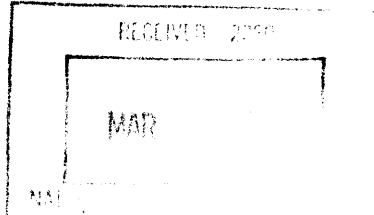


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 functions, 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 Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou

other names/site number Fort Humbug; Fort Scurry

2. Location

street & number LA HWY 1, @ 1 1/2 miles west of Simmesport NA not for publication

city or town Simmesport XX vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Avoyelles code 009 zip code 71369

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 the 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.)

Jonathan Fricker 3/4/97
Signature of certifying official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Date

Deputy SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
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

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): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

M. J. M. [Signature]

4/17/97

Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou
Name of Property

Avoyelles Parish, LA
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	
	4	buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
1	4	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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Defense/Fortification

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture/outdoor recreation/
park & picnic area

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____
walls earth _____
roof _____
other _____

Narrative Description

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

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou, Avoyelles Parish, LA
Section number 7 Page 1

Confederate Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou is a relatively small earthwork fortification associated with the Civil War's Red River Campaign. Built by Confederate soldiers under the command of Brigadier General William R. Scurry during the winter of 1863-1864, it is located along the west bank of Yellow Bayou near Louisiana Highway 1 in the eastern section of Avoyelles Parish near Simmesport. Called Fort No. 2 on military maps of the era, the candidate originally had a sister fortification which stood approximately a quarter mile to its north on one bank of Bayou Des Glaises. This sister earthwork was called Fort No. 1 on the previously mentioned map. Although the names Fort Scurry and Fort Humbug also have been applied to the two forts (the latter because the soldiers who built them supposedly believed that the forts would never see action), both resources are referred to in the *Atlas of the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion* as the Yellow Bayou Forts. Only Fort No. 2 is included in this nomination; Fort No. 1 was partially destroyed by Union troops during the Red River campaign. Later its destruction was completed by home construction and farming activities. Although Fort No. 2 has experienced natural deterioration and adaptation for use as a parish park, it remains eligible for National Register listing.

Nineteenth century American forts were constructed in different shapes according to their location and purpose. Common shapes used in Louisiana during the Civil War included circles, squares, triangles, and continuous lines with projecting angles and indentations. The latter were called indented or cremaillere forts; their angles allowed marksmen to fire in different directions at advancing enemy troops attempting to climb the earthwork wall (see map).

Although the overall shapes of earthwork fortifications were different, a typical pattern of construction was used to build each fort's walls. Each wall consisted of two contiguous lines. The first was in the form of a deep ditch (also known as a dry moat). The second line consisted of a mound which was formed by dirt excavated from the ditch. Known as a parapet, the mound protected the area behind it from artillery fire and elevated troops to a higher and better position from which to defend the fort. No matter what its overall shape, the fort always had at least one, and perhaps several, large acute or projecting 60 degree angles, each of which was called a redan. The redan was the spot meant for the placement of cannon. Approximately 1,300 feet long and six to eight feet high, Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou is a fairly typical example of the cremaillere type of fortification. For its precise configuration and relationship to Yellow Bayou, see the attached sketch map.

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**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou, Avoyelles Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 2

The passage of 130 years has taken a surprisingly small toll on the earthwork itself. The parapet and ditch have been plowed away in two places. However, these openings are relatively small when compared to the entire length of the wall. The parapet has also suffered some erosion in some areas, but most of the earthwork walls are taller than a person and still illustrate their role as a protective device. Parts of the ditch have been taken over by vegetation but most of it is clearly visible.

The use of the land around the earthwork as a park has had some effect upon the resource. The area is now served by a series of dirt paths which connect with two wooden foot bridges crossing the parapet. Buildings added to the site include a covered wooden observation platform fronted by a concrete landing (located atop the angle which forms the fort's western terminus), a large cooking pavilion, a restroom facility, and a covered platform which protects a drinking fountain. A few picnic tables and benches, as well as a concrete pad with a barbecue pit, are scattered about the site. With the exception of the bridges and the overlook, none of these admitted intrusions actually stand atop the Civil War earthworks. The majority of the resource remains intact and easily identifiable. As a result, any veteran of the army which built Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou would recognize the earthwork if he were to return to the site today. As a rare example of a resource associated with the Red River Campaign, Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou is a viable candidate for National Register listing.

