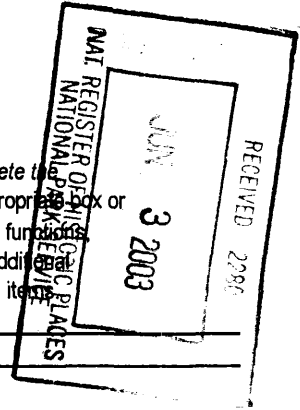


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For furnished architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.



1. Name of Property

historic name Civil War fort at Boonesboro

other name/site number CK - 597

2. Location

street & number .6 miles N of Ford, KY and 1000 feet W of Ford Hampton Rd. not for publication N/A

city or town Ford vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Clark code 049 zip code 40391

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic places and meets procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

David L. Morgan
Signature of certifying official/Title

David L. Morgan, SHPO

3-04-03
Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/ State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and bureau

Date

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

for Daniel J. Vin
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

June 18, 2003

Civil War fort at Boonesboro
Name of Property

Clark County, Kentucky
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
3		structures
	1	objects
3	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Defense - battle site
Transportation - road related
Transportation - water related
Agriculture/Subsistence - agricultural field

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape - park

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls N/A
roof N/A
other earth, stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

see continuation sheets

Civil War fort at Boonesboro
Name of Property

Clark County, Kentucky
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Military - American Civil War

Period of Significance

April 22, 1863 - May 1865

Significant Dates

April 22, 1863

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

see continuation sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

see continuation sheets

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

National Archives, Washington, D. C.

Civil War fort at Boonesboro
Name of property

Clark County, Kentucky
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 11.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	740900	4197050
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	741190	4196990

3	16	741160	4196820
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	16	740880	4196950

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

see continuation sheets

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

see continuation sheets

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joseph E. Brent
organization Mudpuppy & Waterdog, Inc. date January 2003
street & number 129 Walnut Street telephone 859-879-8509
city or town Versailles state KY zip code 40383

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Clark County Fiscal Court
street & number 34 South Main Street telephone 859-745-0200
city or town Winchester state KY zip code 40391

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Civil War fort at Boonesboro

Clark Co., KY

The Civil War fort at Boonesboro

The Civil War fort at Boonesboro (CK-597) is located in southwestern Clark County, approximately 7 miles southwest of the city of Winchester. The nominated area is approximately 11.5-acres that included the remains of the fort, the old army access road and two dry-laid rock walls. The fort is located at the southern end of a fairly broad ridge that is one half-mile north of Ford, Kentucky, east of the Kentucky River and west of the Ford-Hampton Road.

The Civil War fort at Boonesboro was constructed in 1863 by the Union Army as a part of a grand design of Capt. Thomas B. Brooks, Chief Engineer of the District of Central Kentucky. Brooks' design was based on the scheme already in use to protect the L&N and Central Kentucky railroads. In the case of the railroads, the fortifications were built at bridges or trestles. The design that included the fort at Boonesboro called for fortifications to be constructed at the most important fords, ferries, mountain passes and towns. The earthworks were placed in this location to enable the fort's garrison to overlook a "U" shaped bend in the Kentucky River and its confluence with Otter Creek to the south and the site of the town of Boonesborough to the north. In the 19th century there was a ford at the bend, giving the present-day town its name. North of the fort, just south of the current Kentucky River highway bridge on SR 627, was the ferry at Boonesboro. The Union soldiers could have seen these river crossings and could have contested any crossing by Confederate cavalry from the fort.

The Civil War fort at Boonesboro is one of three earthwork fortifications that were designed to protect the principal ferry crossings on the Kentucky River south of Lexington: Boonesboro, Clays Ferry and Tates Creek. Today, the earthworks at Boonesboro consist of two parallel parapet walls located on the end of a ridge approximately 350 feet above the river. The original fortification would have been a redoubt. An "... enclosed work [fort] of a polygonal form, without re-entering angles . . ." Redoubts are created by design to fortify a position that can be attacked on all sides. The fort was sited to guard the ferry and ford crossings and to defend itself from attacks either from the riverside or from the north. It appears that the fortification at Boonesboro was either square or rectangular. What remains today are eastern and western parapet walls and trenches. The northern and southern walls are gone; either destroyed as a part of agricultural operation or as a result of power line construction that runs down the center of the ridge (Map 1).

In addition to the earthworks there are the remnants of a road constructed by the Union army to bring men and supplies up to the fort and two dry-laid rock walls. The road comes up the west face of the ridge from CR 1924. The road proceeds north from the CR 1924 and then switches back to the south, ending on a gentle slope in front of the western wall of the fort. The rock wall follows the slope of the hill to the east from the end of the road to just east of the fort. This may have been an old property line or the wall may have been part of a defensive position, though that is unlikely. There is a second rock wall remnant on the northwest end of the western wall of the fort. The road and the walls contribute to the nomination.

