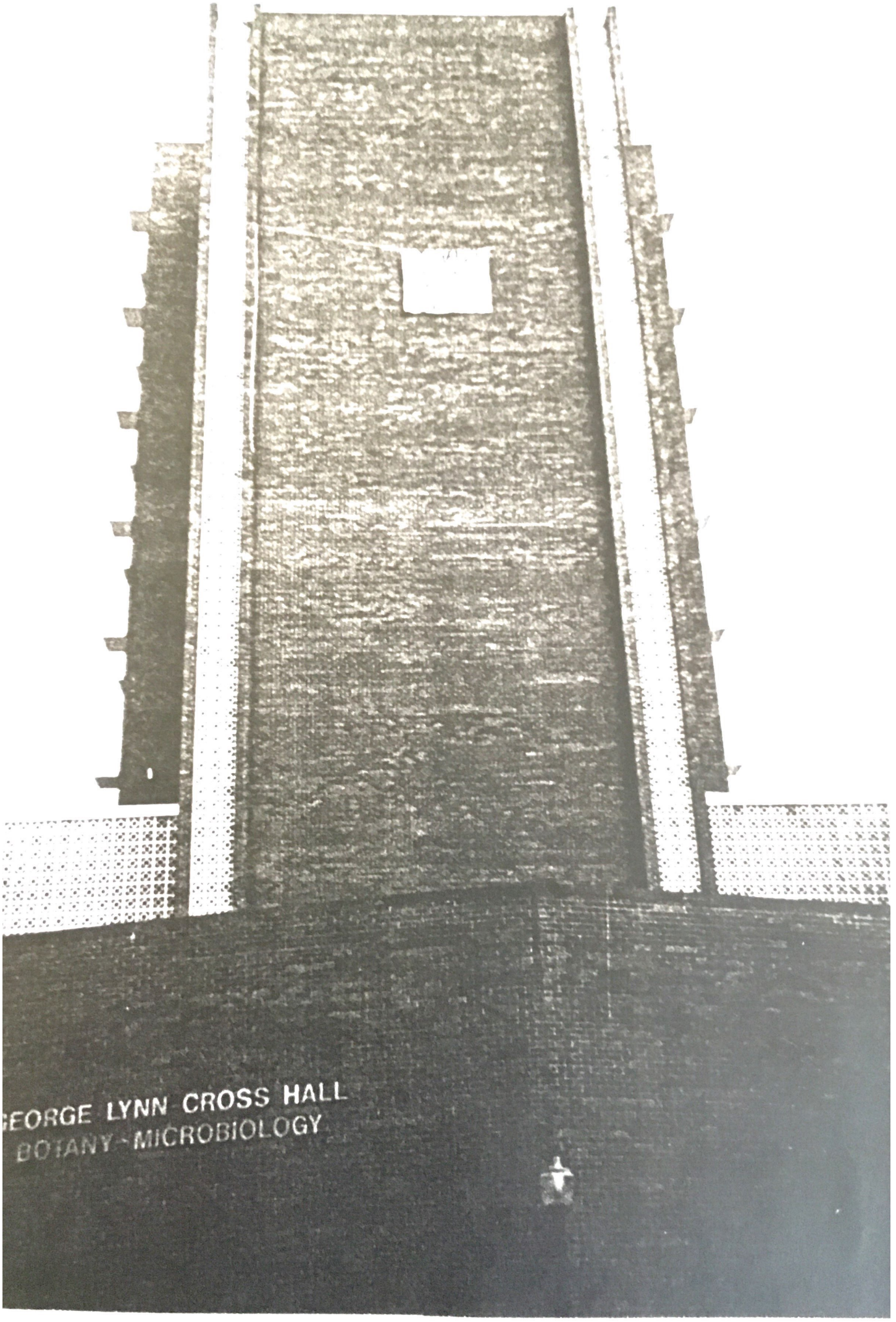
49. **Bizzell Library:** (Ankle-Neck)
Chimney up any one of the
chute-like pillars. Remember..
if you chimney up
you have to chimney
down.



56. **Hester Hall:** West side, north of bookstore. A.(Ankle) Climb the protruding bricks to the top, diagonally, or sideways. Good practice for newbies to the world of climbing and buildering.
B. (Ankle) Climb the corner of this wall up the three concrete slopers to the top.

