

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: FORT JAMES JACKSON

Other Name/Site Number: Fort Oglethorpe

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 1 Fort Jackson Road

Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Savannah

Vicinity: X

State: Georgia

County: Chatham

Code: 052

Zip Code: 31402

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: ___
Public-local: ___
Public-State: X
Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): ___
District: ___
Site: ___
Structure: X
Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

___ buildings
___ sites
1 structures earth dike
___ objects
1 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: DEFENSE Sub: Fortification

Current: RECREATIONAL Sub: Museum

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: OTHER - Second System Fortification

MATERIALS:

Foundation: STONE

Walls: BRICK AND EARTH

Roof: BRICK

Other: N/A

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 4

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Fort James Jackson, one of the few preserved Second System Seacoast Fortifications in the United States, is located approximately three miles east and downstream of Savannah, Georgia, on the south bank of the Savannah River. The fort was built to protect the city of Savannah and harbor from foreign naval attack. The fort consists of an irregular shaped gun battery of earth and brick masonry and is enclosed at its rear by brick walls that include four demi bastions. The gun platform, facing the Savannah River, is supported by arched brick casemates, which served as storage rooms, offices, and cells. Located at the southwest side of the gun platform is a brick powder magazine with gabled roof. On the northeast angle of the barbette is an 1870s concrete and granite sod covered magazine, which was the only addition to this fort after the Civil War. Along the east and west angles of the parade ground are the foundations of two brick enlisted mens barracks. On the center rear of the parade ground is the foundation of a brick officers' barracks, which was not completed. Both battery and rear walls are fully enclosed by a brick lined wet moat, which is supplied by a tide tunnel on the northwest face of the counter scarp wall.

Environmental Setting

The fort was built on a small island, known as Salter's Island, about three miles downstream from the City of Savannah, Georgia, on the south bank of the Savannah River. The fort was sited to overlook a natural deepwater anchorage and water route to Savannah, called Five Fathom Hole. From this location, Fort Jackson could command the river approach to Savannah. In the early nineteenth century the marshes around Salter's Island were developed into rice fields. In the 1950s, the rice fields which surrounded the high ground on which the fort was sited were filled with dredge spoil from the Savannah River.

Physical Description

In their book, *A History of the Savannah District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*, Henry E. Barber and Allen R. Gann, note that prior to the construction of Fort James Jackson, the first defense for the city of Savannah was an earthen fort originally built by the Georgia Colonial Council in 1760, during the French and Indian War "on the eastern edge of the city on a bluff overlooking the river" (1989:32).

When the British occupied the city in 1778, this installation, called Fort Savannah, was fortified with 48 cannon and 43 mortars. After the Revolution it was renamed Fort Wayne in honor of General "Mad Anthony" Wayne, the Revolutionary War leader. It soon, however, fell into decay from disuse and disrepair [Barber and Gann 1989:32].

In 1806, foreseeing a future conflict between England and the United States, the City Council of Savannah ceded to the United States government the site of Fort Wayne, in hopes of the federal government expanding the defenses of the city. Over the next two years the government acquired numerous private parcels for construction of a large fortification, however, the government did not follow through with that project, and the city undertook the strengthening of Fort Wayne on its own (Barber and Gann 1989:32-33). In all probability, the reasoning of the Army Corps of Engineers was that Fort Wayne was too close to the city to provide adequate protection for Savannah. After all, in 1779 during the unsuccessful Franco-American siege of the

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 5

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

British-held city, French warships anchored in Five Fathom Hole, the future site of Fort Jackson, had shelled the city. What was needed was a defensive position further away and down river from the city.

Accordingly, in 1808 the United States Government purchased a 2.3 acre parcel of land, which was identified as Wharf Lot Number 12, from Nichol Turnbull, for \$1800, for the purpose of a new fortification to protect the river approach to Savannah. The site was previously occupied by a "mud fort" constructed in the Revolutionary War, about which little is known (Barber and Gann 1989:33).