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National Park Service

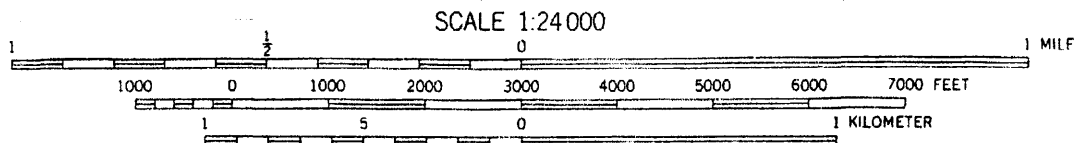
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Civil War fort at Boonesboro

Clark Co., KY

Map 1: Location of earthworks taken from Ford, KY USGS topographic quad, 1963, photorevised 1993.



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Civil War fort at Boonesboro

Clark Co., KY

The site has one noncontributing object, an alternating three-pole, two-pole wooden power line running from south to north along the western edge of the ridge upon which the fort is located. This power line is a prominent feature on the top of the hill and in the winter can be seen coming up the hill from near the power plant in Ford and to the north through the pasture beyond the earthworks. While the power line is a distraction it does not destroy the integrity of the site which can still be readily identified as a Civil War-era earthwork.

Integrity

The Civil War fort at Boonesboro has integrity of location, setting, design, feeling and association. The fort was constructed on a ridge nose, high above the Kentucky River in order to observe any movement across the river at either the ford to the south or the ferry to the north. From the fort the river is still visible, demonstrating why this defensive position was placed at this location, thus demonstrating integrity of location and design. Neither the presence of the power line nor the damage done to the earthworks detract from the setting, feeling or association of the site. The earthworks are unquestionably man-made military features and the road constructed by the U.S. army still can be seen coming up the steep western face of the nominated area.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Civil War fort at Boonesboro

Clark Co., KY

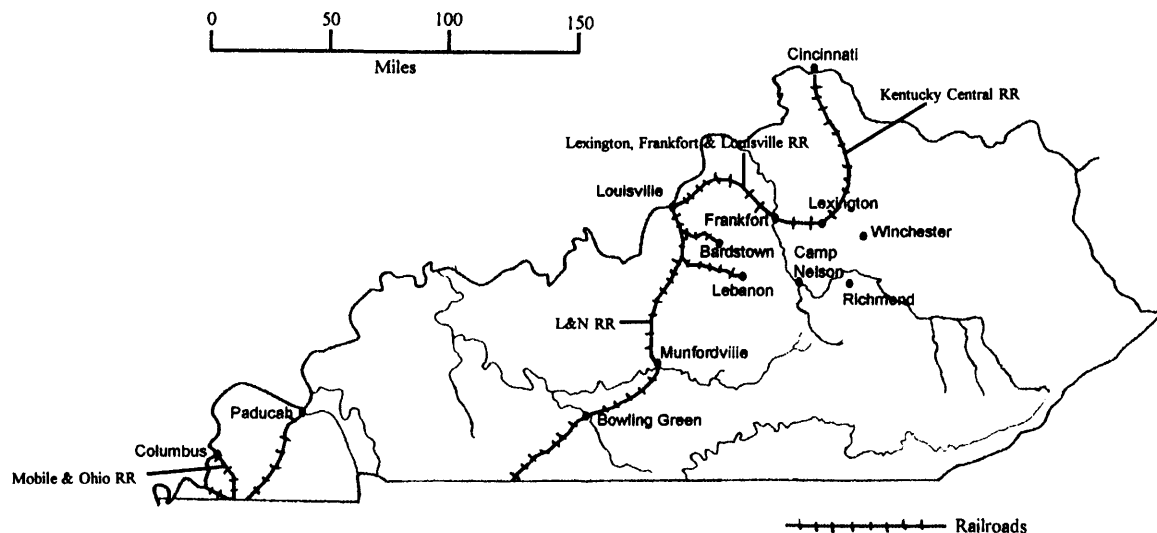
Defending the Kentucky River, 1863-1865

The Civil War fort at Boonesboro (CK-597) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and is significant within the context of the American Civil War, with local significance. The earthworks are a physical representation of the Union army's efforts to defend the Kentucky River and protect its lines of supply. The Civil War fort at Boonesboro has integrity of location, design, setting, feeling and association. The site is referred to as the Civil War fort at Boonesboro because it was never given a name by the Union army. Only fortifications that mounted permanent artillery or garrisons were named.