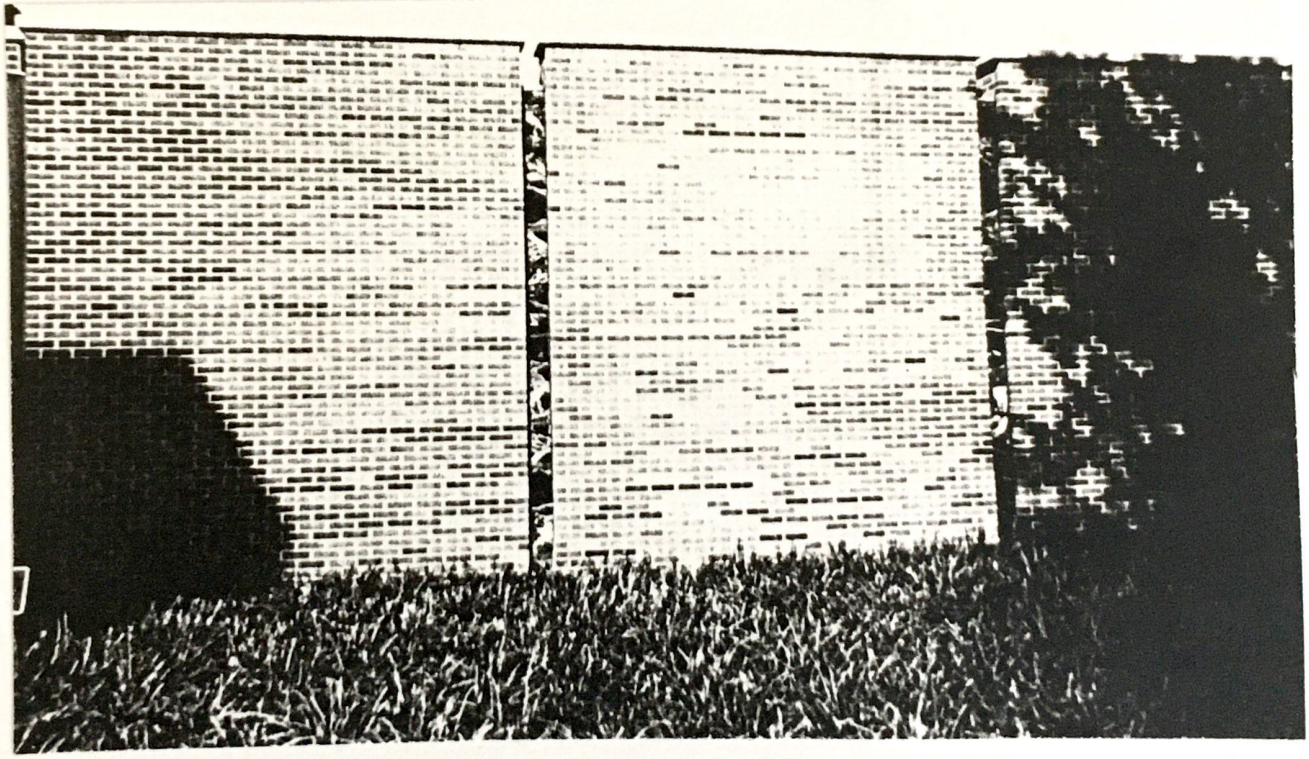


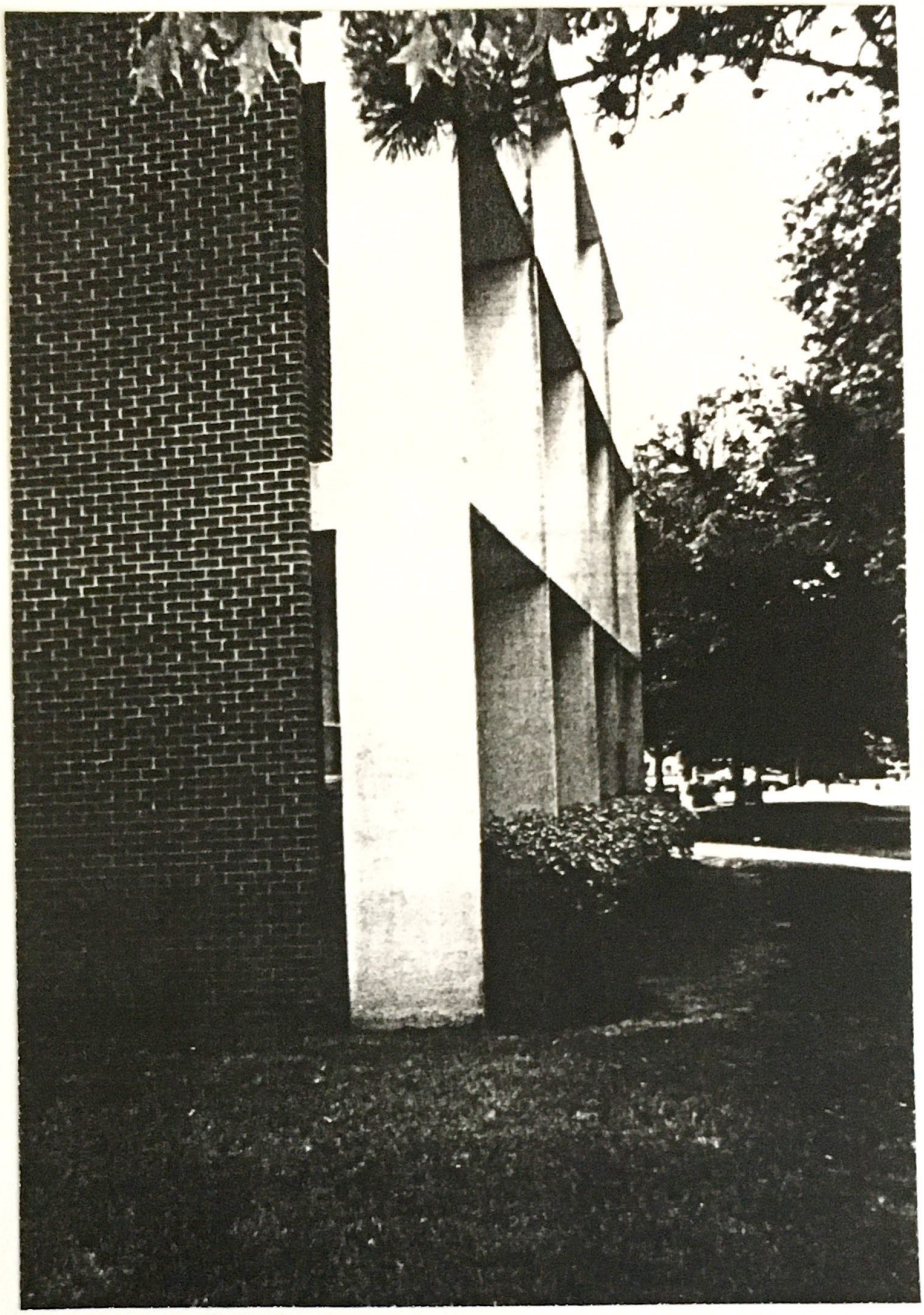
62. **George Lynn Cross Hall:** (S = Can be protected using slings.) Chimney up over one of the exit doorways to the base of the tower. Climb the awesome concrete bricks to the top. Watch out for nesting birds.