Construction of Fort Jackson began late in 1808 under the direction of Captain William McRee of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This construction continued at different intervals being interrupted by lack of funds or fear of fever among the work force until completion of the fort in 1812.

Congress would apply the name of James Jackson to the masonry and earth fort being constructed at Five Fathom Hole, to honor the late Governor of the State of Georgia, who was a Revolutionary War veteran and United States Senator from Georgia (Brinson 1997:2). By 1809, the name of Fort Jackson was officially in use and the fort would continue to have this name except for the years between 1884 and 1905, when it was called Fort Oglethorpe (Kelso 1968:24).

The fort was garrisoned by local militia, such as the Chatham Artillery, as well as Federal troops during the War of 1812. The fort saw no action during the war. Federal troops and state militia were withdrawn from Fort Jackson in 1815. The condition of the fort in 1823 is clearly stated in a report to Major General Alexander Macomb. Since the fort was not altered during the interim period, this report gives an accurate description of its Second System appearance.

This fort consists of a battery, a palisade which enclosed it on the land side, barracks, magazines and a shot furnace. The battery has a development of masonry of 10 or 11 feet and a parapet of mud 17 or 18 feet thick. The platform is sustained by walls 3 feet thick and 12 feet apart. The development of the scarp is 100 yards that of the crest of the parapet or covering line is 78 yards with a height, above high water of about 21 feet.

The palisade is of square timbers rising 9 feet above the ground and pierced with loopholes: its development is 100 yards.

There are three wooden barracks of one story of which that marked A is 80 feet by 18 long outside to outside; that marked B, 105 feet by 10; and that marked C 109 feet by 15.

The magazines are under the platform; they are arched; covered with earth; and may be considered bombproof. There are two of them side by side each being 12 feet by 15. The [hot shot] furnace will hold 50 or 60 balls.

This fort having been exposed for years to the depredation of individuals, to the weather, and to the influx of the tide; the Board found, on their visit in March, 1821, the platform and ramp entirely rotten, the sides and roof of the Barrack A fallen in and the barracks B and C in a state of ruin. The scarp of the battery, the enclosing palisade, the two magazines, and the shot furnace were however well preserved.

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 6

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Fort Jackson to be put in good condition will require a new platform, a new Barracks for 75 men, a dike to exclude the water at high tide and certain reparation to the gates, and to the doors of the magazines [Anonymous 1823].

Until 1845, the Savannah District Corps of Engineers undertook periodic maintenance on the fort in order that it might support Fort Pulaski (built between 1829 and 1847) in the defense of Savannah. In 1845, Congress funded repairs to Fort James Jackson at the start of the conflict with Mexico, and "caused the War Department to have the old fort put into a state of readiness" (Barber and Gann 1989:53).

This work included the replacement of the wooden gun platform with masonry casemates to support a new barbette. The two original magazines were incorporated into these casemates without any alterations to their configuration. A new larger magazine was also built on the southwest end of the new casemates. The battery was raised on its front face about three feet. The wooden palisade was replaced by a 20 foot high brick curtain wall. The curtain wall was made three feet thick and pierced with loopholes with sandstone lintels and sills. Four demi bastions were also built into the curtain wall with embrasures, which could cover the curtain walls with howitzer fire. The entire perimeter of the battery and scarp walls was enclosed by a wet ditch, which is 20 feet wide and seven feet deep. The wet ditch was spanned by a drawbridge, which enters the fort through a sally port on the west face of the scarp wall (Mitchell 1970)

Inside the scarp on the fort parade ground, two brick enlisted mens barracks were built. A foundation for an officers barracks was laid out in the rear center of the parade, but this building was never completed.

Although these modifications were made to the fort during the Third System Period (post-1816), the original Second System masonry of Fort James Jackson remained largely unaltered. Furthermore, the Third System modifications were simply permanent replacements of brick for wood from the Second System construction. The Fort retains its basic Second System form as designed by McRee in 1808 (Barber and Gann 1982:53).

Although occupied by Confederate and Union forces in the Civil War, no permanent modification of the fortification structure took place during that conflict. Following the war the Army Corps of Engineers continued its program of periodic maintenance for the next half century.

