

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Florida</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Monroe</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Fort Zachary Taylor**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Fort Zachary Taylor**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Naval Station**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Key West**

STATE: <b>Florida</b>	CODE	COUNTY: <b>Monroe</b>	CODE
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <b>Storage</b>
			Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Department of the Navy**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**c/o Chief of Naval Operations**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Washington**

STATE:  
**D.C.**

CODE:  
**20350**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Engineering Division, Public Works Dept.**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Naval Station**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Key West**

STATE:  
**Florida**

CODE:

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**National Register**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1970**     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Division of Archives, History and Records Management**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Department of State 401 East Gaines Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Tallahassee**

STATE:  
**Florida**

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Fort Taylor is a product of the Bernard Board system of harbor defenses devised in 1821. Most of the fortifications resulting from the Board were replacement and restoration of older works. Fort Taylor was one of the few entirely new coastal defenses. Some of the principal forts of the system are the most spectacular defense structures to come out of any era of military architecture. These fortifications were a large group of massive walled forts embodying structural durability, heavy armament, and enormous firepower.

The original structure, largely built between 1844 and 1850, was reached by a 1,000 foot long pier, with entrance over a drawbridge at the gate on the landward side or gorge. By continuous filling the fort is now landlocked. The gorge face of the trapezoid-like structure was 494 feet in length; the north face, 335 feet; the front face, 319 feet; and, the south flank face, 335 feet. The gate and sally port pierced the middle of the gorge and led into the parade.

The fort was a three-tier structure, the third tier actually consisting of an earth-filled terreplein and parapet designed to prevent penetration by fragments of shells exploding over the living quarters. The gorge contained over 60 rooms consisting of officer's quarters, company barracks rooms, kitchens, closets, fireplaces, offices, storerooms, and washrooms. Thirty to 36 windows per tier faced the land and 22 windows per tier faced the parade. Twelve doors on the first tier face the parade. There were six guns on the first tier and 22 on the second. The terreplein contained two barbette guns, one on the terreplein of each half bastion.

Each of the three remaining faces contained 14 guns per tier and on the terreplein, 14 barbette emplacements, one above each casemate. The west and south bastions each contained two guns in the lower tier, three on the second and one on the terreplein. Under each lower tier casemate and living quarters, cisterns collected rain water through an ingenious system of pipes. Communication between the lower tier and the terreplein in the three casemated sides was assured by four spiral stairways.

Alterations of the Defenses

The Bernard Board fortifications were technically an impressive combination of design excellence, construction quality and armament power. But they became obsolete during the Civil War due to the appearance of the rifled gun. The elongated projectiles had greater mass and penetrating power than the smooth bore's round shot of the same diameter and could reduce vertical walls to rubble. With the approach of the Spanish American War, the Army again examined the defenses at Fort Taylor and found that her guns were outranged by those of the new battleships. A new-type battery was installed.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Fort Zachary Taylor defended the naval station at Key West, Florida--the most important naval base during the Spanish-American War. The Osceola battery, an emplacement called for by the Endicott Board in the late 1880's, was installed in 1896 within the partially dismantled fortification originally constructed between 1844 and 1850. The disappearing guns of the battery as well as those of the fortified martello towers defended the headquarters and fleet of the North Atlantic Squadron under the command of Admiral William T. Sampson. The U.S.S. Maine left Key West for Havana harbor on January 25, 1898, and when it was blown up the news was received first at Key West. It was from Key West that the Cuban blockade was commanded and from that base that Admiral Sampson, joined by Commodore Winfield S. Schley, set sail with the White Squadron to confront Spanish Admiral Cervera. They succeeded in destroying his fleet at Santiago on July 3, 1898. The victory at Santiago virtually ended the war.

Of lesser importance were the other defensive roles of Fort Taylor at different times in the Nation's history. Fort Zachary Taylor defended the strategic harbor and Naval Station at Key West, Florida, for over a century. Although never attacked, it guarded the headquarters for the naval blockade of Confederate Gulf ports and the more than 299 prizes captured during that blockade. Along with Fort Jefferson, Fort Taylor guarded Key West's forward position in the Gulf. Fort Taylor joins Forts Pickens and Jefferson as the three Federal fortifications never seized by Confederate forces. Unlike many similar fortifications, Fort Taylor exemplifies a century of defense modification from pre-Civil War days, through the Spanish-American War, to a third generation of alterations in World War II. Additionally, Fort Taylor is potentially one of the largest repositories of Civil War ordnance--the very same ordnance directly associated with the Fort.

