

VLR- 3/17/99 NRHP- 7/27/99

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Fort Pocahontas DHR File # 018-5001

other names/site number Wilson's Wharf, Kennon's Landing

2. Location

street & number About one and a quarter miles south of the intersection of State
Route 5 and County Road 614 X not for publication
city or town Charles City vicinity X
state Virginia code VA county Charles City code 036 zip code 23030

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I

recommend that this property be considered significant x nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

McCall Shusser June 11, 1999
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register _____
- See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the _____
National Register
- See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the _____
National Register
- removed from the National Register _____
- other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

=====

5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 7 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 8 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register None

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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6. Function or Use
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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Defense _____ Sub: fortification _____
Funerary _____ cemetery _____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Defense _____ Sub: battle site _____
Funerary _____ cemetery _____

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

N/A _____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Earth _____
roof N/A _____
walls Earth _____

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- b removed from its original location.
- c a birthplace or a grave.
- d a cemetery.
- e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- f a commemorative property.
- g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

- Military
- Archaeology: Historic—Non-Aboriginal
- Ethnic Heritage _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance Ca. 1750 through ca. 1915

Significant Dates May 24, 1864

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above) _____

Cultural Affiliation Black Freedman

Architect/Builder United States Colored Troops, U.S. Army

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- _X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
X University
___ Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources_
College of William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property __approximately 60 acres__

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Table with 4 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Rows 1 and 2.

X See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Salmon and Ann Andrus, Staff
organization Va. Department of Historic Resources date December 1998
street & number 2801 Kensington Avenue telephone 804-367-2323
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23220

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. Harrison R. Tyler
street & number P.O. Box 27207 telephone 804-935-2000
city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23261

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Fort Pocahontas
Charles City County, Virginia

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Summary Description

Fort Pocahontas is located in Charles City County, Virginia, about five miles east of Sherwood Forest, the home of John Tyler, tenth president of the United States. It is sited 1.5 miles south of Route 5 on a bluff at a bend in the James River. African-American Union troops under the command of Brig. Gen. Edward A. Wild constructed the fort between May and July of 1864 as the Union Army of the James under Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler advanced up the James River in an attempt to capture the Confederate capital at Richmond. The fort is a crescent-shaped earthen structure over a half-mile in length with both flanks anchored on the river. A ditch lies in front of the fort. From the top of the parapet to the bottom of the ditch the earthworks range in height from seven to eleven feet. Two bastions are evident, separated by an earthen curtain wall. In 1864, each bastion mounted four guns. Archaeological investigations inside the walls of the fort have revealed the locations of three possible gun pits associated with the fort and two domestic sites, one of which may date to the middle of the 18th century. Outside of the earthworks in a cleared area to the northeast, investigations have revealed the site of a possible Union encampment. A small cemetery lies outside the fort to the east. While it appears to contain civilian and military graves, its extent, as well as its connection with the fort, has yet to be determined.

Fort Pocahontas is in an excellent state of preservation today and is open on a limited basis for public tours. The College of William and Mary's Center for Archaeological Research conducted archaeological assessments at Fort Pocahontas during the summers of 1997 and 1998 to evaluate the extent of the fort and its state of preservation.

Historical Background

Prehistoric native Americans first occupied the land at Fort Pocahontas, a prominent point of high ground on the north bank of the James River. Shovel tests and surface examinations during the archaeological assessment found evidence of prehistoric occupation and artifacts from the Late Archaic, Middle Woodland, and Late Woodland periods consistent with other locations along the James River.

David Jones patented the property in 1635 and a plantation was established there later in the 17th century. It was the seat of the Kennon family from the 1730s until 1765. In 1742, the Virginia General Assembly selected Kennons Landing or "Kennon's" as the site of a tobacco inspection station. After a succession of owners, Josiah Wilson acquired the plantation in 1835 and Kennon's Landing became known as Wilson's Landing or Wilson's Wharf. Wilson's son, John

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Wilson, owned the property after his father's death in 1862. The Wilson family owned the property until 1876. Pilings in the river below the fort likely indicate the site of these earlier tobacco wharves, as well as the location of later landings.