In 1869, a Board of Engineers examined the coastal defenses of the United States in light of the recent Civil War and possible threats to the country from an outside armed force. It was clear that the Second and Third Systems of fortifications could not provide adequate coastal defense in the light of the development of rifled cannons. However, the recommendations of the 1869 Board were considered so expensive that little work was accomplished. Between 1869 and 1875 the Savannah District Corps of Engineers received sporadic sums for the preservation and repair of the coastal forts under their jurisdiction -- including Fort James Jackson (called Fort Oglethorpe from 1884 to 1905). It was during this period that a new magazine was constructed at the fort (Kelso 1968:24).

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 7

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

In describing the Savannah District forts (Forts Jackson, Pulaski, and Clinch), Barber and Gann note,

However, little had been accomplished when [Congressional] appropriations ceased, and work was reduced to essential maintenance. A few old-style smooth-bore guns remained at these forts, but these soon fell into disrepair and became unserviceable. In 1896 Captain Oberlin Carter complained that these three forts were ungarrisoned and two were cared for by only ordnance sergeants. "All these works are in a exceedingly bad condition, overgrown with weeds, and with woodwork rotten and falling," he wrote, "owing to the limited appropriations available, extensive repairs have not been possible for some years" [Barber and Gann 1989:212-213].

In 1925, Fort Jackson was purchased from the Federal Government by the City of Savannah for park purposes. In 1935, the Mayor of Savannah requested that the National Park Service undertake a feasibility study of Fort Jackson to determine whether it might be included as an outlying unit of Fort Pulaski National Monument. In the National Park Service report of October 12, 1936, Fort Jackson was described as follows:

Fort Jackson is a brick structure, roughly six-sided, but with one of the front faces divided into three slight angles. On the river side are three short faces, one parallel to the river, one leading southeastwardly, and one southwestwardly, roughly at thirty degree angles. Joining these walls are the side walls extending several hundred feet to the rear of the fort, and perpendicular to the bank of the river. The wall closing the rear of the fort, on the land side, has a pronounced bastion in each of its two angles [Young 1936].

The American Cyanamid Company acquired the fort in 1955 from the city as part of a larger tract of land. They later resold the fort to the state of Georgia for one dollar in 1965. Between 1965 and 1976 the fort was operated as a historic site for a maritime history museum by the Georgia Historic Commission (today called the Department of Natural Resources). During this period a modern addition was built to enclose the casemates, and the new space was used for museum exhibits. Other modern additions to the fort included paving the parapet with concrete and fiberglass, and the construction of a concrete and masonry stairway to admit visitors to the parapet. In 1976, the Coastal Heritage Society, through lease with the State of Georgia reopened the fort and is presently responsible for the fort's restoration and operation. By February of 1996, all of the 1960s museum additions were removed by the Coastal Heritage Society, and the fort returned to its 1865 condition (Smith 1991).

Integrity

Although modified in the mid-nineteenth century, Fort James Jackson still retains its essential Second System features as designed by Captain William McRee, of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in 1808. Nearly all of the Second System masonry construction remains intact with the exception of the powder magazine (1870s). The only noncontributing property within the boundary is an earth dike constructed sometime after the Second World War.

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 8

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X
 Statewide: ___ Locally: ___

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A X B ___ C ___ D ___

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F ___ G ___

NHL Criteria:

Criteria 1 and 4

NHL Theme(s):

- IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
 3. military institutions and activities
- VI. Expanding Science and Technology
 2. technological applications

Areas of Significance:

Military

Period(s) of Significance:

1808 to 1865

Significant Dates:

1808

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Captain William McRee

Historic Context:

- V. POLITICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS
 K. The Army and Navy
- VIII. TECHNOLOGY (ENGINEERING AND INVENTION)
 E. Military (Fortifications, Weapons, and War Vehicles)

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 9

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**Summary Statement of Significance**

Fort James Jackson was built by the United States Government between 1808 and 1812 to defend the harbor and city of Savannah, Georgia. It is nationally significant as one of only five surviving Second System Seacoast Fortifications. Most of the Second System forts were so radically redesigned by later defensive construction that little remains of their original works. Fort Jackson has nearly all of its Second System masonry, original design, and function intact. The fort was part of the Second System Seacoast Fortifications which defended the eastern and gulf coasts of the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century. Fort Jackson is a rare survival of the Second System as it contains most of its original design of 1808 and is unique in shape from other remaining Second System forts.