EORGE LYNN CROSS HALL
BOTANY-MICROBIOLOGY

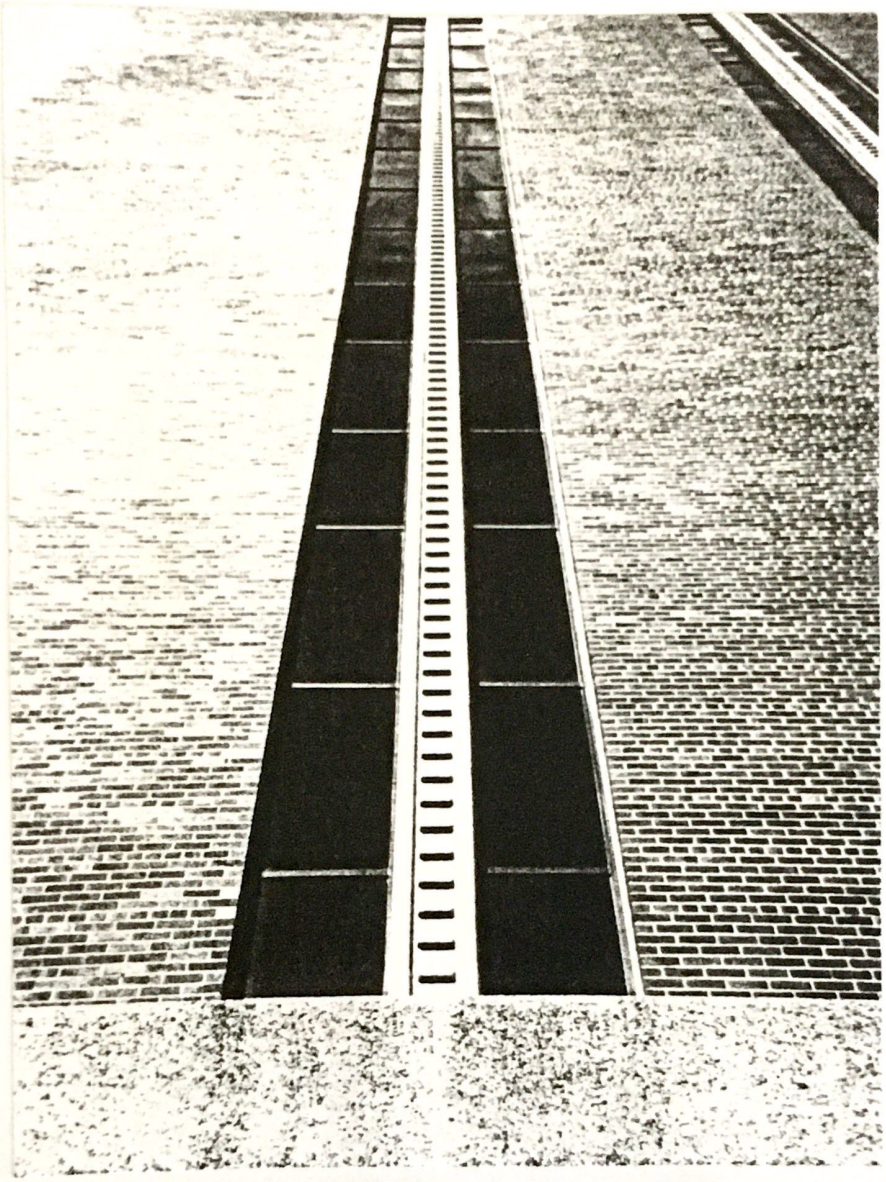
66. **Owen Field:** (S= protectable with cams or top belay.) From the West side of Owen field look just below and to the right of the press box and you will see evidence of climbers past; a white sling around a horizontal concrete support. Follow the sustained hand crack up to the base of the press box.

68. **Ellsworth Collings Hall:** (Ankle) Climb the outside of the white fin-like wall on the north end. The ultimate in testing your anti-barndoor technique.

