

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: LOUISIANA
COUNTY: EAST FELICIANA
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Port Hudson

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Port Hudson

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

STATE: Louisiana

CODE:

COUNTY: East Feliciana

CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

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

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Multiple Public/Private

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE: LOUISIANA

CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: East Baton Rouge and East Feliciana Courthouses

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE: EAST FELICIANA

CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Port Hudson

DATE OF SURVEY:

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Committee for the Preservation of the Port Hudson Battlefield

STREET AND NUMBER: 114 St. Louis Street

CITY OR TOWN: Baton Rouge

STATE: Louisiana

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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DATE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Along the northern part of the Confederate defense perimeter at Port Hudson is approximately a mile of meandering earthworks constructed on the natural defensive edge of the terrace as it falls sixty-five to eighty feet off into the Sandy Creek and Foster Creek bottoms. The earthworks include a Union fortification, Fort Babcock. The terrain is extremely rugged and is in its natural setting, almost impenetrable in many areas. This accounts for its remarkable state of preservation since the surrender of 9 July 1863.

The creeks wander along sandy bottoms through magnolia, oak, and sweetgum forests. The hike up the steep slope to the terrace above is as difficult today as it was when the Union troops were there more than 109 years ago. The defense lines are clearly in evidence and the hiker continuing westward beyond the state owned lands shortly comes upon the hills and ridges overlooking the Mississippi River bottom, some seventy-five feet below, and the Batture area, which once formed the bed of the great river. From these heights one has an excellent view of the terrain across which black soldiers for the first time in American history fought as members of the United States Army in large numbers. The tract is immediately contiguous to land acquired by the state of Louisiana. Casualties among black troops are buried in a common grave lost and forgotten in the thickets of cottonwood and briar patches, flooded each spring by the high waters of the Mississippi. A fresh deposit of silt has hidden from view the footprints and gravesite of these soldiers. Sandy Creek beyond was crossed by two regiments of the Louisiana Native Guards of Free Colored on a pontoon bridge.

The high bluff along the entire two miles of the Confederate river batteries brought their cannons to bear on the battle below. The resulting bombardment and the near impossibility of climbing the steep incline below the cannons, along with the precipitous cliff, doomed the assault. The charge of the black regiment was pictured in Harper's Weekly several months after the battle.

The natural wilderness of this and the adjacent state owned area may not remain undisturbed for too much longer. Trespassers with metal detection equipment in search of cannon shells, belt buckles, and other portions of the uniforms from the fallen soldiers, have begun to invade the property with increasing frequency. The site is still very beautiful however, and is one of America's little touched battlefields.

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**B. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

27 May 1863

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | <u>Afro-American</u>                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | <u>History</u>                                      |
| <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

Two regiments of the Louisiana Native Guards of Free Colored, the 1st and the 3rd, participated in a Union assault on Port Hudson, a Confederate stronghold on the lower Mississippi, in 1863. These black troops had evoked considerable discussion and speculation in the North, in Banks' Military Department, in Washington, and throughout military circles as to their value as fighting troops. The question, "Will the Negro fight?" had yet to be answered so far as many onlookers were concerned. The black troops were aware of this challenge and welcomed the decision to use them in a severe test where they could demonstrate their fighting ability.

The 1st Regiment of the Louisiana Native Guards was comprised of free black men who were the elite black population of New Orleans and nearby areas. They had an average net worth of \$25,000 per man. Many of them were well above the average in intelligence and followed skilled occupations. The outfit had been authorized and its officers commissioned by Confederate Governor Moore of Louisiana in 1861. When New Orleans capitulated to the Federal Government, 26 April 1863, the organization offered its services to General Benjamin Butler who recognized it, commissioned its officers, and encouraged the organization of other similar units into what was called the Corps d'Afrique. All of the line officers of the organization were black men of substance and influence in the community, many of literary and educational achievement.

One of the most popular and efficient officers of this regiment was Captain Andre Cailloux, a black man. A splendid horseman, excellent sportsman, finely educated in Paris and highly polished, he was a leader of the highest quality. Cailloux, a well-to-do man who could certainly have avoided the risks of battle had he chosen to, encouraged his troops for the final attack despite a shattered arm. He died running ahead of them, crying "Follow me," in French and then in English. Cailloux was honored with a public funeral on 11 July 1863. After a eulogy at St. Rose of Lima Church in New Orleans, a lengthy procession of some thirty-seven black societies and the band of the Forty-Seventh Massachusetts Regiment, Cailloux's remains were interred with military honors in the Bienville Cemetery. In New Orleans the American flag remained at half mast in his honor for thirty days.