American Coastal Defense Systems

Pre-Revolutionary War and War of Independence coastal fortification design tended to be small, inexpensive, and temporary in nature, such as Fort Wayne constructed by Savannah on the east side of the city, or the "mud fort" -- about which little is known -- located on Salter's Island, and very often maintained only during periods of actual or perceived threat of war. In the 1790s, President George Washington asked Congress to appropriate funds for a series of coastal forts, later to be known as the First American System of fortifications, in response to concerns in the United States over the outbreak of general war in Europe. These forts were much like the pre-Revolutionary War forts -- "generally open works with earthen walls over which cannon could be fired" (Barber and Gann 1989:15). None of these First System fortifications were constructed in the Savannah area.

Fort Jackson would be constructed along the lines of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' recommendations for the Second System fortifications, which substituted brick masonry for earthen walls.

As a result of mounting tensions between the United States and Europe, in November 1807 a new fortification program was launched, and during the next five years Congress appropriated more than \$3 million for its implementation. These installations, which have been designed the Second System of fortifications, were the first major construction to be carried out by American engineers who were regular officers in the U.S. Army. Most of these men were recent graduates of the new Military Academy at West Point, which had been established in 1802 to train engineers in this country.

In terms of developments in Georgia, only one of the various types of Second System architecture was significant - the all-masonry fort. This dramatic departure from previous architectural styles was employed in building Fort Jackson near Savannah and proved to be the forerunner of a new generation of seacoast fortifications that would emerge after 1816. The all-masonry design allowed for greater protection of guns and gunners by locating the gun emplacements behind the thick masonry wall and providing openings (embrasures) through which the guns could be fired. Masonry construction also permitted the stacking of artillery emplacements in multiple tiers, thus increasing the overall firepower of the installation [Barber and Gann 1989:15].

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 10

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Twenty-six Second System fortifications were constructed to meet the emergency of the War of 1812, in thirteen states. Today, only five of these fortifications remain unaltered. Fort Columbus and Castle Williams, both in New York, are a star shaped fort and a circular fort of masonry, respectively. Castle Pinckney, in South Carolina, also is a circular fort. Fort Norfolk, in Virginia, combines the elements of a half circular fort with a bastion and enclosed perimeter. Fort Jackson is the only remaining Second System fortification built as a masonry gun battery. Jackson, originally built as a faceted semicircular battery with a palisade to protect its rear, is the least typical and most unique of the Second System masonry fortifications.

Historical Background of Fort Jackson

The earliest attempt to fortify the site adjacent to Five Fathom Hole was during the American Revolution. In September 1777 the Georgia Executive Council allocated \$3000 to build a fortification at Salter's Island. An artillery company was raised in Savannah to garrison this fortification known as the "mud fort," under the command of Thomas Lee. Lee died of yellow fever, contracted at the fort in February 1778, and it was abandoned due to its unhealthy location (Brinson 1997:1; Gaines n.d.).

The second effort to fortify the site was in 1808. The United States Government purchased from Nichol Turnbull the property known as Wharf Lot Number 12 for the sum of \$1800. Construction of a brick masonry battery was begun later that year under the direction of Captain William McRee, a recent graduate of West Point Military Academy. Work progressed on the fort until money ran out in 1810. In June of 1810, Captain McRee reported in a letter to the Secretary of War,

The wharf, with the barracks at Savannah and Fort Jackson are finished. To complete Fort Jackson agreeably to the plan originally proposed, there are required 140,000 bricks to be laid. The parapet of earth to be formed and the platform of wood to be erected [Bunting MS].

