

Fort Howell  
Name of Property

Beaufort County, South Carolina  
County and State

NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

(Expires 5/31/2012)

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Fort Howell  
other names/site number 38BU79, 38BU1151

## 2. Location

street & number North side of Beach City Road, approximately 200' SW of its  
Intersection with Dillon Road / Fish Haul Road  not for publication  
city or town Hilton Head Island  vicinity  
state South Carolina code SC county Beaufort code 013 zip code 29926

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

   national    X statewide    local

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, South Carolina Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

   entered in the National Register    determined eligible for the National Register  
   determined not eligible for the National Register    removed from the National Register  
   other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

Fort Howell  
Name of Property

Beaufort County, South Carolina  
County and State

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### 5. Classification

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**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- |                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Local   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - State   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Federal |

- |                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | district    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | site        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | object      |

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
		buildings
		district
		site
1		structure
		object
1	0	<b>Total</b>

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

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### 6. Function or Use

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**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Defense/Fortification

Recreation & Culture/Outdoor Recreation

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### 7. Description

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**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation: N/A

walls: N/A

roof: N/A

other: Earth

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### **Narrative Description**

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(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### **Summary Paragraph**

Fort Howell, a Civil War earthwork fortification constructed by the United States Army in 1864, sits on an approximately five-acre site on Beach City Road, on northeast Hilton Head Island, in Beaufort County, South Carolina. The fort is owned by the Hilton Head Island Land Trust, Inc., a non-profit organization whose goal is to protect and preserve it in perpetuity.

The fort was constructed from late August or early September to late November 1864 by the 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry and the 144<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry—regiments belonging to the Hilton Head District, Department of the South, United States Army—and was part of the Federal defenses of Hilton Head Island. It was a semi-permanent fort designed to be manned by artillerymen serving a variety of garrison, siege or “seacoast” artillery pieces (hereafter called guns, in the terminology of the day). Intended to protect the approaches to the nearby freedmen’s village of Mitchelville, it was constructed on an open site just southwest of the settlement, likely on a recently-logged site or a fallow cotton field.<sup>1</sup>

Fort Howell, an essentially pentagonal enclosure constructed of built-up earth, is quite discernible despite natural erosion and the growth of trees and other vegetation over a period of almost 150 years. Its construction is typical of earthen Civil War fortifications, but the size, sophistication of design, and physical integrity of this fort are all exceptional in the context of surviving Civil War fortifications in South Carolina. Most large earthwork structures and lines of earthworks in the state, whether constructed by Federal or Confederate troops and whether intended as temporary works or semi-permanent ones, have much less integrity than Fort Howell does.

#### **Narrative Description**

The entrance to the site is on the north side of Beach City Road, approximately 200’ southwest of the intersection of Beach City Road and Dillon Road / Fish Haul Road. A South Carolina Historical Marker for Mitchelville, erected by the Town of Hilton Head in 1995, stands 200’ from the entrance to the Fort Howell site on Beach City Road. Three interpretive signs at Fort Howell were erected by the Hilton Head Island Land Trust in 1993. A small parking lot is adjacent to the site, which includes several walking trails through the fort and is open to the public during daylight hours.

Fort Howell is in close proximity to the historic location of Mitchelville, and the Fish Haul Archaeological Site (38BU805). That 33-acre site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 30, 1988, at the national level of significance under Criterion D in the Areas of Significance for Archaeology/Historic/Non-Aboriginal and Ethnic Heritage/Black, as an undisturbed area of the freedmen’s village at Mitchelville, and for its potential to yield information about it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Trinkley, Debi Hacker, and William B. Barr, *A Conservation Assessment and Preliminary Preservation Plan for Fort Howell, Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, South Carolina*, Chicora Foundation Research Series 50 (Columbia: The Chicora Foundation, 1996), p. 5. (Hereafter cited as Trinkley, et al, *Fort Howell*.)

<sup>2</sup> The Fish Haul Archaeological Site was also listed in the National Register under Criterion D in the Area of Significance of Archaeology/Prehistoric, as a prehistoric Stallings Phase (ca. 1800-ca. 1300 B.C.) site with the potential to yield significant information about seasonal encampments along Fish Haul or Coggins Creek. Michael Trinkley, National Register of Historic Places

A brief glossary of some military engineering terms associated with Civil War field fortifications will be useful in describing and assessing the design and significance of Fort Howell.<sup>3</sup> The main features of this fort are its

**Ramparts**, or outer walls, with the top of the wall defined as the **Parapet**, designed for guns to either fire over it, mounted on a wooden platform in a **Barbette Battery**, or to fire through the parapet wall, also mounted on a wooden platform, called an **Embrasure Battery**, for its **Embrasures**, or openings in the walls near the parapet; the **Terreplein**, or built-up earth inside the fort on which gun platforms were mounted; the **Bastions**, or projecting features, in this case **Lunette Bastions**, four-sided features with two faces and two flanks, intended to allow the garrison to increase its field of fire on all possible angles from which an enemy might approach; the **Ditch**, or dry **Moat**, intended as a further obstruction to enemy assault, which surrounded the entire fort and would also protect its **Curtain Walls**, the portion of the parapet walls connecting the two bastions to each other; the **Magazines**, earth and wooden structures for storing ammunition, gunpowder, and tools; the **Priest-Cap**, an “M”-shaped feature made up of two **Redans**, or projections, intended to protect guns from flanking fire; the **Traverse**, sometimes also called a **Bomb-Proof**, a bank of earth usually built perpendicular to the parapet walls intended to protect guns and artillerymen from flanking fire; and the **Sally-Port**, the opening in the rear parapet wall, accessed by a wooden bridge over the ditch, which allowed the garrison to enter and exit the fort.

