

Fort Pulaski  
Savannah vicinity  
Georgia

HABS GA 2158

HABS  
GA  
26-SAV.V  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
South Georgia District

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office

Addendum to:  
Fort Pulaski  
Cockspur Island  
Savannah vicinity  
Chatham County  
Georgia

HABS No. GA-2158

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GA,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO:  
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Fort Pulaski National Monument  
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Savannah vicinity  
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GA,26-SAV.V,2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### ADDENDUM TO **Fort Pulaski** (Fort Pulaski National Monument)

HABS No. GA-2158

**Location:** Fort Pulaski is located on Cockspur Island, at the mouth of the Savannah River, near the city of Savannah, in Chatham County, Georgia.

UTM: 17/510360/3543250

**Present Owner,  
Present Occupant,  
and Present Use:**

As a national monument, the United States Government owns and operates the fort. It is maintained and interpreted by the National Park Service, part of the U.S. Department of Interior, for the public.

**Description:**

Fort Pulaski is a five-sided (truncated hexagon) brick structure, with 7 1/2 foot-thick outer walls, and is approximately 350 feet long on each side. Opposite the gorge face is a triangular demilune with sides approximately 400 feet long. The fort and its demilune are separated by, and completely surrounded by, a wet moat approximately 40 feet wide and 7 feet deep. Extending from the fort in all directions over an area of roughly 100 acres is a system of dikes and drainage ditches. These components of the fort were designed and built as an integrated, militarily interdependent unit.<sup>1</sup>

**Significance:**

Fort Pulaski was built in the second quarter of the nineteenth century by U.S. military engineers who hoped to guard against unwanted river approaches to the nearby port city of Savannah. It was part of a chain of brick fortifications constructed up and down the east coast and represented the premier defense system of its time. Creating Fort Pulaski took one million dollars, 25 million bricks, and eighteen years of labor. When it was completed (1847), Fort Pulaski was considered invincible. The fort remained untested until the Civil War.

In January 1861, the Confederate States of America seized the fort for its use and protection. Union forces targeted the fort in April 1862; yet the Confederates were unafraid of the coming bombardment. They placed their faith in the fort's solidarity. Moreover, the Union army, camped on Tybee Island, was over a mile away. However, the distance between the

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<sup>1</sup>"Fort Pulaski National Monument," Nomination form, National Register for Historic Places, National Park Service, 1975.

batteries and the fort was covered easily by the rifled canons, that unbeknownst to the Confederacy, were capable of shattering the fort's 7 1/2 feet thick brick walls. By noon the following day, the walls of the fort were breached and the main powder magazine threatened. The Confederate surrender -- only thirty hours into the battle -- marked the end of the era of masonry fortifications.

The fort was abandoned after 1880. It became a national monument in 1924; restoration efforts began in 1933.

Historian: Kyle F. Graham, HABS Historian, 1997.

## I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### Fort Pulaski

Cockspur Island is mile-long by .5 mile-wide combination of mud flats and tidal marshes located approximately 17 miles east of Savannah, in Chatham County, Georgia. To the north and south, the island is bordered by the two channels of the Savannah River; to the east, by the Atlantic Ocean. Once an island in the true sense of the word, due to the deposit of materials dredged from the Savannah River and the accretion of other sediments the western side of Cockspur is joined today with neighboring Long Island. In addition, the construction of a system of dikes and ditches on the island and the deposition of sand and mud dredged from the Savannah riverbed has altered significantly the island's terrain since colonial days.<sup>2</sup> Whereas Cockspur was originally a salt marsh interspersed with hammocks, it is today more than forty percent dry land.<sup>3</sup>

Today, Cockspur Island is perhaps best known from the activities that transpired there during the Civil War. However, the island's cultural history began well before the fateful bombardment of April, 1862, when the Confederate defenders of Fort Pulaski succumbed before the rifled-bored cannons of Union troops. In fact, the recorded history of Cockspur begins in the 1730s, when the Georgia colony was in its infancy. At that time, Cockspur was known to locals and travelers as "Peeper" Island, either for the noises made by resident tree frogs or for the manner in which the island's hammocks "peeped" out from neighboring Tybee Island.<sup>4</sup> One of the island's first documented visitors was John Wesley, founder of Methodism. Wesley landed on Cockspur on February 6, 1736, only three years after the founding of the Georgia colony by

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<sup>2</sup>Fort Pulaski National Monument Draft Cultural Landscape Inventory - Level I. (NPS, 1997), p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>Master Plan: Fort Pulaski National Monument (Denver, CO: National Park Service, 1971), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Talley Kirkland, FOPU Interpretive Ranger.

James Oglethorpe. Wesley recorded his visit thusly: "About eight in the morning I first set my foot on American ground. It was a small uninhabited island, but a few miles in extent.... Mr. Oglethorpe led us through the moorish land on the shore to a rising ground.... When the rest of the people were come on shore, we chose an open space surrounded with myrtles, bays, and cedars, which sheltered us both from the sun and wind, and called our little flock together for prayers."<sup>5</sup> Two hundred and fourteen years after his visit, in November, 1950, Georgia Society of Colonial Dames would erect a brick and limestone memorial on the island commemorating Wesley's landing.