With the real possibility of war with England looming, work was resumed on Fort James Jackson in earnest, and the fort was rushed to completion in early 1812.

On June 26, 1812, McRee made application to the governor of Georgia for the necessary militia to garrison the newly finished Fort Jackson. By June 29th a company of state militia and a detachment of artillery occupied the fort. Wartime garrisons of Fort Jackson would include the following local militia companies; Chatham Artillery, Republican Blues, and the Heavy Artillery Company. The fort was also garrisoned by elements of the 8th Regiment United States Infantry until 1815 (Wade 1976).

In 1821, the fort was again garrisoned this time by Company H, 4th United States Heavy Artillery. Due to the unhealthy location of Fort Jackson the garrison suffered greatly from Yellow Fever. The U.S. Health Officer used Five Fathom Hole, opposite Fort Jackson as a quarantine ground and forced all vessels to stop there until 1827 (Barber and Gann 1989:33).

In 1846, due to the defensive needs brought on by the Mexican-American War, the US Army Engineer Department, under Major General Joseph Totten, recommended refitting Fort Jackson, and Congress appropriated funds for the work. This was necessary regardless of the completion of a large Third System fortification at the mouth of the Savannah River. This new fortification

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 11

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

for Savannah, Fort Pulaski (a National Monument since 1933), only guarded the north and south approaches of the Savannah River through Tybee Sound. Hostile vessels could still reach Savannah by Warsaw Sound and advance up the Wilmington River and enter the Savannah River well above Fort Pulaski. Fort Jackson was necessary to guard this approach.

Under the direction of the Savannah District Corps of Engineers, periodic maintenance and other work would continue on Fort Jackson from 1846 until 1860. Work was conducted on the site only during the winter months to avoid the fever season. During this period brick scarp walls were built to replace the former wooden palisade at the rear of the main battery, a casemate was built to support a new gun platform, and a wet ditch or moat was built surrounding the entire work. The portion of the moat to the front of the battery actually extended into the river, being separated only by the counter scarp wall. Located on the northwest face of this counter scarp, a tide tunnel was built to feed water into the moat. A wharf was constructed at the end of the tide tunnel as a point to land supplies and personnel at the site. A large powder magazine was also built to supplement the two others built under McRee. The magazine was built with a gabled roof and located on the southwest end of the casemates (Bunting MS).

By 1859, two brick enlisted mens barracks had been completed on the east and west sides of the parade ground. An officers' barracks was also commenced and built as high as the window sills. Earlier that year a hot shot furnace was built at the base of the casemate stairs, behind the battery (Bunting MS).

In 1860, progress on Fort Jackson was slowed. Superintending Engineer William Henry Chase Whiting reported that the only work needing completion was the officers' barracks and platforms and roofs for the flank howitzers. This work was not completed before work was suspended in 1860.

Word of the occupation of Fort Sumter by federal troops reached Savannah on 10 December 1860, already a hot bed for secession. On January 3, 1861 Georgia State civil officials demanded the keys and took possession of both Forts Jackson and Pulaski from their federal caretakers. On January 26, 1861, a company of Georgia state militia was sent to garrison Fort Jackson. A.R. Lawton later became concerned about the exposed position of the Georgia troops at Fort Pulaski. In a letter to H.C. Wayne he wrote, "The position of Fort Jackson, between this work [Fort Pulaski] and the City of Savannah, has caused some uneasiness among our people . . ." (Lawrence 1961:20).

On April 21, 1861, South Carolina troops fired on Fort Sumter commencing the Civil War. The first months of the war were uneventful at Fort Jackson, although the rebel garrison had their trials. A letter to the editor of the *Savannah Daily Morning News* describes the continuing problem of the fort's unhealthy location,

Why is it that the troops at Fort Jackson have not had any favors extended to them? They are in the midst of the rice fields, where mosquitoes are as thick as rice and as large as humming birds. Each and every one of them should have a mosquito bar. Let the parties having the funds in charge take notice and govern themselves as they should under the circumstances [Daily Morning News, May 16, 1861].