### **Plan and Characteristics of Fort Howell as Constructed in 1864**

Fort Howell was located just southwest of and adjacent to the freedmen’s village at Mitchelville, and was designed to cover the two main road approaches to the settlement from the southwest and any approach through Mitchelville from the northeast. The north bastion covered the southwestern-most of the two roads, and the south bastion covered a parallel road, both leading to Mitchelville, while the priest-cap covered the northeast roads of the settlement itself.

Its placement, determined by general strategic and tactical considerations, in turn dictated its specific design, a practice standard in the layout and construction of semi-permanent field fortifications during the Civil War, which were situated and intended to defend (sometimes described as “anchored upon”) man-made structures such as roads, bridges, railroads, or cleared fields, or natural features such as mountain and their passes, ridges, and hills, rivers and creeks, and forest lines.

The fort, as designed—according to detailed plans drawn to scale in 1864, by Private Armand Riviere, Company D, 47<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteers, and approved by Captain Charles R. Suter, Chief Engineer, Department of the South—measured approximately 525’ x 400’, with a parapet height of 23’.<sup>4</sup>

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Nomination for Fish Haul Archaeological Site (38BU805) / Mitchelville, Beaufort County, South Carolina, on file at the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C. (hereafter cited as Trinkley, National Register Nomination for Fish Haul / Mitchelville.)

<sup>3</sup> This glossary is slightly adapted from Earl J. Hess, *Field Armies and Fortifications in the Civil War: The Eastern Campaigns, 1861-1864* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp. 333-39.

<sup>4</sup> James B. Legg, Christopher T. Espenshade, and Lynn M. Snider, *Camp Baird: Archaeological and Historical Investigations of the Autumn 1864 Camp of the 32nd U.S. Colored Infantry, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina* (Atlanta and Charleston: Brockington and Associates, 1991), p. 4, draft of report courtesy of James B. Legg, Columbia, S.C., and copy on file at South Carolina SHPO; “Plan of

## **Civil War-Era Guns and the Armament of Fort Howell**

Artillery during this period was either smoothbore or rifled, with both types primarily muzzle-loading. A smoothbore gun or howitzer was classified by the weight of its round solid shot, such as a 6-pounder, 10-pounder, 12-pounder, 24-pounder, 30-pounder, or 32-pounder. A rifled gun was classified by the inside diameter of its tube, such as a 3-inch gun, 4.5-inch or 4.62-inch gun, 6-inch gun, or 8-inch gun, measured across the lands, or the narrowest possible measurement, instead of across its rifled grooves.<sup>5</sup> It is not known whether the guns actually mounted at Fort Howell were smoothbore pieces or rifled pieces; it is likely that there were some of each, and in various sizes.

It is also not known what guns were actually mounted in the fort, but it was designed to hold as many as 27 guns, 16 of them grouped in barbette batteries firing from wooden platforms over the parapet wall, and 11 of them grouped in embrasure batteries firing through openings in the parapet wall. The guns in the barbette batteries could have been larger garrison, siege, or “seacoast” guns, such as those utilized in fixed positions such as at permanent masonry forts and at semi-permanent enclosed forts or enclosures supplementing lines of earthworks. It would have been unlikely for the fort to employ the largest columbiads, the 8-inch and 10-inch guns, which were used primarily to defend positions against naval vessels. The guns in the embrasure batteries could have been smaller garrison, siege, or “seacoast” guns, or field artillery such as that used with armies in frequent motion, which was more mobile and could be moved from place to place along the lines and from one semi-permanent fortification to another and back again. The fort’s four 5’ x 8’ magazines were each protected by earthen mounds.<sup>6</sup>

## **Current Condition, Ownership, and Use**

Although there has been some slight to moderate erosion of the ramparts in the past 150 years, the fort is quite intact, especially in the context of other Civil War field fortifications in the South Carolina lowcountry.

In 1991 Fort Howell was owned by the Greenwood Development Corporation, which subsequently developed Palmetto Hall Plantation, gated resort community now adjacent to the fort. The corporation, in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act concerning the review of properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, commissioned an historical and archaeological investigation of its property before it developed the adjacent property, which was determined to be the site of Camp Baird, the August-October 1864 camp of the 32nd United States Colored Infantry, the Federal regiment which was the unit most responsible for constructing Fort Howell.

The extensive historical research and archaeological excavation, data recovery, and analysis of the Camp Baird site, as interpreted in *Camp Baird: Archaeological and Historical Investigations of the Autumn 1864 Camp of the 32<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina* (Atlanta and Charleston: Brockington and

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Fort Howell,” 1864, Prepared by Private Armand Riviere, Company D, 47th New York Infantry, and approved by Captain Charles R. Suter, Chief Engineer, Department of the South, U.S. Army, in National Archives Record Group 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1789-1996, Drawer 146, Sheet 18, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as National Archives RG 77), reproduced in Trinkley, et al, *Fort Howell*, Figure 3, p. 8, and Legg, et al, Figure 13, p. 35, and “Location of Fort Howell adjacent to Mitchelville on Hilton Head Island,” ca. 1867, National Archives RG 77, Map I-52, reproduced in Trinkley, et al, *Fort Howell*, Figure 2, p. 6, and Legg, et al, Figure 12, p. 33).

