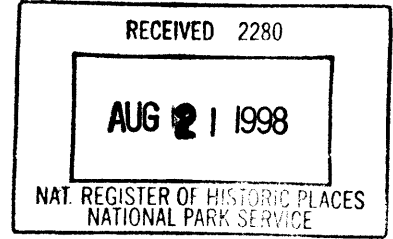


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1182



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 any 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 Big Hill Pond Fortification

other names/site number 40MY95

2. Location

street & number John Howell Rd. & Southern Railroad in Big Hill Pond State Park not for publication N/A

city or town Pocahontas vicinity X

state Tennessee code TN county McNairy code 109 zip code 38061

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Hays Date 8/14/98
Signature of certifying official

Deputy SHPO, Tennessee Historical Commission
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 or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register Barbara Fitts 9/29/98
 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): _____

for Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Big Hill Pond Fortification
Name of Property

McNairy County, TN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) **Category of Property (Check only one box)**

| | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object |

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count).

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | buildings |
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | sites |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | structures |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | objects |
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the American Civil War in Tennessee

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

| | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| <u>DEFENSE</u> | <u>Fortification</u> |
| <u>LANDSCAPE</u> | <u>Forest</u> |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| <u>LANDSCAPE</u> | <u>Forest</u> |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
roof N/A
walls N/A

other N/A

Narrative Description

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

Big Hill Pond Fortification
Name of Property

McNairy County, TN
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

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions).

MILITARY _____
HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY _____

Period of Significance

1862-1864 _____

Significant Dates

1862 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

N/A _____

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: Tennessee Historical Commission _____

Big Hill Pond Fortification
Name of Property

McNairy County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 12 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet) Chewalla 4SW

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 16 342000 3878300 3 16 341490 3878300

2 16 341800 3878180 4 16 341650 3878430

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 Philip Thomason/Doug Cubbison

organization Thomason and Associates date 10/20/97

street & number P.O. Box 121225 telephone (615) 385-4960

city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37212

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Department of Environment and Conservation, c/o Milton H. Hamoilton

street & number 401 Church St., L&C Tower telephone 615-532-0111

city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37243

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Big Hill Pond Fortification
name of property
McNairy County, Tennessee
county and State

DESCRIPTION

The Big Hill Pond Fortification (40MY95) is an earthwork at a Railroad Guard Post constructed in 1862 on a ridge in southern McNairy County, Tennessee. The site is located approximately seven miles northeast of the community of Pocahontas, Tennessee. The earthwork was built at the top of a ridge to protect the crossing of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad (now the Southern Railway) over the Dismal Swamp and Tuscumbia River. The earthwork was built at the military crest of the ridge which is approximately 500 feet in elevation. In 1862, this area was composed of farmland and steep wooded ridges. The property is currently owned by the State of Tennessee and it is now part of the Big Hill Pond State Rustic Park. Since it was abandoned in 1864, trees and vegetation have grown in and around the earthwork and the walls have been reduced due to erosion. However, much of the outline of the original walls remain discernable and the site retains a high degree of integrity. The property consists only of the earthwork site and there are no associated buildings or structures.

This site consists of an entrenchment covering the top, west, and southwest slopes of a steep ridge. These walls are approximately two to three feet in height and on the interior of the walls is an inner ditch (see accompanying site plan). The outline of the earthwork is formed with a salient towards the southwest slope and a returned flank towards the west. The walls and the ditch are clearly identifiable for over 400 feet and are covered with second and third growth forest (Photos 1-3). In the center of the earthwork is a possible blockhouse site and to the north of this feature are possible rifle pits (Photo 4). No clearly discernable artillery embrasures were identified at the site.