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 12

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

With Fort Pulaski at the mouth of the Savannah River there was no great urgency to improve the position at Fort Jackson. However, on November 8, 1861, events in Port Royal Sound, South Carolina would change the lax attitudes in Savannah. With the bombardment and capture of Hilton Head Island by Union forces, the blockade of the South Atlantic coast began to be felt in the city.

In November of 1861, the Confederate blockade runner *Fingal* entered the Savannah River. In its holds was the largest single military cargo to enter the Confederacy during the war. Also on board were James D. Bullock and Edward C. Anderson. This was the first blockade running mission for Bullock, who purchased many ships and munitions in Europe for the Confederacy during the war. Anderson would become a major figure in the role of Fort Jackson in the Savannah River defenses. However, Anderson's first impression of the fort was less than flattering.

The troops cheered us as we passed Fort Jackson, garrisoned by the Blues at the time under my brother (John Wayne), and with Jake Reid's Company of (Georgia) Regulars. I smiled as I looked at the guns on the parapet. They were mounted between two logs placed parallel with each other, with the trunnions of the cannon supported upon them. They could never have been fired without jumping off into the area of the fort [Hoole 1976:99].

In overall charge of strengthening the Savannah River defenses in 1862 was General Robert E. Lee. Lee would make several inspection trips to Fort Jackson during this assignment. One of Lee's recommendations was the Confederate evacuation of the barrier islands. Lee felt the islands were vulnerable to Union naval attack, which was demonstrated at Port Royal. With the evacuation of Tybee Island the Federals began erecting siege batteries to attack Fort Pulaski. On April 11, 1862, Fort Pulaski fell after a 30 hour bombardment. With the fall of Fort Pulaski, Savannah was threatened with capture. Fort Jackson and its dependent batteries became the front line of defense of the city.

Had the Federals attacked up the Savannah River in the summer of 1862, they would have more than likely taken Savannah. However, two things prevented this attack. First, a major outbreak of Yellow Fever hit the coastal region of Georgia. This outbreak affected both the Federal and Confederate forces. Second, the Federals became aware of the launching of the ironclad ram *C.S.S. Georgia*. The Federal Navy had great respect for these Rebel ironclads, as the *C.S.S. Virginia*, had demonstrated their abilities earlier. Only later would it be realized that the *Georgia* was a failure as a warship. Its engines could not even push it against an incoming tide. It, therefore, had to be towed to a defensive position next to Fort Jackson, where it served as a floating battery to protect the flanks of the fort.

On October 1, 1862, two Union steamers, the *Planter* and *Starlight*, under the command of Col. W.B. Barton moved up the Savannah River on a reconnaissance mission. In addition, to acquiring information about the Savannah River defenses, Barton wished to destroy some Confederate steamboats working on the construction of river obstructions near Elba Island, just downstream from Fort Jackson. Upon being fired on by the Union steamers, the Confederate steamboats retreated upstream and anchored under the protection of Fort Jackson.

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 13

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

The *Planter*, was piloted by a former slave Robert Smalls,¹ who had earlier stolen this ship from his masters in Charleston harbor, and turned it over to the Union Navy for their Barrier Island campaign. Now the *Planter* began firing shells at Fort Jackson at extreme range with a 30 pounder Parrot Rifle. Fort Jackson could not return this fire due to the extreme range, however, a supporting battery at Causton's Bluff, about a mile to Fort Jackson's rear, fired on the Union vessels. A few shots from the *Planter* silenced the battery at Causton's Bluff, and firing continued on Fort Jackson. According to local Savannah newspapers, the firing lasted about one hour, and over 100 shots were fired at the fort. Fort Jackson sustained little or no damage during the attack (*Savannah Republican*, October 2, 1862).

Throughout its occupation by Confederate troops, Fort Jackson had many different garrison units attached to it. Among the units to garrison the fort were the 4th Louisiana, the 1st Georgia Volunteers, and the 1st Georgia Regulars. By 1863, it was decided that the river batteries needed a semi-permanent garrison. This led to the formation of the 22nd Battalion Georgia Artillery. It was made up of six companies which served throughout the Savannah area. Companies A and B served at Fort Jackson, and Company A was part of the fort's last Confederate garrison.

