

**Final Report of Archaeological and Historical Investigations
of Camp Parapet, a Civil War Site in Jefferson Parish,
Louisiana**

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Chapter Three

History of the Camp Parapet Area

This chapter summarizes the history of the Camp Parapet area, encompassing an approximately 0.5-mile-wide by two-mile-deep tract directly across the Mississippi River from Nine Mile Point. A middle section of the east bank of Jefferson Parish, the modern boundaries are approximately Severn Avenue on the west, Coolidge Street on the east, the river on the south and Forty-fifth Street on the north. The period covered is from the earliest European settlement to the mid-twentieth century, with a concentration on the Civil War period and the history of Camp Parapet itself.

Colonial Period

Settling *Les Chapitoulas*

The historic use of the project area dates almost to the beginning of the French settlement of Louisiana. Following La Salle's failed attempts to occupy and fortify the length of the Mississippi River in 1683, a successful French occupation of the Gulf Coast was established by Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, who with his younger brother Jean Baptiste, Sieur de Bienville, established Fort Maurepas at Biloxi Bay. The first years at this settlement were very insecure and simple survival dominated the lives of the colonists. The principal settlement was later moved to Mobile in 1711 (Goodwin et al 1985:24, 27).

In 1712 the Louisiana colony was turned over by the French crown to the proprietorship of Antoine Crozat, Marquis de Chatel. Crozat struggled to manage the colony successfully and gave up in 1714. After a brief return to the crown, the proprietorship was granted to John Law and the Company of the Indies in 1717. During this rule, the City of New Orleans was founded in 1718 under the direction of Bienville. More than just settling New Orleans, the Company of the Indies sought to expand the profitability of the colony through agricultural production. To do so, large concessions of land were offered to some of the wealthiest families in France. Other concessions were granted to those promising to settle in the colony and help it grow. Included in these are the concessions made to the three Chauvin brothers and Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil in 1719 along what was known as *Les Chapitoulas*, or the bend in the river opposite nine mile point (Goodwin et al 1985:27-8). These plantations were the first European settlements in the current project area (Figure 3-1).

This section of East Jefferson proved to be a fertile ground for these early settlers. The Chauvin brothers--de Lery, Beaulieu, and Lafreniere--had traveled from Montreal, Canada to Mobile before coming to settle along the Chapitoulas Coast in 1719. Each were granted six arpent frontages along the river with Lafreniere receiving an additional six arpent tract for an absent nephew (note: an arpent is equivalent to 192 feet). Dubreuil emigrated from Dijon, France, arriving in Mobile in

March, 1719, then moving to the Chapitoulas Coast where his concession awaited him (Bezou 1973:18). The exact size of the Dubreuil plantation is not known, but it is shown to be much larger than those of the Chauvin brothers on the 1723 *Carte Particuliere* (Figure 3-2). Following the most recent study of pre-Civil War property ownership in East Jefferson (Goodwin et al. 1993), it is believed that the Dubreuil plantation occupied the entire frontage now delineated as Sections 46 and 47 of Township 12S, Range 10E (see Figure 3-3). As these are the sections in which the current project lies, it is concluded that the Dubreuil plantation was the first historic use of the site being investigated.

A census taken in 1721 recorded one man, one woman, two children, two French servants, and forty-three African slaves resident on the Dubreuil concession. In 1724 another census recorded that skilled European workers joined the enterprise along with additional African and Native American slaves, but that Dubreuil had lost 23 African slaves in the previous two years (Goodwin et al 1985:29, Bauer 1987:22). On the plantation, 300 arpents of land were cleared and under cultivation with indigo, rice, and sweet potatoes. The census taker also recorded these thoughts:

[Dubreuil] is one of the most hardworking and most intelligent of all the residents and he understands well the mechanics of all trades. His land is the largest, the prettiest, and the best cleared in the colony. He was first to have built some levees and deep ditches in order to let the water flow away in the cypresses and maintain tidal lands. He had the idea of making himself more than seven to eight thousand fathoms of ditches besides four to five thousand small ditches . . . He has a large house with two wings which serve as a storehouse which he is completing at present. This will be the best dwelling in the colony... (cited in Bauer 1987:22).

The levees mentioned in this extract are believed to be the first of their sort in the long history of water management along the Mississippi River coast. In fact, due to the flooding of the neighboring properties (upriver from the Chauvin concessions), these levees instigated the first ruling in the colony requiring all landowners along the river to build and maintain levees (Bauer 1987:22).

After the Indian raid on the French Natchez settlement in 1729, Dubreuil joined with his fellow colonists around New Orleans in protecting the city by using his own slaves to clear the woods so that a surprise attack on the city could be prevented. A recent discovery in Dubreuil's letters suggests that he also may have built a fort on his concession that could accommodate 400 people "in the fashion of a castle keep, elevated 22 feet, two storied, gunproof . . . not to mention a large enclosing wall, palisade with bastions, and a large tower, very high to post a sentry, and a cannon. All this was necessary, but only brought on debts" (cited in Bauer 1987:24). Whether this fort was actually built, or was a ruse employed by Dubreuil to gather further sympathy and perhaps restitution for costs incurred during the defense of New Orleans, is not known.

Like his neighbors, Dubreuil successfully used his plantation to enhance his personal well-being. Indigo production along the Chapitoulas Coast kept most plantations there busy and profitable, and the great demand for primary materials in New Orleans offered substantial

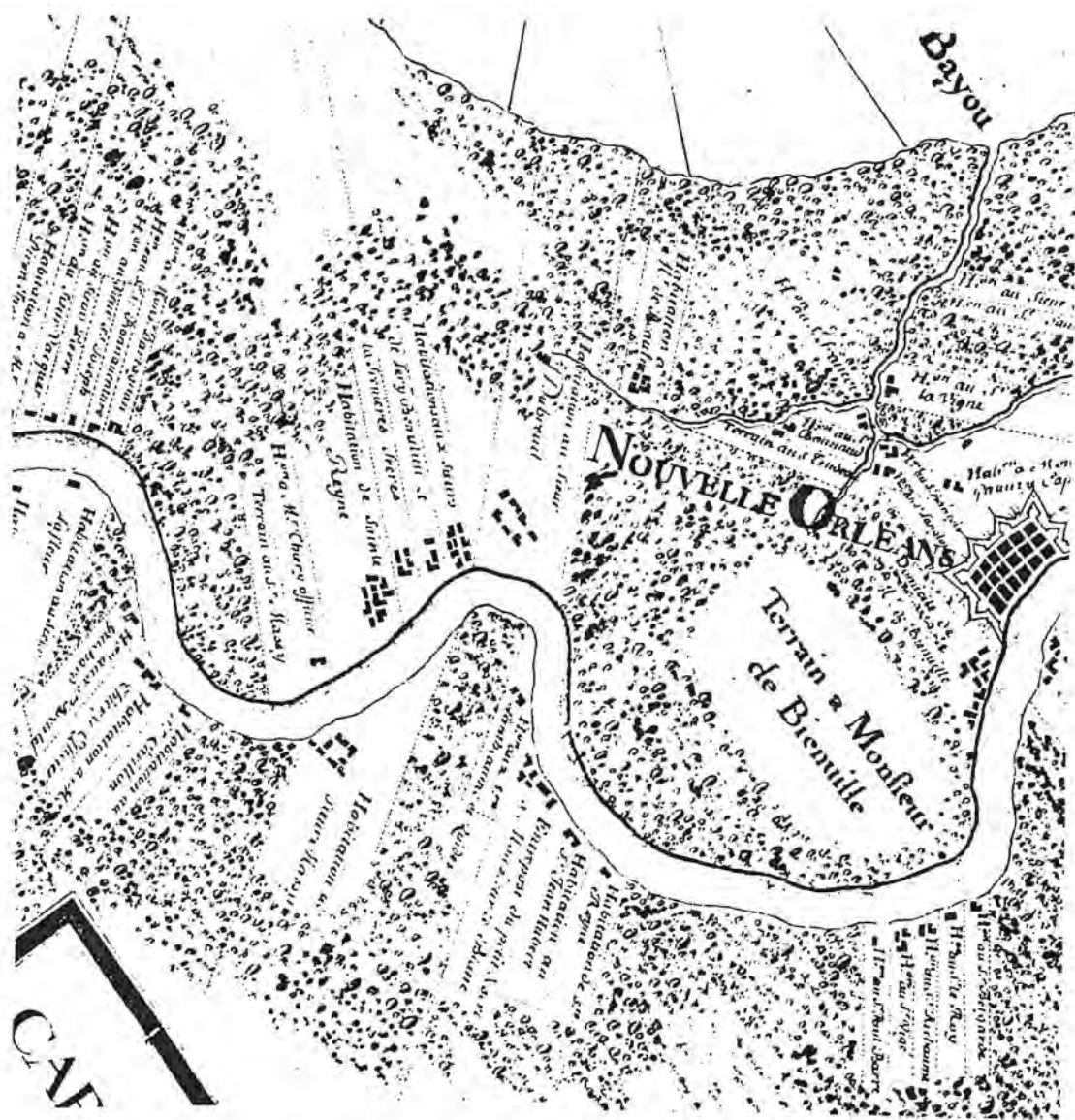


Figure 3-2. Carte Particuliere de Fleuve St. Louis, circa 1723 (Newberry Library, Chicago).

supplemental opportunities for the area's planters. Staple foods like rice, potatoes, wheat, beans, and corn found buyers in the city. The same was true for plantation livestock such as cows, calves, oxen, sheep, and goats. Other staple crops like tobacco and wax myrtle were also grown in the area (Goodwin et al 1985:32-3, Bauer 1987:26).

For Dubreuil, however, the most substantial resource of his plantation was timber. In the 1730s, Dubreuil used his slaves and the vast timber supply of his plantation to enter the construction business. His labors in this field, both privately and as the king's Contractor of Public Works, earned him recognition as "the most important building contractor in French Louisiana" by the eminent architectural historian, Samuel Wilson, Jr. (Bauer 1987:24). Of his noted works are two monumental barracks built in the official Louis XV style, the first Charity Hospital, the restoration of the Balize establishment, and the Ursuline Convent (Bauer 1987:24). To handle these projects it is likely that Dubreuil not only culled his Chapitoulas forests but also built and operated a sawmill on his plantation.

Thus, by 1745, there were several buildings on the Dubreuil plantation including his residence, a storehouse, a livestock barn, a sawmill, an indigo factory, slave residences, and possibly others, all of which stood in or near the current project area.

On April 5, 1745, Dubreuil conveyed his Chapitoulas plantation to his two sons. This decision followed his purchase of another plantation, *La Brasserie*, immediately downriver from New Orleans on the site of the city commons (present-day Esplanade Avenue). This new plantation became home to some of the city's major early industrial works in the colonial era. Following his penchant for innovation, Dubreuil is credited with planting the first sugar cane and building the first sugar mill on this plantation in the 1750s. Unfortunately, his experiments largely failed and sugar did not take off again in Louisiana until much later in the 18th century (Bauer 1987:25-6).

Little mention is made of the use of the Chapitoulas plantation by Dubreuil's sons. It is known, however, that they failed to live up to their father's example as one, Joseph, Jr., died in bankruptcy and the widow of the other, Louis, sought aid from the French government for herself and her children after they returned to France in 1778.

Late 18th and Early 19th-Century Occupations

While use of the project area for planting persisted through the late 18th and early 19th centuries, several economic and political changes occurred. The first was the transfer of the Louisiana territory from France to Spain in August, 1769. During the Spanish reign, populations in Louisiana grew much more rapidly as new immigrants and more enslaved Africans came to the colony. A major economic change was triggered in the shift from indigo to sugar as the major staple export crop, especially after 1790. Also during the Spanish era, sawmills grew in number as the Spanish sought out wooden transport boxes for the Cuba sugar trade.