CONTRIBUTING/NON-CONTRIBUTING BREAKDOWN

1 contributing structure (the fort)

4 non-contributing buildings (covered wooden observation platform, cooking pavilion, restroom, covered platform protecting drinking fountain)

Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou
Name of Property

Avoyelles Parish, LA
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.)

N/A

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

military

Period of Significance

12/15/1863-3/12/1864

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Builder: Confederate troops of

General William R. Scurry

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou
Name of Property

Avoyelles Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 8 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 5	6 1 0 6 0 0	3 4 2 8 9 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date October 1996

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Simmesport, Office of the Mayor

street & number P. O. Box 145 telephone (318) 941-2493

city or town Simmesport state LA zip code 71369

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.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou, Avoyelles Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

Confederate Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou is significant in the area of military history at the state level because it is a rare surviving earthwork representing the Red River Campaign, which was a major Union initiative within Louisiana. The significant dates for the nomination range from December 15, 1863 (the date construction began) to March 12, 1864 (the date Confederate troops abandoned the almost completed fortification--see below).

The Red River Campaign was the Union army's 1864 attempt to occupy Shreveport and invade Texas. A route approximating the path of the Red River was chosen for the invasion because the Union's previous attempts to enter Texas along its coastline and through Southwestern Louisiana had failed. Shreveport was a target because at that time it was serving as the state capital of Louisiana as well as the headquarters of the Confederate army west of the Mississippi River. In addition, the city contained several small manufacturing establishments which were contributing to the Confederate war effort. These included factories producing small arms, ammunition, and artillery projectiles, as well as a small naval yard where the Confederate ironclad *CSS Missouri* had been built. Once successful in capturing Shreveport and neutralizing these factories, Union officers planned to leave a garrison in the Louisiana town and move the rest of the troops forward into East Texas toward the towns of Marshall and Tyler. Reasons for invading Texas included the possibility of securing a large and reliable cotton crop for northeastern mills and the need to prevent the possible intervention of France in the Civil War on the side of the Confederacy. This threat seemed very real after August 1863, by which date French troops had occupied Mexico and made it a puppet state under France's hand-picked ally, Archduke Maximilian, formerly of Austria. Statesmen apparently believed that a Texas held in Union hands would prevent cooperation among the governments of Mexico, France and the Confederacy. It may have been these considerations which caused then General-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck to order his subordinates to stage the Texas invasion. However, the campaign's opening was delayed until March 1864 while Union generals planned and negotiated among themselves to get more troops for the initiative.

The invasion plans (including the proposed route) of the Union army could not be kept secret, and the Union delay gave Confederate forces time to take measures designed to defend central and northwest Louisiana. These measures included the probing of the state for additional troops, the transfer of troops from Texas to Alexandria, an order that civilians remove property which might be useful to Union troops, and the construction of a series of earthen forts along the expected invasion route. In addition to Forts No. 1 and No. 2 at Yellow Bayou, these forts included DeRussy (located north of Marksville in Avoyelles Parish) and a series of six to eight

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Continuation Sheet**

Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou, Avoyelles Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 2

encircling Shreveport and Bossier City. A pre-existing fort at Grand Ecore (northwest of Natchitoches) may also have figured in Confederate defense plans.

The campaign finally opened on March 10, 1864, when Union troops stationed at Vicksburg moved via transports down the Mississippi River to Simmesport, in Avoyelles Parish. Simmesport was chosen as the starting point because the Mississippi, Atchafalaya, and Red rivers converge nearby. The troops, under the command of Brigadier General Andrew J. Smith, were accompanied from Vicksburg by a large Union fleet under the command of Admiral David D. Porter. Smith's men began disembarking for a march toward Marksville on the 12th, and soon thereafter the Union fleet began to steam up the Red River.