The following year the fort would receive one of its most distinguished visitors. On October 31, 1863 President Jefferson Davis visited Savannah. During his visit, President Davis along with Brigadier General Hugh Mercer, Major General Jermy F. Gilmer, Commodore William W. Hunter, and Colonel E.C. Anderson toured the Savannah River defenses on the steamer *Beauregard*. At Fort Jackson, the Confederate President was greeted with a twenty-one gun salute. After a brief stop at the fort the presidential entourage continued on to Thunderbolt battery and later to Fort Boggs (*Daily Morning News*, November 2, 1863).

At the height of their preparedness the Confederates in Savannah had developed an impressive defensive system for the city. This included a series of earth batteries guarding all river approaches to the city. Fort Jackson served as Headquarters for this river defense. These approaches were further guarded by river obstructions, which were protected by underwater mines. The rivers were also patrolled by a fleet of warships, among which were the ironclads *C.S.S. Savannah and Georgia*. The overall defense network served Savannah well as it continued to keep the Union fleet at bay. However, in late 1864 Savannah would feel a new threat from landward.

After the capture of the City of Atlanta, General William T. Sherman began his famous March to the Sea, which would culminate at Savannah. By December 1, 1864, as General Sherman's Union troops approached Savannah, Confederate General William J. Hardee's nearly 12,000 troops were all that separated Sherman from resupply by the Union Navy. Hardee ordered an evacuation of the city and Fort Jackson on December 20, 1864, rather than risk losing his army by defending the city against superior forces. As the Confederate troops moved north into South Carolina, they burned the enlisted mens barracks, spiked the guns of Fort Jackson, and threw their ammunition into the moat. On the same day the ironclad *C.S.S. Georgia*, being unable to escape was sunk by its own crew at Five Fathom Hole next to the fort (Bunting MS).

¹The Robert Smalls House, at 511 Prince Street, in Beaufort, South Carolina was designated a National Historic Landmark on May 30, 1973. Smalls lived in this house both as a slave and a free man. After the Civil War he served in the South Carolina legislature and in Congress.

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 14

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

The fort was occupied by troops of the 28th Regiment Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteer Infantry and the 29th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry on the morning of December 21, 1864. Upon raising the Stars and Strips over the fort, the new garrison was greeted with several shells from the ironclad *C.S.S. Savannah*. The attack on the fort was brief, as the *Savannah* soon advanced up the river to attack other Federal positions. Unable to escape, the *Savannah* was later scuttled by her crew.

On January 16, 1865, the Union garrison at Fort Jackson was relieved by Companies C, D, and F of the 55th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry of African Descent. These troops were recently engaged in the Battle of Honey Hill. They spent their time at the fort putting it into some sort of fighting order by remounting the cannon. On February 1, 1865, the Regiment departed from Fort Jackson for Morris Island, South Carolina (Anonymous 1991:50).

Upon hearing of the news on April 11, 1865 of the fall of Richmond the river batteries fired salutes of victory. The salutes were begun by the Union warship *Pontiac*, with Fort Jackson making the first reply of the Army. This is believed to be the last occasion on which the fort's guns were fired.

In the months following the end of the war, the Army inspected Fort Jackson on several occasions. These inspections were to supervise the removal of Confederate ordnance in the moat and to determine the place of the fort in the future needs of coastal defense. In 1867 the fort was briefly used again as a port quarantine station.

By the 1870s there was renewed interest in modernizing Fort Jackson. In 1872 new armament was requested by General A.A. Humphreys, Chief of Engineers. Three 10 inch Rodmans and two 100 pounder Parrot guns were requested for Fort Jackson. On July 29, 1873, Q.A. Gilmore requested four 15 inch guns with front pintle carriages for the fort. The Engineers Annual Report of 1876-77 states that five guns were in position, but not the caliber contemplated in the approved projects. An appropriation of \$10,000 was requested for the following year. By 1884 Fort Jackson was occupied by a caretaker for which \$480 had been designated.