Introduction

In September 1861 Kentucky chose not to join the Confederacy but to remain in the Union. This decision put the Bluegrass State in the forefront of the conflict for the next fifteen months. The Confederacy recognized the importance of having its north border on the Ohio River and, conversely, the Union was determined to prevent the expansion of Confederate territory. In addition to its strategic location, Kentucky was an important state in terms of the agricultural products it could contribute to the war effort. Among the slave holding states, Kentucky ranked first in the production of horses, mules, barley, and rye; second in corn, tobacco, hemp and wheat; third in hogs and fourth in sheep. Horses and mules in particular were absolutely necessary for both armies and the foodstuffs for both man and beast only enhanced Kentucky's importance to both sides.¹

Kentucky also had series of railroads running north-south that were invaluable to the Union cause. The L&N Railroad, Kentucky Central Railroad and the Mobile & Ohio Railroads could all carry supplies from north of the Ohio to troops in Kentucky and south (Map 2).



Map 2: Railroads in Kentucky during the Civil War

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Continuation Sheet

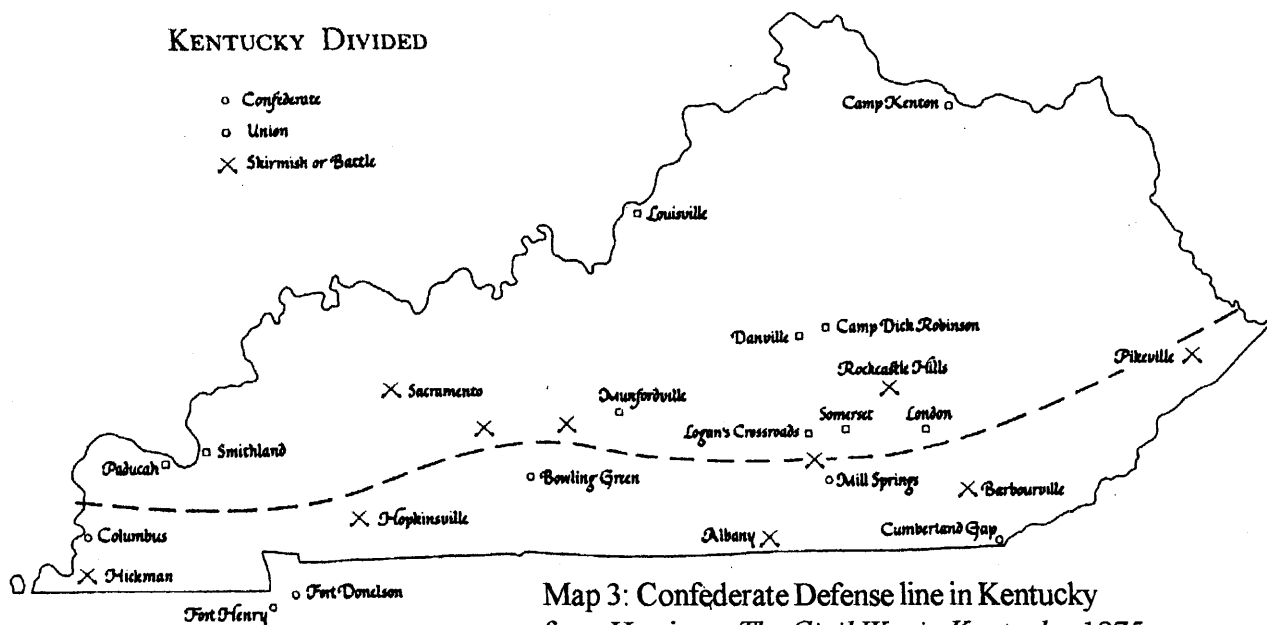
Section number 8 Page 5

Civil War fort at Boonesboro

Clark Co., KY

When the war began in Kentucky the two sides fought numerous skirmishes and small battles as they jockeyed for position within the state. The Union army controlled the state north of a line that extended from Pound Gap in extreme eastern Kentucky, through Somerset, Bowling Green, Hopkinsville and west to Columbus. The area between the Confederate defense line and the strongly held areas to the north was fuzzy (Map 3).

At the beginning of 1862 two battles broke the Confederate defensive line. The Battle of Middle Creek and the Battle of Mill Springs, both fought in January 1862, turned the eastern flank of the Confederate line. Less than a month later Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River, just across the state line in Tennessee, surrendered to Gen. U. S. Grant. This action forced the Confederates in Columbus and Bowling Green, Kentucky to retreat. This retreat would eventually end in Corinth, Mississippi, the Confederacy abandoning most of Middle Tennessee, including Nashville, in the process.



Defending the Commonwealth

After the events of the winter of 1862 Kentucky was even more important to the Union cause. The L&N and Kentucky Central Railroads became major supply lines for Union troops to the south. As the Union army sought to solidify their command in Kentucky they realized that they would have to take measures to defend the state

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Civil War fort at Boonesboro

Clark Co., KY

and the supply lines that ran through it. Initially, the Union army concentrated its effort on the railroads, constructing stockades at vulnerable points on the line such as bridges and trestles. Originally, the stockades were designed to house a small number of infantrymen as a defense against Confederate cavalry.