In 1759, the Crown granted most of Cockspur to Jonathan Bryan, Esq.<sup>6</sup> However, the royal government already had realized the island's strategic importance; one governor called it the "Key to Our Province." To this end, 20 acres on the eastern side of the island were reserved by the Crown for military purposes.<sup>7</sup> On this reserve in 1761, British authorities constructed the first of the three forts which would be built on Cockspur. Situated on the island's southeast point, Fort George (named after British King George II) was a palisaded log blockhouse used for defense against the Spanish, pirates, and disease. Within a decade, the structure had begun to succumb to the ravages of high winds and water. Detecting the futility of defending such a fortification, colonial patriots dismantled the structure in 1776.<sup>8</sup>

After the nation won its independence in the Revolutionary War, Cockspur was again chosen as the site for a fortification to guard Savannah's coastal interests. Concerned by European unrest, in 1794 the U.S. government authorized what would later be known as the First American System of Fortifications. As ordered by the Secretary of War, these fortifications were to be simple and cheaply built - instructions which generally resulted in open works with earthen parapets.<sup>9</sup> Built in 1794 and 1795, Cockspur's Fort Greene (named after Revolutionary War hero Nathanael Greene) was such a timber-and-earth construction, surrounded by pickets. Designed to eventually house six guns, the fort was located on Cockspur's southeast point, atop the previous

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<sup>5</sup>Fort Pulaski National Monument Draft Cultural Landscape Inventory - Level I, p. 5

<sup>6</sup>John Beck, Fort Pulaski National Register Nomination Form (FOPU NM: National Park Service, 1986), p. 3. In 1830, this property was purchased by the United States. In 1845, the Cockspur Point reserve was handed over to the federal government by the state of Georgia.

<sup>7</sup>Ralston Lattimore, Fort Pulaski National Monument: NPS Historical Handbook Series No. 18 (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1954), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup>Lattimore, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Emanuel Raymond Lewis, Seacoast Fortifications of the United States. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1979), 21.

site of Fort George. A guardhouse was built for the fort's garrison, which arrived in 1800.<sup>10</sup> Previously, the fort had been used solely as a quarantine station and was staffed by a health officer, to whom the city of Savannah had given a cannon in order to stop incoming ships for quarantine examination.<sup>11</sup> The Fort's living conditions were not to the satisfaction of at least one soldier stationed at the fort. The letterbook of Capt. A. Y. Nicoll records his observations upon arriving on Cockspur in 1802: "The accommodations for the officers at Fort Green (sic) are indeed wretched, for the soldiers worse. I should prefer a good morgue to the Quarters of the commanding officer, with the men directly over head and the sand and dirt falling into our victuals."<sup>12</sup> The fort, and several of the soldiers stationed there, met an untimely demise in September, 1804. On the evening of September 7, a massive storm swept the island, obliterating the fort and sweeping away roughly half of its inhabitants.<sup>13</sup>

There was no construction on Cockspur for roughly twenty years after the destruction of Fort Greene. Renewed activity would only come following the War of 1812. After the embarrassing ease with which British troops had invaded the states during the war, the U.S. government hired French military engineer Simon Bernard to design a Third System of Defense for the nation. Bernard, along with an army board of engineers, designed a comprehensive defense system incorporating not only new fortifications but also an overhaul of national communication and transportation routes and of the military's organizational structure.<sup>14</sup> As part of this program, Cockspur was recommended as the site for a new coastal fort in 1819. Two years later, Bernard personally surveyed the island, accompanied by Capt. John Le Conte.<sup>15</sup> However, it took six more years for the plans for the new fort on Cockspur to be finished, and an additional year for their approval by the Board of Fortifications for Sea Coast Defense.

In 1828, Major Samuel Babcock arrived in Georgia to begin construction of the fort. During his short tenure on the island, Babcock concerned himself primarily with such preliminary work as topographical surveys of the island, the construction of quarters, a wharf, and other temporary buildings for himself and others working on the fort on the north side of the

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<sup>10</sup>FOPU Draft Cultural Landscape Inventory -Level I, p. 7

<sup>11</sup>Ralston Lattimore, Biography of a Blockhouse (Savannah: National Park Service, 1935), p. 18.

<sup>12</sup>A. Y. Nicoll, Letterbook of Capt. A. Y. Nicoll, U.S.A. Volume 1:1801-1803 (National Park Service; date and site of publication unknown), p. 15.

<sup>13</sup>Lattimore 1954, p. 6-7.

<sup>14</sup>Willard B. Robinson, American Forts: Architectural Form and Function (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1977), p. 86-88.

<sup>15</sup>Lattimore 1954, p. 6-7.

island. By 1830, excavation for the fort's foundation had also begun.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps most significantly - given the sad history of Fort Greene - Babcock also oversaw efforts to construct a system of embankments and ditches (to a depth of five feet) to secure the fort and its workmen against the high waters which had claimed Fort Greene. Beginning in late 1829, Lieutenant Robert E. Lee took the lead in this project. A newly minted graduate of West Point, Lee arrived on Cockspur as his first active military posting. Given Babcock's poor health, Lee oftentimes assumed effective control of operations on Cockspur.<sup>17</sup>

Babcock resigned his commission in December, 1830. He was replaced by Lieutenant Joseph J. K. Mansfield. Upon arriving at Cockspur, Mansfield immediately noted the shortcomings in his predecessor's efforts. First, Babcock had left Mansfield no records of his activities on Cockspur, leading the Lieutenant to write his superiors in Washington that he could find "no plans of what were the ideas of Major Babcock in relation to it (the works), and no plans as yet of what has actually been done."<sup>18</sup> Upon further review, Mansfield also ascertained that Babcock had chosen a poor location for the fort, compromising its ability to defend the river. The major's initial surveys of the island were also woefully inadequate. Most dishearteningly, after conducting extensive soil tests about the island, Mansfield came to the conclusion that the weight of the two-story fort designed by Bernard's staff could not be supported by Cockspur's muddy soil.