History

Key West first attracted military attention in 1823 when the naval station was established to base the West Indies Squadron which was

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Vaughn Camp, Jr., "Captain Brannan's Dilemma: Key West 1861," Tequesta: The Journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida, No. XX (1960), 31-44.

Emmanuel R. Lewis, Seacoast Fortifications of the United States: An Introductory History (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1970).

Clayton D. Roth, Jr., "150 Years of Defense Activity in Key West, 1820-1970," Tequesta No. XXX (1970), 33-51.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 ' "	0 ' "		24° 32' 51"	81° 48' 37"	
NE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SE	0 ' "	0 ' "				
SW	0 ' "	0 ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **3-1/2 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Benjamin Levy, Historian**

ORGANIZATION **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service** DATE **2/5/73**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1100 L Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE **D.C.** CODE

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ <i>Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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Fort Zachary Taylor

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

7. Description

(Continued)

Page 1

The transformation of Fort Taylor resulted in the obliteration of the second and third tiers of the structure. The most interesting aspect of the modification took place at the south flank and front curtains. After removal of the obsolete ordnance and the reduction of the upper levels, the guns and stores were then dumped into an 8-casemate section of the lower tier, and rubble and sand thrown in after them. The concrete battery was poured along the rear line of the casemates thus sealing them. In filling empty spaces between the old and new construction, old cannon were again used in spots. Rubble, sand, and sod were dumped to even up the slopes of the battery. This new structure, named Battery Osceola, contained two emplacements for model 1896 12-inch disappearing rifles and four pits for 8-inch mortars. The battery may also have contained rapid fire guns. During World War II, a 5-inch anti-aircraft gun was positioned on top of the remnants of the spiral stairway of the west bastion and another one on the left flank of the mortar pits.

Associated with the Fort are two "martelo towers." West martelo tower has been seriously impacted by its use as an artillery target. East martelo tower is in good condition and is located 2-1/2 miles east of the Fort at Key West International Airport on U.S. Route A1A. It is occupied by both the Art Gallery of Key West and the Historical Society of Key West. Not completed during the Civil War it was fortified during the Spanish American War.

The Excavation

Under authorization from the commanding officer of the Naval Station, the base Historical Committee began limited excavation. The operation emptied two-and-a-half casemates and recovered, (1) 7,000 gallon per day pre-Civil War desalinization plant, (2) two 10-inch Rodman clumbiads, (3) one 8-inch Coehorn siege mortar, (4) two 10-inch columbiads, 1853 and 1854, (5) one 300-pounder Parrott rifle, (6) 1,500 cannon balls of various calibers, (7) iron cannon carriages and spare parts. It is estimated that still remaining in each of the 16 additional filled casemates are (1) two 10-inch Rodmans on carriages, (2) 3 or 4 Parrott rifle carriages, (3) iron wheels, forks, carriages, canister, grape, and an average of 1,200, 8 and 10-inch cannon balls. What is more, in the concrete fill behind the south curtain lie 75 to 100 cannon, seven of which are visible--six, 10-inch Rodmans and one 300-pounder Parrott rifle. Reportedly, three, 15-inch Rodmans are buried in the fill between the front curtain and the concrete mortar pits.

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(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

8. Significance

(Continued)

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created to destroy Caribbean piracy. Strategically, the base, situated in a safe harbor, commanded and provided access to the Gulf of Mexico and a large portion of the Caribbean Sea. With the routing of the pirates and increases in yellow fever, the squadron was removed in 1826. The only operation remaining was a coaling and supply station which seems to have been upgraded to a naval depot in 1856. In the 1830's several companies of infantry were stationed at Key West in the wake of Indian uprisings. During the following decade, construction of Fort Zachary Taylor began as part of the Bernard Board's effort to strengthen the Florida coasts.