Trade regulations fluctuated under Spanish rule, but overall favored the City of New Orleans' location as the principle port at the mouth of the Mississippi River, leading that city to grow rapidly into a major port for both Caribbean and North American trade. The success of New Orleans allowed smaller plantations in the area to continue their focus on producing supplies for the burgeoning urban market, while the larger holdings continued to focus on sugar. Nevertheless, the colony as a whole failed to meet Spain's expectations and they returned Louisiana to France in 1800.

The success of the New Orleans area continued under French rule and prompted President Thomas Jefferson of the United States to offer to buy the city. Napoleon, however, offered not just New Orleans, but the entire Louisiana Territory for 15 million dollars. With this purchase, Louisiana passed to its third ruling country, the United States, in 1803.

A 1785 census recorded that along the Chapitoulas coast there were 1,128 whites, 263 free persons of color, and 5,645 slaves. By the time of the Louisiana Purchase the overall population had changed little, though decreasing slightly (Goodwin et al 1985:39). It has been suggested that during the Spanish colonial period circumstances in Louisiana were favorable towards the formation of a distinct population of self-aware free people of color (Hanger 1997:1-17). By one account, the number of free people of color along the Chapitoulas Coast at the end of the 18th century represented the greatest concentration of rural free blacks in the colony (Goodwin et al 1985:40). It is possible that producing foodstuffs for the growing urban market helped sustain these people as they struggled to survive as free blacks in a slave society. It is not known whether any of these people lived or worked the lands now included in the project area.

Antebellum Period

During the American period prior to the Civil War much of the same economy persisted in the project area. Of note were the growing tensions in the political relations between the urban residents of New Orleans and the rural residents of the rest of Orleans Parish, which included the current project area. To help resolve these tensions, the parish was split in two in February, 1825. The east bank of the new Jefferson Parish was formed of the land between Felicite Street in New Orleans and the already established St. Charles Parish line. The downriver parish boundary slowly moved further upriver until it reached Monticello Street at the edge of Carrollton where it remains today.

Pertaining to the current project area, the land tenure records show that after the Dubreuil, the area passed through several hands prior to its use as Camp Parapet in the Civil War (see Figure 3-3). At least the upriver portion of the plantation was acquired by M. de Lalande prior to July, 1750, when a transaction regarding the neighboring plantation lists him as the owner (Bezou 1973:39-40). After de Lalande, the property passed in the mid-1750s to Francois Beaulieu, who adopted the name Monplaisir. Francois was the son of Charlotte Orbanne Duval, widow of Chauvin Beaulieu, one of the original Chauvin brothers to settle *Les Chapitoulas* (Bezou 1973:37-8).

The subsequent owner of the plantation was Jean-Baptiste Castillon, the French Consul in New Orleans, who acquired the plantation after his marriage in 1804 to Louise de La Ronde. A land tenure schematic (Figure 3-3) shows that the plantation then passed in two segments to James Williams and Benjamin Farrar. No other mention of these transactions has been found. In fact, a map of current property owners along the Mississippi dating to the establishment of Jefferson Parish in 1825 shows Castillon still resident (Figure 69 in Goodwin et al. 1985). That this map may be correct, rather than the schematic, is suggested by the fact that Pierre Gervais Arnoult is listed as the owner of the neighboring upriver plantation. It is known that Arnoult's acquisition of that plot dates to 1824 (Bezou 1973:40). At this time, it cannot be determined which is the correct version.

In any event, the subsequent owners, Louis D'Aquin and Pierre Francois Volant de La Barre, are known to have been resident at the time the Zimple Map was published in 1834 (Figure 3-4). It is notable that Zimple identifies a "projected Division into Lots" on the D'Aquin plantation. A total of nine lots running from the river towards the lake are shown. The plan of these lots seems to fail to consider the existing structures and gardens of the plantation, as if they were going to be removed in the development process. A similar subdivision plat was also made for the Volant Labarre plantation later in the 1830s (Figure 31 in Goodwin et al. 1985). This plat similarly fails to preserve the existing architecture. Whether these plans were implemented as they were drawn up is not known for certain, but the entire area was subdivided as can be seen on the detail of Norman's Chart of the Lower Mississippi River of 1858 (Figure 3-5). On this map, the project area is depicted as a series of plantations starting with that of E. Preston and running upriver to that of V. Roman. In fact, it has been suggested that the first name applied to Camp Parapet may have been Camp Roman in reference to this plantation, the lands of which were incorporated into the camp in 1861. There is little information regarding the pre-Civil War architecture in the project area. One of the few remaining clues is a 1920s photograph of a small plantation house situated between Carrollton and Harahan first published in the 1947 *Jefferson Parish Yearly Review* (Swanson 1975:75), but it is unknown whether this house stood within the current project area.

Civil War

Greater New Orleans Arena

The history of Camp Parapet must be understood within the context of the greater New Orleans arena during the Civil War. After a year of intense debate and political campaigning, Louisiana seceded from the Union on January 26, 1861. Neither Louisiana's delegation to the Democratic National Convention in 1860 nor the state Legislature was unanimous in this decision, but powerful slave-owning factions controlled the majority (Winters 1963:4-7). A number of prominent Unionists resided in the New Orleans area, but they either left or fell silent as public fervor for secession and by Spring 1861, for war, gained momentum. New Orleans became an administrative center of political and military activity.

Jefferson Parish, at that time largely comprised of Creole-owned sugar plantations, rallied to the Confederate cause even before the vote for secession. In December of 1860, Guy Dreux

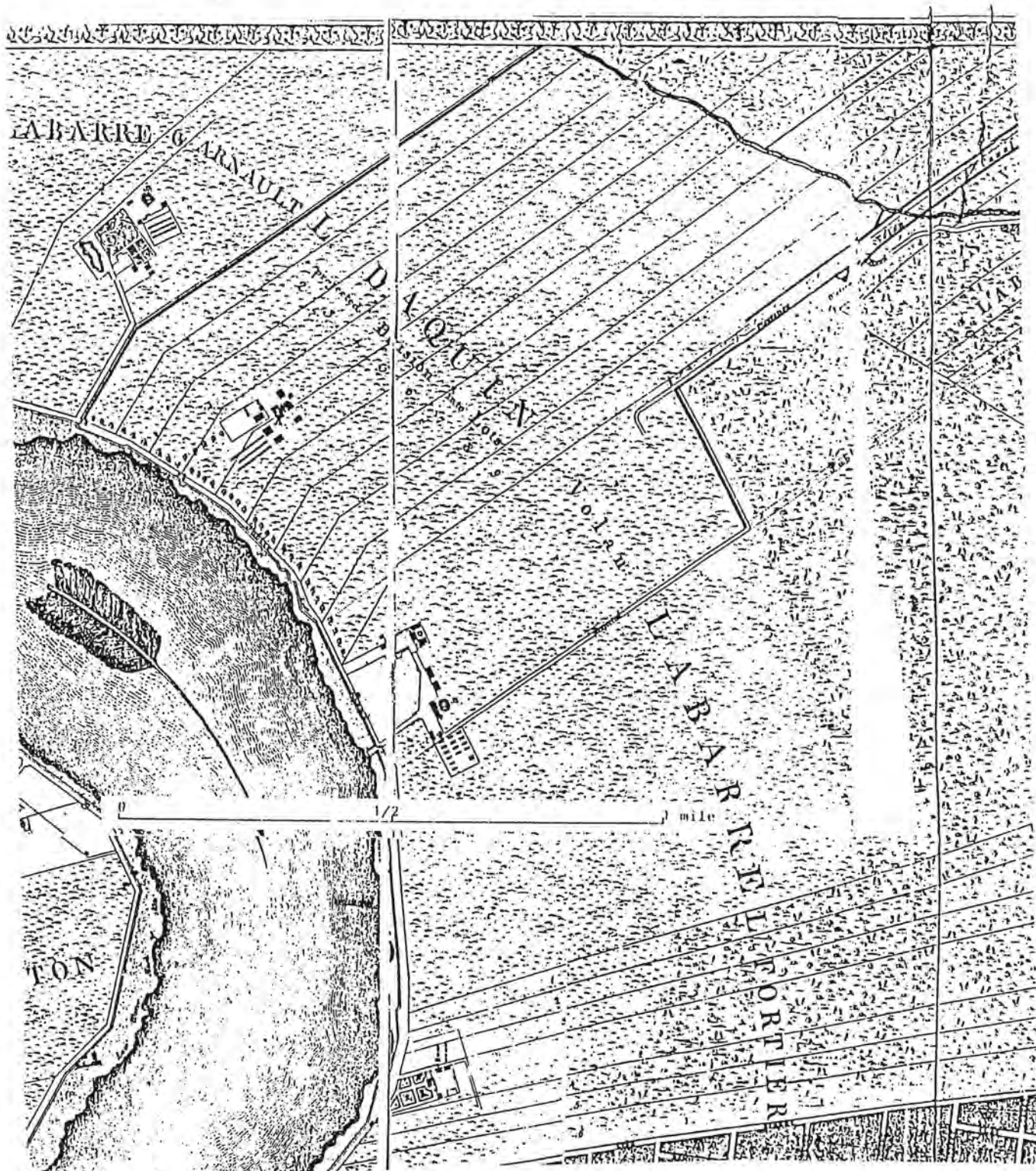


Figure 3-4. Zimpel's 1834 Topographical Map of New Orleans and Its Vicinity (Map Division, Library of Congress).