<sup>5</sup> Useful introductions to Civil War artillery include Warren Ripley, *Artillery and Ammunition of the Civil War* (New York: Promontory Press, 1970), and Philip Katcher, *American Civil War Artillery 1861-1865: Field and Heavy Artillery* (Oxford and New York: Osprey Publishing, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> “Plan of Fort Howell,” 1864; “Location of Fort Howell adjacent to Mitchelville on Hilton Head Island,” ca. 1867.

Associates, 1991), demonstrated the tremendous potential for Civil War camp and battlefield archaeology at a time when such comprehensive and thorough studies were the exception.<sup>7</sup> Though that site was subsequently developed, the information gained from the study was permanently valuable, especially in the context of our knowledge and understanding of the Civil War on Hilton Head Island, in the Department of the South, and in South Carolina generally.

Fort Howell itself was *not* developed or disturbed by the development of Palmetto Hall Plantation, but the 4.12-acre parcel on which it is located was deeded to the Hilton Head Island Land Trust by the Greenwood Development Corporation on 20 December 1991. An adjacent 1.42-acre parcel was deeded to the trust by the corporation on 31 March 1992, for a total of 5.54 acres owned and maintained by the Hilton Head Island Land Trust.<sup>8</sup> Public access to the fort is from Beach City Road, and not through Palmetto Hall Plantation.

In 1996 *A Conservation Assessment and Preliminary Preservation Plan for Fort Howell, Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, South Carolina* (Columbia: Chicora Foundation, Inc., 1996) was prepared with grant assistance from a Survey and Planning Grant administered by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.<sup>9</sup> This assessment and plan, on behalf of the Hilton Head Island Land Trust as the owner and caretaker of the property, included a brief history of the fort, a conditions assessment which addressed issues of erosion, public access, security, and interpretation, and made recommendations for future action.<sup>10</sup>

Visitors today can enter Fort Howell through several walking trails and a small boardwalk, and the best-preserved features of the fort include the ditch, or dry moat, the ramparts, and the north bastion.

Three interpretive signs erected in 1993 by the Hilton Head Island Land Trust enhance visitors' appreciation for and understanding of the fort, its history, and its significance.

The sign near the entrance reads:

### **Fort Howell — 1864**

An excellent example of the defensive earthwork common to the Civil War era, Fort Howell was constructed by Union forces occupying Hilton Head Island and was one of the final major fortifications to be built during the war.

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<sup>7</sup> Legg, et al.

<sup>8</sup> Beaufort County Deed Books, Book 589, Pages 2576-80, 20 December 1991, and Book 599, Pages 843-48, 31 March 1992, Beaufort County Register of Mesne Conveyances, Beaufort County Courthouse, Beaufort, S.C.

<sup>9</sup> Trinkley, et al, *Fort Howell*.

<sup>10</sup> On 7 September 2010, the Hilton Head Island Town Council approved a measure to lease approximately 15 acres near Fort Howell, at Fish Haul Creek Park, to the Mitchelville Preservation Project, which hopes to build a museum and park on that property. The approval is contingent upon the Mitchelville Preservation Project formalizing its long-term plan and demonstrating its financial capacity to carry out that plan. The proposed museum would interpret the history of Mitchelville and Hilton Head Island during the Civil War and afterwards. See Minutes of the Town of Hilton Head Island Town Council, 7 September 2010, available online at [www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov](http://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov), accessed 15 March 2011.

The men of the 32<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry Volunteers labored to complete the fort in the fall of 1864. Its purpose: to protect Mitchelville, a freedmen's village of newly emancipated slaves, which lay just down the road from this spot.

Fort Howell was deeded to the Hilton Head Island Land Trust in 1993 to insure its public preservation as an historic site for future and current generations to enjoy.

**HILTON HEAD ISLAND LAND TRUST, INC.**

The sign at the north bastion reads:

**North Bastion**

Built to protect the long walls of the fort, twin bastions projected from the main earthworks and offered secure vantage points from which troops could provide covering fire. This bastion, and its companion on the Southwest wall of the fort, would have each housed six cannons.

**HILTON HEAD ISLAND LAND TRUST, INC.**

The sign at the traverse, or bomb-proof, includes a copy of the 1864 plan of Fort Howell, and the text reads:

You are standing on what was once the fort's "Traverse," or "Bomb-Proof," a 50-foot-long earthwork which protected troops inside from enemy assaults on the fort's entrance.

Pentagonal in shape, the earthworks measured approximately 525' by 400' and reached a height of 23'. Four 5' x 8' magazines, which were protected by earth mounds, housed powder and shot for up to 27 guns.

The exterior of the fort featured a moat and wooden palisade—sharpened logs driven into the ground to slow advancing troops. The area directly adjacent to the fort walls was further protected by guns mounted in "bastions," an example of which lies at the end of this path.