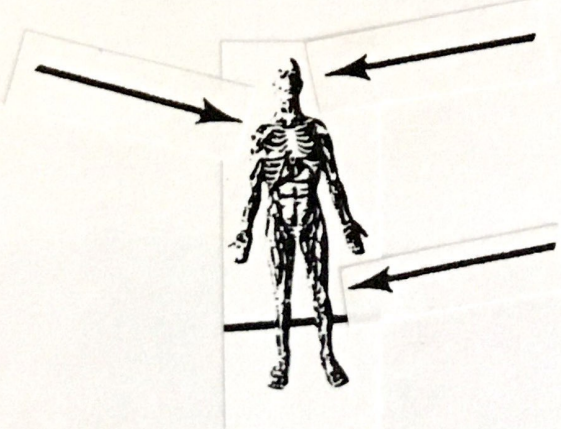




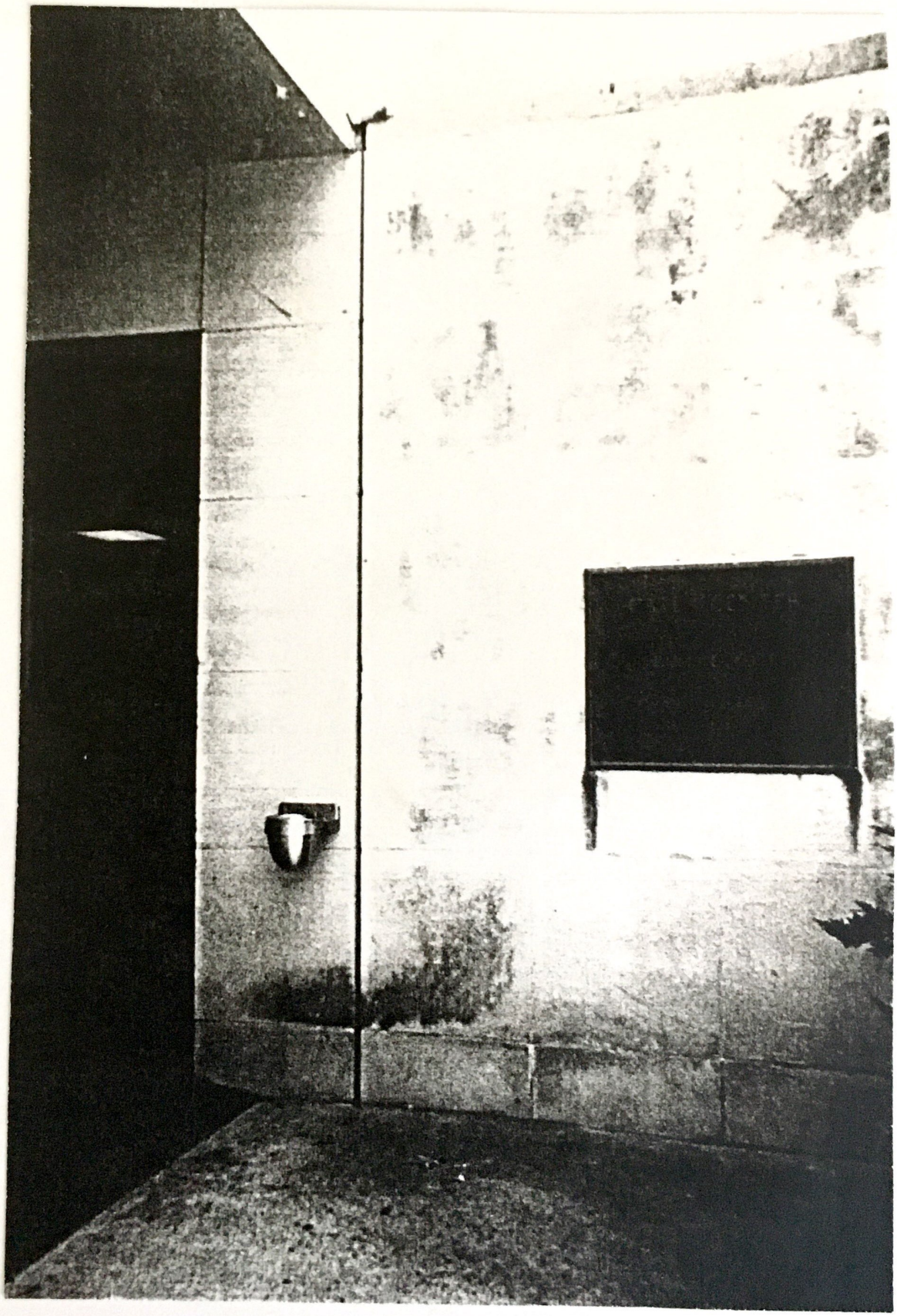
70. **Copeland Hall:** (Ankle) Two vertical edge 7 inches apart go directly up a brick wall. Walk your hands up one edge and your feet up the facing edge. An easier variations exists in the corner where you have an entire wall to smear your feet up.



71. **Dale Hall:** (Neck) Climb the long series of horizontal bricks to the top. Enough said.