The Yellow Bayou Forts had been sited near Simmesport partly because the Confederates believed that nearby swamps would help prevent or impede the forward march of the Union army. However, during March 1864 the swamps were dry, basically making the forts useless. In addition, some sources suggest that Confederate General Richard Taylor, in charge of the Confederate defense, never believed the two small forts could defend against a serious Federal initiative and gave standing orders for the troops to retreat when faced with a major Union advance. Thus, the badly outnumbered troops at the Yellow Bayou Forts withdrew when word of Banks' arrival at Simmesport reached them.

After partially destroying Fort No. 1, Union forces took Fort DeRussy near Marksville on March 14. Then Smith's troops and Porter's gunboats proceeded to Alexandria, where they met Major General Nathaniel P. Banks' army marching from south Louisiana. The troops arrived at Grand Ecore near Natchitoches on April 3. At this point, General Banks, under pressure to take Shreveport by April 25, 1864, or lose the additional troops loaned to him for the campaign, decided to abandon the river route in favor of a shorter route through Mansfield. However in a stunning victory, Confederate forces stopped the advancing troops at Mansfield and pursued them all the way back to Avoyelles Parish near Simmesport. The last battle of this pursuit took place in the vicinity of Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou, but scholars cannot pinpoint it as having occurred exactly at the surviving earthworks. Because the Union army and fleet escaped from the Confederates, this last battle is deemed a Federal victory. However, the outcome of the broader Red River Campaign was a defeat for Union forces.

Although Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou never saw action in the Red River Campaign, its rarity as an example of military earthworks and its good condition make it eligible for National

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Continuation Sheet**

Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou, Avoyelles Parish, LA
Section number 8 Page 3

Register listing. By their very nature, earthworks are subject to deterioration caused by the ravages of time and inclement weather. In addition, most of those located in rural areas have been plowed under by farmers wishing to use every inch of their land to grow crops. Finally, most of those once located in or near cities were long ago the victims of destruction by construction projects. Thus, of the various fortifications associated with the Red River Campaign, only two survive in identifiable form. According to Dr. Art Bergeron, an expert on the Civil War in Louisiana, all but two of the ring of forts once surrounding Shreveport are gone, and one must know that an earthwork existed and search the landscape carefully in order to identify the remains of the two which partially survive. Dr. Bergeron states that the fortification at Grand Ecore was altered so many times during the war that it can no longer be attributed to the Red River Campaign. Only two Red River Campaign forts survive in relatively good condition. These are Fort DeRussy and Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou. As a rare resource illustrating the Civil War Red River Campaign, Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou is a legitimate candidate for National Register listing.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou, Avoyelles Parish, LA

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cowles, Calvin D., compiler. *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891-1895.

Mayeux, Steven M. "A Report on the Origin and Initial History of Fort Humbug, Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana," typescript; copy in National Register file.

McGregory, Lt. S. E. "Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou, LA," historic Civil War map, New York: E. Brown & Son, Steel Plate #2; copy in National Register file.

_____. "Fort No. 1 at Mouth of Yellow Bayou," historic Civil War map; copy in National Register file.

"Reconnoissances [sic] Red River Country," historic Civil War map; copy in National Register file.

Rooney, William E. "The Battle of Yellow Bayou," typescript; copy in National Register file.

Site visit by National Register staff.

Telephone interview, dated 10/24/96, with Art Bergeron, former director of interpretation for the Louisiana Office of State Parks. Dr. Bergeron is an expert on the Civil War in Louisiana; transcript in National Register file.

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Continuation Sheet

Fort No. 2 at Yellow Bayou, Avoyelles Parish, LA
Section number 10 Page 1

Boundary Description: See enclosed sketch map.

Justification: Boundaries were chosen to discretely encompass the extent of the fort.

FORT NO. 2 AT YELLOW BAYOU

Simmesport vicinity, Avoyelles Parish, LA

SCALE: 1" = 100'

BOUNDARY: 

NON-CONTRIBUTING
ELEMENTS:

- A = Well House
- B = Restrooms
- C = Cooking Pavilion
- D = Modern Overlook

