

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 2 1978

DATE ENTERED SEP 20 1978

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 Fort Proctor \*\*

AND/OR COMMON

Fort Beauregard

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

N of Shell Beach  
Near Old Shell Beach on Lake Borgne

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Shell Beach, La. VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st Robert Livingston

STATE

Louisiana

CODE

22

COUNTY

St. Bernard

CODE

087 ✓

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

\_\_\_DISTRICT

\_\_\_PUBLIC

\_\_\_OCCUPIED

\_\_\_AGRICULTURE

\_\_\_MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

\_\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_\_PARK

\_\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_\_BOTH

\_\_\_WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_\_EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_\_SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_\_ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_\_RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_OBJECT

\_\_\_IN PROCESS

\_\_\_YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_NO

\_\_\_MILITARY

OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Shell Beach Properties, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER 1000 South Carrollton Avenue

CITY, TOWN New Orleans

VICINITY OF

STATE

Louisiana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. St. Bernard Parish Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Chalmette

STATE

Louisiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Louisiana Historic Sites Survey

DATE 1978

\_\_\_FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_COUNTY \_\_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN Baton Rouge

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		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The work (or fort) at Proctor's Landing was built on the southern shore of Lake Borgne along a road which ran beside Bayou Terre aux Boeufs. The road and the bayou were both major means of access to the city of New Orleans, and thus a potential invasion route. Today the setting is open, flat, and marshy, much as it was when the fort was built. The only difference is that the land has receded and Lake Borgne has partially engulfed approximately two-thirds of the outer earthworks. The area is, however, completely free of modern intrusions.

The fort was designed as a two-story, square plan tower with four main guns mounted on a parapeted roof terrace. Although the two lower floors were to serve principally as living quarters, eight smaller guns were to be mounted on the second floor. These were to be placed in pairs at the corners. The fort was only completed to a level of 1½ stories. The first floor has a central entrance on the east side which would have been reached by a drawbridge. The magazine is in the center, surrounded by soldiers' quarters. The quarters show considerable concern for comfort. There are vertical slits in the outside walls, which were to be mounted with windows to provide adequate light. Bathrooms were to be installed near the outside walls, with a complete plumbing system. Some of the pipes were installed, but nothing else. Plans also called for paneled doors, fireplaces and other amenities, though these were never installed.

The fort rests upon a spreading brick base, with cisterns below. Sixteen brick piers rise from the base and terminate about six feet above the second floor level. These piers were to support massive groin vaults, which would in turn have supported the gun platform on the roof. The outer walls are also of Flemish bonded brick, approximately four feet thick. Cast iron beams, which resemble modern "I" beams, were installed to support the second floor. They were to have segmental brick vaults running between, but these were never built. The fenestration features granite lintels and sills.

Although plans called for a number of decorative features, including molded doorways and mantels, the only one which was actually installed was a Renaissance Revival doorway at the entrance.

# 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 checked="" 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		

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### SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT J. G. Totten, H. A. Wright,  
P. G. T. Beaugard

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Proctor is significant because it was part of the United States' coastal fortification system prior to the Civil War and also because of certain features of its architecture which were unusual in the design of American forts.

Although Fort Proctor was never completed, the existing work embodies two innovations in fortification design. 1) Full and comfortable living quarters for the soldiers, including bathrooms, were incorporated into the design. In most other forts, the soldiers' living quarters were very restricted and were used only in times of seige. 2) The use of structural iron was unusual in forts in the era before the Civil War. When Joseph G. Totten assumed command of the Army Corps of Engineers in 1838, he instituted a program to improve the technology of fort construction. This program involved in part the use of structural iron, and it is Fort Proctor which best represents this aspect of the improvement program, since no other fort used structural iron to such a great extent.

In the years after the War of 1812, Congress authorized the development of a permanent national system of forts to defend routes which could be used for invasion. (See the attached map, which is page 87 of Willard B. Robinson's American Forts.) Regional fortifications for the defense of New Orleans were conceived as integral links of this extensive national chain.