With the onset of the Civil War, Florida let pass the opportunity of seizing Fort Taylor. The Civil War intensified activity at Key West. With the blockade of Southern ports, the headquarters of the Gulf Blockading Squadron was established at Key West. When the squadron was divided into east and west sections, Key West remained headquarters for the East. The East Squadron captured 299 Confederate blockade-runners which were brought before the prize-court (the building is destroyed), condemned, and sold at auction. At the same time, the naval station provided comfort and safety for merchantmen bound for northern ports. During the Civil War and the establishment of the blockade, Fort Taylor defended the Naval Station although it was never attacked and the lack of a Confederate navy made an attack a problematical operation.

At the end of the Civil War, the naval station reverted once again to a coaling and supply point. In 1870 the Army withdrew its garrison from the Fort which was then used for storage. Permanent defenses decayed swiftly, but by 1889 some observers expressed a concern that the Nation's defenses were becoming vulnerable to the new iron-clads equipped with heavy rifled cannon. Anticipating a conflict with Spain, the Navy enlarged the Naval Station and the Army reactivated the post. An artillery battery arrived in 1896 and "modernization" of the defenses were completed by 1899. The Army enlarged Key West Barracks and prepared the post's hospital for an expected large number of casualties.

During the Spanish-American War, Key West Naval Station was the most important base in the Nation. Headquarters was established there for the North Atlantic Squadron under the command of William T. Sampson. Admiral Sampson was given the New York (Flagship), Iowa, Indiana, and the Oregon. The U.S.S. Maine left Key West for Havana harbor on January 25, 1898, and when it was blown up the news was received first at Key West. It was from Key West that the Cuban blockade was commanded and from that base that Admiral Sampson, joined by Commodore Winfield S. Schley, set sail with the White Squadron to confront Spanish Admiral

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(Number all entries)

8. Significance

(Continued)

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Cervera. They succeeded in destroying his fleet at Santiago on July 3, 1898. The victory at Santiago virtually ended the war.

After the Spanish-American War, the defense role of Fort Taylor diminished. While the Naval Station became headquarters for the Seventh Naval District during World War I, Fort Taylor did not assume its traditional role of defense at this time. While the status of the Naval Station wavered between the World Wars, by 1942 the Seventh Naval District was reestablished at Key West with a relatively significant role in submarine defense. At this time Fort Taylor reasserted its defense role and served as an emplacement for anti-aircraft artillery. Two years after the war the Army entirely abandoned Key West and turned Fort Taylor over to the Navy.

Drawer 70.  
Sheet 150.

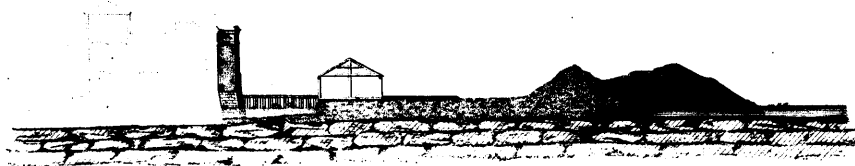
COVER FACE.

Scale 10'-1".

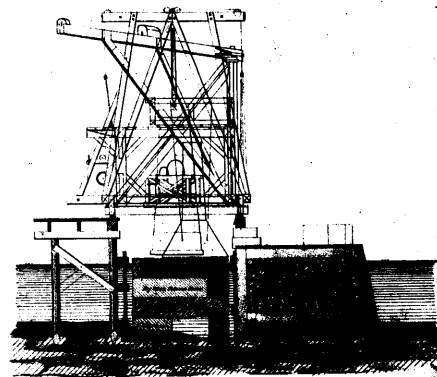
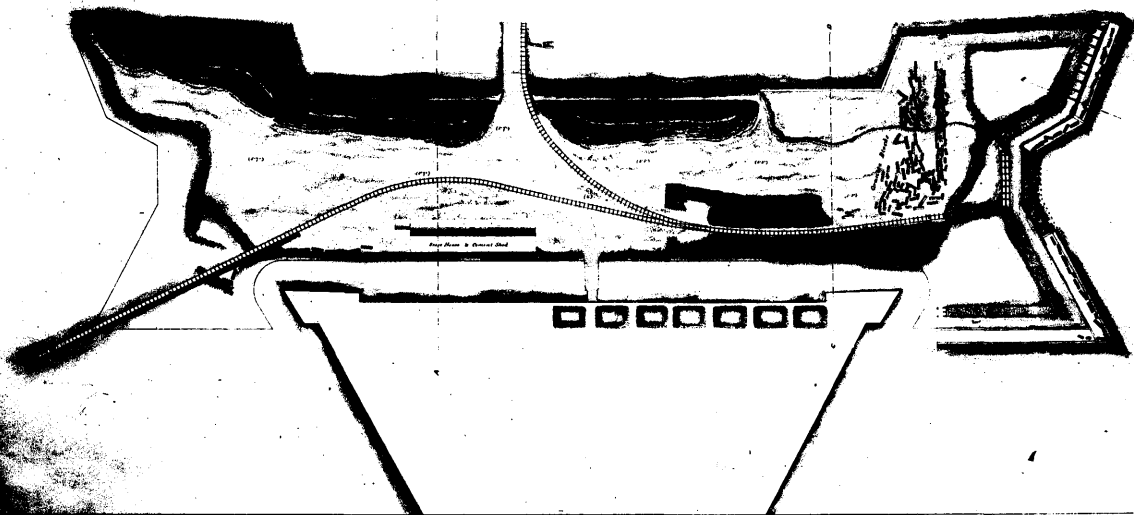
Showing condition of the work  
June 30<sup>th</sup> 1864 & accompanying General Order -  
and also of new 157-1864 (21 4955)  
Matta de la Guardia  
Captain Engineer  
J. D. Smith