Fort Pocahontas is situated approximately 1.5 miles south of Route 5 in Charles City County, Virginia, on the north bank of the James River. The earthen fort is crescent-shaped with both flanks anchored on the river bluff. The earthwork is more than half a mile in length. According to a surviving historical sketch made by Union General Godfrey Weitzel in 1864 (See Appendix 1), the original length of the fort was about 890 meters. About 83% of the original fortification is assessed as remaining in good to fair condition. Approximately 796 meters of earthworks survive. About 85 meters are missing from both flanks and from the various non-historic gaps in the line. Nearly 468 meters are rated by National Park Service historians as being in good condition, 271 meters are considered as fair, 13 meters as poor, and 44 meters as "remnant."¹

The fort features a ditch in front and two bastions connected by an earthen curtain wall. Abatis (trees felled so that their intertwined branches faced the enemy and impeded his progress) were placed beyond the ditch in front of the fort. Flanking parapets on either side extend back to the river. The parapets average about 24 feet in width. Of the original parapets about 752 meters survive in reasonably good condition. Of the western parapet 44 meters can be traced in a highly disturbed condition. A short segment of the eastern face has suffered from erosion and is in poor condition.

An old plantation road to the wharf, now a dirt road leading from County Road 614 to the James River, divides the fort into two roughly equal halves. The road enters the fort at the center of the curtain wall through a sally port that was widened to accommodate the existing road.

The fort's two bastions mounted four field guns each, situated on platforms and firing through embrasures, or openings in the wall. In both bastions two of the guns fired forward (north) and the remaining two guns fired to either side. Archaeological investigations conducted by the College of William and Mary's Center for Archaeological Research in 1997 revealed no evidence of artillery magazines.

The west bastion is defined by four right angles in the contiguous earthwork wall, forming three sides of an approximate square. Within the bastion, there are four earthen gun ramps or platforms for the placement of cannon. The east bastion, while similar to the west, has a more trapezoidal shape. It also contains four earthen cannon ramps.

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Fort Pocahontas
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The archaeological investigations in 1997 concentrated on the interior of the fortification as defined by the Civil War period earthworks, and the immediate area outside of those earthworks. Within the fort interior, the sites of three possible gun pits were located and two domestic sites were identified.

The three square-shaped gun pits, measuring about 20 feet on each side and about 4 feet deep, are situated near the top of the embankment overlooking the James River. Archaeological investigators interpreted these to be rifle or cannon pits. As such they would have provided a protective strong point from which soldiers could defend the south side of the fort or harass enemy vessels moving along the James.

The first pit has three steep walls on the east, west and south sides. The north wall slopes gradually to form a ramp. The second pit, the most inland of the three gun pits, is generally square in shape. The irregularity may be the result of erosion. The north side of the feature is characterized by a ramp, similar to that in the first pit. The third pit is situated at the top of the river embankment. The third pit is more rectangular than square. Its north wall is not as gradually sloped as the north sides of the first and second pits.

The fort's promontory is near its center and is bounded to the east and west by ravines and to the south by the James River. The main road leading to the wharf forks to a branch road that terminates at this point. During the archaeological investigations, a small concentrated area of handmade brick was observed here, indicating the possible location of military structures.

The two domestic sites (designated as "east" and "west") are within the walls of the fortification. They were tested during the archaeological assessment in 1997. The west domestic site lies just southwest of the west bastion and overlooks the James River from a steep bluff. It includes an open cellar and a filled, brick-lined well, as well as scattered ornamental plantings and a chimney fall. While shovel test results suggest that the west domestic site was likely occupied after the war, its wartime function is unknown.