In March, 1831, Mansfield transmitted his assessment of the Cockspur situation to Washington, and included a survey of the island which he had ordered Lt. Lee to complete. This survey depicted the progress to date on Cockspur's dikes and ditches, an overlay reflecting Babcock's planned positioning of the fort, and the locations of the buildings in what had become a thriving construction village. By that time, a storm house had been built on higher ground immediately west of the fort, joining the buildings located near the north wharf: the commanding officer's quarters, the office including Lee's quarters, the overseer's quarters, the boatmen's quarters and stone house, two barracks for laborers, a bake house, the master carpenter's quarters, the bath house, and the boat house of the United States Revenue Department.<sup>19</sup> These buildings

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<sup>16</sup>Rogers Young, "The Construction of Fort Pulaski." Georgia Historical Quarterly 20 (1936): 42.

<sup>17</sup>Lattimore 1954, p. 6-7.

<sup>18</sup>Rogers Young, "Story of Gen. Mansfield, the Builder of Fort Pulaski During the Years 1831-45," Savannah Morning News 3 February 1935, A4.

<sup>19</sup>Rogers Young, "Mansfield and Lee Make Progress With Survey of New Fort on Cockspur," Savannah Morning News 10 February 1935, A4

were of wood frame construction, and raised up to five feet above ground level.<sup>20</sup> Also depicted on Lee's map were a beacon located adjacent to the north wharf, and the head of a wooden sluice near the gorge wall of the fort site.

Throughout 1831, Mansfield continued to suggest revisions to Babcock's original construction plans. By October, the Board of Engineers had approved his changes, which included the use of timber piling and grillage to support the fort's foundations and the substitution of brick for stone in the construction of the fort's walls. Mansfield's recommendation that the number of casemate tiers underneath the terreplein be reduced from two to one was also endorsed. Finally, the size of the demilune was greatly enlarged, as were the number of guns proposed for mounting within the fort (from 143 to 172).<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, during the spring of 1831 workmen built a new wharf on Cockspur's southern shore, as well as a lime house, a blacksmith's shop and a carpenter shop. Laborers also dug a 25-foot-wide, three-foot-deep canal connecting the South Channel wharf with the fort site. Over the course of the next year, work continued on the excavation of the fort's foundation. By October, 1832, this project was complete, and approximately half of the grillage had been "laid and weighed with brick." The pilings for the southeast wall had also been driven, and a 15-foot-wide, three-foot-deep canal dug around the foundation excavation to further facilitate the transfer of building materials.

Construction continued in 1833. Perhaps most importantly, the Fort was christened. Count Casimir Pulaski was a Polish aristocrat who fell while fighting with colonial troops at the Battle of Savannah in October, 1779. Meanwhile, grillage was laid on the southern half of the fort; masonry work on the foundations was begun, and brickwork on the fort's north face had similarly commenced.<sup>22</sup> The masons worked with stone taken from quarries in New York and Connecticut. Meanwhile, bricks for the fort were being purchased in Savannah, Georgia, Baltimore, Maryland, and Alexandria, Virginia. By September, 1835, masonry work had progressed such that the rampart had been completed to the height of seven to twelve feet above the grillage.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>J F. K. Mansfield to Board of Engineers, May 28, 1842; Sheets 16-23, Drawer 70; National Archives Fortifications File; Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers; Records of the Army Corps of Engineers, Record Group 77; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

<sup>21</sup>Rogers Young, "Mansfield and Lee Make Progress With Survey of New Fort on Cockspur."

<sup>22</sup>Rogers Young, "Cockspur Island Had Presented Problem in Building Fort Pulaski," Savannah Morning News 17 February 1935, A5.

<sup>23</sup>Rogers Young, "The Construction of Fort Pulaski," p. 43-4.

However, progress at Fort Pulaski ground to a halt in 1835, as Congress chose not to appropriate additional funds for construction. Relations with France had deteriorated, hostilities appeared imminent, and the government had made a calculated decision to use their scarce resources to finance the repair of existing fortifications.<sup>24</sup> Work would only resume two years later, in 1837. By the close of this year, the masonry had been completed in the fort's north and northeast embrasures, as well as in seven embrasures on fort's southeast face. Along the gorge face, the piers and walls to the level of the bottom of the casemate floors had also been finished. Construction also continued outside of the fort. Two projects suggested by Mansfield in 1836 had also been launched. Work had begun on a breakwater and seawall around the northeast perimeter of the island, and a narrow-gauge railway connecting the fort and the south wharf had been laid by the end of 1837. Finally, a permanent dike system, to replace Lee's makeshift series of dikes and ditches, also was begun.<sup>25</sup>