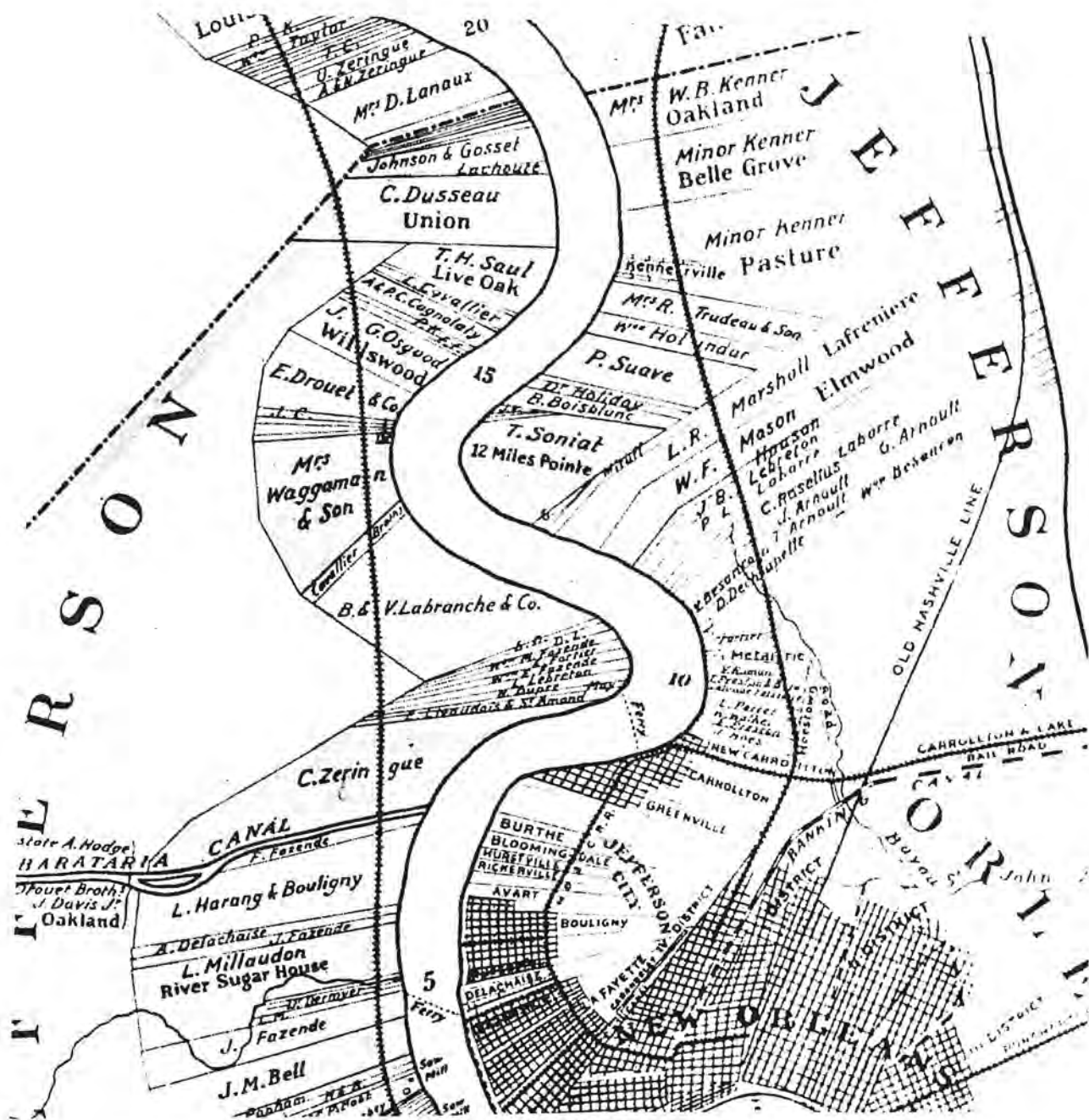


Figure 3-5. Detail of Norman’s Chart of the Lower Mississippi, 1858 (Special Collections, Tulane University Library).

organized the Jefferson Mounted Guards, a cavalry unit of 70 wealthy plantation owners and their sons (Swanson 1975:93). One-hundred and thirty other volunteer militia units were raised around the greater New Orleans area before the first Conscription Act was issued by the Confederacy in April 1862.

The spring and summer of 1861 saw feverish preparations for war. Major P. G. T. Beauregard, who had reluctantly resigned his U.S. commission at West Point out of allegiance to his native Louisiana, advised the local Military Board that the Mississippi River approaches represented a major vulnerability in that state's defenses. As a consequence, older forts were reinforced, new forts built, new camps established, and a complex series of batteries (earthen embankment defense lines) placed on both sides of the river, from its mouth to points above the city and across Lake Pontchartrain (Greene 1982:139-140). These included McGehee line, Chalmette line, Company Canal line, Spanish Fort, Fort Jackson, Fort St. Philip, Fort Pike, Fort Macomb, Battery Bienvenue, and Tower Dupre. Camp Williams (also called Camp Walker) at the Metairie Race Track, Camp Lewis just below Carrollton, and Camp John Morgan were established on the East Bank above the city to train and organize troops.

Because of these efforts, most local residents thought the city was impregnable. However, the Union launched an aggressive campaign in April 1862 to take the largest and wealthiest Confederate city. Their approach was the mouth of the Mississippi River. Admiral David G. Farragut lead a flotilla of 49 vessels including men-of-war, gunboats, and mortar schooners. Most of these were iron-sided and heavily armed with an assortment of 369 guns and cannon (Greene 1982:152; Winters 1963:89). On April 18, the ships opened fire on the first line of downriver defense, parallel Forts Jackson and St. Philip. For one week, the forts were ceaselessly bombarded with little effective defense provided by an outnumbered and disorganized Confederate navy. Despite a steady response from the forts' guns, they could not prevent the fleet from eventually passing through and making its way towards the city. Now cut off and facing mutiny of the mostly foreign-born soldiers at the forts, General Duncan surrendered, opening the way for Union General Butler's large land troops, who had been waiting downstream. News of the forts' defeat and the overwhelming size of the Federal force travelled to New Orleans quicker than Farragut's fleet. Confederate commanders realized they would be completely overpowered. They had just enough time to sabotage the heavy guns before retreating north via train with their troops. The startled city was taken with little bloodshed or resistance.

For the remainder of the war, the New Orleans area served as a southern base of operations for the Union army, with large numbers of troops trained, rested, and deployed there. Federal forces took over the recently built or reinforced Confederate defenses. In many cases, including that of Camp Parapet, the Union expanded and improved the military infrastructure. General Butler's notoriously heavy-handed occupation of the city and his difficulties with the local populace notwithstanding, the New Orleans area passed most of the war in a relatively peaceful setting, seeing no more fighting than sporadic rebel nuisance campaigns. A wartime economy built up in the urban area in response to the large troop presence, somewhat off-setting losses from the paralyzed cotton and sugar industries.

Development of Camp Parapet

In July of 1861, Major M.L. Smith and Colonel Paul O. Hebert proposed a fortification to protect New Orleans' east bank, upriver flank. In August, local contractors under the direction of Smith began work on Camp Parapet (builders Gabriel and Correjolle, James W. Burke and William Henry). At that time the planned fort was unofficially called Camp Roman, after Roman Plantation, which had provided some of the land for the camp. The works consisted of an irregular redoubt (fortified enclosure) surrounding a powder magazine on the river with a zig-zagging earthen parapet (breastwork or rampart) extending approximately 1.5 miles north towards the lake, terminating at the edge of a swampy expanse, and roughly following present-day Causeway Boulevard. The line was nicknamed the "Victor Smith line" in honor of the major's small son. The main redoubt was built to protect an upriver naval approach to the city while the long rampart protected the East Bank land approach, as well as the New Orleans and Jackson Railroad. With the planned work nearly complete, the camp was officially christened "Fort John Morgan" by New Orleans commander Major General Mansfield Lovell on March 21, 1862 (Casey 1983: 145; Parkerson 1990: 90).

No maps or illustrations from the Confederate period are known to survive, but the parapet was described in contemporary accounts as being a turf-covered wall eight to nine feet high, 30 feet wide at the base, 15 feet wide at the top, with a moat in front being 30 feet wide and six feet deep. Accounts differ as to the armament of the fortifications under the Confederates, but at the time of the Union take-over 24 to 29 guns, mostly 42- and 24-pounders, were installed in the main redoubt and along the line. Most of the guns were mounted *en barbette*, meaning on a raised platform which allowed them to fire over the top of the parapet (Casey 1983:146).

In their hasty retreat before Farragut and Butler's forces, Confederate soldiers attempted to sabotage the guns to prevent the Union from using them by throwing some into the river, burning the wooden carriages, knocking off the sights, and "spiking" the guns (ibid.:145-146; letter from Clark S. Willy to sister 5 February 1863, Historic New Orleans Collection). In the latter action, a spike is forcefully wedged into the vent of a muzzle-loading gun, preventing it from being loaded or fired. Their efforts represented only a minor setback for the Federals, who remounted the guns and rebored the spiked vents, quickly reinstalling 30 large-caliber guns along the line and within the main redoubt.

With the expanse of largely undeveloped land behind the Camp Parapet line and its strategic location on the river, the Union made a concerted effort to improve the camp's defenses and facilities, making it suitable for housing the majority of troops stationed in the New Orleans area. This was particularly needed after the Battle of Baton Rouge when additional land forces joined Butler's group. The Confederates had started to reinforce an earthen fort across the river from Camp Parapet; the Union built this location into a sturdy twin to Camp Parapet's main redoubt. Known as Fort Banks, it was located at what is now the west bank foot of the Huey P. Long bridge. At Camp Parapet, the Union reinforced the main redoubt and embankment, extended the embankment a half-mile further to the north and built another redoubt at the northern end, a ten-pointed enclosure appropriately known as "Fort Star" which was located approximately at present-day 45th Street and

Causeway Boulevard, near Rummel High School (Tate 1994:17). A large magazine resided in the center of this new redoubt. A large portion of the labor for these improvements was contributed by former slaves who found refuge at the Federal camp (Casey 1983:46-47).

Numerous maps and sketches dating from the Union occupation describe the appearance of Camp Parapet's fortifications (Figures 3-6, 3-7, 3-8). Taylor's sketch (Figure 3-7) is notable for showing the tent city of the camp, gun emplacements, and, intriguingly, a small house outside the lines which corresponds to the Fleming lot tested archaeologically in 1998 (see Chapter 4). Written accounts are also fairly detailed:

the downstream side of the parapet had a sag or level shelf four or five feet from the top where infantrymen could stand to fire over the parapet. The east side of the parapet was lined the entire length by having stakes about eighteen inches apart along it through which wiches [*sic*] or branches of willows had been interwoven... The point where old Bayou Metairie crossed the Parapet Line was about midway between the present Illinois Central Gulf Railroad and the site where the Star fort was located. Two bastions are between the railroad and this north redoubt and in between them is the camp of the heavy artillery. A long lunette with a covered way extended to the front and was designated as the "Cavalier Battery." One account states that the trees in the swamp had been cut along an extension of the line for a long distance so that a cannon could fire down the lane toward the lake. The map [1863] locates the camp headquarters on the "Miller" property on the river bank below the main redoubt (Casey 1983:146-147)

The map referred to is reproduced in Figure 3-9. The camp headquarters were located between Labarre Road and Rio Vista close to Jefferson Highway (Tate 1994:17), with the large campground for enlisted men occupying the space between the headquarters and the parapet. This campground began as a muddy collection of mildewed tents, but as time and resources allowed, the Union occupants eventually upgraded these to wood-planked temporary shelters. As a result, personal accounts of the early days at Camp Parapet are quite dismal, while later residents were relatively content. An Army hospital was located near the headquarters, as well as a camp store and a blacksmith shop.

The downriver edge of the sprawling camp was defined only by a temporary picket fence, but historic references place the large "Contraband Camp" along this line. It was here that a refugee village of ex-slaves arose under the encouragement of Camp Parapet's first Union commander, the fervent abolitionist Brigadier General John W. Phelps. On an army map made in 1863 (Figure 3-9), the Contraband Camp is shown as a cluster of small buildings located behind what is now Ochsner hospital. Many other small, unidentified buildings appear on this map and another made in 1864 (Figure 3-10) and are assumed to be a combination of occupied plantation structures and new buildings such as warehouses, stables, messes, and artisan shops required for the daily operation of an army camp that averaged 3,500 troops at any one time.

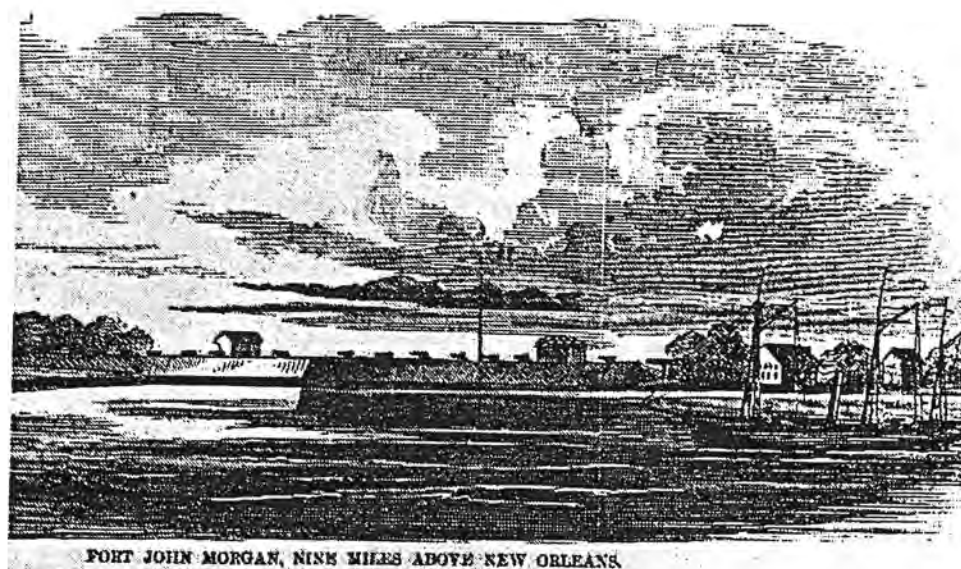


Figure 3-6. View of "Fort John Morgan" One Month after Surrender (Confederate Camp Parapet, dated May 24, 1862) (after Parkerson 1990:92).