The east domestic site is located approximately 400 feet south of the east bastion and 200 feet north of a steep bluff overlooking the James River. Archaeological investigations at this site revealed the remains of a burned building, an open, brick-lined well, and several irregular earthen mounds. The location of these surface features is consistent with the location of General Wild's headquarters as indicated on Brig. Gen. Godfrey Weitzel's 1864 sketch of the fort. The presence of a large amount of brick suggests a substantial building. Tests have confirmed that the east domestic site was occupied during the Civil War period and may relate to an early plantation or

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farmstead.

Outside of the fort archaeological investigations in an area identified as the "East Cleared Area" revealed concentrations of camp-related artifacts. Two clusters of military, domestic and architectural artifacts may mark the site of a Union encampment. Test unit excavation recovered Civil War artifacts above and within apparent structural features believed to be associated with camp shelters. Also outside the fort, on a knoll to the east, is a mid-nineteenth-century cemetery. A cast-iron fence surrounds a few marked graves. The cemetery appears to contain both civilian and military graves, although the numbers of graves, the extent of the cemetery and its relation to the fort have not been established. One marker, erected in the early twentieth century, identifies a single Confederate soldier, William M. Pettit of Sneed's Company of the Virginia Light Artillery. Sneed's Company is not associated with the action at Fort Pocahontas and Pettit's connection with Fort Pocahontas has not been determined.

Today the fort is in an excellent state of preservation. It lies less than 5 miles east of Sherwood Forest, the plantation home of John Tyler, the tenth President of the United States. Both Sherwood Forest and Fort Pocahontas are open for public tours and are owned and operated by Mr. Harrison R. Tyler, grandson of the former President.

Endnotes for Section 7

¹ David Lowe, National Park Service. Notes from his November 1996 field inspection.

Attachments for Section 7

Appendix 1: 1864 sketch of Fort Pocahontas drawn by Union General Godfrey Weitzel.

Sketch Map Showing Areas of Archaeological Investigations by the College of William & Mary Center for Archaeological Research.

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Fort Pocahontas
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fort Pocahontas (Wilson's Wharf) battlefield is the best preserved site in Virginia associated with African American Federal troops in combat. There, on 24 May 1864, United States Colored Troops (USCTs) under the command of Brig. Gen. Edward A. Wild decisively defeated a numerically superior cavalry force led by Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee as it attempted to capture the fort. Despite the implied threat of massacre by Lee's men, the USCTs repelled at least two attacks and inflicted heavy casualties on the Confederates. Their sturdy defense of Fort Pocahontas helped ensure the security of United States Navy vessels on the James River and the never-ending flow of supplies to the Federal army that invested Petersburg and Richmond the following month.

JUSTIFICATION OF CRITERIA

Fort Pocahontas (Wilson's Wharf) is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the role of the United States Colored Troops in the Civil War. It is eligible under Criterion C because it is a rare example of a Civil War fortification that retains almost all of the features originally associated with such structures, but which typically have vanished because of neglect and the effects of time and nature. It is also eligible under Criterion D because it is likely to yield information about the construction of such forts and the troops that occupied them.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

By the late winter of 1864, the tide of events in the Civil War had begun to turn in favor of the United States and against the Confederate States of America. The Army of the Potomac, in winter quarters in Culpeper County, Virginia, was being resupplied from the seemingly bottomless Federal larder, and strengthened by regiment after regiment of new recruits. Meanwhile, the Army of Northern Virginia, still reeling from its defeat at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in July 1863, was enduring a harsh winter in Orange County, Virginia. There, the Confederate high command searched frantically for the manpower and foodstuff that their opponents acquired with so little effort. Over both armies loomed the prospect of another campaign in the spring, a prospect that the Union forces anticipated far more eagerly than the Confederates.

When Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant assumed command of the armies of the United States on 12

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Fort Pocahontas
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March 1864, he initially favored a major advance on Richmond from Suffolk, Virginia by way of Raleigh, North Carolina. He reasoned that such an approach would cut Gen. Robert E. Lee's vital supply lines to the rest of the South and compel him to fight a major battle to restore them. Eventually, however, Grant abandoned this plan in favor of an overland campaign south from the Army of the Potomac's winter encampment in Culpeper County.