**HILTON HEAD ISLAND LAND TRUST, INC.**

Fort Howell  
Name of Property

Beaufort County, South Carolina  
County and State

**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)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Military

Engineering

**Period of Significance**

1864

**Significant Dates**

1864

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Suter, Capt. Charles R., Chief Engineer,

Department of the South, U.S. Army (Designer)

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Period of Significance (justification)**

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Fort Howell, a Civil War earthwork fortification constructed on northeast Hilton Head Island by the United States Army in 1864, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the statewide level of significance under Criterion A in the Area of Significance for Military History, for its role in the Federal occupation and defense of Hilton Head Island; for its association with United States Colored Troops and the role they played in the occupation and defense of the island, and particularly in the construction of this fort; and for its association with Mitchelville, the nearby freedmen's village it was built to defend, a settlement which had been established on Hilton Head Island in 1862-63. The fort is also eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the statewide level of significance under Criterion C in the Area of Significance for Engineering, as a rare, sophisticated, and particularly intact example of a large semi-permanent field fortification, designed by Captain Charles R. Suter, Chief of Engineers, Department of the South, United States Army. Fort Howell retains an exceptional degree of integrity of location, design, and setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It is open to the public under the stewardship of its owner, the Hilton Head Island Land Trust.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

### **Military History**

Fort Howell is significant in the context of the Civil War in South Carolina for its association with the Federal occupation and defense of Hilton Head Island, specifically so for its proximity to and association with the nearby freedmen's village of Mitchelville, established in 1862 by the United States Army; as well as for the role United States Colored Troops played in its construction in 1864, as a semi-permanent field fortification built to defend the freedmen's village from possible Confederate expeditions or raids.

The Department of the South, United States Army, had been created in the spring of 1862, not long after the Federal occupation of the South Carolina and Georgia sea islands in November 1861, with its headquarters on Hilton Head Island. The commanding general of the Department of the South in the summer and fall of 1864 was Major General John G. Foster; the successive commanding officers of the Hilton Head District within the department during that period were Brigadier General Edward E. Potter and Colonel Philip B. Brown, Jr.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Federal Capture and Occupation of the South Carolina Sea Islands, 1861-1862**

After combined Federal land and naval forces commanded by Captain Samuel F. DuPont captured Fort Walker on Hilton Head Island and Fort Beauregard across Port Royal Sound at Bay's Point on 7 November 1861, the towns of Beaufort and Port Royal, and the neighboring sea islands (Hilton Head Island, St. Helena Island, Ladies Island, and Fripp Island, to name the largest and most significant of them), were occupied by Federal troops that continued to hold them for the remainder of the war.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Tables of Organizations of the South Carolina Expeditional Corps, September-October 1861, and the Department of the South, March 1862-June 1865, in Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of Rebellion: Compiled and Arranged from Official Records of the Federal and Confederate Armies, Reports of the Adjutant Generals of the Several States, the Army Registers and Other Reliable Documents and Sources* (Des Moines: Dyer Publishing Company, 1908. Reprint edition, Dayton, Ohio: The National Historical Society, in cooperation with The Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1979), pp. 362-374; John H. Eicher and David J. Eicher, *Civil War High Commands* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 845.

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence S. Rowland, Alexander Moore, and George C. Rogers, Jr., *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina. Volume 1, 1514-1861* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 443-59, and Robert Carse, *Department of the South: Hilton*

The United States Army soon established the Department of the South, with its headquarters on Hilton Head Island, and from there directed its operations against Charleston and other strategic points in the coastal region of South Carolina, Georgia, and northern Florida from late 1861 to early 1865.<sup>13</sup> The United States Navy established the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, with its headquarters at nearby Port Royal, and directed its operations against many of the same strategic points at the same time.<sup>14</sup> At various times Federal land and naval forces cooperated and combined their efforts, and at times they acted entirely independently of each other, but their main focus of operations was always Charleston, as both a strategic point and a symbolic one where the war began. During the Secessionville Campaign of June 1862, and the Siege of Charleston from April 1863 to February 1865, Federal troops used portions of James Island and Folly Island, near Charleston Harbor, as centers for camps and supply depots to support those efforts.<sup>15</sup> Hilton Head Island, distant from Charleston and firmly in Federal control for the duration of the war, proved to be an excellent location for the headquarters of the Department of the South, and a large complex of officers' quarters, administrative buildings, and functional buildings and structures was constructed on the northeast quadrant of the island (the point, or head, known as Hilton Head, which gave its name to the entire island), by the spring and summer of 1862. This complex was commonly known during the war as Port Royal, which has caused it to be confused with the town of the same name on the mainland north of Beaufort. One Federal soldier stationed there wrote in June 1862, "quite a town is being built about the Fort [Fort Walker, renamed Fort Welles after its capture]," while another, writing a regimental history in 1879, described the defenses themselves as "immense, elaborate, scientific, expensive, and strong."<sup>16</sup>

During and immediately after the Battle of Port Royal Sound, plantation owners and most white inhabitants of Hilton Head Island, the towns of Beaufort and Port Royal, and the neighboring sea islands fled to the relative safety of the South Carolina interior, to major cities such as Charleston, Columbia, or Greenville, or elsewhere, leaving behind a large population of slaves who were not quite slaves any longer but not quite truly free yet. In addition, Beaufort, Port Royal, and the sea islands, especially Hilton Head Island and St. Helena Island, became a refuge attracting other displaced slaves and free blacks uprooted by the circumstances of the war.

### **A Model Freedmen's Village on Hilton Head Island, 1862-1863**

In September 1862—after President Abraham Lincoln announced his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that as of 1 January 1863, all slaves in all states or parts of states "in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free"—the United States Army, United States Department of the Treasury, and Northern church missionary organizations began laying the foundation for

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*Head Island and the Civil War* (Columbia: *The State* Printing Company, 1961; Reprint edition, Hilton Head Island: Impressions Printing, 1987).

<sup>13</sup> Dyer, pp. 362-374; Eicher and Eicher, p. 845..

<sup>14</sup> Robert M. Browning, Jr., *Success Is All That Was Expected: The South Atlantic Blockading Squadron During the Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, Inc., 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Stephen R. Wise, *Gate of Hell: Campaign for Charleston Harbor, 1863* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), and E. Milby Burton, *The Siege of Charleston 1861-1865* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970; Reprint edition, University of South Carolina Press, 1982). For excellent brief overviews of these campaigns, see Frances H. Kennedy, editor and principal contributor for The Conservation Fund, *The Civil War Battlefield Guide*, Second Edition (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), pp. 191-94.

<sup>16</sup> Legg, et al, p. 24, quoting John Frederick Holahan, Diary, 23 June 1862, in *Civil War Diary of John Frederick Holahan* (Lake Park, Florida: Ann M. Anderson, 1972), and Frederick Denison, *Shot and Shell: The Third Rhode Island Heavy Artillery Regiment in the Rebellion, 1861-1865* (Providence: J.A. and R.A. Reid, 1879), p. 63.

plans by which these new freedmen and freedwomen and their children could make a life for themselves.<sup>17</sup> They would have assistance to get a rudimentary formal education and agricultural and vocational training, to earn wages and receive other financial assistance, and to acquire land of their own. This attempt to ease the transition from slavery to freedom and to help give freedmen a chance to become successful members of the postwar society that would follow the restoration of the Union and the abolition of slavery, is commonly known as “the Port Royal Experiment.” It was in many respects a trial run—but in the end not quite a model—for the postwar Reconstruction of the South.<sup>18</sup>

On Hilton Head Island, however, these efforts were first undertaken by the United States Army alone and not in cooperation with the Treasury or with northern missionary organizations, making their implementation there unique. Major General Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel, who took command of the Department of the South on 17 September 1862, immediately proposed establishing a freedmen’s village near the northeastern quadrant of the island, a suitable distance from department headquarters, where ex-slaves could build their own houses, form their own government, and establish their own public schools.<sup>19</sup>

Mitchel himself wrote to United States Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase in mid-October, describing his hoped-for “Plantation System,”

My model plantation, with its fields, fences, seeds, tillage, implements, houses, furniture, &c., would be organized with as little delay as possible. I would commence the buildings, which will be required for the large accessions of population which will certainly come to us, when we break through the enemy’s line on the main land, which we are determined to do. I would have all the blacks distinctly informed as to the plan by which they were to be governed, educated, and made industrious and worthy citizens. I would tell them that the fruits of their future toil would be consecrated hereafter to their own benefit; to each family on the plantation I would give a separate dwelling, with a patch for their own private cultivation as a little garden. From estimates which I have carefully made, I am quite certain that an industrious family of three persons will certainly save from \$150 to \$200 each year. In five years such a family will have laid up in the Plantation Bank an amount sufficient to make them independent. And then with industrious habits, with religious instruction, with correct moral views and sentiments, with

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<sup>17</sup> The Emancipation Proclamation, 1 January 1863, quoting the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, 22 September 1862, in David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), pp. 2430-31.

<sup>18</sup> The documentary edition by Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Thavolia Glymph, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation 1861-1867. Selected from the Holdings of the National Archives of the United States. Series I, Volume I (Book I): The Destruction of Slavery* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), especially Chapter 2: Lowcountry South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, pp. 101-156, is particularly valuable. For further context see Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1964; Reprint edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), and the three excellent introductory essays (gathered together from Volumes I-IV of *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation 1861-1867*), in Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, *Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>19</sup> Michael Trinkley, ed., *Indian and Freedmen Occupation at the Fish Haul Site (38BU805), Beaufort County, South Carolina*, Research Series No. 7 (Columbia: Chicora Foundation, Inc., 1986), hereafter cited as Trinkley, ed., *Indian and Freedmen at Fish Haul*; Michael Trinkley, National Register Nomination for Fish Haul / Mitchelville; Christopher Espenshade and Ramona Grunden, *Contraband, Refugee, Freedman: Archaeological Investigations of the Western Fringe of Mitchelville, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina* (Atlanta: Brockington and Associates, Inc., 1990); “Our Port Royal Correspondence. The Expedition to St John’s. Popularity of the Emancipation Proclamation in the Army. A Skirmish. Educating the Blacks for Freedom, &c.,” *The New York Times*, 8 October 1862.

minds properly trained to self-dependence, they may elect their own homes if they so choose, and begin the world for themselves.<sup>20</sup>

A correspondent for *The New York Times* observed a week later, “Gen. MITCHEL is doing a good work here with the negroes. Stimulated and encouraged by his efforts to serve them, they are making rapid strides toward improvement and enhanced usefulness.”<sup>21</sup>

Mitchel, who was already ill when he took command of the department, died of yellow fever in Beaufort on 30 October 1862, less than three weeks after he wrote his letter to Chase.<sup>22</sup>

The village, named Mitchelville in his memory, was more regularly laid out than most other freedmen’s settlements on the Sea Islands and other Federal-occupied areas in the South, which were typically little more than barracks or holding areas, and never intended to be anything else.