The new defensive measures were to be tested throughout 1862, as the Confederates were not content to sit idly by and allow Kentucky to remain in the Union fold. In July 1862, Confederate Col. John Hunt Morgan swept through the state from Tompkinsville to Cynthiana and back to Sparta, Tennessee. Once safely back in Tennessee he telegraphed Gen. Braxton Bragg and informed him that Kentuckians were ready to flock to the Confederate standard. Bragg and Gen. E. Kirby Smith, who had planned some action against the Union army in Nashville, suddenly caught Kentucky fever and opted to invade the Bluegrass State.²

By August the Confederate army had moved into Kentucky in a two-pronged attack. Kirby Smith went through the Cumberland Gap and followed the old Wilderness Road to Lexington. Bragg marched from Tennessee, paralleling the L&N Railroad north. After initial successes at Richmond and Munfordville, Bragg met the main Union army at Perryville. Though the Confederates won the battle, Bragg, who had realized that he was greatly out-numbered, withdrew to Harrodsburg where he was finally united with Kirby Smith. Smith and other officers urged him to stay and fight again but Bragg had had enough. The Confederate army and Southern hopes for a border on the Ohio River marched back to Tennessee. Kentucky was now firmly in Union hands.³

In late December 1862, after the main Confederate armies withdrew from the state, the Confederate high command sent John Hunt Morgan back to Kentucky to hit the Union supply lines. Morgan's Christmas Raid and a subsequent raid in late March 1863 by Col. Roy Cluke demonstrated the weakness of the Union defenses within Kentucky. Union commanders sought ways to improve those defenses. The purpose was two-fold, to insure the unimpeded flow of supplies to Union forces in the south and to defend against Confederate cavalry moving unimpeded through the state.⁴

The Union army had already begun to fortify Kentucky before the Bragg/Smith invasion. A series of defensive works were constructed in an arc south of the Ohio River near Covington. The earthworks that had been begun by the Confederate army at Bowling Green were reoriented and strengthened. Stockades for infantry were constructed to defend bridges and trestles along the L&N and the Kentucky Central Railroads. The Union army was in Kentucky to stay. It was imperative that the state, the supply lines and the people of Kentucky were defended against raiders and any subsequent invasions that might be undertaken by the Confederate army.⁵

The Confederate Raids

Between February and July 1863 three Confederate raids posed threats to central Kentucky. These raids emphasized the need to protect the Kentucky River by exposing the Union army's inability to defend it. The Union army had been unable to prevent Confederate cavalry from crossing the river at will. The defenses of the Kentucky had to be improved.

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Civil War fort at Boonesboro

Clark Co., KY

Three different Confederate commanders, Col. Roy Cluke, Gen. John Pegram and Col. John Scott, beginning in February 1863 and ending in August of the same year, undertook the three raids. During the six month period 3,250 Confederate soldiers entered Kentucky and made their way around the state, generally the Bluegrass region. They crossed and recrossed the Kentucky River concealing their numbers and their destination. They destroyed thousands of dollars worth of Union military stores. They captured horses, took cattle, military supplies and escaped the Commonwealth. While they generally had to fight their way out of Kentucky and often lost some of the supplies or animals that they had captured they were able to move about the state at will. The purpose of raids after all is not to occupy territory, but to confuse the enemy, destroy specific targets and return safely to your base of operations. This is precisely what the Confederates had done.⁶

While these raids were not devastating to the Union cause in Kentucky or elsewhere, they were problematic and embarrassing. In early 1863, the Union troops were unable to defend Kentucky, which was the main route for supplies going to Union armies in Nashville. Without protection for the Union supply lines future offensives in Tennessee could be in jeopardy. The Union command believed that it was absolutely imperative that the supply lines be protected from Confederate raids.

In 1863 the Union army was in the process of determining the best way to defend Kentucky. In fact, an April 22, 1863 report from Capt. Miles McAlister to Maj. James H. Simpson, Chief Engineer of the Department of the Ohio, of which Kentucky was a part, stated that the only defenses that were complete at that time were the stockades on the Kentucky Central Railroad. Fortifications were under construction at Lexington, Bowling Green and other points along the L&N Railroad but they were not complete. The fortifications at Camp Nelson would not begin until June and the Union army had decided not to fortify Louisville at that time. The Union defenses in Kentucky were in a state of flux and the Confederate raids only served to clearly demonstrate the lack of preparedness.⁷

The Kentucky River

Defending the Kentucky River had proved to be an enigma to the Union army. In central Kentucky the river was bridged in only two places, at Hickman Creek near Nicholasville and at Frankfort. Yet the river had 50 fords and ferries between those points, allowing troops to cross easily. The series of raids by Confederate cavalry in 1863 exasperated the Union command. The raiders eluded the Federal troops chasing them, created havoc by concealing their locations, crossing and recrossing the Kentucky River, attacking isolated garrisons, capturing and destroying Federal supplies and material. Although the Union troops were able to expel the Confederate raiders, it was not without a great deal of agitation and aggravation on the part of the Union headquarters, the local populace and the troops chasing the Rebels.⁸

The situation had simply become intolerable. Every time Confederate cavalry came into the state panic ensued. Union commanders turned to their engineers to create a system of defense that would address the situation.