Section on C.D.  
Scale 10'-1".

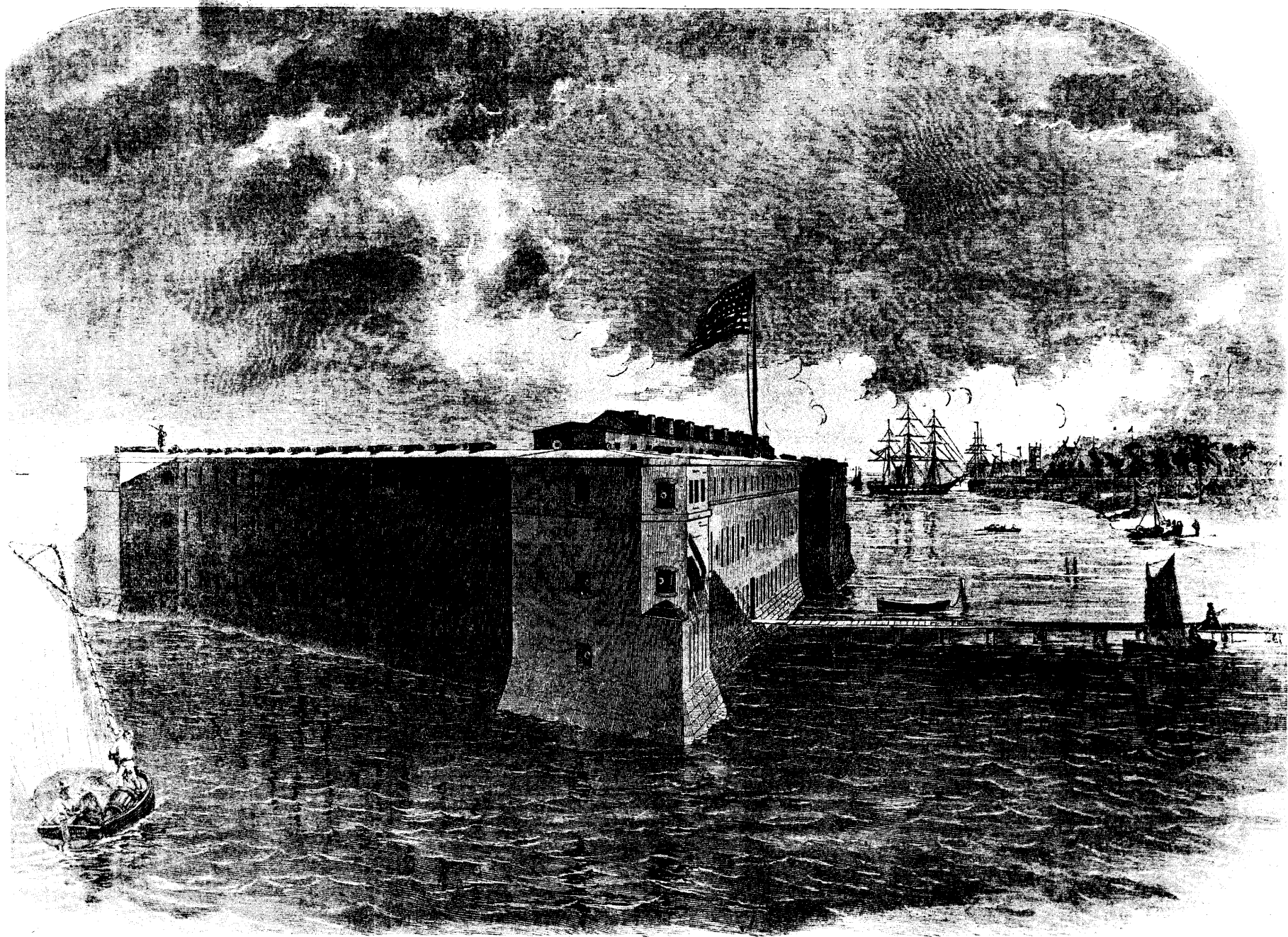


Section on A.B.  
Scale 10'-1".

