

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
 RECEIVED JAN 30 1976
 DATE ENTERED JUN 29 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Bailey's Dam in Red River at Alexandria, Louisiana
 AND/OR COMMON *in* Bailey's Dam *Site*

LOCATION *Red River sub US 71/165/167*

STREET & NUMBER Immediately downriver from O. K. Allen Bridge Serving U. S. Highways
71, 165 and 167.

CITY, TOWN *Alexandria* VICINITY OF _____ CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT *8th - Gillis Long*
 STATE Louisiana CODE 22 COUNTY Rapides CODE 079

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: <i>in river</i>

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME State of Louisiana, Division of Hospitals and City of Alexandria
 STREET & NUMBER P. O. Box 44215, Baton Rouge, La. 70804 City Hall, Alexandria, La.
 CITY, TOWN _____ STATE Louisiana 71301
 VICINITY OF _____

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. None
 STREET & NUMBER _____
 CITY, TOWN _____ STATE _____

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Map and Profile of the Red River Falls (Prepared by A. F. Wrotnowski, C. E.)
 DATE 1874 _____
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Mr. Rufus Smith, Personal Collection
 CITY, TOWN Alexandria STATE Louisiana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This report is taken from Bailey's notes in the Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (1893) Plate LIII.

"At the point where the main dam was constructed the river is 758 ft. wide, with from 4 to 6 ft. of water running at about 10 miles per hour.

Two coal-barges 23 x 170 ft. were sunk in the channel, having been filled with stone, brick and iron taken from foundries and sugar mills in the vicinity. Between them was a chute of 66 ft. in breadth. From the barges to the right-hand bank, the dam was built of cribs of stone; that to the left-hand bank was constructed of trees with their branches entire.

The increase of water caused by the main dam was 5 ft. 4 in.; that caused by the wing dams, 1 ft. 2 in. Total 6½ ft.

At the point where the wing dams were placed, the river is over 1,000 ft. in breadth.

The cribs were placed by means of hawsers. As soon as this was done, bars of iron, taken from sugar houses, were driven from 1 to 3 ft. into the bottom, which is of soft stone. The cribs were then filled with old iron, brick and stone, having a layer of fine brush beneath them.

The bracket dam was constructed to guide the current of the chute, and was built by Lieut. Col. Pearsall, assistant engineer, in 6 hours from the time of its commencement.

See copy of "Section including Falls and Dam in Red River: also from the Atlas.

Porter's report varies from Bailey's in the Official Records. Porter states that four barges were sunk after the two wing dams were completed.

Presently, of these structures, all that is left in the river bed are remnants, which are underwater, of the tree dam on the Pineville side. At a very low river stage (the last in 1972) water-logged tree trunks pointing from the Pineville bank toward the Alexandria bank were visible. Silt and debris were, of course, also in evidence at that time. On the river bank on the Pineville side are the remains of a ramp.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES April 30-May 12, 1864

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The construction of Bailey's Dam in the Red River, a tributary of the Mississippi River, at Alexandria, Louisiana, made possible the release of the Union fleet (commanded by Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter) which was held above the falls in low water. It was a crucial phase of the Union retreat led by General N. P. Banks from the Battle of Mansfield, Louisiana, in April and May of 1864 (Red River, La., Campaign). If the dam had not been successful the entire fleet (the Osage, Neosho, Ft. Hindman, Lexington, Carondelet, Pittsburg, Ozark, Louisville, Mound City, Chillicothe, and two tugs) would have had to have been destroyed.¹ Admiral Porter credits the dam with shortening the war. In his report to Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, Admiral Porter states:

"...This is without doubt the best engineering feat performed. Under the best circumstances a private company would not have completed this work under one year, and to an ordinary mind the whole thing would have appeared an utter impossibility. Leaving out his ability as an engineer, the credit he has conferred upon the country, he has saved to the Union a valuable fleet, worth nearly \$2,000,000 more; he has deprived the enemy of a triumph which would have emboldened them to carry on this war a year or two longer, for the intended departure of the army was a fixed fact, and there was nothing left for me to do in case that event occurred but destroy every part of the vessels, so that the rebels could make nothing of them.