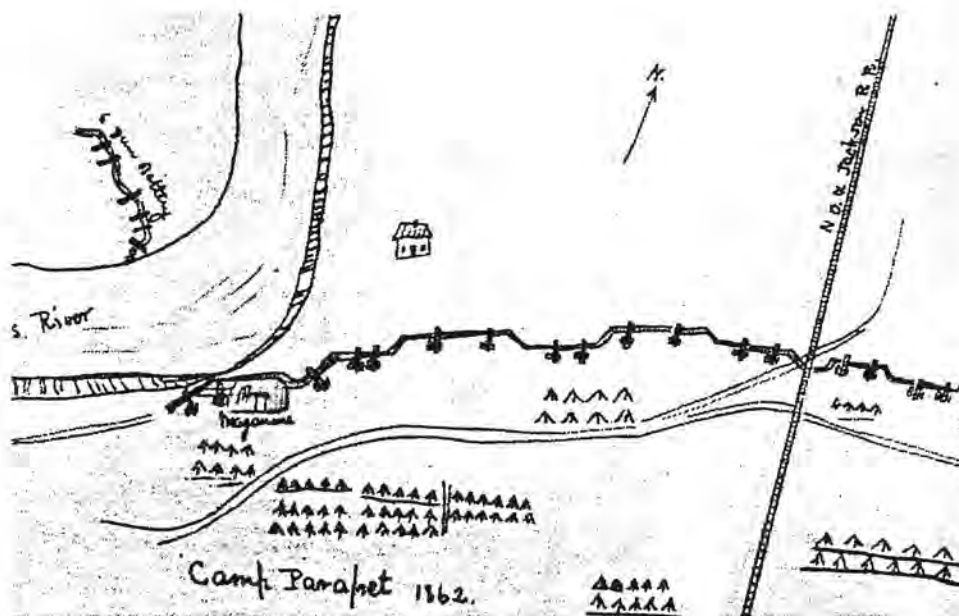


Figure 3-7. Captain Taylor's Sketch of Camp Parapet (after Parkerson 1990:92).

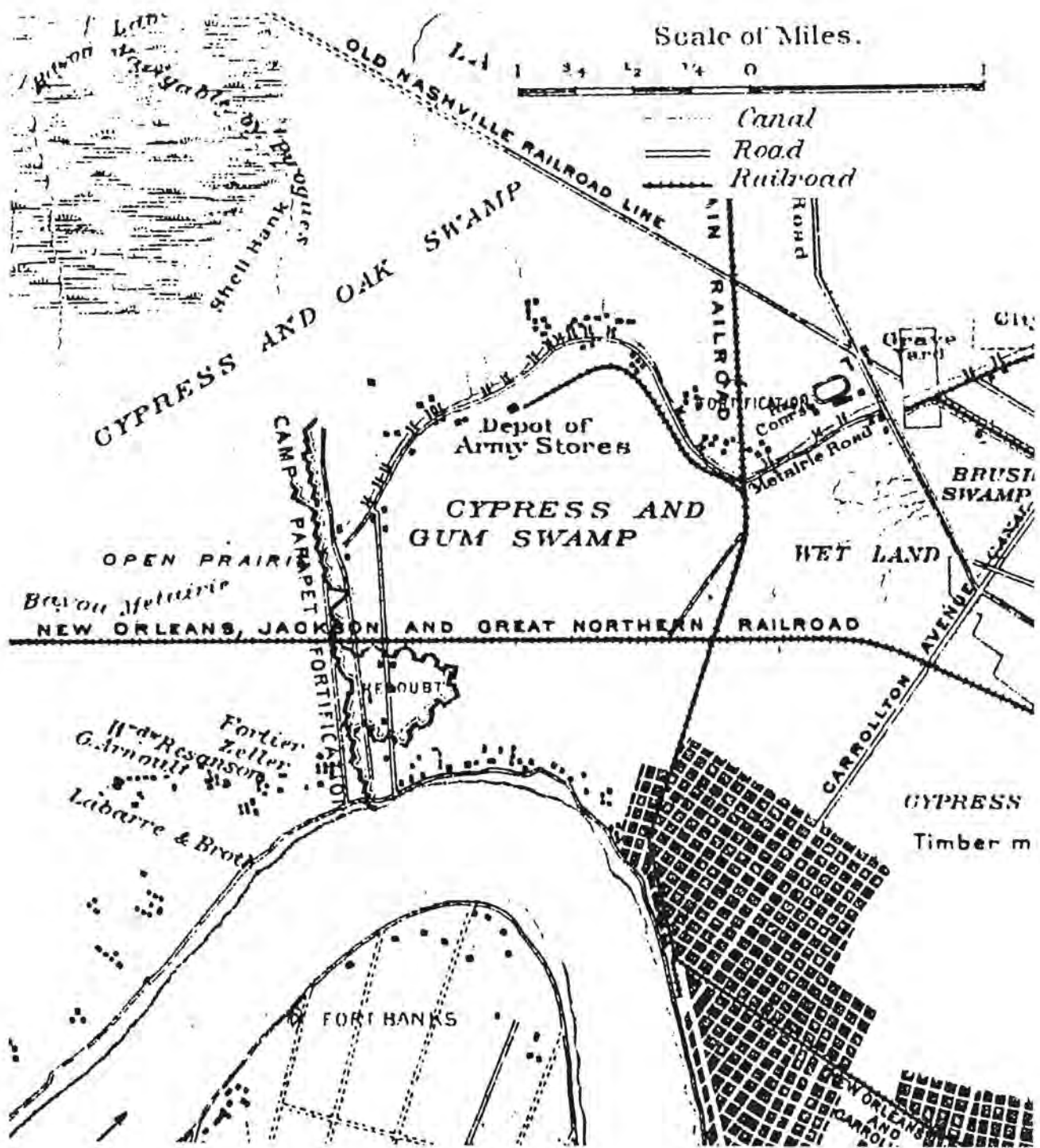


Figure 3-8. Detail of Approaches to New Orleans, Henry Abbot by order of Major General N.P. Banks, February 14, 1863 (note that the accuracy of this map is questionable since Main Redoubt is exaggerated in size) (National Archives).

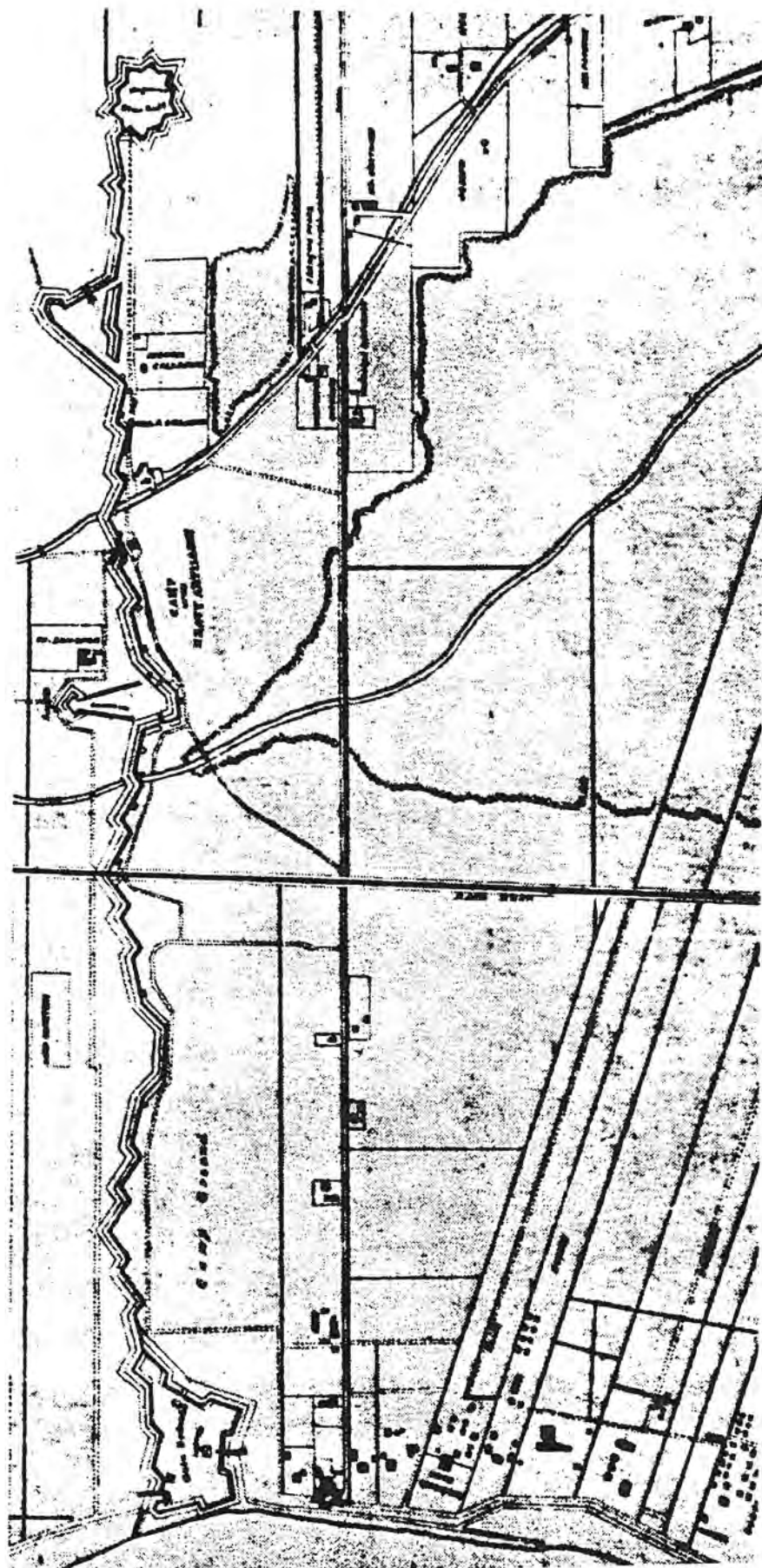


Figure 3-9. Detail of 1863 Map of Camp Parapet and Environs (National Archives).