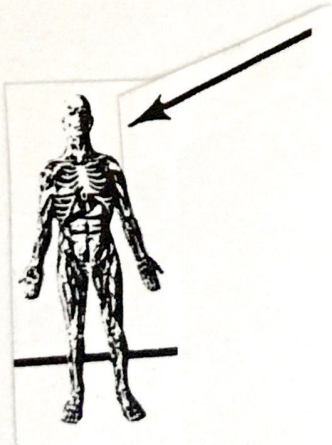


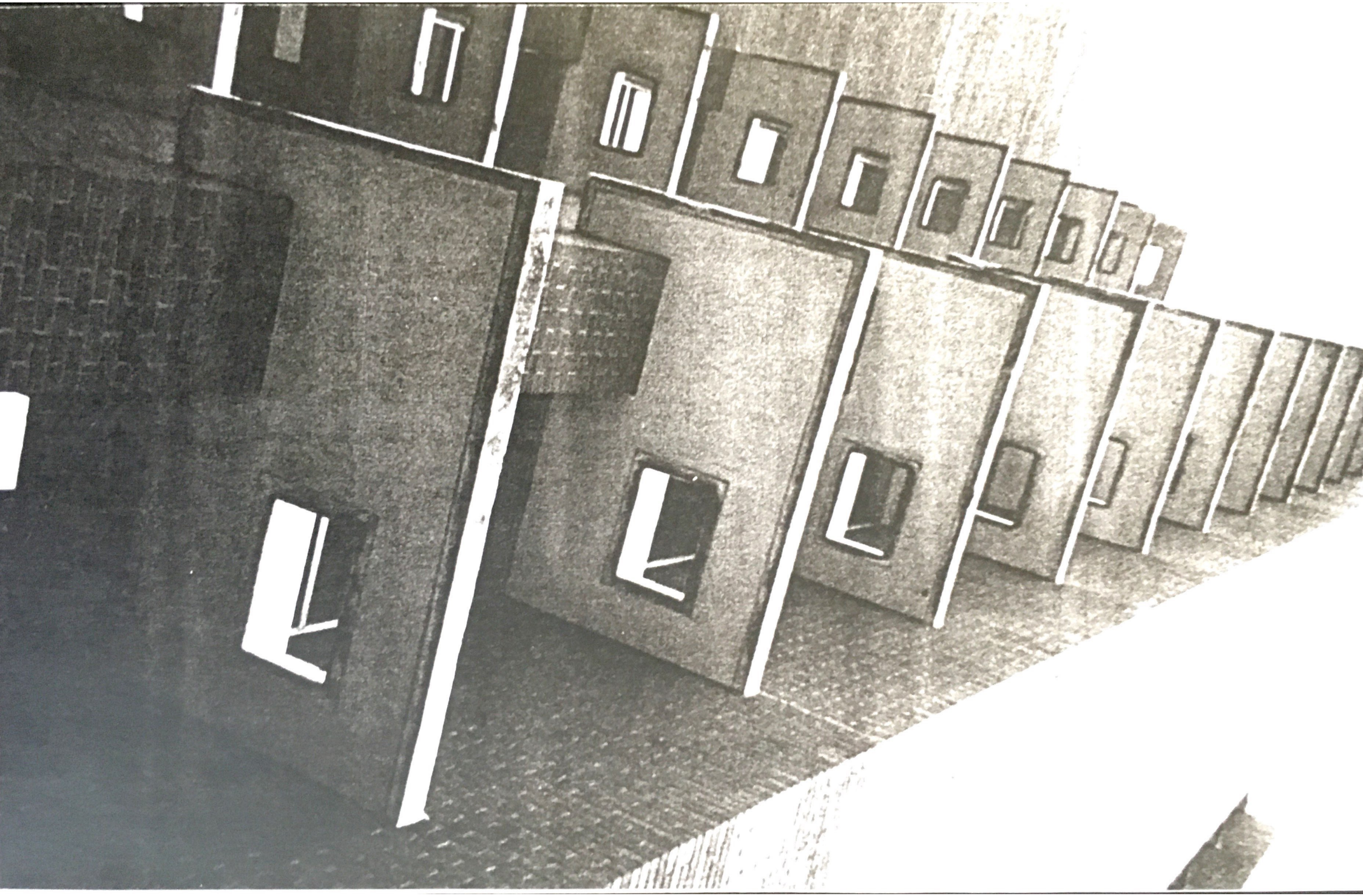
82. **Cate Cener:** (S) North side. Probably the best and most difficult crack on campus. A finger width crack splits a blank concrete wall and narrows at the top (ashtray to the left is *strictly* off). This requires strong fingers and tiny toes. A truly awesome problem and my personal favorite.
Also on the North side: Window sill problem possibly requiring a heel hook and dyno.



87. **Honors dorms:** A. (Legs) Climb the white ledges to the top. Simple sequence of jumping, and manteling, however this does not mean that it is easy....or safe.
B. (Legs) Face climb up several horizontal rows of bricks to an airy finish.