Besides the new campaign, Grant ordered two other offensive operations in Virginia. Maj. Gen. Franz Sigel would lead a force through the Shenandoah Valley, and another army would march up the Peninsula to Richmond from Fort Monroe in Hampton, in effect forming the left wing of the Federal offense. This army also would accomplish Grant's earlier goal of severing the Confederate lines of supply and obliging Lee either to fight in the open or retreat behind the Richmond defenses. To lead this force, the Army of the James, Grant appointed Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, the commander of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina.

On 5 May, Butler's army sailed up the James River in a wide variety of military and civilian vessels. Elements of the force boarded transports at various wharves en route, gunboats escorted the flotilla, and the 1st and 2d U.S. Colored Cavalry Regiments trotted parallel to the fleet on the north bank of the river. At Wilson's Wharf, in Charles City County, half of Brig. Gen. Edward A. Wild's brigade—the 1st and 22d Regiments of U.S. Colored Troops and two sections of Battery B, 2d U.S. Colored Artillery Regiment—disembarked to construct Fort Pocahontas there. The remainder of Wild's brigade, the 10th and 37th U.S. Colored Troops, supported by two sections of Battery M, 3d New York Artillery, disembarked upriver at Fort Powhatan to occupy and improve the abandoned Confederate fortification.

Just two miles south of Sherwood Forest, the home of John Tyler, the late former president of the United States, Wilson's Wharf was an ancient plantation dock located at a strategic bend in the river. High bluffs overlooked the place, and farmland owned by Dr. John C. Wilson spread over the plateau to the north. There on the bluffs the black troops immediately set about constructing an earthwork later named Fort Pocahontas, while Wild established his headquarters in Wilson's house.

The presence of African American troops sent shock waves through Charles City County that rippled all the way to the Confederate capital some thirty miles west. Blacks bearing arms struck at the core of slave owners' fears, conjuring up images of slave rebellions such as Nat Turner's in 1831. Officially, the Confederate government refused to recognize the legitimacy of black soldiers, treated captives as slaves in rebellion not prisoners of war, and turned a blind eye to atrocities committed against black prisoners. The most notorious such atrocity, the "Fort Pillow

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Massacre," had occurred just the month before the landing at Wilson's Wharf, when Confederate soldiers commanded by Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest allegedly slaughtered black prisoners after a battle in Tennessee.

Soon, reports of "atrocious outrages" committed by Wild's soldiers began appearing in Richmond newspapers. Wild helped fan the flames of Confederate anger, particularly when he authorized the public whipping of a civilian, William H. Clopton. According to Wild, Clopton was a "very cruel slave master" of "notorious" reputation who also was "actively disloyal" (Wild had rounded up several pro-Confederate civilians to prevent sabotage). When some of Clopton's female slaves showed Wild the scars they bore on their backs from whippings at their master's hands, a furious Wild turned the tables on Clopton. He was stripped, and three of the slave women and one man took their revenge by whipping him by turns. When the Richmond newspapers reported the incident, however, Clopton had been transformed into three white men and the slaves into Wild's soldiers.

The Confederate government responded, motivated in part by military considerations and in part by anger over the presence of black troops. Gen. Braxton Bragg, President Jefferson Davis's military advisor, ordered Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee to "surprise and capture if possible a garrison of Negro Soldiers" at Wilson's Wharf. Lee and his cavalry division left their camp at Atlee's Station on the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad north of Richmond about 4:00 P.M. on Monday, 23 May. They rode all night, passing through Mechanicsville and Seven Pines to the Charles City Road (present-day Rte. 5), then east to Samaria (later misnamed Saint Mary's) Church soon after dawn. The force had covered about twenty-six of the forty miles to Wilson's Wharf, where they finally arrived about 11:00 A.M. on Tuesday, 24 May.

Lee's division consisted of about 2,500 cavalymen from the brigades commanded by Brig. Gen. Lunsford L. Lomax, Brig. Gen. Williams C. Wickham, and Col. James B. Gordon. Lomax's brigade included the 5th, 6th, and 15th Virginia Regiments, Lomax's the 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th Virginia Regiments, and Gordon's the 1st, 2d, 3d, and 5th North Carolina Regiments. In addition, Col. John Dunovant's 5th South Carolina Regiment was attached to the force, and one artillery piece accompanied it. Lomax remained at Atlee's Station to command the camp there.

At Fort Pocahontas, portions of Wild's original command had been shuffled back and forth between Charles City County and Fort Powhatan, which was located a few miles upstream on the south bank of the James River opposite Weyanoke, as well as City Point. Wild's garrison consisted of the 1st Regiment U.S. Colored Troops, four companies of the 10th U.S.C.T., and a two-gun (ten-pounder rifled Parrott guns) section of Battery M, 3d New York Artillery Regiment. Lt. Nicholas Hanson commanded the section. The gunboat *Dawn* lurked nearby in the river.

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Fort Pocahontas
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When Lee's division came within sight of Fort Pocahontas, he and his men observed a work still in progress but already formidable. More than half a mile in length, the crescent-shaped fort faced north; its left flank rested on a bluff above a small, swampy inlet on the James River, while its right faced a branch of Kennon Creek. Two bastions with artillery emplacements faced north across the Wilson farm fields. An old plantation road penetrated the center of the fort between the two bastions and led south to the wharf. A deep, broad ditch fronted the steep face of the fort, with abatis (trees felled so that their interlocked branches faced the enemy) beyond the ditch. More progress had been made east of the plantation road, but a section of the fort paralleled the Kennon Creek branch for a considerable distance, and wooded ravines led from the branch to within a few feet of the fort. The western half was less complete, but the attackers would have to cross broad, deep fields to assault it. Each section of the fort offered its special protections and dangers to the defenders.

About noon, Lee mounted a charge and drove in Wild's pickets, who were posted near the Charles City Road a mile or so north of the fort. Lee separated his division into two detachments: Wickham's brigade, commanded by Wickham, in one, and Lomax's and Gordon's brigades and the 5th South Carolina, all commanded by Dunovant, in the other. The Confederates dismounted and invested the fort, skirmishing and maneuvering to cut off its communications with the river on its left flank, to prevent reinforcement from Fort Powhatan. Lt. Julius M. Swain, the Union signal officer, managed to maintain communications and direct fire from the *Dawn* despite Lee's efforts.

At 1:30 P.M., Lee sent a flag of truce to the fort with a message. He demanded the surrender of the garrison and made a promise: "If the surrender of the Federal forces is made, the soldiers will be taken to Richmond and treated as prisoners of war. But if they do not surrender, Gen. Lee will not be answerable for the consequences." Wild and his men understood the implications of the threat. Wild scrawled his reply on Lee's note: "We will try it."

Lee ordered continued skirmishing while Wickham led his detachment to the right flank of the fort near the Kennon Creek branch. As Wickham got into position, Dunovant's men would demonstrate against the western half to draw the defenders there; then Wickham would charge up the ravines, across the ditch, and over the eastern face of the fort.

Lee's plan was executed flawlessly but failed. Dunovant's detachment reached the abatis and ditch but were driven back by heavy fire. On the Union right, Wickham's men had been observed, and when they charged up the ravines they met a vicious crossfire, as the eastern section of the fort had been built in a zigzag to offer interlocking fields of fire.

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Fort Pocahontas
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During the skirmishing as well as during the general attack, Swain maintained his signal communications with the *Dawn*, despite being driven by Confederate gunfire from his primary signal station. The *Dawn* shelled Wickham's men, adding to their woes, and by late afternoon the Confederates withdrew out of range, as reinforcements and additional gunboats began to arrive at Wilson's Wharf from Fort Powhatan. Lee and his division bivouacked at Charles City Court House, then began the ride back to Atlee's Station the next morning. Fort Pocahontas was not attacked again, and soon white troops replaced the black and continued to improve the fort.