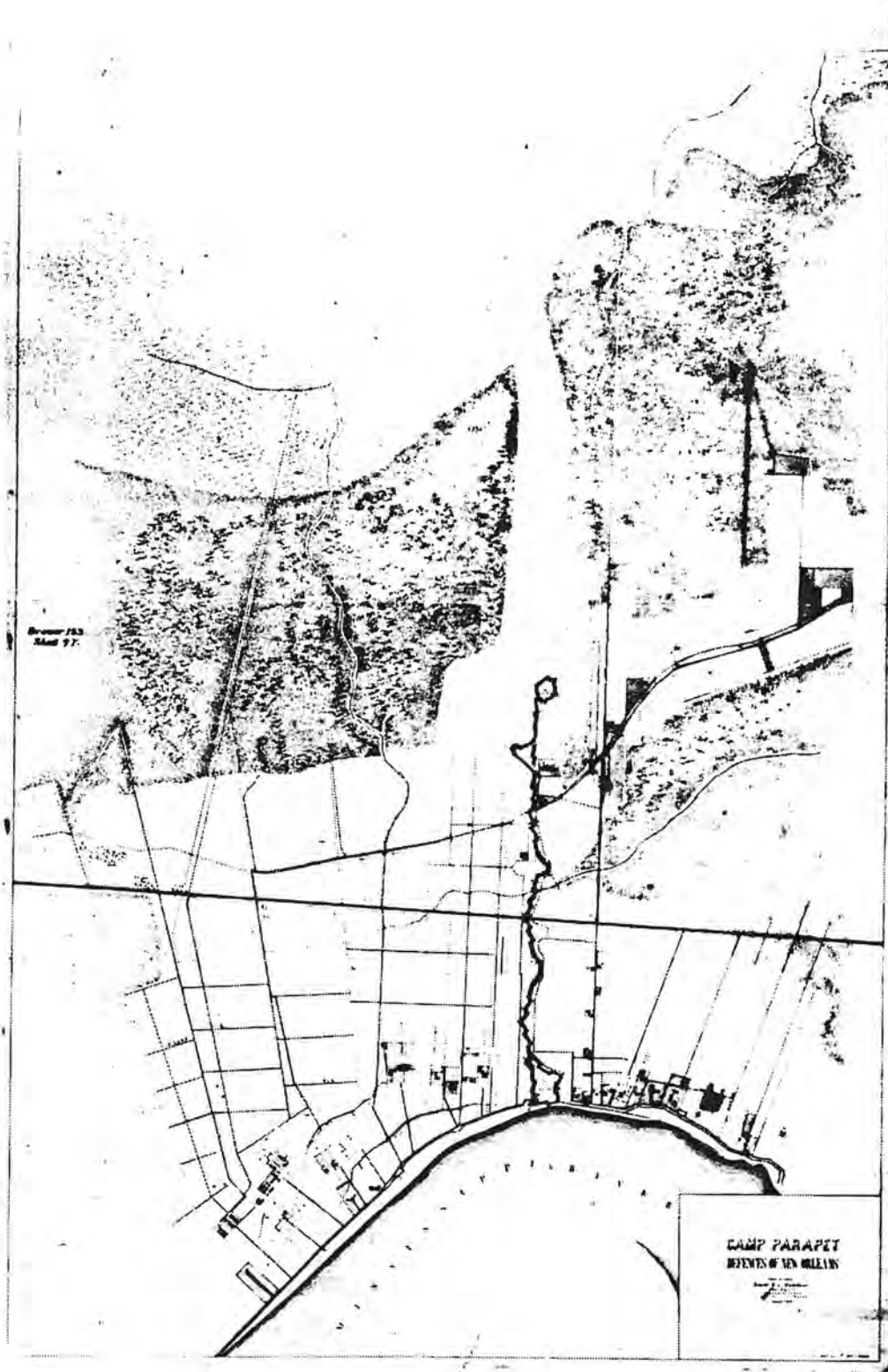


Figure 3-10. Sketch of Camp Parapet, Defenses of New Orleans, 1864 (National Archives).

The camp cemetery lay outside the line, approximately one-half of the way to the north (Figure 3-9). Previous researchers have estimated that this cemetery lay in proximity to a cemetery associated with Mount Zion Baptist Church (Swanson 1975; Tate 1994). For the current project, a corrected map overlay was produced, in which it was possible to tie in key points of the 1863 map (Figure 3-11) to the modern landscape. A corrected scale was accomplished by tying in the points where Metairie Road and Metairie Ridge intersected the rampart, as well as the Causeway/rampart alignment and the placement of the surviving powder magazine within the main redoubt. This overlay indicates that the cemetery, as drawn in 1863, lies just south of Mount Zion Baptist Church. However, due to the high death rate at the camp from illness, it is quite likely that the cemetery expanded between the time of the map and the end of the war, making this association quite plausible. It should be noted, however, that an effort was made to transfer all of the buried remains to Chalmette battlefield after the war (Bernard Eble, personal communication, 1997).

An 1865 plan of the main redoubt (Figure 3-12) details the design of the main enclosure and the features it protected, which included: three magazines, officer's quarters, a guard house, an observatory, and a hot-shot furnace. The main powder magazine, which sat adjacent to the northeast wall of the enclosure, is the one which survives at the end of Arlington Street today. Another magazine was situated against the wall in the southwest corner, while the third and smallest appears to be built into the northwest wall. The two smaller magazines may have stored extra arms and supplies rather than powder. The main magazine, however, was carefully constructed to resist explosive charges:

The walls are about 2.14 meters thick with the interior vaulted ceiling of 3.04 meters high, the main room is 2.48 meters wide and 6.16 meters long. The floor is 1.22 meters below ground level. The ceiling has a ventilation shaft that rises 6.09 meters combined with the five vents built into the walls provide a circulation of air in the magazine to keep the powder dry. The entrance is a tunnel 4.57 meters long and is .93 meters wide and 1.89 meters high. (Tate 1994:17-18)

Oral history says that the brick used to construct the magazine was taken from a nearby plantation great house destroyed in a hurricane (Bernard Eble, personal communication, 1997). The top of the chimney had metal bars to protect it from dropped charges while the whole was covered with a mound of earth for extra protection against bomb blasts (Swanson 1975:94). This mound was removed for fill early in this century, but replaced when the magazine was restored by Jefferson Parish in 1982 (Figure 3-13).

Daily Life at Camp Parapet

Since Camp Parapet never saw significant military action and thousands of soldiers were garrisoned there under both the Confederacy and the Union, life at the camp was dominated by a sense of waiting more than anything else. Those who were healthy complained of boredom at the camp, or the monotony of training drills and ditch-digging busy work. Tempting diversions of drink, gambling, and women were offered by the city and nearby enterprising residents. Many of those

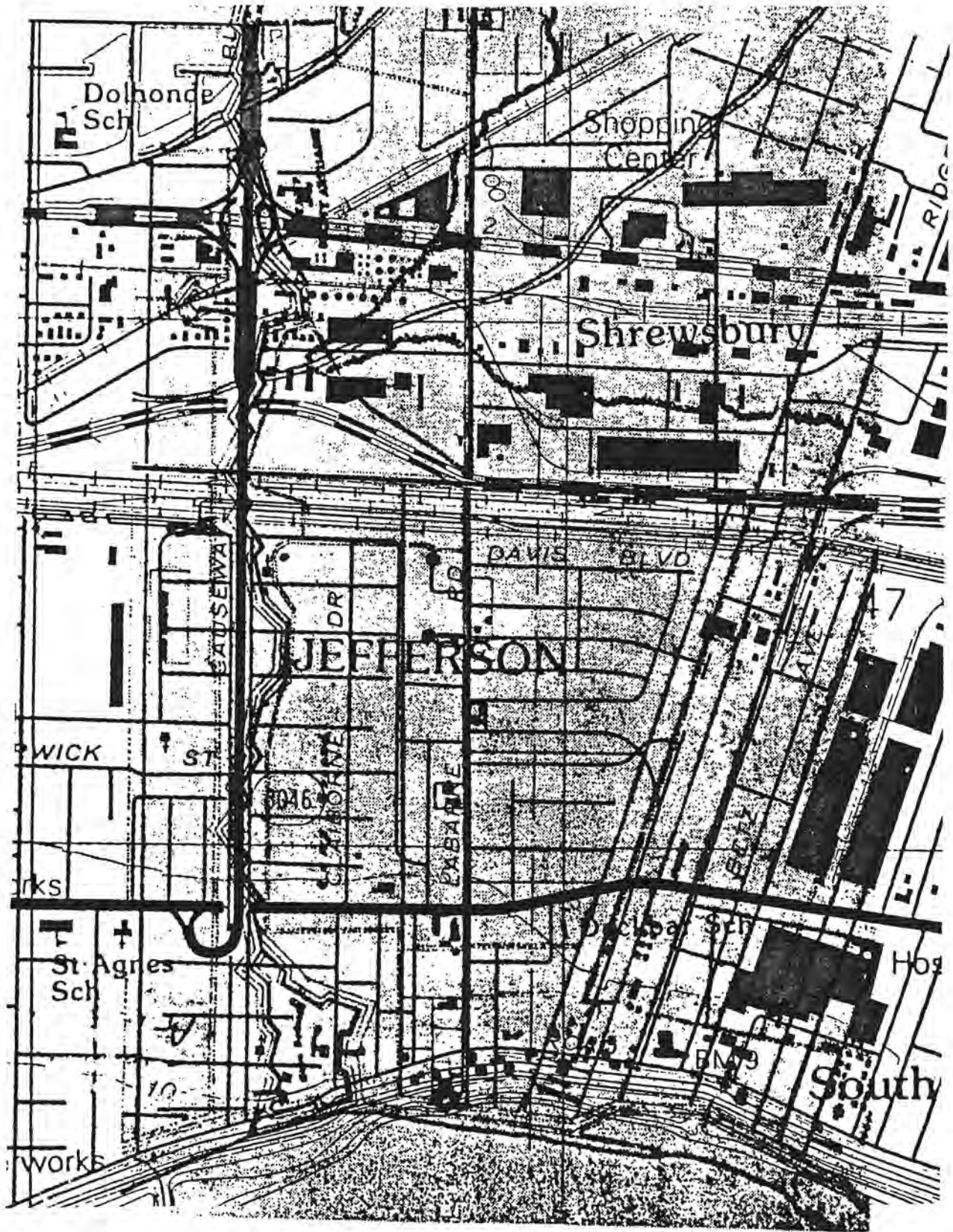


Figure 3-11. Scaled Overlay of 1863 Map Detail over Modern U.S.G.S. Quadrangle of Project Area.