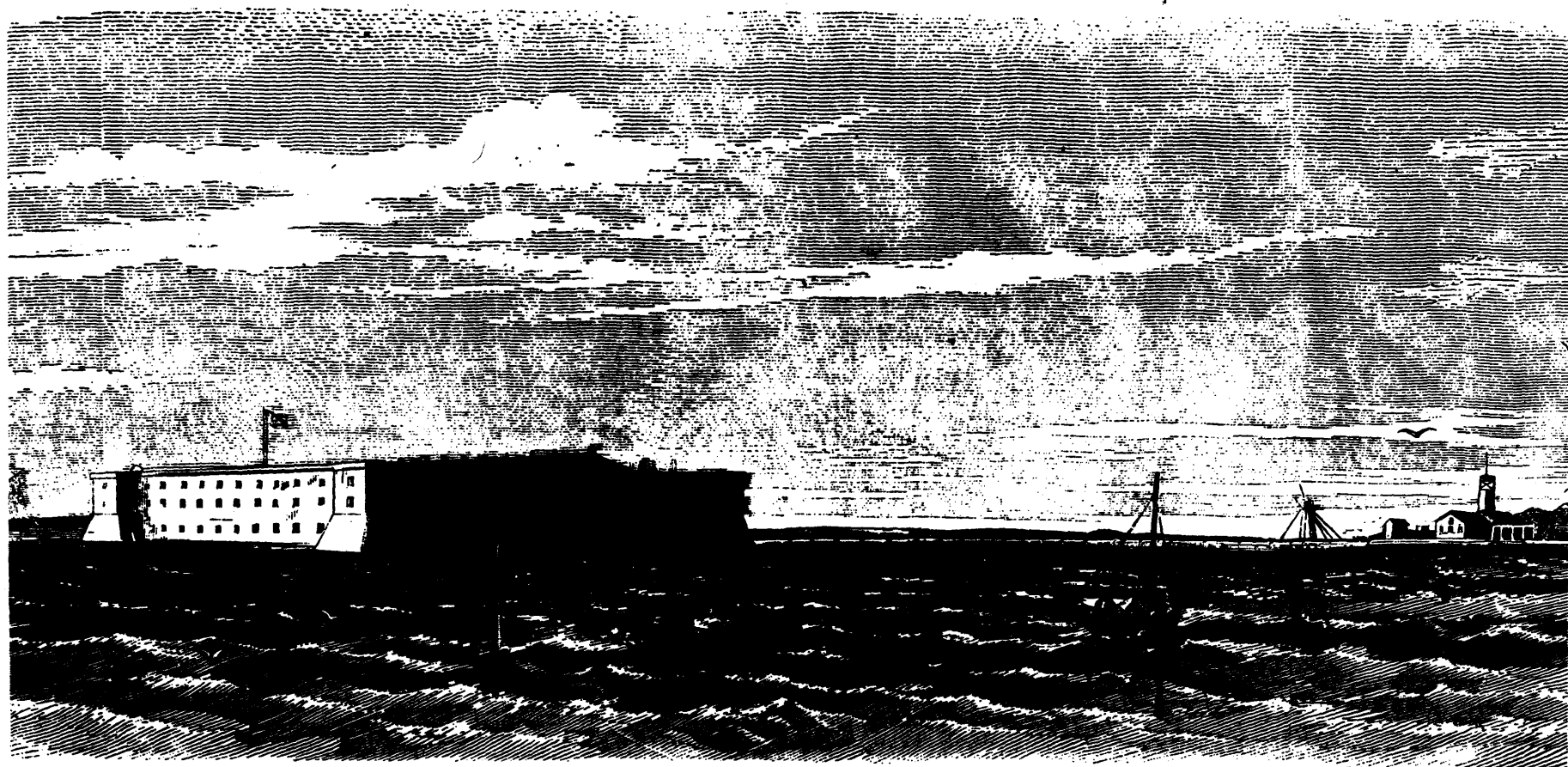


Section on E.F.  
Scale 10'-1".

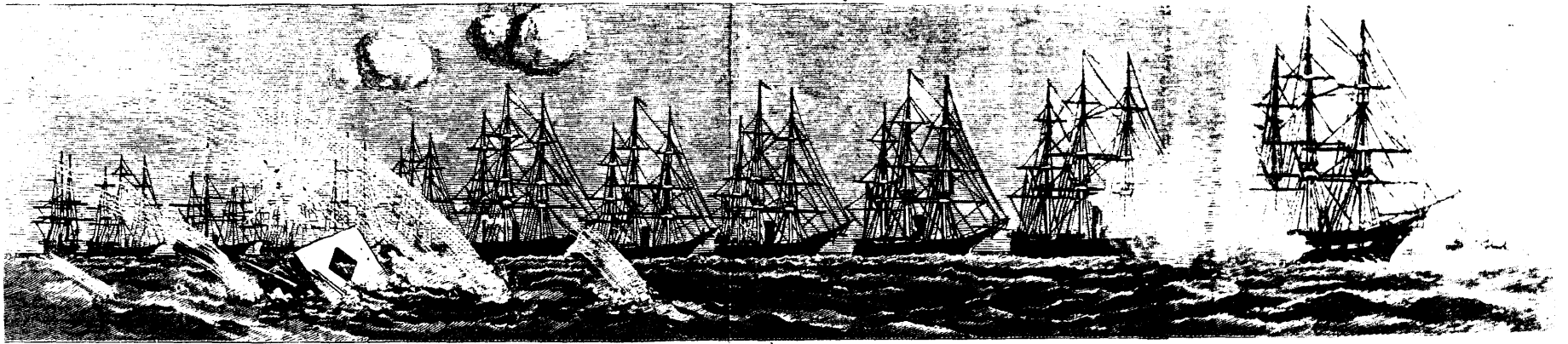




FORT TAYLOR, KEY WEST, FLORIDA.—FROM A DRAWING BY A MEMBER OF THE GARRISON.—[SEE PRECEDING PAGE.]



THE FORTIFICATIONS AT KEY WEST, FLORIDA.—FORT TAYLOR. CAPT. JOHN BRENNAN, COMMANDER, U. S. A., IN POSSESSION OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.—FROM A SKETCH BY AN OFFICER



FLEET TARGET PRACTICE, FLORIDA BAY.