Ironically, it was the white soldiers who later committed attacks on civilian households: several of them broke into Sherwood Forest, destroyed furniture, stole family heirlooms, and attempted unsuccessfully to burn the house. Lee reported 10 killed, 48 wounded, and 4 missing, but a recent historian of the battle estimates the Confederate casualties as approaching 180. On the Union side, Wild reported 7 killed and 40 wounded. Most of the killed were among the pickets overrun by Lee, who reported ominously that several were shot dead "while attempting to escape." The engagement at Fort Pocahontas resulted in a Union victory by the black garrison there and helped ensure the continued passage of Federal vessels on the James River.

The Wilson family abandoned their farm after the war and the land and the fort soon were covered in trees. The foliage protected the fort from erosion and helped ensure its survival. Fort Pocahontas is in an excellent state of preservation today, thanks to the efforts of Harrison Tyler, the grandson of President John Tyler and present owner of Sherwood Forest. He purchased the tract with the fort in 1996 and since then has cleared trees selectively and opened the fort for public tours. Of the several Virginia battlefields that are associated with African-American troops—including The Crater, New Market Heights, and Saltville—Wilson's Wharf is the only one that is also in virtually pristine condition.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Besch, Edwin W. "Action at Wilson's Wharf, 24 May 1864." Unpublished typescript, DHR.

Blanton, Dennis B. Director, College of William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research. Interview, January 1999.

College of William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research. "Archaeology at Fort Pocahontas: Results from the 1997 Field Season." Williamsburg, VA: February 9, 1998.

Lowe, David W. Historian, CRGIS, National Park Service. Notes and GIS maps from site visit at Fort Pocahontas, November 25, 1996.

Lowe, David W., Notes and interview. December 1998.

Robertson, William Glenn. *Back Door to Richmond: The Bermuda Hundred Campaign, April-June 1864*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987.

Salmon, John S. Forthcoming. *A Guidebook to Virginia's Civil War Battlefields*.

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Prepared Under the Direction of the Secretary of War by Robert N. Scott. 129 vols. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880B1901.

10. Geographical Data

UTM References:

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	322870	4130450
2	18	323090	4130650
3	18	323070	4130420
4	18	323390	4130320
5	18	323090	4130300

Verbal Boundary Description

The Fort Pocahontas property is bounded by a line beginning at a point on the James River approximately 7,200 feet South of the intersection of County Road 614 with State Route 5 at UTM point 1, thence running generally Northeast for about 1,000 feet to UTM point 2, then running generally East-Southeast for about 1,200 feet to UTM point 3, then Southeast for approximately 500 feet to the James River shoreline and UTM point 4, then following the shoreline of the river generally West for approximately 1,100 feet to UTM point 5, then continuing to follow the shoreline generally Northwest for about 1000 feet to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification

The nominated acreage includes the entire earthen fortification, the possible camp area, the historic landing on the river, and the cemetery.

June 1864 sketch of Fort Pocahontas (the Works at Wilson's Wharf)