*Printed by Dept. of the Gulf
(A. 1865)*

Office Chief Engineer, Dept. of the Gulf

*Main Redoubt
Camp Parapet, New Orleans*

Scale 2 in. to 100 ft

Drawn by B. W. Knapp

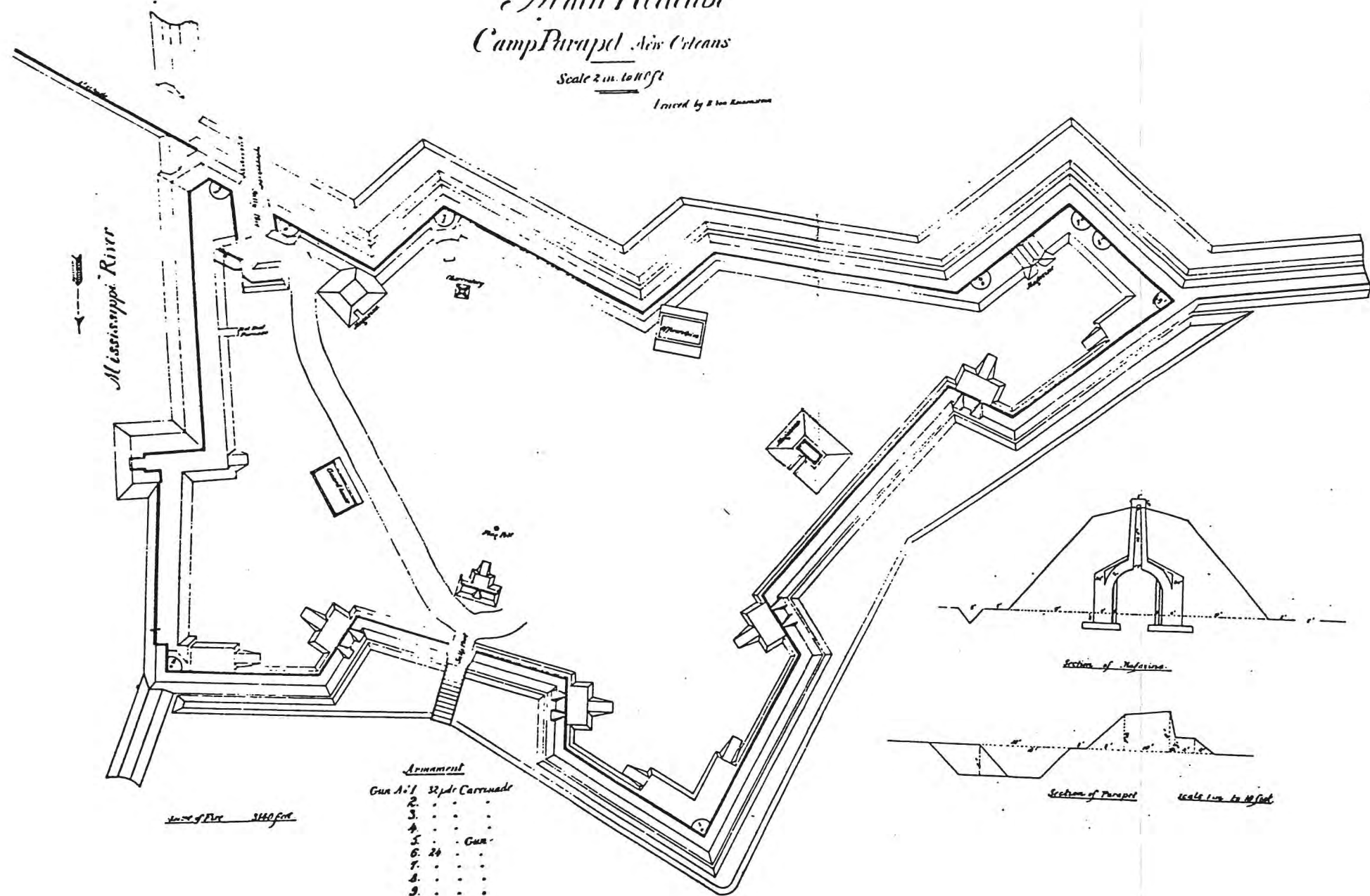


Figure 3-12. 1865 Plan of Main Redoubt, Camp Parapet (National Archives).



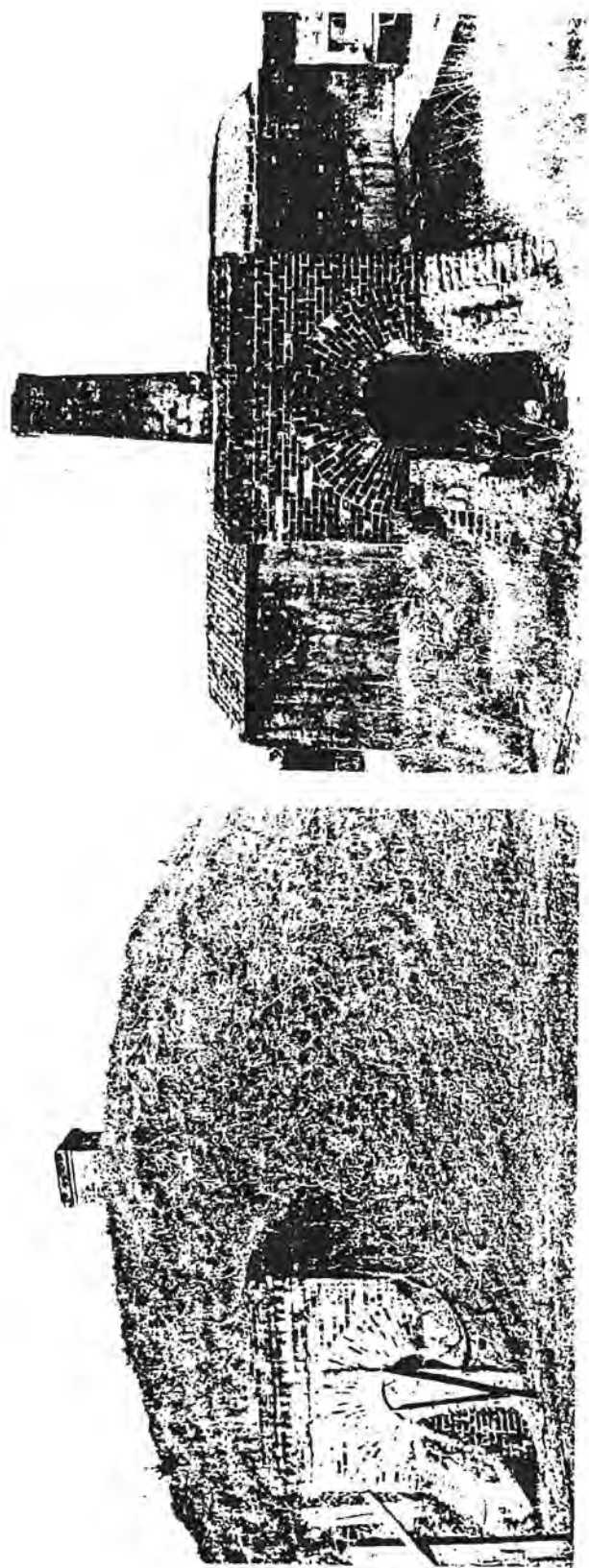


Figure 3-13. Early and Mid-20th Century Photographs of Powder Magazine Before Restoration (from Swanson 1975:94).

who left a record, however, wrote letters to their loved ones from the camp hospital, where they were more likely to be suffering from yellow fever caught at the camp than from war wounds in the field. The former was so prevalent that the camp was at times referred to as "camp fever" (Tate 1994:8). There are contradictions in the personal accounts left by soldiers that reflect a gradual improvement of conditions at the camp and the diverse personal experiences possible as a result of rank and luck of the draw when it came to detail assignments within the camp.

One veteran of the camp wrote a history of his regiment, the 15th New Hampshire, in which he vividly described the dull cycle of days at the camp:

Here we settled into a daily routine of camp life, with seldom anything to break the monotony. Daily company, regimental, and brigade drills, Neal Dow, brigadier-general, commanding. How many and many times has our regiment marched in line and column, formed hollow squares, formed from column into line of battle, and from line back to column; by fours, by platoons, by companies; and charged quick and double quick; fixed bayonets and unfixed bayonets, and fired with blank cartridges under that burning sun... until the whole could move as if by instinct like one vast machine (McGregor 1900:223).

Another soldier commented that his regiment, the 12th Connecticut, had to be one of the "healthiest, largest and best drilled" in the division. His laments sum up the role of Camp Parapet in the war, "[we] are destined to stay in peaceful possession of this earthwork, guarding New Orleans against a foe which cannot get near it. I begin to despair of finding a chance to fight unless there is another war after this one" (letter, June 15, 1862 in Captain DeForest's *A Volunteer's Adventures*, quoted in Greene 1982:296).

A regiment newspaper called the *Twenty-Sixth* and a camp-wide newspaper called *The Letter H* were started by a Union soldier named Charles Bennett attempting to alleviate his comrades' ennui. Some of the issues have survived and are archived at the Historic New Orleans Collection. They represent a hodge-podge of camp news, war updates, and items from home. One regular feature of the camp broadside was a list of all the soldiers who had died, citing their unit, where they died, and the disposition of the body (Tate 1994:7). Yellow fever, smallpox, and dysentery were the most common scourges.

A poignant account comes from the diary of Lawrence Van Alstyne, who wrote from his cot in the camp hospital. Entries between February and April of 1863 frequently report the death of fellow patients, such as those for March 19, "[p]oor Crowthers died very peacefully about noon today. His cot next to mine and he seemed like one of the family to me," and March 28, "[t]he next morning I found both my right and left hand neighbors had died in the night and their blankets were drawn up over their faces." Van Alstyne's diary also indicates that the sick and dying were so numerous, the camp hospital could not hold them all, a tent annex having been built. He also notes that "we have quite a graveyard started" (Van Alstyne 1910:88-95). Funerals became such a routine occurrence that one battalion commander finally ordered that the processions be silenced because

the daily sound of the "dead march" was devastating to morale (Chenery 1898:105). General Phelps reported losing men at the rate of two to three per day.

Illness, particularly yellow fever, was brought on in part by the swampy and unsanitary conditions at the camp. The majority of the enlisted soldiers were housed in tents pitched on the muddy ground. Mosquitoes bred in the puddles between the tents and in the nearby parapet ditch. Yellow fever was described by one survivor of the camp, "A man would be stricken suddenly with these fevers, and in an half hour his eyes would turn yellow, and vomiting spells would ensue; the skin would become hot so as to burn the hand like a gun barrel... Unless relief was afforded the victim would die within a day's time" (McGregor 1900:216).

No one, perhaps, sums up the tribulations of outdoor living in southeast Louisiana better than Captain DeForest:

This is the rainy season here, but by no means a cool season. I cannot give you the temperature, for there is not a thermometer in the brigade; but in scorching and sweating a man's strength away it beats anything that I ever before experienced. Sitting in my tent, with the sides looped up all around, I am drenched with perspiration. I come in from inspection (which means standing half an hour in the sun) with coat and trousers almost dripping wet, and my soaked sash stained with the blue of my uniform. There is no letup, no relenting, to the heat. Morning after morning the same brazen sun inflames the air till we go about with mouths open like suffering dogs. Toward noon clouds appear, gusts of wind struggle to upset our tents, and sheets of rain turn the camp into a marsh, but bring no permanent coolness.

The night air is as heavy and dank as that of a swamp, and at daybreak the rotten odor of the earth is sickening. It is a land moreover of vermin, at least in this season. The evening resounds with mosquitoes; a tent hums with them like a beehive, audible rods away; as Lieutenant Potter says, they sing like canary birds. When I slip under my mosquito bar they prowl and yell around me with the ferocity of panthers.

Tiny millers and soft green insects get in my eyes, stick to my perspiring face, and perish by scores in the flame of my candle. Various kinds of brilliant bugs drop on my papers, where they are slain and devoured by gangs of large red ants. These ants rummage my whole habitation for rations, crawl inside my clothing and under my blanket at night, and try to eat me alive. (letter, August 13, 1862 in Captain DeForest's *A Volunteer's Adventures*, quoted in Greene 1982:298).

Despite DeForest's complaints, conditions were better near the main redoubt which rested on relatively high ground compared to camp stations further north along the line and at swampy Fort Star. One soldier at nearby Camp Williams at the Metairie race track paints a grim picture.

Mud ankle deep, almost pulling our brogans from our feet at every step... we pitched our tents among the slimy brakes and disagreeable odors that arose from the surface. To bunk on the ground was simply impossible, therefore we drove stakes in the soft earth and built our bunks up from the mud as much as possible. Ten thousand pests continually harassed us day and night in the shape of monstrous mosquitoes and gnats. (Ben C. Johnson of the 6th Michigan Infantry, quoted in Swanson 1975:130 without archive citation).

Mosquitos were not the only pests to be reckoned with. Captain George W. Taylor of the 4th Massachusetts Light Artillery recorded in his diary, "[s]nakes and lizards were seen about every day and we became used to them; the lizards we ignored, but the slimy moccasins we killed all we could of them. They used to get into our tents and among the blankets so we could not lay down to sleep until we had ascertained what was under our blanket" (quoted in Parkerson 1990:91). Other northerners marveled at the crawfish or "land lobster" and the mud chimneys they erected around the grounds of the fort (*The Letter H* 2 March 1863, Charles Bennet Papers, HNOC).