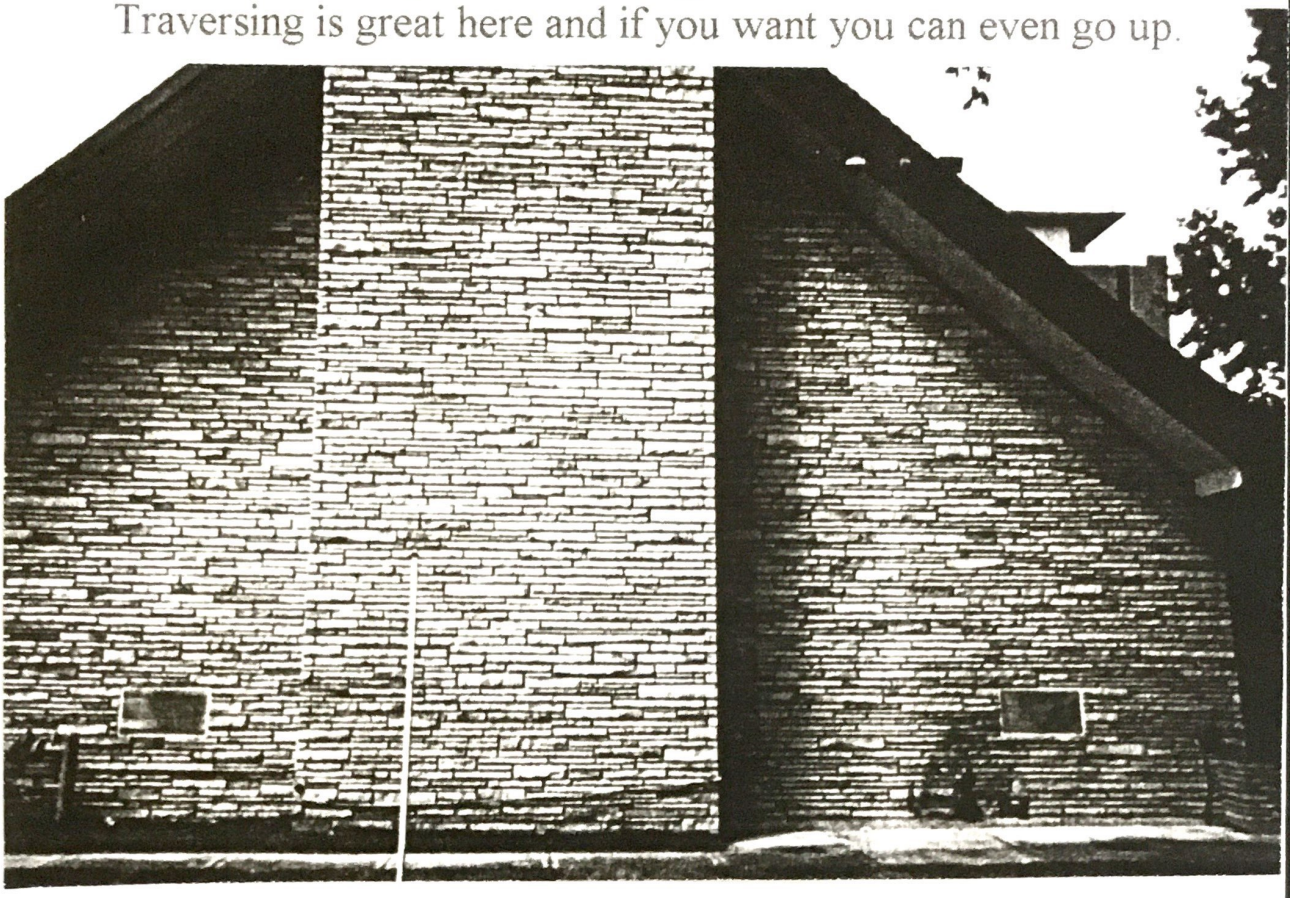
99, 100, 108. **Adams/Walker/Couch towers:** A. (NECK) Each of these towers have similar climbs requiring you to climb up through a hole in a concrete ledge. Couch tower seems to be the best tower for climbing simply because it has low visibility. Make sure you don't climb a route that is directly outside someone's window (unless that is the point of the climb). Climb up 13 stories and then climb the sculpted brick section to the very top. A wonderful climb, a wonderful view. Exposed. (See introduction section for decent hints.)
B.(S-protectable) Climb the long line of sculpted white bricks to the top of one of these towers. High visibility.





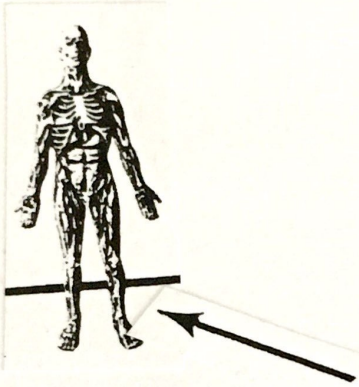
129, 122, 128. **OCCE Administration Buildings:** (Ankle) Each of these buildings offer climbing similar to that of George Lynn Cross building, and the dorms. The cool thing is that these climbs are not nearly as long and therefore are safer. Drawback: High visibility.

A. **Wesley Foundation:** (S or Ankle) Located at Lindsey and Elm, this building offers climbing on a sandstone rock wall. Traversing is great here and if you want you can even go up.