The site overlooks the present right-of-way of the Southern Railway at a point where it passes through a cleft in the ridge and then crosses the bottom areas of the Dismal Swamp and the Tuscumbia River to the west. This railroad right-of-way has not been changed since 1862. During the construction of the earthwork, the adjacent slopes would have been cleared of trees to allow for open lines of fire. Since the site was abandoned it has been allowed to return back to forest.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

Big Hill Pond Fortification
name of property
McNairy County, Tennessee
county and State

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Big Hill Pond Fortification is significant under National Register Criterion A for its role in the military history of the Civil War. The site is representative of Railroad Guard Post fortifications constructed by Union forces to protect strategic points along the railroad in Tennessee. The earthwork was erected in 1862 to defend the long trestle crossing of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad over the Dismal Swamp and Tuscumbia River. This earthwork was garrisoned until 1864 when Union troops were transferred to participate in the Atlanta campaign. The site has eroded over time but otherwise has not been significantly disturbed. The outline of the wall and ditch of the earthwork remains easily discernable and the site maintains its sense of time and place.

The Big Hill Pond Fortification is also significant under National Register Criterion D for its archaeological potential to yield information concerning Civil War fortifications of this type. The site may contain artifacts which could provide information regarding its occupation and activities in the war. The site may also yield information on fortification construction and design.

The property meets the registration requirements set forth in the multiple property documentation form, the "Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the American Civil War in Tennessee."

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The important rail junction of Corinth, Mississippi fell to Union forces on May 30, 1862. Federal commanders established a series of garrisons along the Memphis and Charleston Railroad in northern Mississippi, from Memphis to Corinth. From northern Mississippi, the Union Forces prepared for eventual attacks toward the gateway cities of Chattanooga and Vicksburg.

One of these fortifications was an earthwork constructed on a promontory providing a commanding western view of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, between the Tuscumbia River and Cypress Creek. This earthwork was probably constructed to provide for the defense of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad where two water courses offered cover and concealment for Confederate partisans or guerrillas.¹

¹ It has been suggested that this is a Confederate entrenchment, constructed during the retreat of Van Dorn and Price's command from the Battle of Corinth, the retreat in this area occurring on October 4-5, 1864. However, these works are clearly oriented to the west, while the Federal pursuit would have been anticipated to occur from the southeast (in the direction of Corinth). During the retreat from the Battle of Corinth, Confederate forces moved rapidly through this area in the direction of Holly Springs, Mississippi to re-supply and re-organize for future operations. Finally, as discussed in the Historic Context for the Davis Bridge Battlefield, the Confederate line of retreat followed the Corinth-Ripley road, which ran south of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, and thus Confederate forces on this campaign did not pass within several miles of this location. To construct works of this magnitude would have taken longer than a few hours, making it further unlikely that they are Confederate. Finally, this type and location of earthworks is consistent with Union garrisons along this rail line, as described in the Historic Context for the Wray's Bluff Fortification.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

Big Hill Pond Fortification
name of property
McNairy County, Tennessee
county and State

The site consists of a series of rifle pits or infantry entrenchments on the topographical crest, western, and southwestern sides of a ridge approximately 500' in height. One continuous entrenchment followed the 460' elevation contour, while others run perpendicular to this line. It is possible that a blockhouse was also constructed at this location.²

This area was initially garrisoned by the 18th Missouri Infantry. Companies A, B, C, and E had moved from Corinth, Mississippi to establish a post at Chewalla, Tennessee in mid-October, 1862. It is possible that the earthwork was constructed at this time. The remainder of the regiment followed in January, 1863. The regiment was responsible for guarding the railroad and patrolling the area northwest of Corinth. This area has been described by a modern historian:

...the neighborhood lay far back in the brush and away from well-traveled thoroughfares. The new post was situated on the north edge of country heavily wooded with oak and hickory, through which innumerable streams ran. Thick canebrakes were much in evidence along various of the creeks, most of which were tributary to the Tuscumbia as it wound westward toward its confluence with the Hatchie, just above Pocahontas.... Scouting became a major function of the 18th Missouri.... The woods were swarming with Rebel guerrillas....³

The 9th Illinois Infantry (mounted) were also active in this area.

The 18th Missouri Infantry would remain at Chewalla until early October, 1863, when they were transferred to the Corinth garrison, and were relieved by the 7th Illinois Infantry. As a result of the Confederate victory at Chickamauga, and the resulting Union efforts to lift the ensuing siege of Chattanooga, the Army of the Tennessee departed the Corinth area on October 28, 1863, marching east along the Memphis and Charleston Railroad towards Chattanooga. At the time of this movement, the Federal garrison at Corinth was significantly reduced in size.⁴ It is possible that the redoubt was also abandoned at this time.

The Union garrisons throughout northern Mississippi, extreme southwestern Tennessee, and northwestern Alabama were all withdrawn late in January, 1864. All Federal forces were moved east to either support or participate in the Atlanta campaign. This fortification, if not abandoned in October, 1863, would have definitely been abandoned by the end of January, 1864.

Further information is located in the accompanying multiple property cover document the "Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the American Civil War in Tennessee." This cover document also describes the Wray's Bluff Fortification which is a redoubt located adjacent to the railroad approximately four miles to the west.

² A search of the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion failed to reveal any information concerning the defense of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad from October, 1862 to January, 1864.

³ Leslie Anders, *The Eighteenth Missouri* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1968), p. 121.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-163. There are also some references to companies of the 1st Alabama sent to Big Hill in October and November 1863. (Smith)

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 4

 Big Hill Pond Fortification
name of property
 McNairy County, Tennessee
county and State

Bibliography:

Anders, Leslie. *The Eighteenth Missouri*. Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1968.

Prouty, Fred M, and Barker, Gary L. *A Survey of Civil War Period Military Sites in West Tennessee*. Nashville, Tennessee: Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Archaeology, Report of Investigations No. 11, 1996.

Smith, Sam. Review notes for Civil War nominations. 20 January 1998.

U.S. War Department. *The War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. Washington, D.C., 1890-1901), series I, 1901.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 5

Big Hill Pond Fortification
name of property
McNairy County, Tennessee
county and State

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Big Hill Pond Fortification is an area which encompasses the earthwork and its immediate surroundings and is shown as the solid black line on the accompanying McNairy County tax map 146. The property is bounded on the east by a park road; on the south by the Southern Railway right-of-way; on the west by an imaginary line which extends north from the railroad right-of-way approximately 450'; and on the north by an imaginary line which extends approximately 1,200' west from the park road. Included in this boundary is approximately ten acres.

The tax map for this nomination has the scale of 1" = 800'. This scale map was prepared by the McNairy County Tax Assessor for the rural areas of the county. The Tennessee Historical Commission has found that this scale adequately meets its office needs. The Tennessee Historical Commission does not have the facilities to prepare maps to the scale preferred by the National Park Service.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary for the Big Hill Pond Fortification includes all of the earthwork and its immediate surroundings which are associated with site # 40MY95. The boundary includes not only the earthwork, but also adjacent slopes and approaches to the fortification which have the highest probability to yield archaeological information concerning the site. There are no other earthworks associated with this site in the immediate vicinity.

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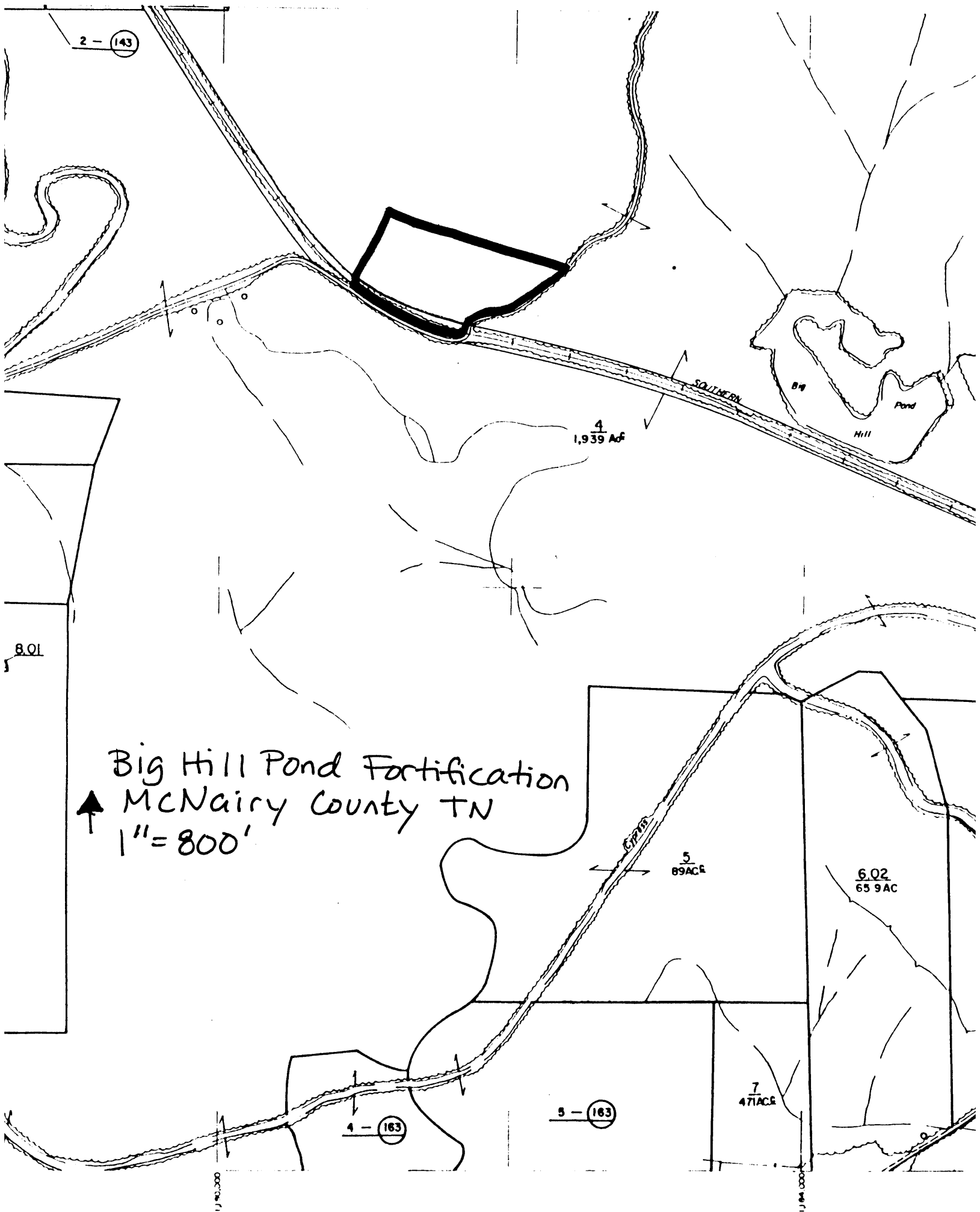
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 6

Big Hill Pond Fortification
name of property
McNairy County, Tennessee
county and State

Big Hill Pond Fortification
McNairy County, Tennessee
Photo by: Thomason and Associates
Date: November 4, 1996
Location of Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission

- Photograph No. 1: View of earthworks to the north.
- Photograph No. 2: View of earthworks to the southeast.
- Photograph No. 3: View of earthworks to the northwest.
- Photograph No. 4: View of possible blockhouse site to the north.



Big Hill Pond Fortification
McNairy County TN
1" = 800'

2 - 143

4
1,939 Ac

SOUTHERN

Big Hill Pond

8.01

5
89 AC

6.02
65.9 AC

7
47.1 AC

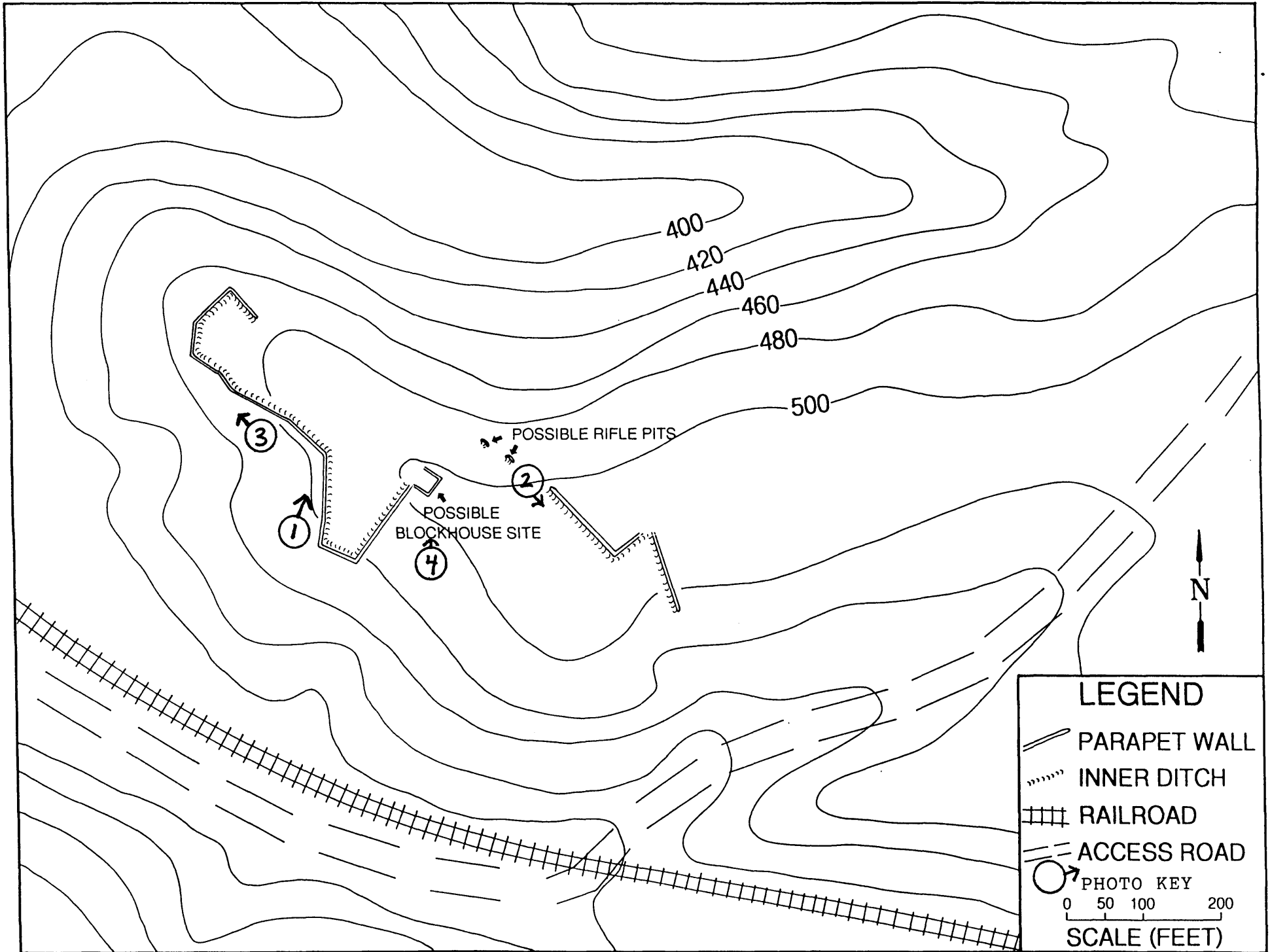
4 - 163

5 - 163

1/4 000

1/4 000

Big Hill Pond Fortification McNairy County TN



40MY95 EARTHWORKS AT BIG HILL POND