THE NAVAL REVIEW—KEY WEST, FROM THE MARTELLO TOWER—FORT TAYLOR AND FLEET IN THE DISTANCE.—DRAWN BY GRANVILLE PERRINS.—[SEE PAGE 345.]

Sheet 100.  
Sheet 100.

Sheet No. 2.

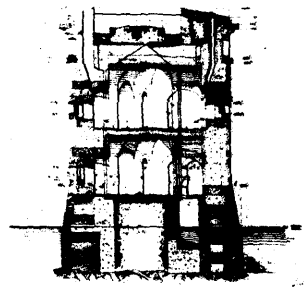
# PLANS & SECTIONS OF FORT TAYLOR KEY WEST FLORIDA

Drawn under the direction of  
Bvt. COL. E. D. BIRD, U.S.A., Engineer  
and Gen.  
May 1869

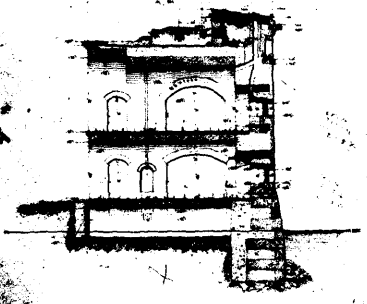
## PLAN OF LOWER TIER

Scale 1"=45'