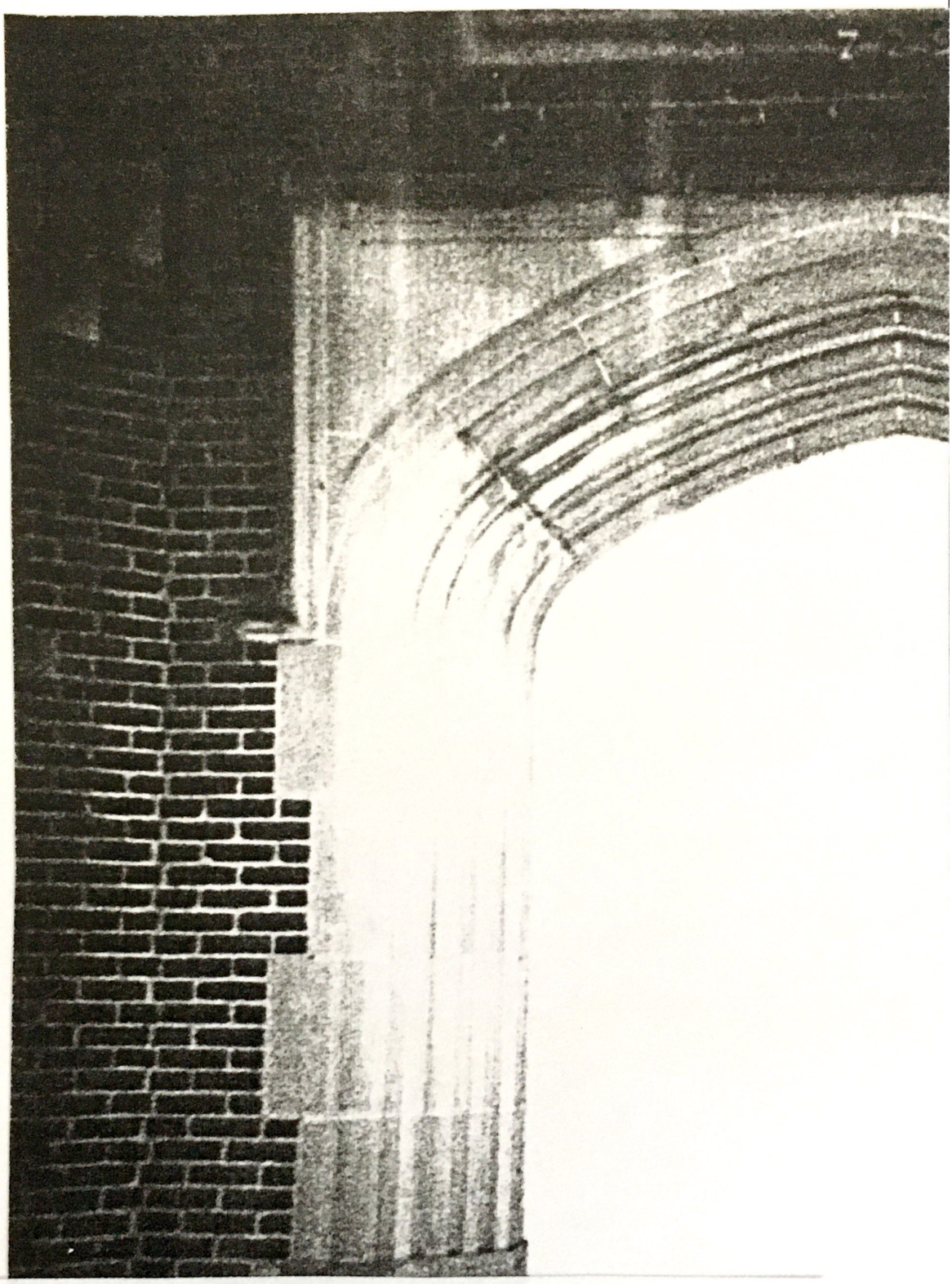


B. **Hal Neimann Wall:** (S) Probably the most popular area for bouldering on campus. This wall offers an infinitely long traverse because you can climb all the way around it. Climbing seems to be tolerated here more than anywhere else on campus. The OUPD is usually cool about people climbing here (hopefully it will stay that way).

C. **Statue:** (Ankle) Disrespectful or just plain fun? It's probably not good to do this one with a crowd around for the very reason that it would attract an even bigger crowd! Climb the front of the statue to his head, then sit on his shoulders, or ride his face....he likes that. (I've heard of up to three pieces of gear being placed on the statue. This is unnecessary and could result in more damage than safety...do it without pro, or not at all.



D. **Arches around Campus:** (Ankle) Some of the freestanding arches around campus are difficult, if not impossible to climb. A couple of arches that you can climb are located at the corner of Boyd and University Blvd, just north of the North Oval.