...I trust some future historian will treat this matter as it deserves to be treated, because it is a subject in which the whole country should feel an interest, and the noble men who succeeded so admirably in this arduous task should not lose one atom of credit so justly due them."²

In Banks' report in the Official Records referring to the bridge Bailey constructed of steamers at Simsport, La.: "This work was not of the same magnitude, but was as important to the army as the dam at Alexandria was to the navy."³

History of Bailey's Dam in Red River (Louisiana) 1864

In the month that had elapsed since the Union fleet had, even then with some difficulty, ascended the rapids, the river had fallen more than six feet; for a mile and a quarter the rocks were bare. In places the water was only four feet deep while the heavy gunboats required at least seven feet. The current, running up to ten miles

¹ Official Records, XXXIV, Pt. 1, p. 219.

² Ibid., pp. 220 and 221.

³ Ibid., p. 212.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

No. 8 SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

per hour, narrowed to almost nothing here and there along the channel.⁴ A plan to dam the stream and raise the water level at seven feet was proposed by Lt. Col. Joseph Bailey, an acting engineer from the Fourth Wisconsin Volunteers then serving under General John Franklin. Gen. Franklin, an engineer in civil life, approved the plan, and then submitted it to Gen. Banks who gave the order to have it carried out.

Bailey was a lumberman in his native state, Wisconsin, prior to the war. His principle of the dam was a device known to all lumbermen and river men but never used on such a scale or for such urgent purpose.

His plan was not his alone as Col. George D. Robinson, of the 3rd Engineers Corps d'Afrique, and Lt. Col. Uri B. Pearsall, of the 99th U. S. Colored Troops, were both called into consultation with Bailey. They advised in favor of two dams, one at the upper falls, and the other at the lower falls. This advice was overruled by Bailey, who was the superior officer, and only one dam was built. Later another had to be built as suggested by these men. The only obvious remnants of these dams exist at latitude 31°19'29" N, longitude 92°27'04"W and this site is what the Historical Association of Central Louisiana, Inc. proposes for listing on the National Register.

Bailey received the credit for saving the fleet, was made a Brigadier-General and given a vote of thanks by Congress. The other two men passed out of the Army with the rank they had held at the time of the building of the dam.⁵

Over three thousand men were detailed to work on the dam. On the Pineville side opposite Alexandria large detachments of New York and Marine regiments plus many Western troops from the Thirteenth Army Corps were set to work felling trees, hauling them a short distance to the river, and floating them into position. Some of the men quarried stone above the dam (there is no modern record of the quarries) and loaded it aboard barges to be brought down. The trees were placed fifteen or twenty abreast pointed toward the opposite bank and weighted down with bags filled with dirt and stones. Successive layers formed a crisscross pattern and were made tight with sand, bricks, and brush. Gradually the Pineville side began to expand out into the river. Night and day the task went forward despite the backbreaking labor, the heat, and the danger from the swift current. The men often worked in water up to their necks.

On the Alexandria side two Negro regiments commanded by Col. Robinson and an additional detail of four hundred men from Dickey's colored infantry brigade began work building a crib dam from the bank out to meet the tree dam. Houses were

⁴ John D. Winters, The Civil War in Louisiana (Louisiana State University Press, 1963)pp. 368 & 369.

⁵ George P. Whittington, Rapides Parish, Louisiana, a History, (Baton Rouge, La. 1932)p. 167.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 3

NO. 8 SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

torn down and additional lumber was taken from warehouses and a mill to furnish timber for the cribs. The navy blacksmiths helped to make bolts to hold the cribs together and, after deeper water was reached, navy boats helped to move the cribs into position. Stones from quarries, bricks torn from buildings, and heavy machinery taken from sugar mills and cotton gins were then thrown into the cribs to hold them in position. Finally the two wings dammed most of the 758 feet from shore to shore, with the exception of a gap about 150 feet wide. To narrow the gap four large coal barges, weighted down with stones and bricks, were sunk alongside the crib and tree wings.⁶ Bailey, in his notes in the Atlas, states that only two coal barges were sunk and intimates that this was the initial step in building the dam.

On Sunday, May 8, after eight working days, the Osage, Neosho, and Fort Hindman passed the upper falls and moved down to the pool formed by the dam. The next morning around five two of the coal barges were swept away by the swift current. For some reason, only one vessel above the falls, the Lexington made a run for it and made it through.

Bailey and his details, inspired by the partial success of their first attempt, went to work at the upper rapids to construct a new crib wing from the southwest bank and a tree dam from the Pineville side similar to the first dam. A diagonal bracket dam of logs was constructed just below to confine the waters into a narrower channel. After working three days and nights the water level was raised sufficiently to try another passage below.

