

CIVIL WAR FORTIFICATIONS. In the summer of 1862 the Confederacy launched a bold offensive. Its armies were on the move in both the eastern and western theaters of the war. Kentucky was invaded by two armies. One came through the Cumberland Gap, and the second, larger force moved north from Tennessee through the central part of the state. A Union army raced to Louisville to head off the Confederate advances.

In Louisville, a former navy officer, Gen. WILLIAM "BULL" NELSON, ordered the construction of a defensive perimeter. In addition he had pontoon bridges constructed in the event of a Confederate siege, to insure that supplies

196 CIVIL WAR FORTIFICATIONS

from the north could reach the defenders from across the OHIO RIVER or to facilitate their withdrawal if necessary. The southern forces never made it to Louisville. Their armies were stopped at Perryville in October 1862, forcing the Confederate troops to retreat back to Tennessee.

But the scare generated by the Confederate threat to the city caused federal authorities to take action to prepare Louisville in case the Confederates ever returned. The task of insuring the safety of the city and other strategic points in the Ohio Valley fell to Col. James H. Simpson, the chief engineer for the Department of the Ohio. Simpson assigned the actual construction of the fortifications to a civilian engineer, John R. Gilliss.

After an examination of the defensive works constructed by General Nelson, it was determined that they had been built too near the center of the city to be an effective deterrent to enemy artillery fire. Consequently, Gilliss had to begin from scratch. Construction began sometime in early 1863. It proceeded very slowly until the fall of 1864, when a Confederate army was once again moving north, this time toward Nashville. The Confederate threat was crushed in Tennessee, but the fortifications of Louisville were undertaken in earnest. By mid-October Gilliss reported that he had almost completed one fort and that construction was well under way on four others. He had at his disposal a labor force of some 450, including 30 prisoners sentenced to work on the fortifications.

The engineer's plans for the defensive works at Louisville were grand. They called for a line of eleven forts and twelve batteries stretching over a ten-and-one-quarter-mile arc around the city. The line anchored on the east at the BEARGRASS CREEK cutoff and on the west at the mouth of Upper Paddy's Run. The forts were to mount four to six guns and have a minimum complement of 250 soldiers (200 infantry and 50 artillery). The forts or redoubts were to be 550 to 700 feet in length, with the smaller batteries placed between them. The walls of the forts were six to seven feet high and fifteen to thirty feet thick. Each was to have a magazine that could hold two hundred rounds for each gun. The batteries were to be similar but without magazines. The batteries were to be manned by a mobile force of field artillery and infantry that would move where it was needed in the event of an attack.

Fort McPherson was the exception. This fort was twice as large as the others; it was designed to be manned by five hundred infantry and one hundred artillery. It held a huge Parrott gun capable of firing a hundred-pound shell five miles. This fort was constructed to house government stores or other property in case of a raid or other attack. It was located south of the old city limits above Dry Run between the SHEPHERDSVILLE TURNPIKE and the LOUISVILLE & NASHVILLE RAILROAD.

The eleven forts were named after fallen Union officers, mostly from the Army of the Ohio and were:

Fort Elstner—named after Lt. Col. George R. Elstner, Fiftieth Ohio Infantry, who was killed in action near Utoy Creek, Georgia, August 8, 1864. It was located at approximately what is today Bellaire Ave., Vernon Ave., and Emerald Ave. between Frankfort Ave. and Brownsboro Rd., and anchored the defenses on the upper side of the city close to where the Beargrass Creek cutoff emptied into the river.

Fort Engle named after Capt. Archibald H. Engle, an aide-de-camp to the staff of Major General Schofield and member of the Thirteenth U.S. Infantry, killed in battle at Resaca, Georgia, May 14, 1864. The fort was located at what is now Spring St. and Arlington Ave., commanding at that time the Louisville and Lexington Railroad.

Fort Saunders—named after Capt. E.D. Saunders of the A.A.G. Volunteers, killed in action at Dallas, Georgia, June 2, 1864. Its site was on property since taken in by CAVE HILL CEMETERY.

FORT HILL—named after Capt. George W. Hill, Twelfth Kentucky Infantry, killed in action at Atlanta, Georgia, August 6, 1864. It was located on the hillside between Goddard Ave. and the St. Louis Cemetery above Barret Ave., commanding the Newburg Rd. The section of Newburg Rd. lying directly south of and in front of the fort is now Castlewood Ave.

Fort Horton—named after Capt. M.C. Horton, 104th Ohio Infantry, killed in action at Dallas, Georgia, May 28, 1864. It was situated at the approximate confluence of Shelby

St. and Meriwether St.

Fort McPherson—this was the largest of the forts and sixth from the left in the ring of the city. It was named after Maj. Gen. James B. McPherson, who fell July 22, 1864, in fighting at Atlanta, Georgia. The fort was located just west of PRESTON ST. in the area bounded by Barbee, Brandeis, Hahn, and Fort Streets. This fort held the angle of the defense line and thus held eleven guns with a contingent of five hundred infantrymen and one hundred artillerymen.

Fort Philpot—named for Capt. J.D. Philpot, 103rd Ohio Infantry, killed in the battle of Resaca, Georgia, May 14, 1864. It was just east of Seventh Street Rd., then known as the LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE TURNPIKE Rd., and north of where Algonquin Pkwy. now crosses.

Fort Saint Clair Morton—named for Maj. James St. Clair Morton of the Corps of Engineers, who was killed June 17, 1864, during an assault on Petersburg, Virginia. It was built on a rise at what is now Sixteenth St. and Hill St. and commanded the SALT RIVER Turnpike Rd., now DIXIE HWY.

Fort Karnasch—named for 2d Lt. Julius E. Karnasch of the Thirty-Fifth Missouri Infantry, who was killed in action at Atlanta, Georgia, August 4, 1864. Fort Karnasch was located at what is now Wilson Ave. between Twenty-sixth and Twenty-eighth Streets but was then the junction of the SHIPPINGPORT Rd. and the Cane Run Turnpike Rd.

Fort Clark—named for Lt. Col. Merwin Clark, 183rd Ohio Infantry, killed in action in the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, November 30, 1864. It stood at approximately Thirty-sixth St. and Magnolia St.

Fort Southworth—the most westerly of the forts, it was named for Capt. A.J. Southworth, killed August 16, 1864, at Atlanta. It was located on the north side of a bend of Upper Paddy's Run at about a quarter of a mile from the Ohio River below the city.

Of the proposed batteries, only two were completed, and they were:

Battery Camp—located between Fort Saunders and Fort Hill, it was named after Capt. Edgar Camp of the 107th Illinois Infantry who was killed at the Battle of Lost Mountain, Georgia. The battery was situated at what is now Baxter Ave. and Rufer Ave.

Battery Gallup—located between Fort Clark and Fort Southworth, it was named after Capt. A.G. Gallup of the Thirteenth Kentucky Infantry, who fell September 1, 1864, in action near Lovejoy's Station, Georgia. It was located on Gibson's Ln. at what is now Western Pkwy., at least part of it being on the old State Fairgrounds.

It is unlikely that the fortifications of the city were ever completed. A report of March 11, 1865, noted that the eleven named forts were mostly finished, but only two of the twelve batteries had been built. Of the forty-four to

sixty-six guns that the forts were designed to house, only twenty-two had actually been placed in the fortifications. Federal authorities halted all construction on unfinished fortifications on May 1, 1865.

See Leland R. Johnson, *The Falls City Engineers: A History of the Louisville Corps of Engineers United States Army*, (Louisville 1974); *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 129 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1880-1901); series 1, vol. 45, Part I Correspondence, Etc., Serial No. 9; series 1, vol. 49, Part I, Reports, Correspondence, Etc. Serial No. 103; and series 1, vol. 49, Part II, Correspondence, Etc. Serial No. 104; Robert E. McDowell, *City in Conflict: Louisville in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Louisville 1962).

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THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
Louisville

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THE UNIVERSITY PRESS OF KENTUCKY