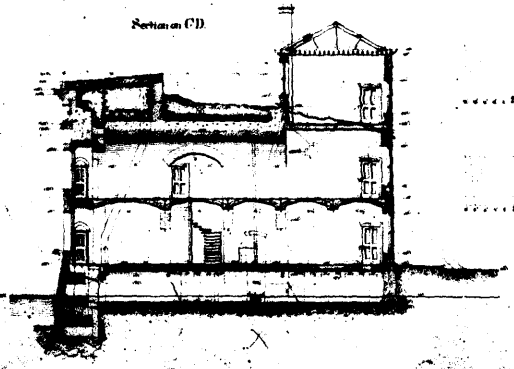
Section on GH



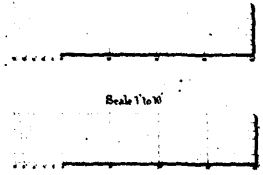
Section on AB



Section on CD



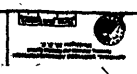
Scale 1"=45'



Section on EF



Scale 1"=45'



Drawer 76.  
Sheet 100.

N  
E  
S  
— LANDFACE —

BARRACKS

Sheet No. 2

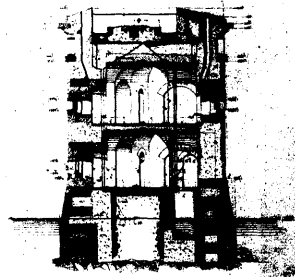
### PLANS & SECTIONS OF FORT TAYLOR KEY WEST FLORIDA

Drawn under the direction of  
Prof. C. C. E. Blunt, U.S. Col. of Engineers  
by W. B.  
May 1869.

PLAN OF LOWER TIER

Scale 1 to 5

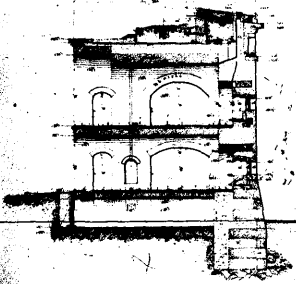
Section on GH



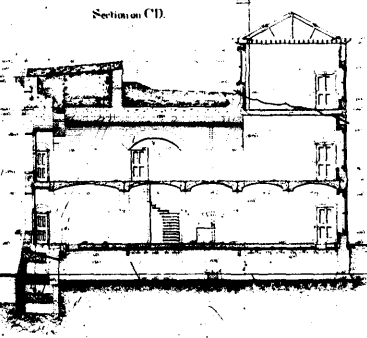
SW

W

Section on AB



Section on CD



Scale 1 to 5

Scale 1 to 10

Section on EF



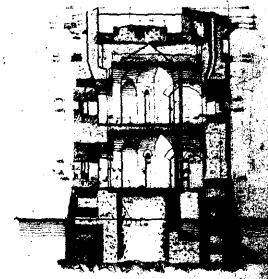
# PLANS & SECTIONS OF FORT TAYLOR KEY WEST FLORIDA

Drawn under the direction of  
Bvt Col C.F. Hibert U.S. Army, Engineer  
in the  
May 1869

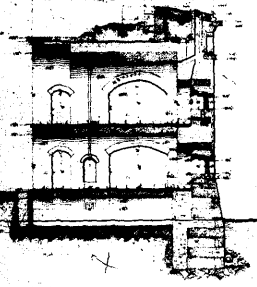
## PLAN OF LOWER TIER

Scale 1 to 50

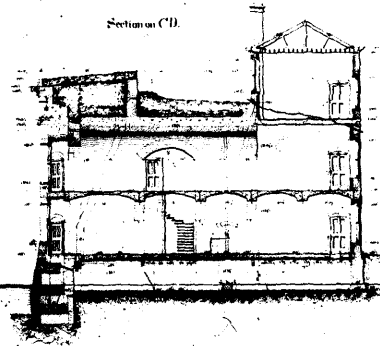
Section on GH.



Section on AB



Section on CD.



Scale 1 to 50

Scale 1 to 50

Section on EF



ARROW POINTS TO APPROXIMATE  
LOCATION OF FILLED IN PORTION  
OF FORT (1894) WHERE EXCAVATION IS GOING  
ON AT PRESENT.

FORTIFICATIONS.

Drawer 78.  
Sheet 151.