Many soldiers drank to alleviate their boredom and probably, their sorrows. In September of 1862, a Union captain was dismayed to see his all his men staggering and falling when called to the parapet by an intelligence alert. Luckily, it was a false alarm, for the men were in no shape to fight (Hinks et al. 1993:29). Reporting on this incident, Captain DeForest remarked,

To comprehend this drunkenness you must understand that many of my men are city toughs, in part Irish; also that they are desperate with malaria, with the monotony of their life, and with incessant discomforts; finally, that intoxication in itself is not a military offense and not punishable. If you could look into our tents you would not wonder that consolation is sought for in whiskey. The never-ceasing rain streams at will through numerous rents and holes in the mouldy, rotten canvas... It must be added in fairness that intoxication is not confined to the soldiers. The officers are nearly as miserable, and are tempted to seek the same consolation. Lately a lieutenant reeled into my tent, dropped heavily on a bed, stared at me for a minute as if to locate me, and said in a thick voice, "Capm, everybody's drunk today. Capm, the brigade's drunk." (letter September 2, 1862, in Captain DeForest's *A Volunteer's Adventures*, quoted in Greene 1982:300).

Alcohol consumption was probably a constant feature of camp life, despite the best efforts of the noted temperance advocate Neal Dow who served as Brigadier-General in the winter and spring of 1863 (ibid.).

Life at camp did occasionally have its bright spots. In fact, although physical conditions were poor under the Confederates, who were still struggling to finish the post between August 1861 and April 1862, an unreal aura of festivity pervaded the city's military preparations. A soldier stationed at the camp wrote his sister in September that he had attended a barbecue and ball where he had danced all night long and that there were two or three balls a week to attend in the city

(Private James D. Durin to sister, September 1, 1861, quoted in Swanson 1975:93 without archive citation).

Less than a year later, local residents had begun to feel the deprivations of war. A letter from a Union soldier, who was one of the first to take over the camp in spring 1862, noted that the area surrounding the camp was settled by diverse ethnic groups ranging from rich French Creole planters to poor but "industrious" Germans. Even many of the Creoles at this time, however, were "dressed in tatters and extremely dirty" as were the "ragged slaves" (letter 14 May 1862 in Captain DeForest's *A Volunteer's Adventures*, quoted in Greene 1982:295). Most of the darkest portraits of life at Camp Parapet date from the year 1862.

Later, in 1863, conditions during the Union occupation improved significantly. One soldier commented that "we are quite comfortable here, board floors in our tents, and pretty good living" (Elbridge L. Sweetser, Private in Co. E. 50th Massachusetts, U.S. Military History Institute, quoted in Greene 1982:301). *The Letter H* reported that "we are favored being furnished with good tents, board floor, and ... corn husks... for beds" (*The Letter H* 16 March 1863, quoted in Greene 1982:302). Daniel Mason of the 15th New Hampshire reported in a letter, "we are having a very easy time now, we do not have to drill only two or three hours in a day and that is not very hard work." Union commanders apparently had learned to adjust camp life to conditions in south Louisiana and permitted their troops to rest in their tents during the hottest part of the day. Interestingly, this was contrary to the army surgeons' recommendations, who thought that the profuse sweating brought on by drilling in the mid-day sun would cleanse the soldiers of their fevers (Greene 1982:297). At least some officers elevated the needs of morale over dubious medical advice.

Somewhat surprisingly, the well-content Mason also praises the camp meals which included strawberries, blackberries, plums, dates, oranges, and pineapples (Daniel P. Mason to his mother, 1863, quoted in Swanson 1975:94 without archive citation). Such a rosy portrait is painted, one wonders if Mason was simply trying to alleviate the worries of his mother. Another possibility is that Mason was an officer fed in the officer's mess, which was a small house on the base where African-American cooks and servants from neighboring plantations had been hired to serve meals from fresh eggs, fish, chickens, and vegetables. Rations for the enlisted men were also an improvement over what was available on the battle line, consisting of potatoes, baked beans, fried pork, bread, and coffee. In a generous gesture, an elderly black woman provided Private Sweetser and his comrades with fresh cane syrup and refused their payment (Greene 1982:301).

General Butler kept as tight a rein on his occupying forces as on the local populace. Although soldiers fresh from battle were allowed a few days of diversion in the city, many laws were passed to keep debauchery in check. Gambling halls were closed and theaters and balls restricted. Butler angered many by arresting more women, supposedly for prostitution, than rowdy soldiers during his occupation (Capers 1965:206-207). Some men also took their pass days to explore the surrounding countryside (Greene 1982:302).

"Contraband" Camp

The term "contraband" perhaps has its source in an order issued by General Benjamin F. Butler who declared in 1861 that refugee slaves were to be considered "Contraband of War" and as such, receive protection, food, and shelter. Despite the humanitarian sentiment, the term "contraband" recognized these African-Americans more as ownerless chattel than citizens, having an uncertain status somewhere between freedom and slavery. Throughout the war, Washington was stubbornly vague in its policy on ex-slaves in the occupied south (the sugar parishes of southeast Louisiana, for example, were exempted from the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863), although Congress did pass an act forbidding the return of slaves to their former owners (Johnson 1941:517-518; Capers 1965:94). Some slaves risked escape to territories occupied by Federal forces while others were forcibly driven off their plantation homes by economically distraught owners. Many came to the New Orleans area, not only because of the significant Union presence, but because it held out a better hope for providing the necessities of life than the deserted rural landscape. By one estimate, 10,000 ex-slaves had sought refuge in the city by the end of 1862 alone (Parton 1864:521-522). The new arrivals were "[b]ewildered and excited by the strange events, they came to greet the Yankees as saviors, to offer their services, to beg for food, and to satisfy their curiosity. Even more than the whites, they must have wondered what would happen to them in all the confusion" (Johnson 1941:518).

The first Union commander of Camp Parapet, Vermont native John Wolcott Phelps, was an ardent abolitionist. So much so, that when he first took command of the camp, he welcomed slaves from surrounding plantations to leave their masters. One officer reported that Phelps allowed his men "to range the country, insult the planters, and entice negroes away from their plantations" (quoted in Johnson 1941:518). He was soon overwhelmed by a rapid response in which upwards of 100 people a day were arriving at the fort. A makeshift refugee encampment on the downriver edge of the military post soon rivaled the main troop encampment in size. One of Phelps' officers reported the growth and condition of the camp on June 15, 1862, less than two months after the Union took possession:

I beg leave to call your attention to the large and constantly increasing number of blacks who have congregated near the upper picket station on the river road. I learn that 24 hours ago they numbered about 75. The officer of the guard reports to me this morning that the number has increased to 150 or more... They are of all ages and physical condition, a number of infants in arms, many young children, robust men and women, and a large number of lame, old and infirm of both sexes... [They] came in singly and in small parties from various points up the river within a hundred miles. They brought with them boxes, bedding, and luggage of all sorts, which lie strewn upon the levee and the open spaces around the picket. The women and children, and some feeble ones who needed shelter, were permitted to occupy a deserted house just outside the lines. They are quite destitute of provisions, many having eaten nothing for days except what our soldiers have given them from their own rations... unless supplied with the means of sustaining life by the benevolence of the military

authorities or of the citizens (which is scarcely supposable) they must shortly be reduced to suffering and starvation in the very sight of the overflowing store-houses of the Government. (Major Frank H. Peck to Phelps, Camp Parapet, June 15, 1862, quoted in Johnson 1941: 520).

The refugees soon resorted to building huts of cane or scrap wood. Soldiers began visiting the camp in search of entertainment among the banjos, fiddles and dances of those celebrating their freedom. They also came looking for sexual favors or opportunities. That summer, Phelps ordered a ban on new arrivals, but struggled to enforce it.

Camp Parapet was the setting for not only one of the largest contraband encampments in the south but of a critical political struggle between Union leaders on what to do with them. Butler's tactic was to employ the refugees as officer's servants, mess help, hospital assistants, and laborers in return for food and shelter. Butler enforced this policy by attempting to expel all non-employed persons from the camps. Phelps saw this forced labor as little more than slavery to government and resisted his commanding officer vehemently on this issue. It was Phelps' view that abolition should be applied to the occupied states so that the people under his care could be treated as free citizens able to choose wage labor, enlistment, or other arrangements according to their own desires. He was particularly in support of enlisting black troops, whom he saw as critical to Union victory. Phelps pushed the issue by sending a request to President Lincoln to decide the matter, essentially requesting that emancipation be unequivocally extended to the occupied territories (Johnson 1941). Phelps' eloquent plea to the President may have even influenced the Emancipation Proclamation announced September 24, 1862 (to take effect January 1, 1863).

The response, however, did not come soon enough for Phelps. When a month went by in silence, Phelps took matters into his own hands and began training three black regiments. On July 30, 1862, he wrote Butler requesting arms and supplies to outfit the new recruits. This angered Butler,

Butler ordered Phelps to set the Negroes to work, chopping trees; axes, instead of guns, would be given them. For, he pointed out, only the President had the power to arm slaves. Determined now to have the showdown for which he had asked in the beginning, Phelps replied flatly that, though he was willing to train Negro soldiers, he would not become a slave driver for anybody. Under the circumstances, therefore, he was compelled to submit his resignation. (Johnson 1941:522)

Despite their philosophical differences, Butler valued Phelps as an energetic and able 25-year U.S. officer and tried to prevent his resignation without giving ground on the issue of contraband troops. He failed. Phelps resigned his Union commission on August 21, 1862 and returned north. Butler's resistance to the black regiments was motivated in large part by a fear of armed insurrection by ex-slaves. Unfortunately, the Union's slowness to liberate slaves in the occupied territories and their poor response to refugee needs had quickly disenchanted the "contraband," many of whom justly felt they had only been traded from an individual southern master to a bureaucratic northern one

(Winters 1963:143-144; Johnson 1941). Butler was also concerned that if all the surrounding plantations lost their labor supply, the troops would starve. Interestingly, Butler was not opposed to black troops on the basis of race. In fact, the day after Phelps' resignation, he revived the Louisiana Native Guard, traditionally comprised of members of New Orleans' free people of color. The complexity and humanity of the contraband problem did not escape him. He wrote in a letter,

The question now pressing me is the state of negro property here and the condition of the negroes as men. It has a gravity as regards both white and black appalling as the mind follows out the logical necessities of different lines of action. Ethnological in its proportions and demands for investigation, it requires active administrative operations immediately upon the individual in his daily life, his social, political, and religious status as a human being, while some of the larger deductions of political economy are to be at once worked out by any given course of conduct. It cannot be solved, therefore, without thought... (Butler to Stanton, 25 May 1862, quoted in Johnson 1941:517).

With Phelps gone and Butler relinquishing control of the Gulf Department to General Nathaniel P. Banks in November, 1862, new policies on contraband were put in place and an attempt was made to stabilize the situation by discouraging any more desertions from the plantations and ordering all unemployed refugees to choose a plantation to return to so that they could contribute agricultural labor under the supervision of the Union army.

A degree of order and routine was imposed on the contraband camp at Camp Parapet. Men were separated from the women and children. Regular tasks were assigned to all. The forced labor system and authoritarian conditions differed little from slavery: "[t]he laborers were divided into gangs of 125 each under two enlisted men, and this group was subdivided into squads of twenty-five under a Negro straw boss" (Winters 1963:208). At night, the men would make their way back to the river to visit their families or meet at a remote place in the swamps for all-night religious revivals. When those returning in the morning were too exhausted to work effectively, the white sentries at the engineer camp were ordered to shoot any man who tried to leave without a pass (ibid.:208).

Black Troops at Camp Parapet

Camp Parapet's biggest claim to historical significance is the important part it played in the introduction of African-American soldiers into the U.S. Army. Late in the war, black Union troops represented a majority of the soldiers stationed at Camp Parapet (Hinks et al. 1993:29).