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Civil War fort at Boonesboro

Clark Co., KY

Capt. Thomas B. Brooks, Chief Engineer of the District of Central Kentucky, offered a solution in early March 1863. Brooks' idea was based on the defensive works that the Union army was using along railroads. He suggested that "... small defensive works be erected at the most important Fords, Ferries, Mountain Passes and Towns in this District South and East of this post, [Lexington] or in other words that the present system for the defense of the Rail Road be extended Southward."⁹

Brooks' idea was not new. In fact, what he was advocating was not too different from the fortified stations that were constructed by Kentucky settlers in the late 18th century. He envisioned "... an enclosed earth work, surrounded by an abattis and enclosing a block house, to be used as a keep in case the work was assaulted." Brooks wanted to use the works as both defensive positions and rallying points for the Union men of Kentucky. The forts, as he envisioned them, were to be garrisoned by a small number of Federal soldiers who were to be supplemented in times of danger by citizens, home guards or Union reinforcements.¹⁰

Brooks envisioned these defensive positions as an important part of the overall defense of the Commonwealth. He felt that they were justified militarily, politically and economically. In his communication to Gen. Quincy A. Gillmore he listed four reasons why he felt these defensive works should be constructed:

"1st This would afford at a very small cost to the U.S. or to the State of Kentucky (whichever undertook them) considerable amount of much needed protection to the lives and property of the loyal citizens of Ky. By affording them a place of refuge in times of danger, and defending such stock and stores as might be brought within the area defended by these works, and in virtue of their positions strength and garrisons would lessen the number of these marauding expeditions of the Rebels.

2nd This system would practically reinforce our army by rendering our active allies many loyal citizens who now dare not take up arms for fear of losing everything, they knowing by bitter experience that they have little to hope from Federal support to help protect their homes.

These Federal works garrisoned by federal soldiers would be rallying points and "backing" for Union men and Union sentiments, which we might then hope would increase instead of diminishing as is now I fear the case.

3rd These forts would be points where raw troops would stand and fight. Recent experience proves that portions of your command need something to give them confidence.

4th These fortified outposts would afford means of gaining intelligence of the enemy and transmitting it to Headquarters. It appears that citizens cannot be relied on for giving information of the enemy. The few "skedaddle" before they leave anything definite, the remainder stay at

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Civil War fort at Boonesboro

Clark Co., KY

home and "keep quiet," taking care of their families and stores. Much information now carried through our lines to the enemy by this system would be intercepted. It would afford the Federal Provost Marshall the realistic means for doing their duty."¹¹

Brooks based his theory on the construction of these fortifications on his experiences in Kentucky and sound military precedent. In the letter to Gillmore he cited D. H. Mahan who, literally, wrote the book on field fortifications. Brooks drew on his experience as a working military engineer in Kentucky and the work that was being carried on along the Kentucky Central Railroad in the District of Central Kentucky, where he was stationed, and the L&N Railroad further to the west.¹²

The result of Brooks' grand scheme was the construction of three defensive works along the Kentucky River south of Lexington. The construction was actually begun in the midst of the Confederate raids of 1863.

Fortifying the Kentucky River

When Confederate raiders threatened, guards were placed at the ferries in an attempt to prevent Confederate troops from crossing the Kentucky River. Often, ordering guards to the ferries was about as effective as closing the barn door after the horses had gotten out. The reality of the situation was that in 1863 the Union command in Kentucky had no defined defensive strategy and was simply reacting to moves made by the Confederates.¹³

In the midst of Cluke's raid, Brooks made his recommendation to Gen. Gillmore that river fortifications be constructed in the District of Central Kentucky. Brooks' original idea was all-encompassing and included fortifying much more than just the ferries and river crossings. To date, research indicates that fortifications were only constructed at Boonesboro, Tates Creek and Clays Ferry.