On May 11 the Carondelet, Pittsburg, and Mound City passed over the upper falls safely and proceeded to the first dam. On May 12, the Ozark, Louisville, and Chillicothe and two tugs safely negotiated the upper rapids and that evening and the next morning all of the boats successfully passed through the gap in the dam. With his fleet now safely below the falls, Porter rapidly prepared to move as quickly as possible to the Mississippi.⁷

⁶ Winters, The Civil War in Louisiana, p. 369.

⁷ Ibid., p. 370.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 3

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

No. 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (cont'd)

193, 212, 219-221, 253, 402-405.

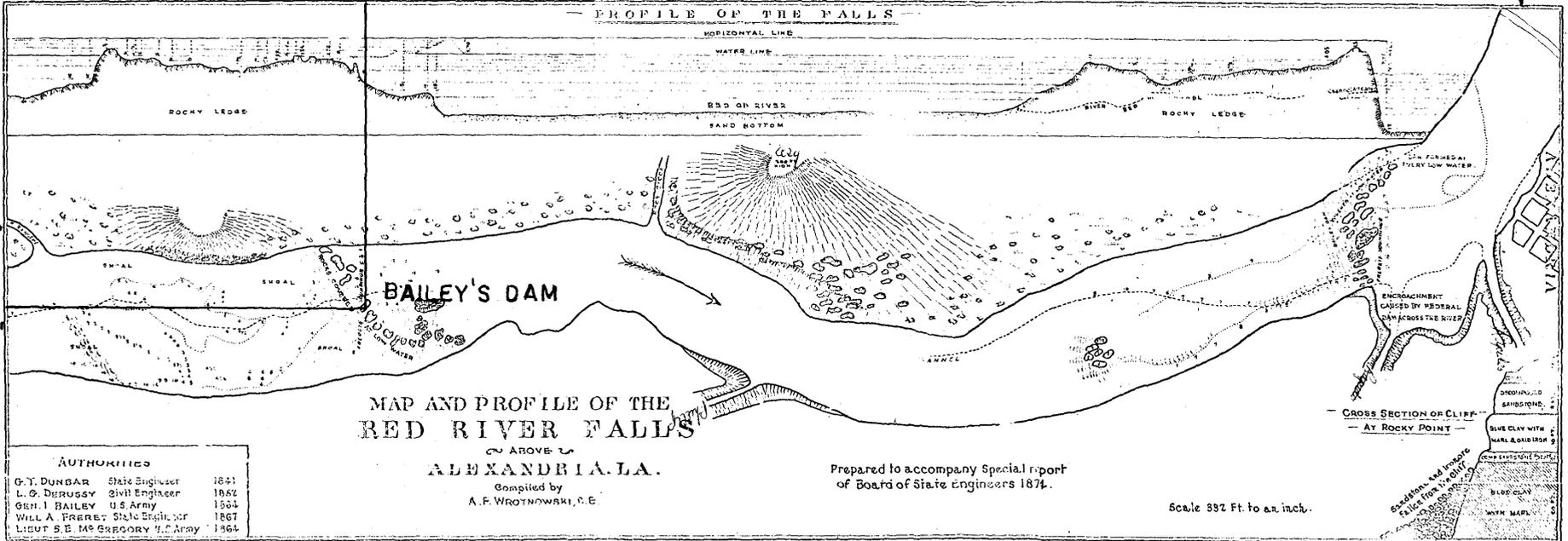
Whittington, G. P. Rapides Parish Louisiana. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: 1970, p. 167.

Winters, John D. The Civil War in Louisiana. Binghamton, New York: 1963, pp. 367-370.



31° 19' 29" N

— PROFILE OF THE FALLS —



MAP AND PROFILE OF THE
RED RIVER FALLS

ABOVE
ALEXANDRIA, LA.

Compiled by
A. F. WROTNOWSKI, C. E.

Prepared to accompany Special Report
of Board of State Engineers 1874.

Scale 332 Ft. to an inch.

AUTHORITIES			
G. Y. DUNBAR	State Engineer	1841	
L. G. DERUSSY	Civil Engineer	1842	
GEN. I. BAILEY	U. S. Army	1861	
WILL. A. FRERET	State Engineer	1867	
LIEUT. S. E. MCGREGORY	U. S. Army	1864	

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC Bailey's Dam in Red River at Alexandria, Louisiana

AND/OR COMMON

Bailey's Dam

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Alexandria-Pineville VICINITY OF COUNTY Rapides STATE Louisiana

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE Mr. Rufus Smith, Personal Collection, Alexandria, Louisiana

SCALE 332 ft. to one inch DATE 1874

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES