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PREFACE

That Louisville was a fortified city during the latter part of the Civil War is not generally known to its citizens and for that matter some of its historians and those interested in its history. This is probably so because while Louisville was important to the Union cause its part was not spectacular. No battle was fought in front of the forts, no shots were fired in anger at or from them. It is therefore the purpose of this book to make known the records of the planning and building of the fortifications and why they were built so that this part of the history of Louisville during the Civil War period be not forgotten. It has taken some time and effort to bring together at this late date the meagre data concerning what ninety years ago was current knowledge of something which was of utmost importance and concern to the city and its citizens. I had gathered this information for my own gratification only with no intention of ever assembling it into a formal writing. However, having learned through my own experiences that there was no assembled history of the Louisville forts and that the only information existed in the newspapers of the day and in official reports and orders I felt that such information as I had gathered should be properly put together for the use of others who may in the future seek to know of the forts and to save them the necessity of slowly groping through the scattered records. No attempt is made to recount the engineering of the redoubts, intrenchments, etcetera, as the

knowledge of this can best be had by reading the official reports and documents in the Annexes. These may be very profitably read as from them may be obtained the best picture of the defenses, the reasons therefor and the methods of construction used. The terms used are not too technical and from these reports may be learned the military and engineering problems incidental to defending a city during the Civil War.

My own interest in the Civil War stems from the stories and tales I heard as a boy from parents and grandparents who were living in Louisville at that time. The stories of the excitement that prevailed over the threat of Gen. Braxton Bragg's march toward Louisville in 1862 and the feeling of relief caused by the arrival of Gen. Don Carlos Buell with his Union troops stimulated my interest and curiosity. In school and out I read Civil War and Louisville history avidly. Never though did I find more than passing reference to the forts which I had heard of being constructed. Just where they had been I did not know until one day in 1935 at The Filson Club in the Atlas of The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies I came upon the military map of Louisville showing the sites of the forts. From then on it was a matter of reading official records and daily newspapers of the time and correspondence with possible sources of additional information. Of course the military map dated 1865 showed the forts located far out from the then city limits in rural territory which in the course of years has been absorbed into the city. By measuring and arcing on the military map distances of each of the forts from several points which

are still located today as they were in 1865 such as the Court House, Fourth Street and Broadway, and other street intersections, it was simple to transfer the results to a present-day map of Louisville making due allowance for difference in the scales of the maps. Thus the sites were determined with fair accuracy.

In February 1936 the former sites of the forts were visited. Evidences of military construction were of course gone with one exception. This exception was Fort Southworth, the most westerly of the chain of eleven forts, which was located at Paddy's Run near the Ohio River on property belonging in 1936 to the Gulf Refining Co. Here in the woods could still be seen mounds of earth, overgrown with trees and underbrush, which had been the ramparts. The outline of the redoubt however was readily discernible. Of two other forts there was still visible the low hills, or parts thereof, on which they had been located. These were Fort Horton at Shelby and Meriwether Streets and Fort McPherson at Barbee and Arthur Streets. Now, in February 1956 it is interesting to note that the site of Fort Southworth is being utilized by the Metropolitan Sewer Board for erection of the city's sewage disposal plant and that the site of Fort Horton is the location whereon the city's new incinerator plant is to be constructed. So with the advance of progress all <sup>physical</sup> evidence of the forts' existence will have been wiped out.

After several years of searching I laid aside my notes because the final military report of June 1865, which I knew had been made, could not be located. I felt that this report would contain much pertinent information if I could ever find

it. For some reason this report had not been included in the published Official Records. In 1955 I located this report quite by chance and as I had surmised was the most important of all. Now after a lapse of twenty years I am able to complete the story. It does not concern those temporary entrenchments laid out by Gen. William Nelson in 1862 at the time of Gen. Bragg's threat to Louisville but only the planned, formal redoubts and batteries erected to defend the city in 1864-5. Construction of these started August 1, 1864 and terminated May 1, 1865 subsequent to the surrender at Appomattox.