The board of engineers, led by Simon Bernard (1779-1838), recommended that a chain of forts and batteries be constructed at strategic locations around New Orleans to block potential invasion routes to the city. To protect the approach up the Mississippi River, a work (later named Fort Jackson) was projected for the Plaquemines, opposite Fort St. Philip, the only colonial work to be retained in the system. To defend the northern water communication to New Orleans through Lake Borgne and Lake Pontchartrain, works were projected respectively for Rigolets Pass (Fort Pike) and Chef Menteur Pass (Fort Wood, later renamed Fort Macomb). To defend Baratavia Bay, a work was projected for Grand Terre Island (Fort Livingston). To defend the pass used by the English in 1814, a work was projected for Bayou Bienvenue (Battery Bienvenue). To defend a channel leading to New Orleans to the south of Bienvenue, a tower was projected for Bayou Dupre.<sup>1</sup>

It was not until the mid-1840's that Proctor's Landing began to claim attention as a possible invasion route. At that time, the entire system of seacoast defense was undergoing reevaluation in light of new developments in naval architecture. Several sites previously considered too shallow for

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Coastal Environments, Inc.  
 "1976 Resource Management: St. Bernard Parish Wetlands," report submitted to the  
 St. Bernard Parish Police Jury, Baton Rouge.  
 1856 letter to J. G. Totten from General P. G. T. Beauregard, National Archives,  
 Army and Navy Branch.  
 Senate Documents, Volume 7, #509, Report of J. G. Totten.  
 (See continuation sheet)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ QUADRANGLE SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	2,4,1	2,9,0	3,3	0,6	9,2,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING					ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C							D			
E							F			
G							H			

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The site is bounded by the outer walls of the earthworks of the fort.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Eileen K. Burden, Archaeologist

Revised by  
John Easterly

ORGANIZATION

Coastal Environments, Inc.

DATE

March 1978

STREET & NUMBER

1260 Main Street

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Baton Rouge

STATE

Louisiana

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Bernard James*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

25 April 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*R. B. Rethy*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

9/20/78

ATTEST:

*William Labovich*

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

Sept 18, 1978

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Fort Proctor

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8. Significance (cont'd)

navigation were added to the network to defend against the passage of steam-powered vessels with light draft. Proctor's Landing, along with Ship Island (Fort Massachusetts), became part of the revised system for defending New Orleans.

Appropriations for the work at Proctor's Landing were requested in 1847, but funds were not made available for nearly a decade due to widespread skepticism over the strength of the system. Throughout the late 1840's and early 1850's, this skepticism made the forts, including Fort Proctor, low priorities for Congressional appropriations. But it was finally decided that the internal system should be continued and in 1856 work began on Fort Proctor. Satisfactory progress was made in the years immediately following, but a hurricane in 1860 retarded construction. When the state seized Fort Proctor at the beginning of the Civil War, it was still unfinished.<sup>2</sup>

Fort Proctor was a minor lookout post in the Civil War and played no significant role.<sup>3</sup> The reason why the fort was not completed after 1865 was related to the war's impact on ideas about fortification. It seems that the skepticism which had made the forts low priorities in the years after the Mexican War was justified. "Rifled cannons had virtually made obsolete all the forts that had been a part of the permanent system; fortifications based on theory that had taken centuries to develop no longer appeared adequate. Since walls of masonry could not long withstand the terrific impact of rifled cannons, the effect of these weapons on the architecture of forts in North America was to be as revolutionary as the invention of smoothbore cannons had been centuries earlier in Europe."<sup>4</sup>

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9. Bibliography (cont'd)

American Forts: Architectural Form and Function, by Willard B. Robinson.  
Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977.