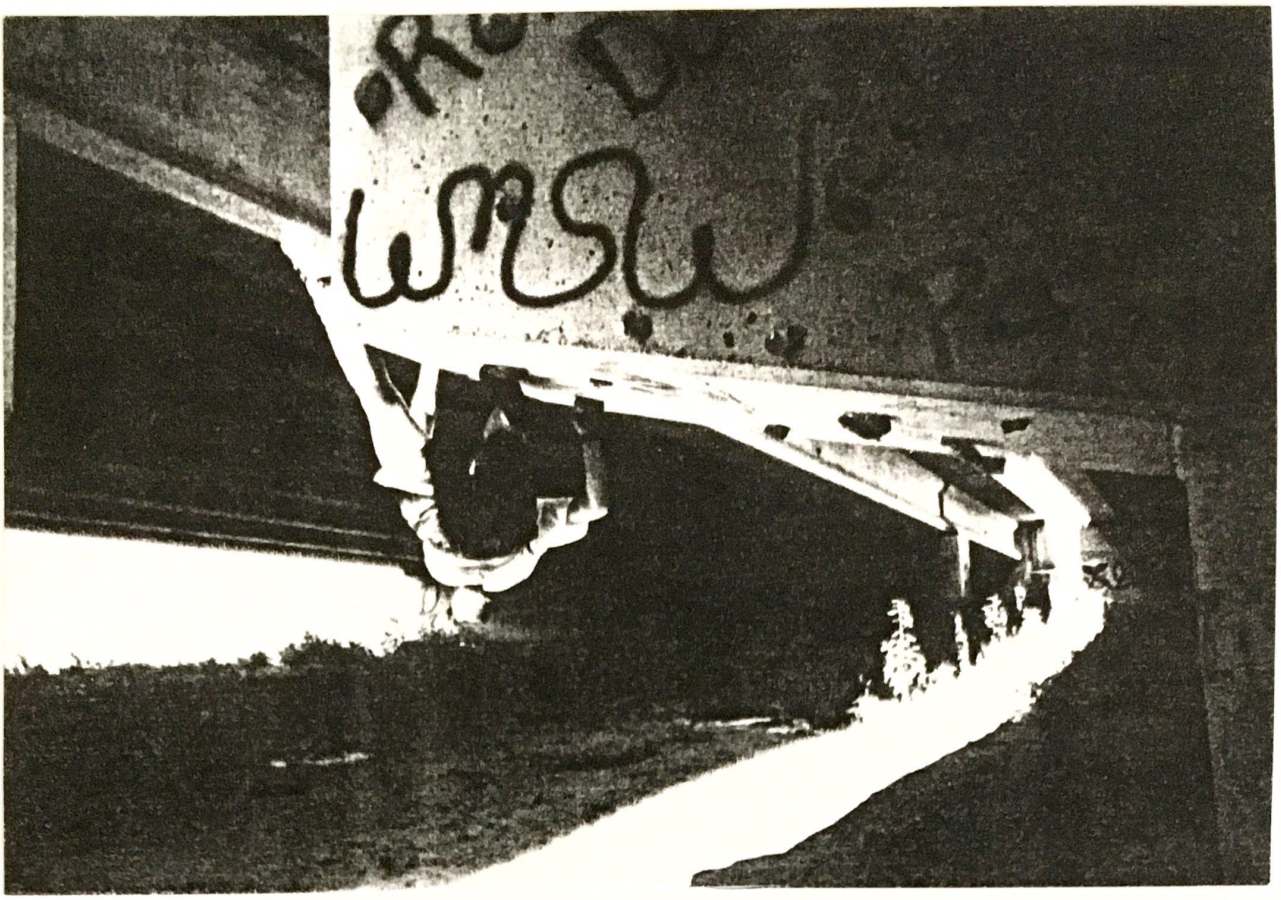


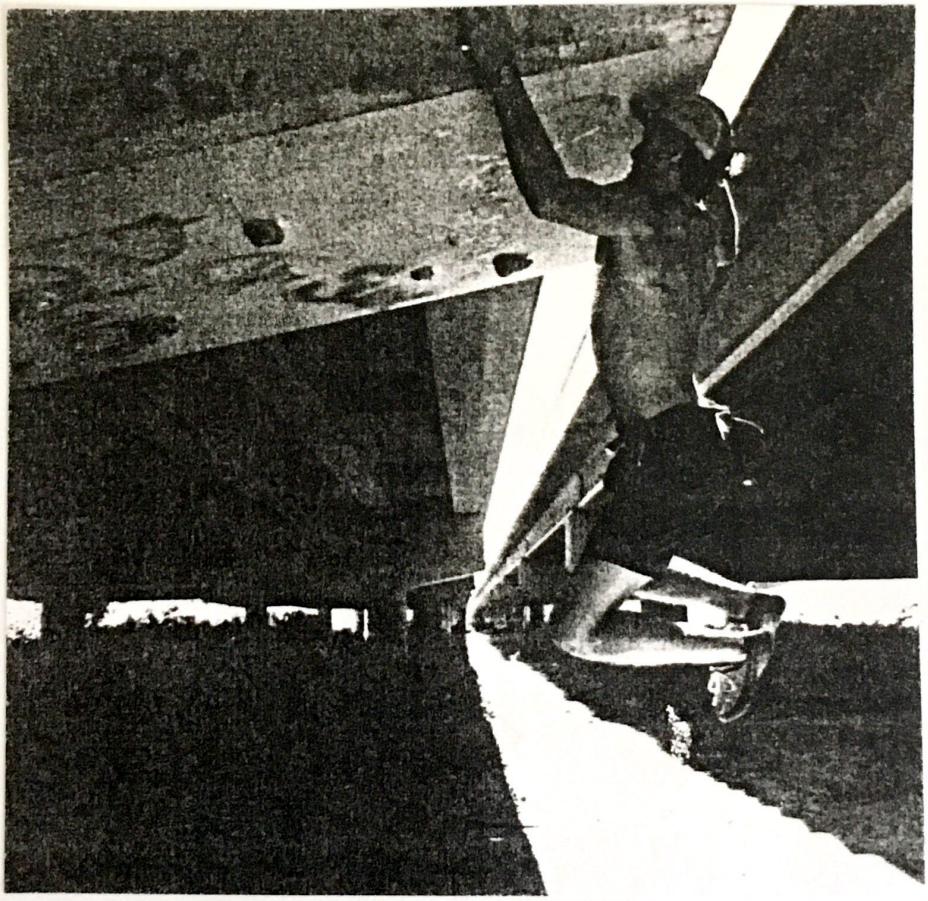
E. **Various doorways:** (Ankle) An entire guide could be written on nothing but doorways on campus (well maybe not an ENTIRE guide...but at least part of a guide....this part.) Doorways are fun because they provide overhanging climbing and strong grip strength. Nielsen Hall (Physics building), Felgar Hall, Hester Hall, Adams Hall, Buchanan Hall, and several others all offer cool doorway climbs; some are harder than others. Where you top out depends on you.

Other Areas around Norman:

Andrews Park: This area, conveniently located just north of the Norman Police Department, is a great place to boulder-away an afternoon. It offers tricky sequential climbing on real rock buildings. Both the North and South walls of the pavilion are popular with the south being slightly taller.

Bridges: Bridge climbing has become increasingly popular glued on rocks or drilled pockets. I'd like to tell you more but these areas must remain very low profile if we want climbing here to continue.





"One little epigram that Chouniard once applied to bouldering was, 'Instant suffering.' I'll agree. It's as if you take a lengthy climb and squeeze it down into one or two moves. To compensate for length, you increase the difficulty."

-John Gill, from *Master Of Rock*