Mitchelville, which was surveyed and featured named streets with neat little wooden cottages, was completed in March 1863. Charles Carleton Coffin, an army correspondent for the *Boston Journal*, visited it about that time and later described it as located

on a broad, sandy plain, bordered by groves and thickets of live-oak, palmetto, and the coast pine. At that time [the spring of 1863] there were about seventy houses,—or cabins rather,—of the rudest description, built of logs, chinked with clay brought up from the beach, roofs of long split shingles, board floors, windows with shutters,—plain board blinds, without sash or glass. Each house had a quarter of an acre of land attached. There was no paint or lime, not even whitewash, about them. It was just such a place as might be expected in a new country, where there were no saw-mills or brick-kilns, a step in advance of a hole in the ground or a bark wigwam. It was the beginning of the experiment of civilization on the part of a semi-barbarous people just released from abject bondage, and far from being free men.<sup>23</sup>

With a population of about 1,500 for the remainder of the war, it was by far the largest community of freedmen, freedwomen, and children in the Department of the South.<sup>24</sup>

### **Defensive Preparations in the Department of the South and on Hilton Head Island, 1864**

The most intense period of the Siege of Charleston was from April to September 1863, when Federal land and naval forces made several joint attempts to take Charleston. Notable actions included the naval bombardment of Fort Sumter and attempted landing on Folly Island on 7 April; two combined assaults on Battery Wagner, Morris Island, 10-11 and 18 July 1863; the formal siege of Battery Wagner, 5-7 September 1863; and another bombardment of Fort Sumter, 17 August-9 September 1863. The only real Federal success, however, was the

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<sup>20</sup> Maj. Gen. Ormsby M. Mitchel to Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, 13 October 1862, in “Gen. Mitchel and the Contrabands,” *The New York Times*, 30 October 1862. This letter was printed in the *Times* the same day Mitchel died of yellow fever in Beaufort.

<sup>21</sup> “News from Port Royal. Arrival of the Steam Transport United States—Another Report about the Savannah Ram, &c. Capture of the Steamer Ouachita—Other Prizes—Several of the Sixth Connecticut Taken Prisoners—Gen. Mitchel and the Negroes, &c.,” *The New York Times*, 2 November 1862.

<sup>22</sup> Eicher and Eicher, p. 392; Heidler and Heidler, eds., pp. 1341-42; Ezra J. Warner, *Generals In Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), p. 327.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Carleton Coffin, *Four Years of Fighting: A Volume of Personal Observation with the Army and Navy, from the First Battle of Bull Run to the Fall of Richmond* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866), pp. 231-32.

<sup>24</sup> Trinkley, ed. *Indian and Freedmen at Fish Haul*; Trinkley, National Register Nomination for Fish Haul / Mitchelville; Espenshade and Grunden.

siege of Battery Wagner, which forced the Confederate evacuation of Morris Island, and in the fall of 1863 the Department of the South began shifting its focus to defensive rather than offensive operations.<sup>25</sup>

At the end of April 1864, as Federal armies were preparing for major campaigns in Virginia and Georgia—most notably, the Army of the Potomac and the Army of the James in the former, under the command of new General-in-Chief Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant, and the combined Armies of the Cumberland, the Ohio, and the Tennessee in the latter, under the command of Major General William T. Sherman—units in less strategically-significant areas such as the Department of the South were transferred to join those armies.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout the spring and summer of 1864, Federal officers in the department and its component districts corresponded with each other and with their superiors elsewhere about the transfer of units from coastal South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida to support the massive campaigns underway in northern Virginia and north Georgia, and about their need to retain sufficient infantry, artillery, and cavalry units to adequately defend the department. At the end of April Colonel William W.H. Davis, commanding the Hilton Head District (consisting of Hilton Head and St. Helena Islands in South Carolina and Fort Pulaski and Tybee Island in Georgia), estimated that he needed at least four regiments to defend Hilton Head Island alone, numbering at least 3,000 men, “one-half of which at least should be white troops.” He commented, “I do not believe the enemy will attempt anything beyond raids, but there should be preparations for a more serious attack.”<sup>27</sup> Brigadier General John P. Hatch, who had just succeeded Brig. Gen. Quincy A. Gillmore in command of the Department of the South, complained on 13 May, “the effective force, nominally 17,000 men, left by General Gillmore, is inadequate to the defense of the department. Nearly 4,000 of these men are raw colored troops.”<sup>28</sup>

On 11 June Hatch’s successor, Major General John G. Foster, observed, “in addition to the force being very small . . . there is a lack of boats, horses, and material for engineering purposes. I am planning to make the best of everything, and will soon, I hope, to be in a condition to operate on the offensive with some effect.”<sup>29</sup> Shortly afterwards he reported, “I am now drilling the new negro regiments in hopes of making them effective for service in two or three months, and at the same time gathering into this place [Hilton Head Island] Morris and Folly Islands the best white regiments, so as to obtain a small force of really effective men with which to attempt some promising operation against the enemy. . . . as soon as I know the wishes of the General-in-Chief [Grant] I will carry them out with alacrity. And should it be decided to withdraw a portion of the present force I will do the best I can with what remains.”<sup>30</sup> It became increasingly clear, however, that Foster’s superiors wanted the Department of the South to focus exclusively on defending its positions and not to attempt any offensive operations whatsoever. By mid-August, replying to a request Foster had made in June for an artillery regiment to help defend the department and for six armed transports to support offensive operations against Fort Sumter and other Confederate defenses, Ulysses S. Grant commented, “As I have requested that all the troops

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<sup>25</sup> Wise, pp. 214-15; Burton, pp. 277-320; Kennedy, ed., 191-94.

<sup>26</sup> Tables of Organization, Department of the South, in Dyer, pp. 36-374. See also Federal correspondence and reports related to the Department of the South in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. in 4 series (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, XXXV, pt. 1, and XXXV, pt. 2, *passim.*, with specific correspondence relevant to Fort Howell cited below. (Hereafter cited as *O.R.*, with all references to Series 1.)

<sup>27</sup> Col. William W.H. Davis, Hilton Head District, to Brig. Gen. John P. Hatch, Department of the South, 30 April 1864, *O.R.*, 35, pt. 2: 76-77.

<sup>28</sup> Hatch to Col. E.D. Townsend, Assistant Adjutant-General to Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, 13 May 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:92. See also Col. C.R. Brayton, Chief of Artillery, to Capt. W.L.M. Burger, Assistant Adjutant-General to Hatch, 29 May 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:105-06, and 1st Lt. Charles R. Suter, Chief of Engineers, to Hatch, 8 June 1864.

<sup>29</sup> Maj. Gen. John G. Foster, Department of the South, to Halleck, 11 June 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 1:11

<sup>30</sup> Foster, Department of the South, to Halleck, 21 June 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:142-43.

that can be spared from General Foster's command be brought forward, and that General Foster for the present act purely on the defensive at Charleston, there is no necessity for sending these vessels."<sup>31</sup>

On 17 August 1864, Foster, determined to defend Hilton Head Island from any possible Confederate expeditions or raids against it, ordered Captain Charles R. Suter, his recently-promoted chief of engineers in the Department of the South, to design and begin construction on three major new earthworks on the island.<sup>32</sup> In his report to Major General Henry W. Halleck, Chief of Staff, United States Army the next day, Foster listed them: 1) A fort he described as a "new work on the line of constructions," a large earthwork bastion added to the 1862 lines running from northeast to southwest, subsequently named Fort Sherman; 2) "another work . . . about being erected on a site near Mitchellville," the new pentagonal earthwork subsequently named Fort Howell; and 3) "the work at Spanish Wells . . . rapidly progressing toward completion," the new earthwork on the southwestern shore of the island, subsequently named Battery Holbrook.<sup>33</sup> On 26 August, he reported, "the new works at Hilton Head and Beaufort have been laid out and the engineers are now busily engaged in erecting them."<sup>34</sup> The new fort at Beaufort was subsequently named Fort Stevens, for Brig. Gen. Isaac I. Stevens (1818-1862), former commander of a division in the Department of the South and later killed at the Battle of Chantilly (Virginia), 1 September 1862. By September 19, Foster told Halleck, "The department is now strictly on the defensive, the new batteries being very nearly completed, and the old being in the course of thorough repair."<sup>35</sup>

The new pentagonal earthwork just southwest of and adjacent to the freedmen's village at Mitchelville was intended to defend the two main road approaches to the settlement from the southwest and any approach through Mitchelville from the northeast. The north bastion covered the southwestern-most of the two roads, and the south bastion covered a parallel road, both leading to Mitchelville, while the priest-cap covered the northeast roads of the settlement itself.

### **The 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry and the 144<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry Build Fort Howell, August-November 1864**

Two Federal regiments, one African-American (the 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry), and one white (the 144<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry), built this field fortification as a significant late-war addition to the defenses of Hilton Head, part of the Hilton Head District, Department of the South.

On 18 August 1864, the day after he ordered Suter to begin designing and building the fort near Mitchelville, Foster ordered Brig. Gen. Alexander Schimmelfennig, commanding the Northern District (Morris Island, Folly Island, and Little Folly Island) to send one of his white regiments "to go north," and to send the 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry to Hilton Head Island.<sup>36</sup> The next day Brig. Gen. Edward E. Potter, commanding the Hilton Head District, ordered Col. George W. Baird of the 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry to move his regiment "to a point just beyond Mitchelville and encamp on ground which will be designated by Capt. Suter Chief Engineer Dept. South near which a work is to be constructed under his direction." Potter's instructions

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<sup>31</sup> Foster to Halleck, 22 June 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:144; Bvt. Maj. Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs, Quartermaster-General, U.S. Army, to Halleck, 6 July 1864, enclosing Foster to Halleck, 22 June 1864, with indorsement by Halleck, 9 July 1864, and second indorsement by Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, Armies of the United States, 16 August 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:167-68.

<sup>32</sup> Foster to Suter, 17 August 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:245.

<sup>33</sup> Foster to Halleck, 18 August 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 1:21. See page 18 below for more on Fort Sherman, Battery Holbrook, and Fort Stevens.

<sup>34</sup> Foster to Halleck, 26 August 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 1:22.

<sup>35</sup> Foster to Halleck, 19 September 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 1:23.

<sup>36</sup> Foster to Brig. Gen. Alexander Schimmelfennig, Northern District, 18 August 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:238.

were specific: “The 32<sup>nd</sup> U.S.C.T. [United States Colored Troops] will be charged with the construction of this work and will furnish daily as large a detail for this purpose as the strength of the Regiment will permit. The working parties will report to the Engineer Officer superintending the construction.”<sup>37</sup>

Fatigue details from the 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry, camped nearby at Camp Baird (named for their colonel) did most of the construction from late August or early September to mid-October 1864, using shovels, spades, picks, and axes, and working under the supervision of Captain Patrick McGuire of Company A, 1st New York Engineers (Serrell’s Engineers) and the officers and enlisted men of several companies of that regiment.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry numbered approximately 500 officers and men, with white commissioned officers and black noncommissioned officers and other enlisted men, as was standard practice with black regiments in the United States Army during the Civil War.