As of March, 1838, the masonry of the casemate arches on the fort's north and northeast fronts had been "turned," and all of the fort's embrasures fully constructed. Meanwhile, the piers and scarp wall of the south and southeast fronts had also been completed such that work on casemate arches could begin. Masonry work on Pulaski's walls continued through 1838 and 1839. By the time of Mansfield's annual report to Washington on September 30, 1839, the scarp wall of the fort had been raised to a height of three inches below the cordon, as had the wall "sustaining" the terreplein on the battery fronts and on two-thirds of the gorge face. The grained arches of the casemates and magazines, eight brick cisterns in the four battery fronts, and a "sewer under the postern" were also finished.<sup>26</sup>

In 1840 and 1841, further efforts were hampered by a reduced appropriation from Congress. However, by the end of the latter year wooden floors in the casemates had been laid and the casemate roofs finished. The interior walls were nearly finished, the south wharf enlarged, the Fort's main gates hung, and 20, 32-pounder cannons were mounted in the battery casemates.<sup>27</sup>

In the early 1840s, work on the fort concentrated on finishing the interior and preparing the fortification for its armament. Stairways within the fort were constructed; roofs over the

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<sup>24</sup>Rogers Young, "Cholera Epidemic Was Controlled at Pulaski But Funds Had Depleted," Savannah Morning News 17 March 1935, A7.

<sup>25</sup>Rogers Young, "Congress in July, 1836, Approves Appropriation For Work at Ft. Pulaski," Savannah Morning News 31 March 1935, A8.

<sup>26</sup>Rogers Young, "Vexatious Trials at End So Work on Fort Pulaski Is Pushed on Vigorously," Savannah Morning News 7 April 1935, A5.

<sup>27</sup>Rogers Young, "The Construction of Fort Pulaski," p. 45.

casemate arches were leaded to keep rain out of quarters; pintle blocks and stone segments for the fort's 56 barbette guns were laid. Two shot furnaces were built, magazines completed, and fireplaces in gorge quarters constructed. Outside the fort, permanent dikes on the west, northeast, east and south sides of the island nearly were finished, and brick sluices in the northwest and southeast dikes were also almost completed.<sup>28</sup>

Between 1843 and 1847, the fort was effectively completed. Work included the completion of interior casemate quarters; the laying of drains under the parade ground; and the pointing of the Fort's walls. Outside the fort, by 1843 plans had been submitted for the fort's counterscarp walls and demilune, and for the feeder canal which would control the flow of water to and from the moat. Mansfield also supervised the construction of a road stretching from the fort to a point roughly 600 feet west of the existing south wharf. At the road's terminus, Mansfield made plans to construct a new wharf. The next year, the masonry of the demilune's north scarp and counterscarp walls was completed, and similar work had commenced on the south face. As of 1846, the demilune's breast-high wall stood complete, as were the bridge leading to the demilune and drawbridge to the fort. Finally, in 1847, the grading and embankment of the glacis slopes of the demilune and main work were finished. That same year, work was also effectively completed on the fort's interior. Surveying the fortification, Lieutenant Barton S. Alexander, Mansfield's successor, wrote in 1847 that "at date everything in, about, or pertaining to the main work and its out works is complete, and they are now ready for their entire armament."<sup>29</sup>

Once complete, the fort commanded the Savannah River channel. A five-sided, 25,000,000-brick structure 1,508 feet in circumference, Fort Pulaski boasted 32-foot-high walls that were seven to eleven feet thick. The fort was designed for two tiers of guns, one mounted in casemates and the other *en barbette*. A seven-foot-deep, 35-foot wide moat surrounded the fort. A six-foot-high dike with a circumference of approximately two miles encompassed the fortification and construction village, providing them with some measure of protection from the elements. Three tidal gates and the feeder canal, which extended to the river's South Channel, controlled the depth of the water in the Fort's moat. A causeway led from the Fort to the south wharf, with another path connecting the fort to the north pier and workmen's village.<sup>30</sup>

This village had grown since Mansfield and Lee's initial survey in 1831. By the early 1840s, there were approximately 20 separate structures on Cockspur, in three separate areas. Most buildings were located near the north wharf. However, northwest of the demilune stood

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<sup>28</sup>Rogers Young, "The Construction of Fort Pulaski," p. 46-48.

<sup>29</sup>Rogers Young, "The Construction of Fort Pulaski," p. 48-50.

<sup>30</sup>FOPU. Draft Cultural Landscape Inventory -Level I, p. 13.

mechanic's quarters, a storm house and cisterns to collect drinking water (several cisterns were also located in the cluster of buildings near the north wharf). Near the south channel were a stable, lime house, cement house and two cisterns.<sup>31</sup> Finally, two outhouses were built in the mid-1840s immediately south of the fort's southwestern corner.<sup>32</sup>

The temporary buildings near the south wharf had disappeared by the 1850s, a decade which otherwise saw few changes to Cockspur's cultural landscape. Between 1848 and 1851, Lt. J. F. Gilmer oversaw modifications to the Cockspur island dike system; in 1857 and 1858 a new sluice-way was built at the south end of the feeding canal leading to the fort's moat; and in 1855 twenty-six new gun platforms were built.<sup>33</sup> Work on Cockspur's dikes and embankments was frustrated frequently by Cockspur's climactic vagaries. In 1854, another massive storm swept over the island, washing down many embankments. Surveying the damage, Gilmer wrote that in many places the embankments had been washed down to the general level of the island. Further, the storm battered many of the buildings on the island. The carpenter's shop was taken from its foundations and floated completely off the island "with all its contents - benches, boxes, tools, etc."<sup>34</sup>

The most significant change in Cockspur's landscape during the 1850s occurred in 1856. That year, on a small sand spit off Cockspur's southeast corner, the Cockspur Island lighthouse was completed. Replacing an earlier structure built in 1837 and 1839, the beacon was built at a cost of \$6,000. A three-story brick tower, this lighthouse was in active service through 1909. A lighthouse keeper's house had been built in 1848, adjacent to the earlier lighthouse; it was demolished by a hurricane in 1881.<sup>35</sup>

By the late 1850s, Fort Pulaski was maintained only by a two-person skeleton crew. But with the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency in 1860 and the secession of South Carolina from the Union a month later, Fort Pulaski's strategic importance mushroomed. Alarmed by the Union occupation of Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor on December 26, 1860,

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<sup>31</sup>[Cartographic Record] J. F. K. Mansfield to Board of Engineers, 11/1/43; Sheet 33, Drawer 70; Fortifications File; Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers; Records of the Army Corps of Engineers; Record Group 90; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

<sup>32</sup>Untitled photograph, Fort Pulaski National Monument Files.

<sup>33</sup>Rogers Young, "The Construction of Fort Pulaski," p. 50-51.

<sup>34</sup>Ralston Lattimore, Hurricanes and High Water at Fort Pulaski (UPS, 1935), p. 17.

<sup>35</sup>Judith E. Collins, Historic Structures Assessment Report: The Cockspur Island Light House Building Number HS-4 Fort Pulaski National Monument (Savannah, GA: National Park Service & Savannah College of Art and Design, 1994), p. 6-7, 12.

Savannah residents came to the conclusion that it had become necessary to pre-emptively seize the Cockspur Island fortification. On January 3, 1861, 134 men marched into the fort without resistance.<sup>36</sup>

After taking control of the fort, the troops were faced with the significantly greater task of readying it for defense. First, the 20 guns which had been mounted in 1840 were remounted in the casemates and ramparts, and mud was excavated from the moat. As additional guns were obtained, they too were mounted. After receiving instructions from Robert E. Lee, the confederates also tore down the veranda outside of the officers' quarters and cut the graded parade ground into a series of trenches to prevent shot from rolling. In addition, the soldiers used timber and earth to create a traverse which encircled the parade ground and protected from enemy fire. Outside of the fort, soldiers stripped and burned away most of the island's vegetation, to ensure maximum possibly visibility from the fort.

As 1861 turned into 1862 and Union troops cut off the fort's supply and reinforcement lines and established eleven batteries on Tybee Island, across the South Channel of the Savannah River. Since Cockspur's neighboring islands were beyond the range of traditional smoothbore cannon, Confederate troops were not overly worried by the northern advances. However, within 30 hours of the time when Union batteries commenced fire on the supposedly indestructible fort - 8: 10 a.m., April 10, 1862 - the southerners had surrendered. Though Fort Pulaski - with its thick walls and inaccessible location - was believed to be invulnerable to enemy attack, northern troops had utilized a new weapon to force their opponents into submission: the rifled gun. Using rifled cannon, which possessed a significantly longer effective range from regular guns, troops under Capt. Quincy A. Gillmore breached Fort Pulaski's southeast corner and threatened the installation's powder magazine. With his garrison in imminent danger, Col. Charles H. Olmstead surrendered unconditionally at 2 p.m. on April 11.<sup>37</sup>

Soon after marching into the fort, Union troops worked to repair the destruction they had inflicted. Within six weeks, they had rebuilt the fort's heavily damaged southeast corner. Other, less significant construction and reconstruction projects also were completed. While encamped at the fort, soldiers constructed a number of wooden and brick structures on the demilune. Though the exact nature of these buildings is unknown, it is probable that at least one of them served as a kitchen.<sup>38</sup> Wooden structures and earthen and brick mounds also appeared on the fort's terreplein,

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<sup>36</sup>Lattimore 1954, p. 13-14.

<sup>37</sup>Lattimore 1954, p. 32-5.

<sup>38</sup>Talley Kirkland, FOPU Interpretive Ranger.

possibly to shield soldiers from enemy fire.<sup>39</sup>

Throughout the Civil War, Fort Pulaski's occupation by Union forces blocked commerce to and from Savannah. During this era, the fort also was used as a military prison. Unwilling visitors to Cockspur Island included "The Immortal Six Hundred," confederate officers who had earlier been pawns in a cat-and-mouse game of hostage-taking in Charleston, South Carolina. This hapless group spent six months of deprivation on the island in 1864 and 1865.<sup>40</sup> After the war, the fort was used first as a prison for former confederate officials and then, through the early 1870s, for deserters among union troops occupying Georgia during Reconstruction.