Work progressed slowly at the ferry fortifications, in part because of the Confederate raids and in part because of the weather. Throughout March, Brooks continued to report progress on the earthworks. He sent maps of the ferries and the surrounding topography to the Department of Ohio headquarters in Cincinnati in mid-March, demonstrating the work that had been done and illustrating why these areas should be defended.¹⁴

By April 1863 the construction of permanent defensive positions along the river was well underway. Capt. Brooks reported on April 5, 1863 that a small redoubt with rifle trenches was nearly finished at Boonesboro. A redoubt, as defined in Mahan's *Treatise on Field Fortifications*, is "[a]ny enclosed work [fort] of a polygonal form, without re-entering angles" Redoubts are created by design to fortify a position that can be attacked on all sides.¹⁵

A report dated April 22, 1863 by Capt. Miles D. McAlister makes it clear that the redoubt at Boonesboro was part of an overall strategy for the defense of the Kentucky River. This defense included not only the ferries but also Hickman Bridge, which would later become Camp Nelson. McAlister clearly states that C. E. McAlister

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Civil War fort at Boonesboro

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was in charge of the works on the Kentucky River, Brooks having by this time been sent to Knoxville. Boonesboro had not been completed by April 22, or at least its completion had not been reported to Capt. McAlister. There seemed to be a problem in finding enough men to work on the ferry defenses.¹⁶

The Earthworks

To date, no documentation has been found clearly stating when the defenses above the ferries were completed. It may be assumed that they were completed sometime in the early summer or late spring of 1863. Of the three ferry defenses constructed, a description and drawing has been located only for Clays Ferry. However, in a letter to Gen. Gillmore Brooks states that the works at Boonesboro were to be the same as those at Clays Ferry. It is probable, therefore, that the works constructed were similar, allowing for variations due to the topography of the site. The topography at Clays is similar to Boonesboro. Both are in a horseshoe bend in the river and, in addition to the ferry, both have fords within sight of the works. However, without additional documentation and/or evidence from archaeological investigation this is speculation, even if it is speculation based on sound research.¹⁷

Brooks' initial design for Clays Ferry was approved by Gen. Gillmore. In his proposal Brooks outlined the number of men and tools required to construct the works. He believed 75 men would be needed to carry out the work. Those men would require 40 shovels, 10 axes, 10 picks, one hand saw, one square, one two-inch auger, one adz and two one-inch chisels in order to build the work to his specifications.¹⁸

Brooks' design called for the utilization of earthworks, stockading and a blockhouse. This was in keeping with Brooks' original idea of creating a keep where defenders could seek refuge if the works were overrun. The defenses were to have trenches for infantrymen. Directly in front of the trenches was to be stockading made from fence posts placed vertically in the ground and loopholed at the bottom. The loopholes were for soldiers to shoot through (Figure 1).¹⁹

Forward of the trenches, abbatis was to be placed. Abbatis was the 19th century equivalent of the barbed wire used in World War I. It was an entanglement made of cut trees with the limbs facing the enemy. The rifle trench was to be covered by artillery on the opposite side of the fort. (The idea of artillery, or at least permanent artillery, must have been abandoned. None of the forts at the ferries shows up on the Union army in Kentucky's list of fortifications, that is, forts that mounted artillery.) In the center of the work a log blockhouse was to have been constructed. This building was to be used for defense, as a keep, storeroom and for quarters. An earthen wall, known as a parapet, was to be constructed on the river side of the fortification. An abbitis and a stockade were to be placed in front of the parapet. The original design called for an elliptical or circular shaped fort.²⁰

The works at Boonesboro suggest that Brook's original design for Clays Ferry was altered, at least in part. The works appear to have been square or rectangular rather than circular or elliptical. This change may have been necessitated by the topography of the site. As for the other features, the blockhouse and the stockade, without a

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Civil War fort at Boonesboro

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period description, drawing or map or evidence from archaeological investigation it is impossible to tell if they were ever constructed. Documentation does confirm that the forts were constructed and were in use sometime after the summer of 1863. In a dispatch sent in July 1864 and troops were mentioned as being at the works at Boonesboro.²¹

Conclusion

What happened to these works and why? Part of the explanation lies in the shifting fortunes of war. The Department commander, Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside, had come to Kentucky to lead an invasion of east Tennessee, only to have his command sent off to Mississippi to help Gen. U. S. Grant in his efforts to wrest Vicksburg from the Confederates.²²

While Burnside was in Kentucky he began the construction of Camp Nelson and its defenses. When Burnside finally left Kentucky for Tennessee, he took the 23rd Corps, the troops responsible for defending Kentucky, with him. Burnside stripped garrisons from everywhere in Kentucky and marched toward east Tennessee. With this offensive movement to Tennessee the emphasis of the war shifted. The Federal government and Union army were now concerned with getting supplies from the depot at Camp Nelson to Burnside, who by September, 1863 had taken Knoxville.²³

During the ensuing Confederate siege of Knoxville a second depot was constructed at Port Isabella, now Burnside, on the Cumberland River. Supplies from Camp Nelson were hauled overland and others came up the river from Nashville to Camp Burnside at Port Isabella. The engineers and the quartermasters turned their energies to the Knoxville campaign. When it was over in early December, the war had moved south and would continue to do so until late in 1864. The changing front of the war may explain why the Defenses of the Kentucky never achieved the scale for which they were originally planned.²⁴