Even before the Union took over, however, black Confederate soldiers were mustered in New Orleans and probably drilled at Camp Parapet (then Camp John Morgan). In May of 1861, Louisiana Governor Moore issued a proclamation calling for the organization of free men of color into the First Native Guard of Louisiana, a militia of the Confederate States of America. By 1862, 3,000 of Louisiana's 11,000 registered free men of color were enlisted in the Guard, the vast

majority living in the New Orleans area. When New Orleans fell early in the war, the guard was effectively retired without having seen any action (Tate 1994:11).

Phelps' efforts to recruit and train three regiments of African-American soldiers in the summer of 1862 may have been the first move of the Union Army towards enlisting soldiers of color. Although Butler did not sanction Phelps' effort at first, as noted above, he moved soon thereafter to resurrect a Union version of the First Native Guard who, "would be treated, paid, equipped, rationed, and armed like any white volunteer" (Winters 1963:145). Although officially Butler was only comfortable with legally free persons enlisting, many contemporaries reported that at least half of the recruits were fugitive slaves. Within a number of weeks, three regiments were raised. The first two regiments had black line officers, but white field officers. By the time the third regiment was filled, Butler had apparently become so impressed with his new soldiers' dedication and discipline that he lifted the ban on black line officers (*ibid.*). Butler described them as "zealous, attentive, obedient and intelligent. No man in the Union army had such a stake in the contest as they" (Parton 1864:517-519). Other officers in the Department of the Gulf initially resisted support from the black troops, but became more open-minded as the war went on. After training, two of these Native Guard regiments were sent to guard the Opelousas Railroad between Algiers and Berwick Bay.

The troops were not restricted to infantry. Two batteries of field artillery were created and trained under Butler's command. His successor, Banks, dispatched other black troops to Ship Island and surrounding forts. After the Emancipation Proclamation at the beginning of 1863, the army began to recruit black troops in earnest and allowed black units into combat. In April of 1863, the War Department sent Brigadier General Daniel Ullmann to New Orleans to raise an entire brigade of black troops. At the time, Banks reported that he already had five black regiments of 1,000 men each and had prospective recruits ready for two more. Banks welcomed Ullmann's assistance, naming the new brigade the *Corps d'Afrique*, which ultimately comprised eighteen armed regiments (Winters 1963:238).

A number of these units were drilled or garrisoned at Camp Parapet. As early as 1862, Van Alstyne recorded in his diary, "saw a regiment of negro soldiers, who seem to feel fine, were having all sorts of games and in first-rate spirits" (Van Alstyne 1910:95). In the spring of 1863, the black troops were such a presence at the camp that Charles Bennett predicted in a letter to his family that, "in the course of the month we shall give up our arms and equipment to the negro recruits and return home" (8 May 1863, Charles Bennett Papers, HNOC). Other first-hand accounts tell of underlying racial tensions between the black and white soldiers and the pressure that black officers felt to prove their unit's worth, such that some of their disciplinary measures bordered on abuse (Tate 1994:13).

Members of the *Corps d'Afrique* and the Louisiana Native Guard trained at Camp Parapet are reputed to be the first black Union soldiers to see combat duty (Tate 1994:13-14). On January 3, 1863, Colonel Spencer H. Stafford of the 1st Louisiana Native Guard Infantry Regiment asked that his unit be allowed to fight. He argued with Banks that if his men were not fit to fight, then they were not fit to defend the city. During the critical Battle of Port Hudson, the 1st and 3rd Native Guard

regiments were selected to provide a diversionary attack, although there were doubts about how this group of green soldiers would fare against seasoned Confederates.

The black troops advanced under fire within 200 yards of the (CSA) position, the artillery opened up on them with canister, 6-pound ball and hard conical shells... They proceeded to make six or seven more charges over several days up the bluff and were repelled each time... The Native Guard was exposed to terrible fire, out of 1080 men, one hundred and fifty four were killed or wounded. But this disproved the belief that the "Negroes would not fight"... The conduct of the Native Guard at the Battle of Port Hudson was a turning point... (Tate 1994:15)

By 1865, post returns indicate that African-American regiments were in the majority at Camp Parapet. They included the 68th, 73rd, 77th, 80th, 87th, 93rd, and 96th regiments of the U.S. Colored Infantry, the Third Battalion of the 11th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery, and Company F of the 10th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery (Greene 1982; Hinks et al. 1993). The 87th regiment was typical of black troops in the gulf coast arena, being comprised of Louisiana freedmen who had served in Texas before returning to Camp Parapet. The 11th Artillery (previously known as the 14th Rhode Island Heavy Artillery, then the 8th U.S. Colored Artillery) was somewhat unique, being a regiment of Northern free blacks recruited in September 1863. Although organized in Rhode Island, they came from throughout New England and arrived in the Department of the Gulf in February, 1864. Split into three battalions, they were mainly garrisoned at Fort Jackson, Fort Butler, and Camp Parapet. The Third Battalion, in fact, assumed responsibility for Camp Parapet sometime after June 1864 under the command of Lt. Colonel Nelson Vail. Vail is noted for arranging an evening school at the camp for his officers, presumably to improve literacy (Hinks et al. 1993:30). During the transition period, the 11th Artillery provided provost guard duties in New Orleans.

In September 1865, the regiment was ordered disbanded. Its three battalions were concentrated at Camp Parapet, prior to final transportation back to Rhode Island. The entire regiment assembled for a final dress parade of 1,400 men at the camp. Yet 500 men were absent; they either had died or received medical discharges while in service (Hinks et al. 1993:31)

After the major withdrawal of troops, Camp Parapet was left to the First New Orleans Volunteers.

Post Civil War Period

After the dispersal of troops, the buildings and improvements abandoned around Camp Parapet's Main Redoubt supported a small crossroads community which continued to call itself "Camp Parapet." Some remnant late-19th-century buildings in the area are all that is left. Into the first quarter of this century, the hamlet was still occasionally noted on birth certificates. Jefferson Parish briefly used the powder magazine as a prison, after which a dairy operation dominated the area of the Main Redoubt well into this century (Bernard Eble, personal communication, 1998). Although big enough to have a post office and a riverboat landing (Swanson 1975:107; Hinks et al.

1993:32), it was a small rural settlement that faded into obscurity when urban development encroached in the 20th century.

The 1882 U.S. Coastal Survey map of the area (Figure 3-14) indicates that at least half of the enclosing walls of the main redoubt had been torn down, probably by local residents for building fill. Numerous small structures are shown clustered within the former confines of the walls as well as across a wide road that is now the foot of Causeway Boulevard. One of these fits the location of the Fleming Lot and the structure reported there. Older local residents say this road, before becoming causeway, was a wide shell path with a covered walkway leading to a landing. The Star Redoubt is also missing from the map, although the parapet line between appears relatively intact.

A similar development history is associated with the settlements of Hoeyville, Shrewsbury, and Southport, which occupied or bordered the downriver portions of the once extensive camp. Shrewsbury is shown on the 1896 Mississippi River Commission map as the area just upriver from the old parapet line (Figure 3-15). By now, the Main Redoubt walls are completely gone and the parapet line appears to be broken in places. The riverside sally port of the redoubt, however, survived long enough for living residents to recall playing in the secret "tunnel" as children.

Southport was located at the site of the former Contraband Camp. "A steamship wharf was located there in 1894 and various railroad spurs provided connections to the major lines" (Hinks et al. 1993:32). In the early 20th century, a creosote company was operating at this locale. Despite these early industrial concerns, the area was still largely rural in character until the post-World War II building boom. Now designated the town of Jefferson, it is characterized by a dense mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses dominated by the commercial thoroughfare of Jefferson Highway and the transportation artery of Causeway Boulevard, the latter built over and parallel to the old parapet line.



Figure 3-14. Detail of 1882 Coastal Survey Map of Camp Parapet Area (Louisiana Collection, Tulane University Library).

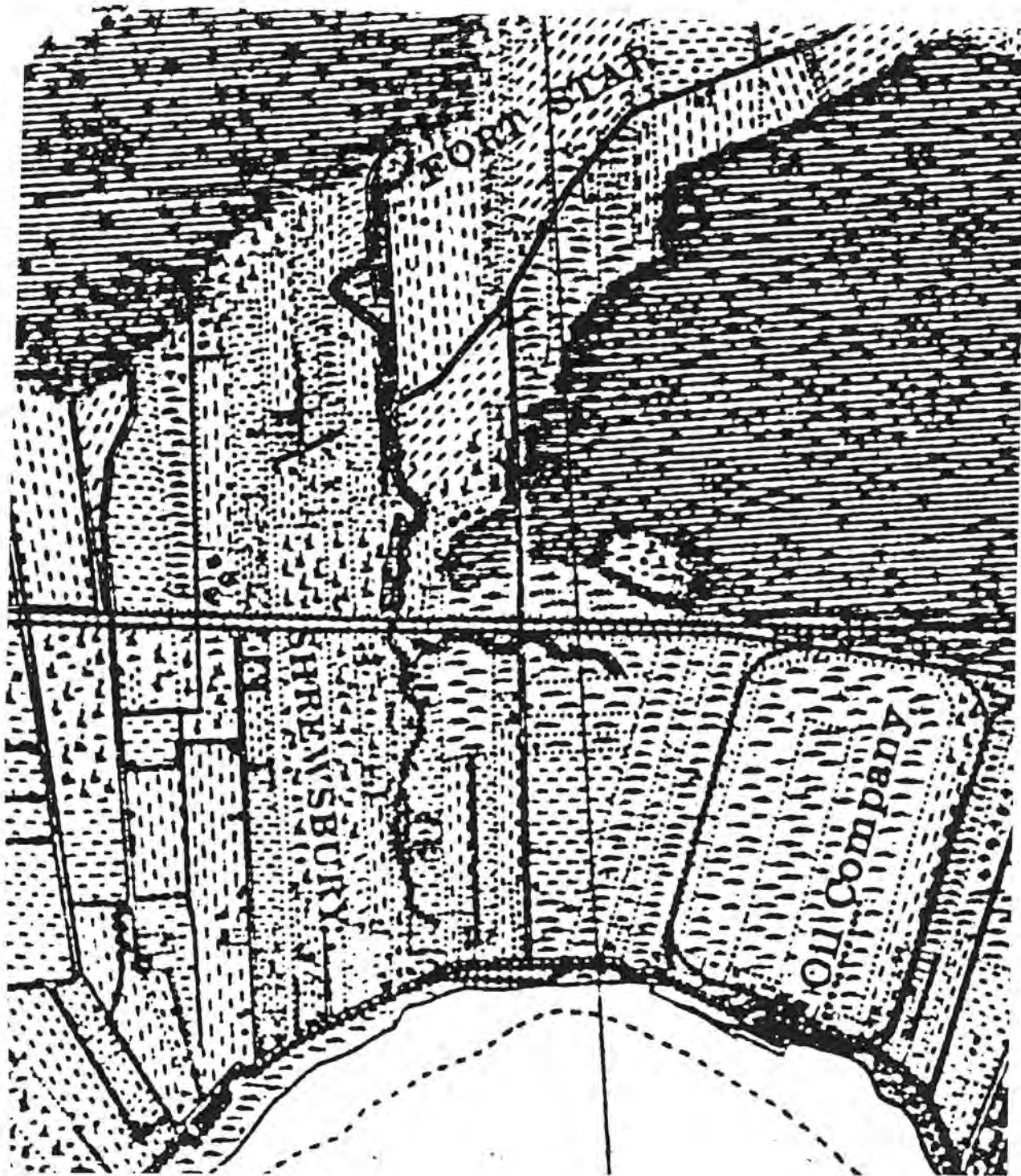


Figure 3-15. Detail of 1896 Mississippi River Commission Map Showing Former Camp Parapet Area (Louisiana Collection, Tulane University Library).

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