After the South had been subdued, a sizeable contingent of Union troops returned to Fort Pulaski. Between 1869 and 1872, troops redesigned and remodeled the Fort's demilune, putting in place underground magazines and several gun emplacements. Above the magazines, troops substantially altered the demilune's topography, changing its surface from a flat plane to a series of mounds covering the magazines.<sup>41</sup> Troops also reconstructed roads and repaired sea walls around Cockspur. During this era, many soldiers were quartered in Pulaski's casemates.<sup>42</sup>

The end of Georgia's Reconstruction, in 1873, coincided with the beginning of an era of relative quiescence on Cockspur. In 1879, the Tybee Knoll Cut Range lighthouse was built on the western side of the island, overlooking the South Channel. This lighthouse was joined by a boat house and keeper's house in 1882, a wharf in 1888, and an oil storage shed in 1893; these support structures were built along or near the island's southwestern face.<sup>43</sup> In August, 1881, a hurricane washed away what remained of the construction village. In fact, the only buildings on the island to survive the storm were the fort and the ordnance sergeant's residence. Though the exact location of this latter structure is unknown, it is likely that ruins located immediately north of the fort, roughly 100 feet from the counterscarp wall, constitute its remains. Meanwhile, waters during the 1881 storm rose to a foot above the floors of the officers' quarters within the casemates along Pulaski's gorge walls, forcing the Cockspur lighthouse keeper to take refuge in the stairways leading up to the fort's parapet. The storm also damaged the island's dike system. Though the embankments were eventually repaired, they were not completely restored to their

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<sup>39</sup>FOPU Draft Cultural Landscape Inventory -Level I, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup>Lattimore 1954, p. 39-40.

<sup>41</sup>FOPU Draft Cultural Landscape Inventory -Level I, p. 21.

<sup>42</sup>Capt. D. R. Ransom to the Office of the Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the South, Sept. 20, 1872; Letters Sent, 1867-73, Vol. 1; Descriptive Books of General Prisoners, Ft. Pulaski; Part V; Record Group 393; National Archives Building I, Washington, D.C.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid, p. 21-2.

original six-foot height.<sup>44</sup>

After this hurricane, the Cockspur Island lighthouse keeper took residence in Pulaski's casemate quarters. Not long afterward, a house was built for this keeper atop the southern portion of the fort's gorge terreplein. The exact date of construction for this two-story, three-chimney structure is unclear; sources have cited dates ranging from 1893 to 1906. Despite this uncertainty, it is clear that \$4,000 was appropriated by Congress for the construction of a dwelling in 1902, and that the building was erect by 1906.<sup>45</sup> This building, which also boasted an adjacent woodshed, was claimed by fire stemming from a lightning strike in 1925. This fire also damaged several of the casemates underlying the house. Thirty-one years earlier, another fire had claimed five casemates.<sup>46</sup>

Though the last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed few changes to Cockspur's cultural landscape, activity in and around the Savannah River would ultimately result in major changes to the island. Beginning in 1885, a series of jetties were constructed around the mouth of the river. The last jetty from this era was built in 1894-6 from the northeast tip of Cockspur Island, stretching eastward out into the Atlantic Ocean. Attracting sediment, this jetty further increased the land mass of Cockspur Island by creating an arm of dry land along the North Channel. Simultaneously, the tidal marsh between Cockspur and Long Islands began to disappear. By the 1900s, what had once been a fairly well-defined separation between the islands had become filled with dry land.<sup>47</sup>

In 1895, a room was built underneath the demilune's southeast corner to house controls for electric mines positioned in the Savannah River; this room was covered by a substantial earthen mound. Four years later, construction began on Battery Horace Hambricht. Located southwest of the north wharf, this 100' x 50' x 15', steel and concrete battery contained three ammunition magazines and two gun emplacements. Its north face was also covered with a sloped earthen surface. Construction on the battery, named after a West Point graduate who had died

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<sup>44</sup>Lattimore 1935, p. 17.

<sup>45</sup>Letter from L. J. Gage, Secretary of the Treasury, to Committee on Appropriations and Speaker of the House, January 11, 1902; also [cartographic record] Fort Pulaski, Nov. 21, 1906; Sheet 86-2; Drawer 70; Fortifications File; Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers; Records of the Army Corps of Engineers, Record Group 77; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

<sup>46</sup>Capt. O.M. Carter to Brig. Gen. Thomas L. Casey, Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, July 24, 1894; Drawer 70; Fortifications File; Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers; Records of the Army Corps of Engineers, Record Group 77; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

<sup>47</sup>FOPU Draft Cultural Landscape Inventory -Level I, p. 23.

after falling from his horse in North Dakota in 1896, was completed by March 31, 1900.<sup>48</sup>

The 1890s also witnessed the establishment of a quarantine station along Cockspur's northwest shore. In 1890, the City of Savannah began construction on a Caribbean-style raised cottage on the island for a quarantine officer, "provided with modern improvement and built in a substantial manner" and completed the following year. In 1893, a house was built for the crews of vessels, and a disinfecting plant, containing fumigation and disinfecting apparatus, was begun. Six years later, the U. S. Marine Hospital Service assumed control over the station.<sup>49</sup> Under their control, by 1903 the quarantine station had grown to include nine buildings: a hospital, laundry, pharmacist and attendants' quarters, kitchen building, medical officers' quarters, disinfecting house, paint house, sailors' quarters, and an attendant's quarters. Atop the wharf, which was 312 feet long and 10-17 feet wide, were a boathouse, engine room and sulfur storeroom. Meanwhile, a massive water tank had also been constructed adjacent to the decontamination building.<sup>50</sup> A 1914 map also depicts a small picket fence, approximately 1,000 feet in length, forming the station's southern and western border, as well as a tennis court between sailors' and attendant's quarters.<sup>51</sup> The station itself was built atop sand and rock ballast discharged from vessels, the ground level being approximately a foot above ordinary spring tide. Missives to military and civilian authorities spanning the station's history requesting the strategic deposition of dredged materials onto quarantine ground suggest that even though the station's wood-frame buildings were elevated on wood and masonry posts, the nearby waters were never out of mind.<sup>52</sup>

In anticipation of the arrival of German prisoners of war and soldiers returning from World War I, the station was dramatically expanded in 1918 and 1919. The wharf was extended northward into the Savannah River channel; this addition extended along a southwest-northeast axis, boasted a second boat house near its center, and was connected to the older wharf by a plank walkway extending from its center to the center of the first wharf. In addition, quarters

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<sup>48</sup>Charles Snell, Battery Horace Hambricht: Historic Structure Report, Fort Pulaski National Monument, Georgia (Denver, CO: NPS, 1977), p. 7-16.