Interviews with Powell Casey and Willard B. Robinson, 19 April 1978.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

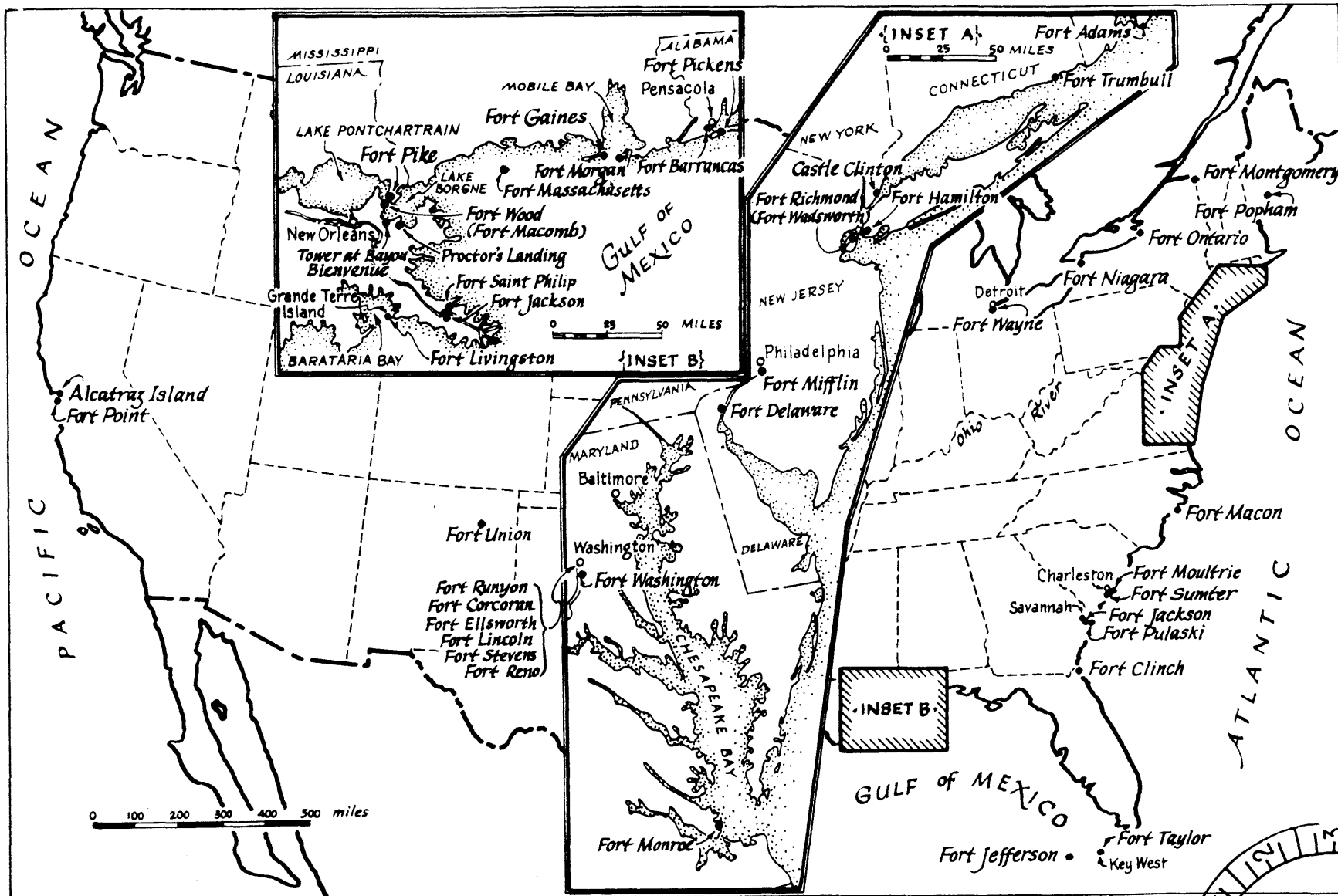
ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

NOTES

1. Willard B. Robinson, "Maritime Frontier Engineering: The Defense of New Orleans," Louisiana History 18 (Winter 1977): 24-31. Hereinafter cited as Robinson, "Maritime Frontier Engineering."
2. Robinson, "Maritime Frontier Engineering," 52-55; Interview with Powell Casey, 19 April 1978. Hereinafter cited as "Casey Interview."
3. Casey Interview.
4. Willard B. Robinson, American Forts: Architectural Form and Function (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 126. In his interview, Casey also gave this reason for the fort's abandonment.

Fort Proctor



The Permanent System

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