Construction of the forts was under the general supervision of Lieut.Col. James H. Simpson of the army Corps of Engineers whose headquarters was at Cincinnati, Ohio, and who had charge of construction of fortifications in Kentucky. Directly in charge of planning and construction at Louisville under Lieut.Col. Simpson, was John R. Gilliss, Asst. U.S.Engineer, a civilian. Judging from the reports and correspondence the entire responsibility for inception and completion of the program was Gilliss'. That he was a competent engineer with a full understanding of the problem can be judged from meticulous and lucid reports, maps and plans. This in spite of the fact that he was but twenty-two years old when he started the fortifications. That he in turn also had competent help can be assumed if we consider the beautiful draughting of the maps and plans. That the undertaking was of considerable magnitude there can be little doubt when we remember that in the building of the line of forts the engineers were dependent on hand labor, there being then no power scoops, cranes, earth-movers, tractors. The job consumed nine months from August 1, 1864 to May 1, 1865. The volume of work done, the cubic yards of earth moved, can be learned by reading the various reports and appendixes.



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INTERESTING AND AMUSING SIDELIGHTS OF THE TIMES!

The pages of the Louisville Daily Journal of the time yielded some interesting items, some ludicrous and some serious, as to how life in Louisville went on at this period of its history.

This official order appeared in the issue of Tuesday, March 1, 1864 and several other issues of the newspaper:

" Headquarters, Military Commander,  
Louisville, Ky., Feb. 24, 1864.

Special Orders No. 44

~~#~~Extract

III. It having been reported at these Headquarters that the children and slaves of citizens residing on First Street are in the habit of placing obstructions on the track of the Military Railroad, on that street, causing much annoyance and inconvenience; also that parents of children and owners of slaves uphold said children and slaves in this unlawful practice. It is therefore ordered that parents or owners of any child or slave, committing such offences, be at once arrested and punished with the utmost rigor of the law.

By order of Col. S. D. Bruce,  
20th Ky. Infantry, Commanding,

Jas. A. McCampbell,  
Lieut., Post Adjutant "

From the foregoing it would seem that children then had the same natures as those of today, and that some parents were the same in upholding them in their activities. It seems that the military authorities' idea of holding the parents responsible is still today being advocated by some authorities.

It seems that in the armies of those days, as in those of today, enlisted men sometimes loaned money to their officers as this advertisement under "Personals" in the issue of May 10, 1865 testifies:

" Personal. To Marshall S. B. Truax- Quondam Second Lieutenant of Co. H, 5th Tennessee Cavalry Volunteers. Sir: Having ineffectually tried by letter, three times, to reach your ears, we are obliged to take this method, hoping you will face the music and pay your just debts, and save us further trouble, which we will take unless you comply. Expecting a remittance from you in short, we remain your abused creditors. Arthur Maguire, Sergeant, Arnold Deliffs, Private, Co. H, 5th Tennessee Cav.Vol."

The divided sentiments prevailing in Kentucky and Louisville could be expected to give rise to such as this item from the issue of June 13, 1864:

" Arrests for disloyalty are becoming very common. F.E.R.Hull was arrested at the Woodlawn Race Course, on Saturday for babbling treason. He was examined by the Provost Marshal, and sent to the Military Prison, to be kept in confinement until further orders. T. O. McDonald was arrested in the city, yesterday, charged with uttering disloyal sentiments. He was paroled to report at the Provost Marshal this morning to have his case investigated."

The surgeon incharge of Totten General Hospital on Broadway between Newburg Road ( now Barret Avenue ) and Cave Hill Cemetery evidently was a man of humor. He had this notice inserted in the issue of July 9, 1864:

" Totten General Hospital,  
Louisville, Ky., July 8, 1864.

To the Editors of the Louisville Journal:

Notice is respectfully given to all parties owning hogs, now running at large and "loafing" at Totten Hospital (on Broadway, just beyond Newburg Road) to take them away and secure them. I am informed that their running at large is contrary to law, and, unless this warning is promptly attended to, they will disappear as if by magic. In addition to their being prejudicial to the comfort and recovery of the sick and wounded they are an insufferable nuisance.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant  
A.C. Swartzwelder,  
Surgeon, U.S.V. in charge "

Evidently what the good surgeon meant was that if the owners didn't keep the hogs at home his patients and staff would be eating fresh pork.

The following high-flown and flowery comment on vice in the city and the good effects that had occurred by putting the "rounders" at work on the fortifications appears in the issue of Monday, August 29, 1864:

" "The Military & "Up-Town". The patrol guards are quite numerous in the upper part of the city now, and they are very active, obeying their orders to the very letter. But few "rounders" venture on the streets, or are found idling about houses of ill-fame, as the greater portion of them have already been picked up, and set to work on the fortifications. What few remain at liberty have become as quiet and docile as lambs, and gone into close retirement. No longer are the parlors of the "garnished hells" thronged with the bacchanal-

ian crowd. The shutters are drawn close about the windows; the harp is laid aside, the piano covered, and the walls no more echo with shouts of mirth, sounds of revelry, songs of passion, and the tread of wild, voluptuous dance. The sirens are left alone with their guilt, and at times a pale, stray gleam from Virtue's star shoots athwart the clouded sky, and mingling, like the crystal waters of the murmuring brook and the river's dark and turbid flow, with the brazen light of vice, strangely contrast the Past with the Present----the innocence of the happy days of childhood with the depravity of maturer years. A reformation seems to have taken place, and the haunts of woe and vice wear the stillness of the Sabbath Day. Night in the upper portion of the city, is no longer rendered hideous by abandoned women and their paramours, and drunken brawls. The debauchee selects a less-suspected quarter to engage in his midnight revels. The action taken by the military in arresting all up-town loafers and placing them at work on the fortifications, has had a salutary effect, and improved the morals of our city one hundred percent. We are assured that the patrols will be kept upon the streets, and continue their nocturnal calls. The "rounders" now at work under Captain Hewett complain much of the injustice of their treatment, but we feel safe in saying that their complaints will find no responsive echo in the hearts of citizens, loving law, order, and morality.<sup>M</sup>

Soldiers then too were apparently imposed upon by tradesmen. Whether the soldiers were forbidden to buy articles of uniform or just civilian clothing, is not clear,

but the following item was in the issue of Tuesday, September 6, 1864:

" "Important to Clothiers"--We are requested by the Provost Marshal and the Chief of the U.S. Police to say that hereafter any person, owner or clerk, found drumming or running after soldiers outside of their business houses, for the purpose of selling them clothing, will be arrested and put to hard labor on the fortifications for thirty days and fined \$500.00."

Apparently this notice was disdained by some for in the issue of Friday, September 16, 1864 we find the following item:

" Two runners for clothing establishments, Wiley and Wolf, were arrested yesterday while attempting to induce soldiers to invest in bran-new outfits. They were taken before the Provost-Marshal, and, for a violation of military orders, were sent to labor on the fortifications. A bad speculation for the two runners, but one likely to prove beneficial to Uncle Sam."

Almost all of the Louisville Daily Journal issues of 1864 contain news items of killings by soldiers of civilians or other soldiers, hold-ups, robberies, fights, brawls, etc. Courts martial were in almost daily session dealing with offences of both officers and enlisted men. Desertions were numerous judging from charges before the military courts. The issue of Saturday, May, 7, 1864 carries the news that on Thursday night a lieutenant and three soldiers entered a shoe store on Green Street (now Liberty Street) near Preston Street and robbed the place. The article stated that the lieutenant had been arrested with some of the stolen

articles in his possession. Judging from news items such as this the discipline of troops must have been very poor at this time-- a source of terror and worry to the citizens. Louisville at this time was full of troops returning from the South and troops on their way to the front; other troops formed the garrison. The Provost guard was quite an important part of the military establishment. In contrast during World War I with Camp Zachary Taylor on it's edge, with at one time 60,000 men in camp, Louisville was never the scene of such lawlessness as evidently plagued it during the Civil War. While naturally arrests were made in the city by both city police and military police of soldiers for disorders these arrests were more the exception than the rule. Considering the number of troops here from 1917 through 1919 disorder due to the soldiers was negligible.

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