From the documentation it appears that none of the forts built at any of the three ferries ever mounted artillery, at least permanent artillery, as was called for by Brooks in his original proposal. An April 1863 request from the Ordnance Office in Washington specifically asks for an accurate list of "[e]very detached work of any description, which is armed with field, siege, or garrison guns in position" No report from Kentucky ever mentions the works after 1863. They are mentioned as being under construction, but later reports that list forts, batteries and field works do not include the works at the ferries. This leads to the conclusion that they never mounted artillery and thus were not included in the inventory.²⁵

The earthworks may have been manned and mounted artillery intermittently, as circumstances warranted. Confederate raiders again threatened Central Kentucky in the summer of 1864. Confederate Gen. John Hunt Morgan swept through the Bluegrass and ultimately clashed with Union forces at Cynthiana. In the fall of that same year Gen. John Bell Hood attempted a grand campaign in which he planned to invade Kentucky. He never made it to the Commonwealth. His army was destroyed at Nashville.

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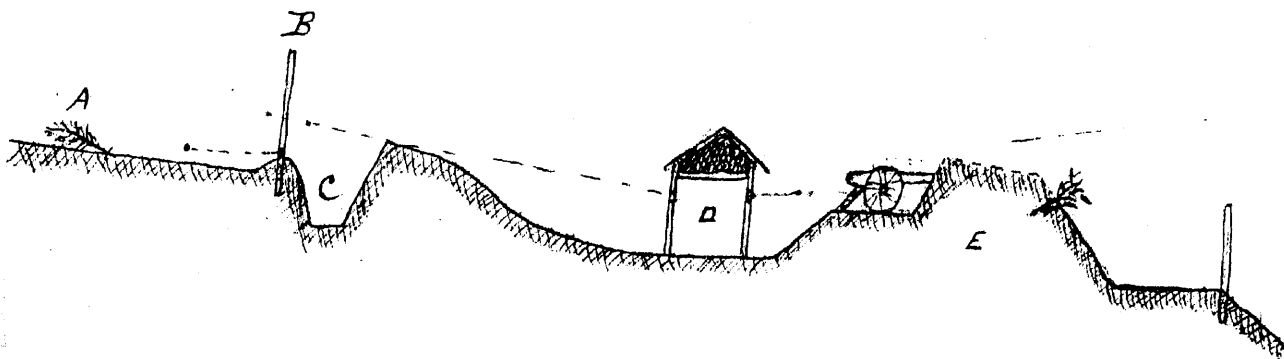


Figure 1: Capt. Thomas B. Brooks concept drawing of the fort at Clays Ferry. This design was to be used at Boonesboro. In the drawing the letters indicate features of the fort area: A abattis, B stockading, C infantry trench, D blockhouse and E parapet, or main wall, of the fort.

The Confederate threat to Kentucky ended with Hood's aborted campaign. The Confederate army was not able to mount another effort to invade Kentucky. After the close of 1864 the Confederate army did not again send raiders into central Kentucky, although guerilla activity continued. In the months ahead the Confederate army faced defeat after defeat. Less than a year after Hood's campaign the Civil War was over.

In late 1862, Kentucky was a vital part of the Union supply line to its forces in Nashville. Supplies came down the Ohio River and then were shipped via railroad to Tennessee. The Confederate Invasion (August-October 1862) and subsequent raids (December 1862-August 1863) proved that the defensive works for the supply line were woefully inadequate as Confederate cavalry operated at will within the state. Ongoing upgrades in the defensive works in late 1862 and 1863 proved effective in ensuring that supplies got through. The defensive works did not stop the Confederate soldiers from coming into the state, but they kept the Confederates away from vital bases and vulnerable railroad links such as bridges, trestles and tunnels. The shift of the main focus of the fighting from Kentucky to Tennessee in late 1862 and 1863 and to Georgia in 1864 meant that the main emphasis of the Union defensive efforts in Kentucky was the L&N Railroad. The Civil War fort at Boonesboro lost its importance to the war effort, Confederate raids became less frequent and less effective as both the Federal defenses in Kentucky and the pressure of the Union armies pushed the main Confederate forces further and further to the south.