It was also in 1884 that the Army changed the name of the fort to Fort Oglethorpe. It kept this title until War Department General Order No. 10, dated January of 1905 assigned the name Oglethorpe to an active military base in North Georgia.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States began to prepare herself for another conflict. Fort Jackson (Oglethorpe) would make its final contribution for National Defense during the Spanish-American War. Early in this conflict, southern port cities were concerned about being attacked by Spanish warships, so the Army relocated many guns to calm the fears of the populace. In April 1898 the Fort Jackson guns were removed from the fort with some difficulty. While removing the guns, two fell into the moat and were later salvaged with barges. The guns were sent to Brunswick, Georgia for the defense of that port (Savannah Evening News April 16, 1898).

In 1923, Congress authorized the disposal of Fort Jackson as surplus property. In June 1925 the City of Savannah purchased the property for the purpose of using the property as a park. The

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 15National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Great Depression interrupted these plans. Shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War, Fort Jackson was acquired by the Southeastern Shipyards, along with a parcel of river front property. Southeastern was Savannah's largest single employer during the war and produced over 80 Liberty ships and minesweepers.

The fort was purchased in 1955 by the American Cyanamid Company. American Cyanamid tried to encourage any historic group to take the fort site for a public park, but did not receive any interest in their proposal. Finally, when Cyanamid threatened to sell the fort for scrap brick, Judge Alexander A. Lawrence and a group of concerned Savannah citizens lobbied the State of Georgia to purchase the property (Bunting MS).

In 1965 the property was purchased by the Georgia Historical Commission. Shortly thereafter the Commission began developing the property as a site for a historical museum, opened in 1969. After opening the fort to the public for about five years, the State closed the site due to state budget problems in 1975. The following year a small citizen based group proposed to operate the site and reopen it to the public. On Labor Day 1976, the fort reopened under the operation of the Coastal Heritage Society. The Society continues to operate the fort, under a lease agreement with the State of Georgia, and is dedicated to interpreting the history of the fort and the people associated with it.

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 16

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 17

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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1991 Fort Jackson Master Plan. Copy on file with Coastal Heritage Society, Savannah, Georgia.

Wade, Arthur P.

1976 Letter to Scott Smith concerning research on Fort Jackson. Copy on file with Coastal Heritage Society, Savannah, Georgia. December 3rd.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 Previously Listed in the National Register. February 18, 1970
 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(Specify Repository): Coastal Heritage Society
P.O. Box 1153
Savannah, Georgia 31402

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 18

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 7.8 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Northing	Easting
	17	3549340	496590

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the southwest corner of the Fort Jackson structure, then south thirty-two degrees thirteen minutes. West a distance of four hundred and eight and three tenths (408.3) feet to a concrete monument, said concrete monument being the southwest property corner of said tract and being the point of beginning: thence north thirty-one degrees no minutes west four hundred and seventy-seven (477) feet, more or less to the mean low water mark of the south bank of the Savannah River, thence in an eastwardly direction following the mean low water mark along the southern bank of the Savannah River and along the masonry retaining wall of Fort Jackson to a point on the southern bank of the Savannah River thence south thirty-one degrees no minutes east three hundred and sixty-six (366) feet, more or less to a concrete monument, said concrete monument being the southeast property corner of said tract, thence south fifty-nine degrees no minutes west seven hundred and fifty (750) feet to a concrete monument at the southwest property corner of the tract hereby conveyed, the point of the beginning: all of which will appear by reference to a map of said tract of land made by Sewell & Associates, Inc. for the American Cyanamid Company, dated April 16, 1965, which is recorded in the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Chatham County, Georgia, in plat Record Book O, Folio 108.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary for Fort Jackson includes the masonry fort, its tidal moat, and counter scarp walls. This represents the total nationally significant properties associated with Fort James Jackson.

FORT JAMES JACKSON

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 19

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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Org.: N/A

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Date: August 21, 1998

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NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY