

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED DEC 11 1979

DATE ENTERED

NOV 10 1980

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME** Perdido Key Historic District

HISTORIC

Foster's Bank or Ft. McRee

AND/OR COMMON

Perdido Key Historic District (Preferred)

**2 LOCATION** S of Warrington on

STREET & NUMBER

Eastern end of Perdido Key

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Near Warrington mi

VICINITY OF

First

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Florida

12

Escambia

033

**2 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service, Southeast Region

STREET & NUMBER

1895 Phoenix Blvd.

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Escambia County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Corner of Palofox and Government

CITY, TOWN

Pensacola

STATE

Florida

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" 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

Perdido Key is a small island located south of Pensacola in Pensacola Bay. In 1977-78 the last five eastern miles of the key were purchased by the National Park Service and together with Rosamund Johnson Beach completed the Johnson Beach Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore.

Presently the key is characterized by dunes and dune-related vegetation. Several small live oak/scrub pine hammocks exist on the northern shore of the key.

The Perdido Key Historic District is located on the eastern end of Perdido Key. Located in the district are three coast artillery batteries, a sea wall and foundations for military support facilities. All of these structures have been heavily affected by sand movement and vandalism. Two of the coastal batteries are buried in sand as is most of the sea wall. The top of the newest battery has received heavy usage as a dune buggy launching pad and is severely deteriorated.

The original appearance of the Perdido Key Historic District has been documented in maps drawn by U.S. Engineers in 1828--the beginning of the historic period. At that time the key was much longer and the "pond" seen on today's maps was actually a lagoon. The key was also connected to the mainland and was really more a peninsula than an island.

The movement of sand from east to west (littoral drift) is largely responsible for the changed appearance of Perdido Key and the undermining of Ft. McRee which once sat on its eastern end.

The three coastal batteries located in the historic district are Slemmer, Center, and 233. Slemmer was built in 1898 and mounted two 8" rifles on disappearing carriages. The battery is completely buried today and only the outline of one gun pit can be discerned. Battery 233 was built on top of the other gun pit. Battery Center was begun in 1899 and mounted four 15" rapid fire guns. The battery today is largely covered with sand.

Battery 233 was built on high ground in 1940 and was designed to mount two 6" shield guns on barbette carriages. The casemated supply and storage rooms were built in the shape of a "T" and the top of the battery buffered with sand and camouflaged with vegetation.

A pentagonal shaped concrete sea wall was built around the historic district following the construction of Slemmer and Center. Most of this wall is now covered with sand as are the foundations of supply rooms, latrines, etc. A water pump windmill still stands next to Battery Slemmer.

The site of Ft. McRee, began in 1828, is thought to be somewhere in the middle of the channel leading into Pensacola Bay. Attempts to locate the site by comparing historic and modern maps has not been successful. No above-ground remains are left of this fortification.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1828, 1862, 1898, 1905, 1940 BUILDER/ARCHITECT U.S. Corps of Engineers

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Perdido Key Historic District encompasses the elements of the last link in the triangular coastal defense of Pensacola harbor. The fortifications on the key, Santa Rosa Island and the mainland, when evaluated together, are of national significance.

The history of the key first becomes recorded in 1821 when the Spanish government transferred "Fosters Bank" as the key was then known, to the United States Government. In 1828 proposals were made by Corps of Engineer Officers to construct a fortification on Fosters Bank. This fort, named McRee after a Corps of Engineers Officer, was to command the western side of the deep-water channel into Pensacola Bay and along with Ft. Pickens on Santa Rosa Island and Ft. Barrancas on the mainland, effectively defend the harbor and the city from enemy attack. The kidney-bean shaped fort was designed to mount 80 guns in two tier casemates and 53 guns en barbette.

Early in 1861 Confederate forces moved into Fts. Barrancas and McRee. Union troops, hastily evacuated from Barrancas, took up their position at Ft. Pickens. On Nov. 22, 1861 at 10 a.m. Union and Confederate forces bombarded each other from the three forts and from two Union ships. "By noon the guns of Ft. McRee were silenced, with the exception of one; and three hours before sunset the fort and the adjoining battery ceased firing entirely." McRee was badly damaged and never fired another shot during the Civil War.

Following the war, the precarious position McRee held on the eastern end of the key deteriorated and by the early 1890's all but one archway had tumbled into the Gulf of Mexico. By the time the Corps of Engineers decided to build coastal batteries on Perdido Key, McRee was no more. The name has remained, however, and is still in use today.

Battery Slemmer was the first of three batteries built on the key between 1898 and 1940. Batteries were the new alternative to forts. Slemmer mounted only two guns but each had a range of over five miles. Center, built after Slemmer, mounted rapid fire "torpedo" guns designed to accost fast-moving enemy ships. Construction 233 was never armed totally but was capable of mounting two 6" shield cannons.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Edwin C. Bearss - The Civil War in and around the Pensacola Area
- Gulf Islands National Seashore - List of Classified Structures
- Gulf Islands National Seashore - Historic Resource Management Plan

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**UTM NOT VERIFIED  
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6+ or - \_\_\_\_\_

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	4,6,8,6,8,0	3,3,5,4,9,4,0	B	1,6	4,6,8,8,7,0	3,3,5,4,6,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,6	4,6,8,4,8,0	3,3,5,4,6,0,0	D	1,6	4,6,8,4,4,0	3,3,5,4,6,6,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Perdido Key Historic District is bounded by the seawall enclosing the three batteries and support structures. It also includes the old dock located north of the small pond.

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

Anne Castellina-Dudley, Historian

02-14-78

ORGANIZATION

Gulf Islands National Seashore

DATE

904-932-2077

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 100

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Gulf Breeze

STATE

Florida

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES X NO \_\_\_\_\_

NONE *[Signature]*

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *F. R. Hollander*

TITLE

*Asst. Dir., Cultural Resources*

DATE

*12/10/79*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Bill Weaver*

DATE

*3/10/80*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*W. A. Davis*

DATE

*8/3/82*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

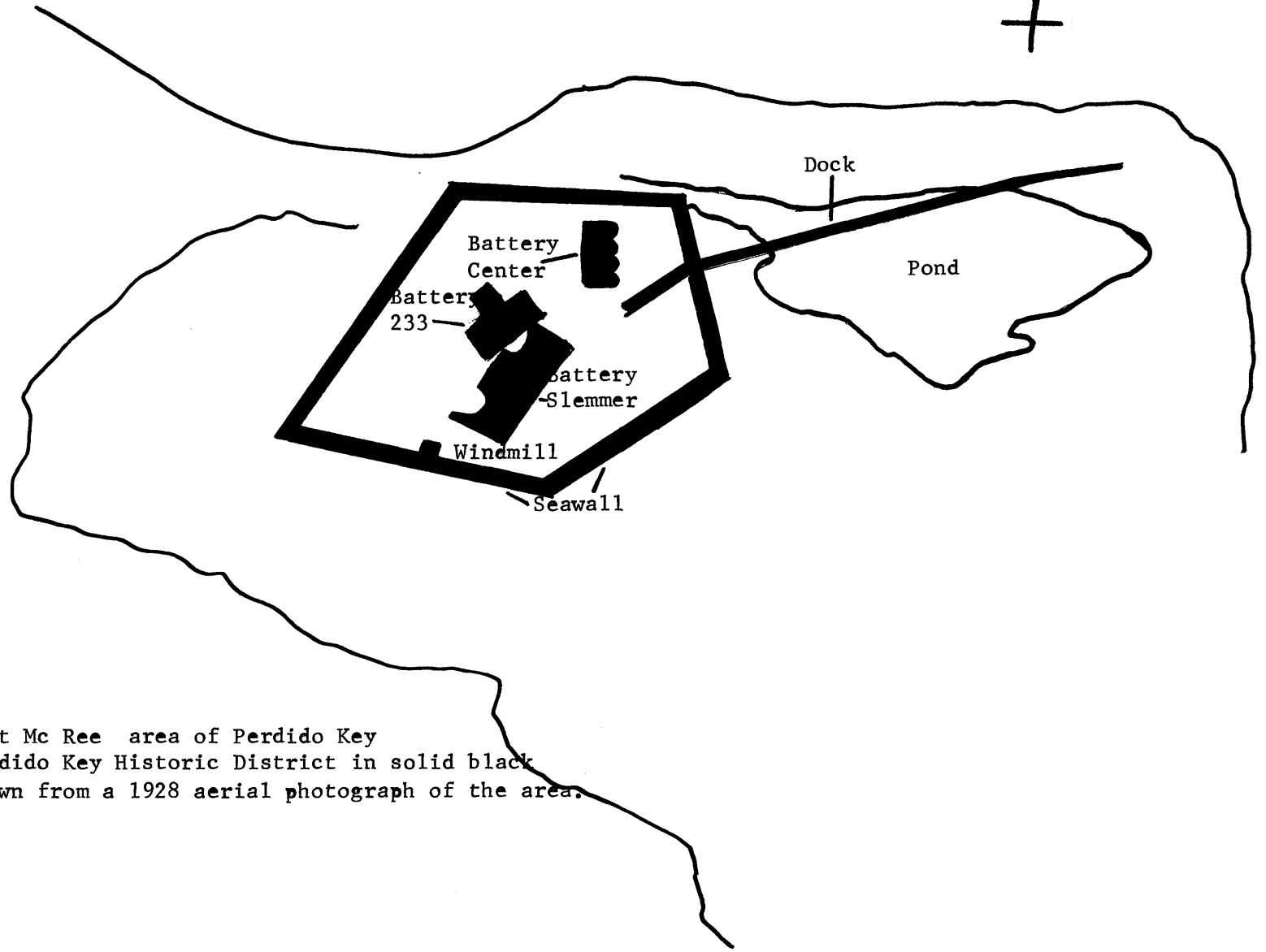
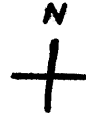
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These three batteries, and those built during the same years on Santa Rosa Island maintained an effective defense of Pensacola Bay as had their predecessors, the brick forts. Men of the 13th Coast Artillery Corps (CAC) practiced during these years on the big guns. During World War I, Pensacola boasted the second most heavily defended harbor in the country.

By 1946 the Perdido Key Historic district had ceased to be used for military purposes. The sand began shifting and Slemmer and Center were soon buried. The Navy maintained harbor lights on the Key for many years. Today access is limited to those in boats or four-wheel drive vehicles. The latter have created much undesirable erosion on Battery 233. Now that the Key has fallen under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, protection of this historic area and eventual rehabilitation and interpretation of it's structures and sites will follow.

The seawall that encloses the historic district was constructed about 1899. It provides a visual barrier and includes within its bounds the remains of the three batteries that contributed to the defense of the Pensacola harbor.

DEC 11 1979



Fort Mc Ree area of Perdido Key  
Perdido Key Historic District in solid black  
Drawn from a 1928 aerial photograph of the area.