NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES
(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME
COMMON:
Civil War Fort Sites
AND/OR HISTORIC:
(individual Fort names listed in No. 7 Description)

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER:
Civil War Forts from Battery Kemble, N.W., to Fort Greble, S.W.
CITY OR TOWN:
Washington
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
District of Columbia
STATE:
District of Columbia
COUNTY:
District of Columbia
CODE
001

3. CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY (Check One)
☐ District ☐ Building ☐ Site (17) ☐ Structure ☐ Object
☐ Public ☐ Private ☐ Both
PUBLIC ACQUISITION:
☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered
STATUS:
☐ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC:
☐ Yes: ☐ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)
☐ Agricultural ☐ Government ☐ Park ☐ Transportation
☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Private Residence ☐ Other (Specify)
☐ Educational ☐ Military ☐ Religious ☐ Scientific
☐ Entertainment ☐ Museum ☐ Transportation

4. AGENCY
Department of the Interior, National Park Service
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)
National Capital Parks
CITY OR TOWN:
Washington
STREET AND NUMBER:
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.
STATE:
District of Columbia
CODE
11

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
National Capital Parks
STREET AND NUMBER:
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.
CITY OR TOWN:
Washington
STATE:
District of Columbia
CODE
11

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE OF SURVEY:
Fort Park System
DATE OF SURVEY:
1965 ☑ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
National Capital Parks
STREET AND NUMBER:
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.
CITY OR TOWN:
Washington
STATE:
District of Columbia
CODE
11
A representative group of forts erected around the Nation's Capital have been acquired over several decades for park purposes. A list of those in the District of Columbia and their present condition are included below.

The study "The Defenses of Washington 1861-1865," prepared by Historian Stanley W. McClure, contains photographs showing conditions of some of these forts during the Civil War Period.

Battery Kemble - Chain Bridge Road, N.W.; emplacements for two parrott rifles are well preserved.
Fort Bayard - Western Avenue, N.W.; slight traces of works remain.
Fort Reno - Nebraska Avenue, N.W.; no visible historic remains.
Fort DeRussy - Rock Creek Park off Military Road, N.W.; well preserved works in a natural state.
Fort Stevens - Piney Branch Road, N.W.; partially reconstructed in 1937-38 from original plans. Six replica cannons are mounted on appropriated field carriages on platforms, and one original Napoleon 12-pounder is in place.
Fort Slocum - Kansas Avenue, N.W.; no trace of main fort but evidences of rifle trenches and battery positions extend westward for several hundred feet.
Fort Totten - Fort Totten Drive, N.E.; fort earth works and rifle trenches well preserved.
Fort Bunker Hill - 14th Street, N.E.; little visible evidence of remains at fort site.
Fort Lincoln - Bladensburg Road, N.E.; little evidence of earthwork remains associated with Fort Lincoln and nearby trenches and covered way.
Fort Mahan - Benning Road, N.E.; some evidence of earthworks visible.
Fort Chaplin - East Capitol Street; well preserved earthworks.
Fort Dupont - Fort Dupont Park, Alabama Avenue, S.E.; well preserved earthworks.
Fort Davis - Alabama Avenue, S.E.; well preserved earthwork remains.
Battery Ricketts - Erie Street, S.E.; well preserved remains.
Fort Stanton - Erie Street, S.E.; substantial traces of fort works visible.
Fort Carroll - Martin Luther King Avenue, S.E.; Some of the fort's works preserved.
Fort Greble - Martin Luther King Avenue, S.W.; little visible evidence of remains.

The former fort sites are on federal park land totaling some 1,300 acres. Most of the park areas are recreation sites used heavily by the neighborhood or by National Park Service "Summer in the Parks" Day Camping Programs.
Curing the American Civil War, Union Forces protected the Capital city by building a ring of forts around the city. The land involved in this circumferential defense system in the District of Columbia is now marked by an almost continuous twenty-three mile green belt of public land administered by the National Park Service. The foundations and revetments of many of these fortifications have returned to dust, but others were preserved because of their historic interest.

By the end of the Civil War in 1865, there were 68 enclosed forts and batteries, 93 unarmed batteries, three blockhouses, and 20 miles of trenches connecting the main defense works. This was at that time perhaps the strongest system of protection existing for any city in the world. Along the circumference of the entire 37 mile ring of defenses were emplacements for 1,501 guns, over 900 of which were in place.

Because of their deterrent value, these fortifications freed Union Forces for offensive purposes. Without them, it is difficult to believe that a leader as bold and as brilliant as Lee would not have sought to seize the symbol of the Union. These interesting applications of the 19th Century theory of field fortifications and modifications through four years of practical experience also provide valuable research material.

Fort Stevens was the target of the only serious Confederate move against the Capital. General Early's attack occurred on July 11-12, 1864, and was repulsed. It was during this attack that President Lincoln was subjected to rifle fire while visiting the scene of the battle.

The site occupied by the Fort Lincoln complex of fortifications during the Civil War was the scene of Commodore Barney's engagement with the British on August 24, 1814. This temporary holding action permitted evacuation of important persons and documents prior to the capture and burning of the Capital by the British.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


Records of the Office of the Chief Engineer and Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives.


10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

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LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Approx. 17 acres (an acre each)

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

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Helen Dillon, Historian

BUSINESS ADDRESS: National Capital Parks

STREET AND NUMBER: 1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: District of Columbia

CODE: 11

DATE: November 1972

PHONE: 426-6957

12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

State Liaison Officer recommendation:
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ None

State Liaison Officer Signature

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

Federal Representative Signature Date

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date
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