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End Notes

- ¹ Lowell Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky*, The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, 1975, pp. 1-12 and Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, p. 138.
- ² Harrison, *Civil War*, pp. 39-40.
- ³ Joseph H. Parks, *General Edmund Kirby Smith, CSA*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1954, pp. 225-237.
- ⁴ James A. Ramage, *Rebel Raider: The Life of General John Hunt Morgan*, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 1986, pp. 134-147; Bennett Young, *Confederate Wizards of the Saddle*, reprint edition, J. S. Sanders, Nashville, 1999, pp. 171-194.
- ⁵ Harrison, *Civil War*, pp. 14-32 and Joseph E. Brent, *National Register Nomination for Fort Sands, Hardin County, Kentucky*, Kentucky Heritage Council, 1993.
- ⁶ Young, *Wizards*, p. 171, 173-179, 188-189; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol. 23, Part 1*, United State Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C, 1880-1901, p. 87, 164-165; 828, 833-836 and 840 (hereafter cited as OR). *OR, Series I, Vol. 18, Part I*, p. 171-173 and 167, 169 and Richard Collins, "Civil War Annals of Kentucky (1861-1865)," p. 279, *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, Vol. 35 No. 3, July 1961.
- ⁷ Capt. Miles D. McAlister to Maj. James H. Simpson, April 22, 1863, RG 393, United States Army Continental Commands, Entry 3541, Box 2, National Archives. Hereafter cited as RG 393.
- ⁸ *OR, Series I, Vol. 16, Part I*, pp. 367-369 and Joseph E. Brent and R. Berle Clay, *The Civil War Fortifications Above the Boonesborough Ferry in Clark County, Kentucky: A Research Project*, Cultural Resource Analysts, Lexington, Kentucky, 1999, pp. 4-7.
- ⁹ T. B. Brooks to Q. A. Gillmore, March 3, 1863, RG 393, Entry 1111, Pt. 2, Box 2, National Archives.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² Brooks to Gillmore, March 3, 1863, RG 393. D. H. Mahan was the Professor of Military and Civil Engineering at West Point and he wrote *A Treatise on Field Fortifications*, which was used by both sides as the book on earthen fortifications during the Civil War.
- ¹³ Brent and Clay, *Civil War Fortifications*, pp. 5-8.
- ¹⁴ T. B. Brooks to J. H. Simpson, March 15, 1863, Entry 3541 Box 1 and T. B. Brooks to M. D. McAlister March 23, 1863, Entry 3541, Box 3 and March 29, RG 393.
- ¹⁵ Brooks to J. H. Simpson, April 5, 1863, Entry 3541, Box 2, RG 393 and D. H. Mahan, *A Treatise on Field Fortification*, John Wiley, New York, 1863, p. 12.
- ¹⁶ M. D. McAlister to J. H. Simpson, April 22, 1863, Entry 3541, Box 1, RG 393.
- ¹⁷ T. B. Brooks to Q. A. Gillmore, March 15, 1863, Entry 1111, Box 2, RG 393.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ *OR, Series I, Vol. 39, Part 2*, pp. 178-179.
- ²² William Marvell, *Burnside*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1991, p. 264-265.
- ²³ Marvell, *Burnside*, pp. 266-276 and W. P. Anderson to J. T. Boyle, November 30, 1863, Entry 2173, Box 2, RG 393.
- ²⁴ John S. Bowman, *The Civil War Almanac*, World Almanac Publications, New York, 1983, p. 166 and Leland R. Johnson, *Engineers on the Twin Rivers: A History of the Nashville District of the Corps of Engineers*, Nashville, 1979, pp. 97-98.
- ²⁵ James H. Ripley to Charles W. Foster, April 20, 1863, Entry, 3541, Box 4, RG 393; *OR, Series I, Vol. 34, Part 3*, pp. 769-777 and *OR, Series I, Vol. 49, Part 2*, pp. 273-275 and 957-959.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is a trapezoid shaped area of approximately 11.5 acres delineated by four UTM points. The boundary area runs from UTM point 1 approximately 1000 feet east to UTM point 2. At UTM point 2 the boundary turns 90 degrees south for 500 feet where it intersects UTM point 3. At UTM point 3 the boundary makes a 90 degree turn west. The boundary runs west 1000 feet where it intersects with UTM point 4. At UTM point 4 the boundary turns 90 degrees north for 250 feet where it intersects with UTM point 1 and closes the trapezoid.

Boundary Justification

The nominated area includes the fortification, the road down from the fort, two sections of rock fence, a power line and a buffer around the fort. The nominated area includes the area that would have been the military complex on top of the hill. All features of the property nominated contribute to the nomination, save the power line. This land is owned by Clark County and it is the county's intention to utilize it as a Civil War park.

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Civil War fort at Boonesboro

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Photographs

Civil War fort at Boonesboro

Clark County, Kentucky

Photographer: Joseph E. Brent

Date photograph taken: March 7, 2002

original negatives on file at Kentucky Heritage Council

Photo 1: looking east view of earthworks

Photo 2: looking south southeast view of old military road

Photo 3: looking southwest view of Kentucky River from fort.

Photo 4: looking northwest view of corner of southern most earthwork

Photo 5: looking south southeast view of northern most earthwork

Photo 6: looking south southwest view of northern most earthwork