Sergeant Planciancois was at Port Hudson with the 1st Regiment too. When given the charge to defend the colors, Planciancois replied, "Colonel, I will bring back these colors to you in honor, or report to God the reason why."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (PARTIAL LISTING)**

Irwin, Richard. History of the Nineteenth Army Corps. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons's, 1892.  
 Lossing, Benson J. Pictorial History of the Civil War in the United States of America. Hartford: T. Belknap Publisher, 1870.  
 U.S. War Department. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.  
 Wilson, Joseph T. The Black Phalanx: A History of the Negro Soldiers in the United States in the Wars of 1775-1812, 1861-1865. Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1888.

**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
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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:  
 Marcia M. Greenlee, Historical Projects Director

ORGANIZATION: The Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation      DATE: December 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1420 N Street, N.W. Suite 101

CITY OR TOWN: Washington, D.C.      STATE: \_\_\_\_\_      CODE: \_\_\_\_\_  
20005

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

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:

National       State       Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

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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The 3rd Regiment consisted mainly of ex-slaves enrolled and organized in New Orleans, 24 November 1862. The black officers who had been largely responsible for raising the troops were forced to resign when they entered Union service in the Corps d'Afrique and were replaced with white officers.

The third black organization at Port Hudson was the 1st Regiment of Engineers of the Corps d'Afrique. This unit was organized on 28 April 1863 at Camp Parapet, Carrollton, Louisiana. On 24 May, upon order of Major Houston, Chief Engineer, Department of the Gulf, it proceeded to Port Hudson, General Bank's Headquarters, where it arrived on the 26th of May. The following day it received orders from Banks to report to General Weitzel, commanding the right wing.

The 1st and 3rd Regiments of black troops, having received orders the night preceding, that they would attack the enemy on the extreme right of the national line, assumed battle stance early on the morning of 27 May 1863. Numbering 1,080 men, they formed into four lines, the first two were led by Lieutenant-Colonel Bassett and the second two by Lieutenant-Colonel Finnegas with Colonel Nelson placed in command as Brigadier-General.

After artillery preparation and while the guns fired, Banks planned to attack the enemy simultaneously with his whole line. But plans miscarried, timing, and communications were off, and the assault became piece-meal with severe fighting developing on the right, especially the extreme right where the black columns were posted.

The black men moved forward in quick time, soon followed by double time. The alignment was perfect and the movement was executed smartly as they entered the woods immediately in front of them. Emerging from the obstacle-ridden woods, they continued their charge towards the works in full face of the batteries. The first fire of the enemy, grape, canister, shell and musketry which increased in momentum and concentration as the blacks advanced, killed and wounded a number of them. Wavering momentarily, the blacks, encouraged by Colonel Bassett and the black officers who moved among the men urging them forward with their fearless examples, closed ranks and continued the charge. Every advancing step took its toll in casualties, yet the blacks fought and bled their way through the sheets of fire until they were within fifty paces of the enemy line when they were halted by an unexpected impassable stream, eight feet deep and twenty to forty feet wide, made by the backflow of the river.

Suffering severe losses and stopped by the stream, the troops retired under a continuous fire, regrouped and charged again reaching the ditch some fifty feet from the enemy guns. Again they met sheets of enemy fire. In spite of this a number of volunteers from the decimated Companies E and G, 3rd Native Guards, attempted with their officers to swim across the flooded ditch while covered by the fire of Bassett and Finnegas which temporarily drove the enemy from their outer works. Although some reached the other side and momentarily faced the enemy it was largely in vain as the water was too much. Only

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six returned from the party of thirty-five or forty that succeeded in crossing.

Repulsed by the second assault, Nelson sent word to Brigadier General Dwight at the northwestern end of Port Hudson acquainting him with the situation and the insurmountable difficulty, and awaited further orders. They were told to carry on. For the third time the troops dressed into line for assault and charged. Their charge again was met by a holocaust of fire. Yet with a final desperate spurt they pushed on again to within fifty yards of the Rebel battery. So strong was this final charge that a newspaper reporter observing the battle wrote, "Indeed, if only ordinarily supported by artillery and reserves, no one can convince us that they would not have opened a passage through the enemy's works."

Although this statement is speculative, there is no doubt that Banks' attack suffered from being uncoordinated. On the right, next to the black troops, Generals Weitzel, Grover, and Payne made a vigorous attack. General Augur in the center did not mount his attack until long past noon and Sherman on the left, not until later in the day. This situation enabled the enemy to concentrate its fire on each assaulting group separately with devastating results especially on the black troops. The blacks remained in action before the enemy line until 4:00 P.M. that afternoon when the order for retreat came. They responded by marching off proudly as if on parade. Port Hudson was not taken but black soldiers had given a fine account of themselves. Their casualty list easily confirmed this--37 killed, 155 wounded, and 116 missing. Here, as elsewhere on the battlefield, they demonstrated their courage and ability as fighting men.

The role of the black soldiers at Port Hudson is of national historical importance because blacks fought valiantly under black leadership despite extremely heavy losses from their ranks including the loss of their very popular leader, Captain Callioux; and because free blacks who could have isolated themselves from the struggle of their slave brothers chose instead to sacrifice the security and comfort of their position to fight for the freedom of their people.