Section 7, Appendix 1

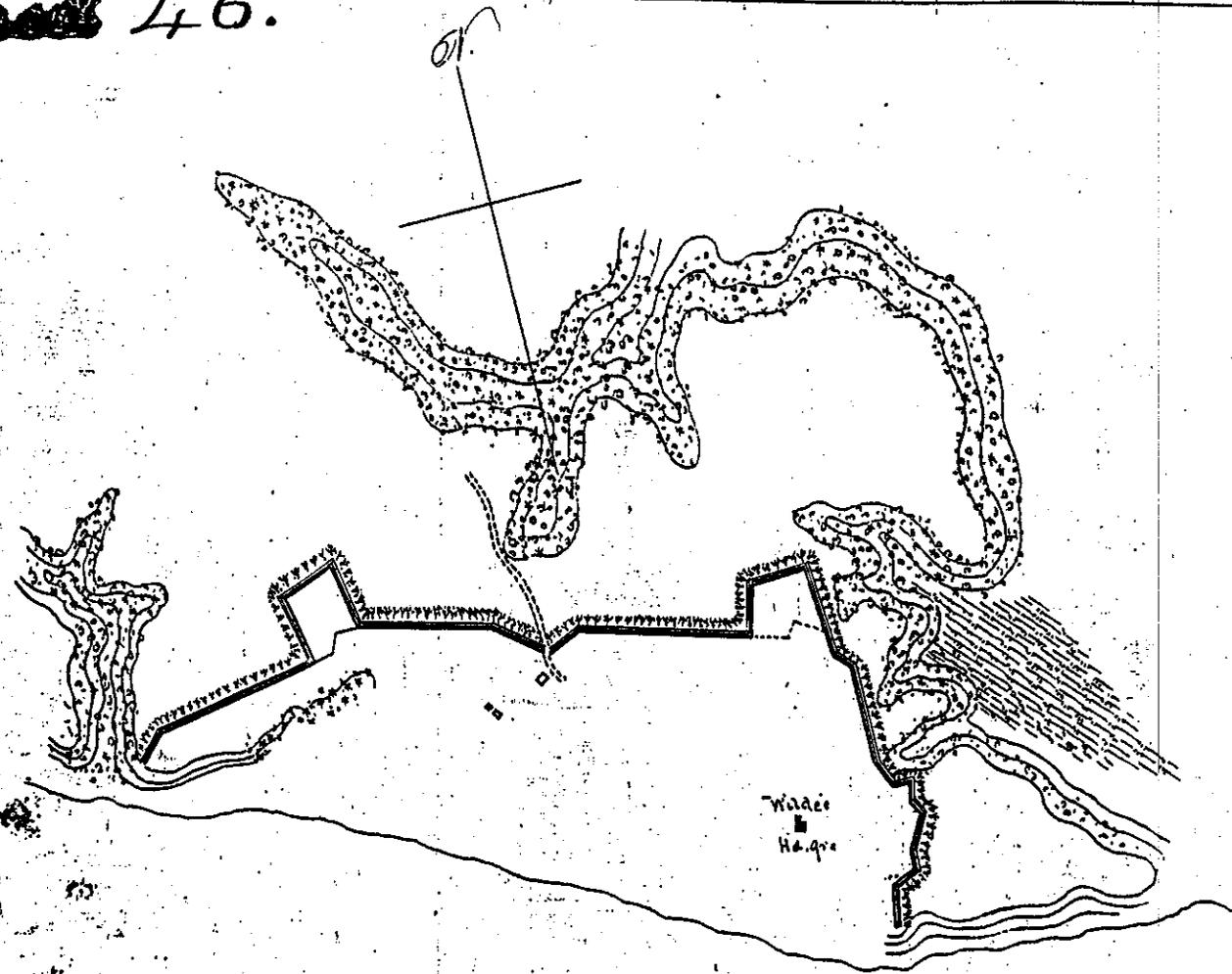
By Union General Godfrey Weitzel

Scale 12 in to
5000
Scale of feet



Drawer 150.
Sheet 46.