FORT TAYLOR, KEY WEST, FL.

TOWER N° 1  
AND  
ADVANCED BATTERY.

Scale 80'-1".

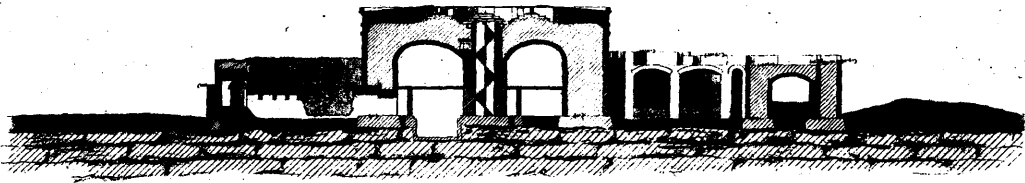
Showing condition of the work  
since 30<sup>th</sup> 1864, to accompany annual report  
sent to Congress in fulfillment of  
Act of Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> 1864 (Ch. 4933)

Walter M. Fensholt  
Captain Engineers

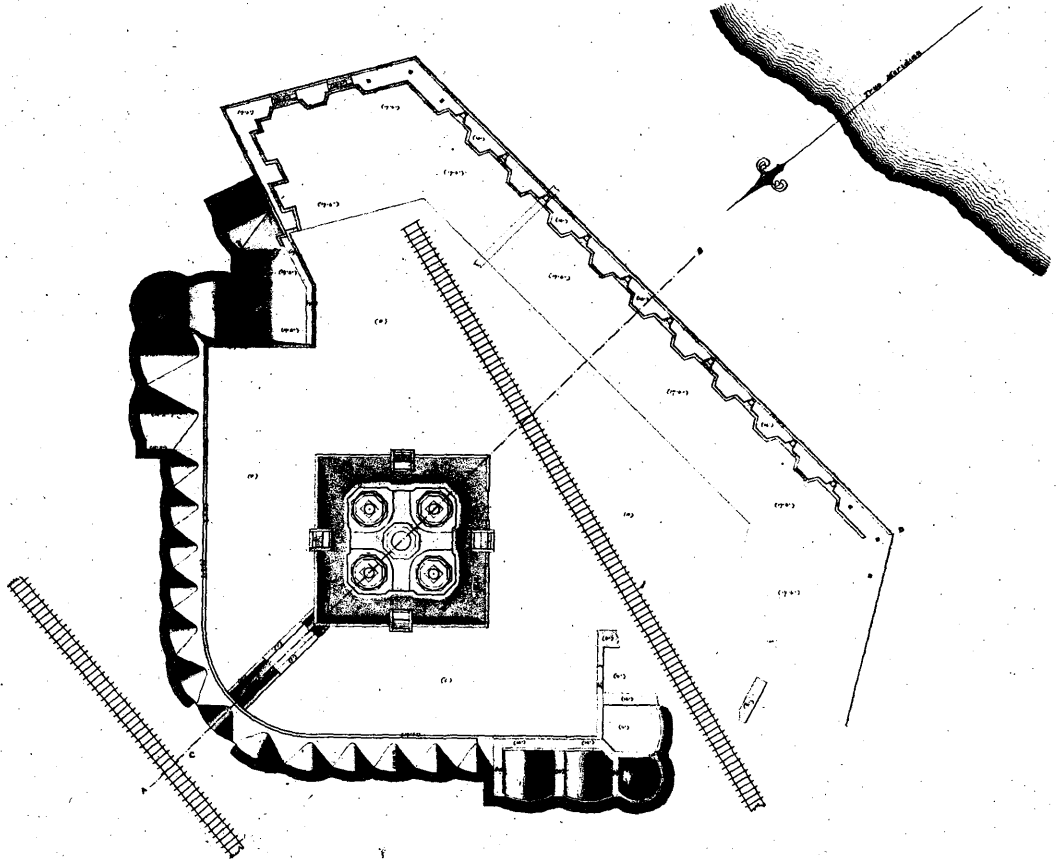
Prep'd at Eng. Dept.  
Nov. 3, 1864.



Elevation on C, D.



Section on A, B.



For a brief history of these towers  
see U.S.P. 3147-2636, Aug 1929

76-151

REPRODUCED FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAWING BY THE  
ENGINEERING DIVISION, ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.