<sup>49</sup>Thomas Gamble, Jr., History of the Municipal Government of Savannah from 1790 to 1901 (Savannah: 1901), p. 356-361.

<sup>50</sup>Untitled photograph; Savannah Quarantine file; Records of the Public Health Service, Record Group 90; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

<sup>51</sup>Manuscript Map of Savannah, GA U.S. Quarantine Station, drawn June 16, 1914; File 0750, Grounds; Box 89; Domestic Stations, Georgia; NC 34 Entry 10, General Subject File, 1924-35. Records of the Public Health Service, Record Group 90. National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

<sup>52</sup>William J. Linley, Acting Asst. Surgeon, to the Office of the Surgeon General, July 5, 1906; File #321, Box 048; Quarantine Stations; NC 34, Entry 10, General File, 18971923; Records of the Public Health Service, Record Group 90; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

were built adjoining the station's existing kitchen and dining room and its pantry; a large hospital building was constructed; and a new kitchen, dining room, and barracks building also were completed.

Like the construction village almost a century before, the quarantine station had grown into a fairly considerable community. The quarantine reservation itself was approximately 130 acres in size, five of which were enclosed by fencing. The new wharf was 250 feet long, with width varying from 20 to 25 feet. Atop this old wharf were a large boathouse, a small hoisting engine house, and a tool house. As of the late 1920s (1928), there were approximately 20 other buildings on the site: a paint house, quarters for black attendants, a gasoline and oil storage shed, new and old laundry buildings, the fumigation building, four barracks buildings, new and old hospital buildings, an isolation house, a kitchen and dining room for those in isolation, an office building, the medical officer's quarters, the station pharmacist's quarters, the kitchen, mess hall and attendant's quarters, and a wood shed.<sup>53</sup> Most of these buildings were elevated several feet above ground level as protection from high waters. Though primarily designed for functional use, several of these structures also offered creature comforts. For example, the pharmacist's quarters included separate sitting and dining rooms.<sup>54</sup> Water for the station was drawn from an artesian well 200 feet in depth.

Meanwhile, long-neglected Fort Pulaski had begun to receive renewed attention. Under the Antiquities Act of 1906, the War Department announced on July 17, 1915 that the fort had been selected as a national monument. However, it was not until October 15, 1924, that Fort Pulaski officially became a monument, by proclamation of President Calvin Coolidge.<sup>55</sup> Despite its newfound status, Fort Pulaski remained in dilapidated condition throughout the 1920s. The parade ground was overgrown with vegetation, the island's dike system had been battered by decades of coastal storms, and the ditches and moat were filled with sediment. The *Savannah Morning News* put the plight of would-be visitors thusly: "The only access to the island is by boat, and the visitor must struggle through a swampy and marshy section for nearly half a mile before coming to the fort itself. There is no caretaker at the monument ... [t]he fort is in ruins."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>John McMullen, Senior Surgeon, to the Office of the Surgeon General, April 3, 1928; File 1850, Reports; Box 89; Domestic Stations - Georgia; NC 34, Entry 10, General Subject File, 1924-35; Records of the Public Health Service, Record Group 90; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

<sup>54</sup>Barton Brown, A.A. Surgeon to the Office of the Surgeon General, July 25, 1924; File 0245, Buildings; Box 89; Domestic Stations - Georgia; NC 34, Entry 10, General Subject File 1924-35. Records of the Public Health Service, Record Group 90; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

<sup>55</sup>Lattimore 1954, p. 43.

<sup>56</sup>"Fort Pulaski Project to Be Developed on Generous Scale," *Savannah Morning News* 3 February 1934; Fort Pulaski Vertical File, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA.

In 1934, help arrived in the form of the Civilian Conservation Corps, an unemployment relief program for youths established during the Great Depression. Within two years, CCC laborers had designed and executed many repairs to the fort. The lead roof was repaired, as were the casemate floors. Brickwork was repainted throughout the entire fortress. The island's dike system was repaired. A parking lot west of the demilune was constructed. The earthen mounds on Battery Horace Hambright and the demilune were hand-graded. Barracks rooms and officers' quarters were restored, and wooden casemate fronts were reproduced in one of the Fort's galleries. The moat and feeder canal were excavated and then refilled with water. Also the subject of restoration projects were the circular stair tower railings, the northwest bastion stair tower, the sallyport and demilune drawbridges (restored by the NPS in July, 1936), pathways leading to and from the fort, and the sally-port flag pole. A new drainage system was installed in the parade ground. The gorge rooms and the underground passages in the demilune were wired for electricity. Comfort stations were established. Two tide gates were erected on the main moat drainage canal (one of which, at the southern end of the canal, was located south of the original gate and was built in tandem with a reconfiguration of the original dike system at that point) and headwalls were provided for two culverts under the south channel walk.<sup>57</sup>