No 3



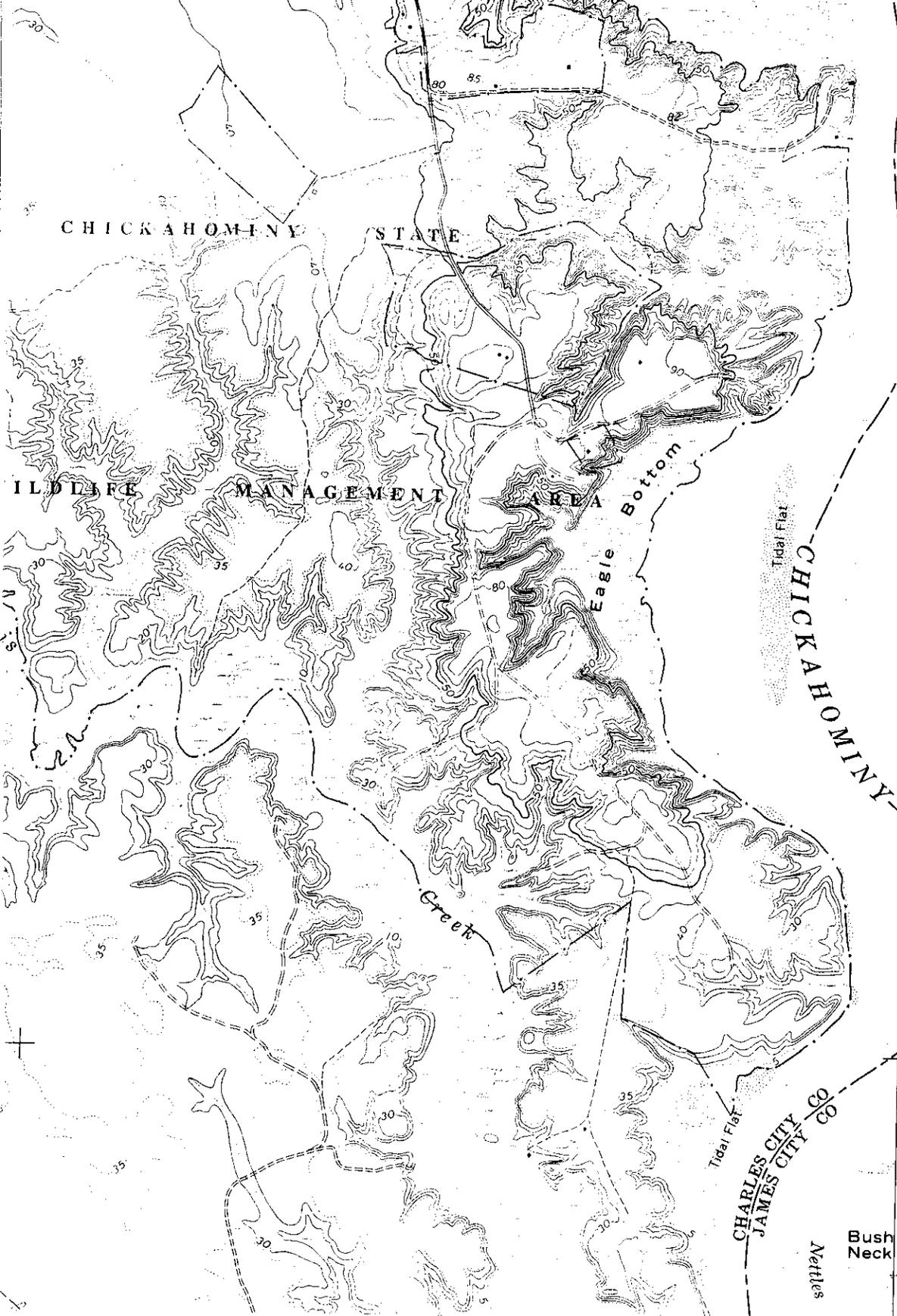
Sketch of Works at Wilson's Wharf or Landing, James R. Va.
June 8th 1864

Survey by G. P. M. D. ...
Capt. M. S. ...

By order of
G. Weitzel

June 1st 1864 Prof. ...
Chief Eng
Capt. ...

860 ...



4133

4132

FORT POCAHONTAS
 CHARLES CITY COUNTY
 VA.

Z E N
 (NORGE)
 5658 N SE
 1/18/322870/4130450
 2/18/323096/4130650
 3/18/323070/4130420
 4/18/323390/4130320
 5/18/323090/4130300

4130

4129

17'30"

4128

CHARLES CITY CO
 JAMES CITY CO

Bush Neck
 Nettles