The Civilian Conservation Corps also left a substantial cultural footprint on Cockspur Island outside of their repairs of Fort Pulaski. Several corps workers were enlisted to demolish decaying buildings at the quarantine station. A 1934 report had commented that "a large double barracks building, a large laundry building, together with other temporary structures erected during the World War are now settling on their foundations and are about to fall in."<sup>58</sup> A year later, one inspector put matters much more succinctly: "All of the buildings are ugly. It would be quite impossible to beautify them even by repair and paint."<sup>59</sup> Soon after arriving on the island, the corps was asked to destroy five of these buildings, while salvaging portions of others for their own use.<sup>60</sup> What remained of the quarantine post was transferred to the National Park Service in August 1937.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>NPS, Final Report on Restoration of Public Works Project #545, (National Park Service, 1936), Fort Pulaski File #52.

<sup>58</sup>John McMullen, Asst. Surgeon General to Office of the Surgeon General, March SO, 1934; File 1850, Reports; Box 89; Domestic Stations - Georgia; NC 34, Entry 10, General Subject File 1924-35; Records of the Public Health Service, Record Group 90; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

<sup>59</sup>F.C. Smith to Office of the Surgeon General, March 25, 1935; File 1850, Reports; Box 89; Domestic Stations - Georgia; NC 34, Entry 10, General Subject File 1924-35; Records of the Public Health Service, Record Group 90; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

<sup>60</sup>NPS FOPU Job #98 CCC-7-713, Razing Undesired Structures (National Park Service, no date), Fort Pulaski Files, Bally Index #159.

<sup>61</sup>"Quarantine Site Is Transferred," Savannah Morning News 9 August 1937, A32.

In addition, CCC workers constructed an extensive camp while on Cockspur, located immediately east of the quarantine station. In addition to a 139-foot, 6-inch dock extending into the Savannah River's north channel, the camp included a utility building, four barracks, mess hall, pantry, a headquarters building, a bath house, light plant, and storage building. In addition, two wings of a quarantine building were moved, then rejoined to form the company's recreation hall. These buildings were linked via shell covered walkways. South of the camp, the company had cleared a baseball field.<sup>62</sup> Activities on this field provided just one of several diversions available to the company. The CCC post also boasted basketball and boxing teams, as well as a "hill-billy orchestra" with its own local radio show. These extracurricular activities were undoubtedly one of the reasons why Superintendent Reaville Brown wrote in one of his quarterly narrative reports, "I doubt if the morale of any camp is higher than that of the camp located at this monument."<sup>63</sup>

Though the CCC's work was complete by 1936, Cockspur remained abuzz with activity well into the 1940s. In 1938, Cockspur was joined with McQueen's Island and U. S. Route 80 to the south via a 1,280-foot bridge designed by architect W. J. Meagher.<sup>64</sup> One year later, the Savannah Bar Pilots moved their operational base from Lazaretto Creek to Cockspur's northern shore; they remain on the island to this day.<sup>65</sup>

In 1942, Fort Pulaski N.M. was closed when Cockspur Island was again called to military duty. The site of the quarantine station and CCC camp was chosen for a naval Section Base. Almost \$2,000,000 was spent to renovate CCC and quarantine buildings, and to construct additional structures. When finished, the station included "barracks of a permanent structure, accommodating about 400 men, an administrative office, an air cooled auditorium with moving pictures, club rooms and cooking facilities for the men, an officers' club, gymnasium, athletic field and tennis courts."<sup>66</sup> In addition, several ammunition magazines were built southwest of the base. The majority of these structures were destroyed soon after the end of the war; only the magazines, the park residence (formerly the quarantine station officer's quarters), and a

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<sup>62</sup>FOPU Draft Cultural Landscape Inventory -Level I, Figure 24.

<sup>63</sup>Reaville Brown, Narrative Report for the Fifth Enrollment Period, April 1st to October 18t, 1935, 10/2/35; Box 14; Georgia; Entry 42, Narrative Reports Concerning ECW (CCC) Projects in National Park Service Areas 1933-35; Records of the National Park Service Records of the Branch of Recreation, Land Planning and State Cooperation; Records of the National Park Service, Record Group 79; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

<sup>64</sup>Fort Pulaski National Monument List of Classified Structures (Atlanta, GA: National Park Service, 1994).

<sup>65</sup>FOPU Draft Cultural Landscape Inventory -Level I, p. 28.

<sup>66</sup>"Cockspur Island Hospital Planned," Savannah Morning News June 16 1944; Cockspur Island Vertical File, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA.

The Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) division of the National Park Service and the Fort Pulaski National Monument jointly sponsored this project to trace the evolution and development of the site and island. The principles involved were E. Blaine Cliver, Chief of HABS/HAER, and John Breen, Superintendent, Fort Pulaski National Monument. The documentation was undertaken by HABS under the direction of Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief of HABS, with the assistance Mark S. Schara, HABS Architect, and Catherine C. Lavoie, HABS Historian, who oversaw the personnel involved in this project. The documentation was completed in the Washington, D.C., office of HABS by Brain J. Bitner, HABS Architect, Shawn A. Gregoire, HABS Architectural Technician, and Kyle F. Graham, HABS Historian. The large format photography was produced by Jack E. Boucher, HABS Photographer. Talley Kirkland, Collections, Fort Pulaski National Monument, provided invaluable assistance to various members of the HABS team throughout the course of the project.