Its work on the fort was slowed and complicated somewhat by its officers’ apparent reluctance to assign sufficient men to the task, and by its soldiers’ apparent reluctance toward or inability to perform the hard labor necessary to complete it. It was common for Federal commanders to assign their black units to fatigue duty, and especially to employ them to build or improve of field fortifications. In this way they could “save” their white units for combat. Officers in the Department of the South were no exception.<sup>38</sup> Captain Joseph Walker of the 1<sup>st</sup> New York Engineers, who supervised black troops working on the fortifications of Morris Island in 1863, expressed a view typical of many Federal officers when he wrote that African-American soldiers “have great constancy. . . . Their status is mediocrity, and this uniformity and mediocrity, for military fatigue duty, I think answers best.”<sup>39</sup>

The white officers and black enlisted men of the United States Colored Troops, however, often protested such treatment, sometimes informally, and sometimes in writing. African-American soldiers and their white officers often resented their being assigned to tasks that white units were ordered to do less frequently, and especially so in the case of building field fortifications, when the example of slaves being made to construct them for the Confederates was such an obvious parallel to their status as blacks, even as free men, in the United States Army.

One of the most eloquent protests over excessive fatigue duty was that written by Private Nimrod Rowley of the 20<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Infantry, serving in Louisiana, to Abraham Lincoln in August 1864. Rowley, weary of working in “one of the most horable swamps in Louisiana stinking and misery,” addressed his appeal to “My Dear Friend and x Pre” about the same time the 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry began building Fort Howell on Hilton Head Island. Rowley wrote Lincoln,

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<sup>37</sup> Legg, et al, pp. 29-30, citing Brig. Gen. Edward E. Potter, Hilton Head District, to Col. George W. Baird, 32nd United States Colored Infantry, 19 August 1864, National Archives Record Group 393, Records of United States Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (Hereafter cited as National Archives RG 393.)

<sup>38</sup> Dudley Taylor Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1956, reprint edition, The Norton Library, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1966), pp. 240, 242, 244-46; Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged In Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), pp. 182-85.

<sup>39</sup> Captain Joseph Walker, Company I, 1<sup>st</sup> New York Engineers, 11 September 1863, replying to circular from Maj. T.B. Brooks, Assistant Engineer, Department of the South, 10 September 1863, *O.R.* 28, pt. 1:329-30.

we are treated in a Different maner to what others Rigiments is Both Northern men or Southern Raised Rigiment Instead of the Musket It is the Spad and the Whelbarrow and the Axe.<sup>40</sup>

As for the work of constructing Fort Howell that fall, McGuire reported more than once that between 250 and 300 members of the 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry were typically assigned to guard duty either in their camp or in Mitchelville for the day, performing a non-essential duty, but only 150 to 200 of them were typically assigned to work on the fort for the day. McGuire and Suter, however, expected a daily average of 250 to 300 men working on the fort out of a total strength of about 450-500 available, and were frustrated by their inability to form larger work details. On 2 September Suter wrote Potter, commanding the Hilton Head District, about the problem. "I think that a regiment of this size ought to furnish at least from 250 to 300 for duty and in this I think you will agree with me. Their camp guard for instance is absurdly large."<sup>41</sup>

On 3 October Foster wrote Rear-Admiral John A. Dahlgren of the United States Navy, commanding the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, proposing that the army remove the garrison then at Fort Seward, at Bay Point on Phillips Island opposite Fort Welles. Fort Seward, originally a Confederate earthwork built in 1861 and named for Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard (1818-1893), had been renamed for United States Secretary of State William H. Seward (1801-1872) by the Federals after the Battle of Port Royal Sound. On 8 June Suter had reported to Foster's predecessor Hatch that Fort Seward then held 13 guns, but his report did not specify their types or sizes.<sup>42</sup>

Foster suggested turning the fort over to Dahlgren and the Navy after removing the guns and carriages, which he believed "will be of value to me in arming the new field forts at this place [Forts Howell and Sherman] and Beaufort [Fort Stevens]."<sup>43</sup> Dahlgren quickly agreed to Foster's proposal, and Foster indorsed it with the comment, "The guns are to be used to arm Forts Sherman, Howell, and Stevens, the selection of the guns for each being made by Captain Suter. The present garrison of Fort Seward will help dismount and load the guns, and will then rejoin their regiment."<sup>44</sup>

By mid-October the 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry was split up, with its companies ordered to various points on Hilton Head Island and elsewhere in the Department of the South. Companies began leaving Camp Baird and Fort Howell on 14 October, and by 31 October regimental headquarters was at Seabrook's Plantation,

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<sup>40</sup> Private Nimrod Rowley, 20<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Infantry, to President Abraham Lincoln, August 1864, in Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation 1861-1867. Selected from the Holdings of the National Archives of the United States. Series II: The Black Military Experience* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 501.

<sup>41</sup> Legg, et al, pp. 30-37, citing Suter to Potter, 2 September 1864, and Captain Charles R. Suter, Journal of Engineering Operations, Department of the South, United States Army, 1863-1864, National Archives RG 77, copy on file at South Carolina SHPO. The documentary edition by Ira Berlin, et al, *Freedom . . . Series II: The Black Military Experience*, especially Part I: Black Enlistment and the Collapse of Chattel Bondage, Chapter 1, Early Recruitment in Lowcountry South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida; Louisiana; and Kansas, pp. 37-73, Chapter 2, Recruitment in the Free States and Free-State Recruitment in the Occupied South, pp. 74-112; Part 2: The Structure of Black Military Life: Limits and Opportunities, pp. 303-482; Part 3: Black Military Life: On Duty, Chapter 10, Duties: "Instead of the Musket it is the Spad and the Wheelbarrow and the Axe," pp. 483-516, and Part 4: Black Military Life: Off Duty, Chapter 13, Camp Life, pp. 597-610, is particularly valuable in assessing the experience of officers and men in the United States Colored Troops / United States Colored Infantry. For further context, see also Cornish; Glatthaar; Noah Andre Trudeau, *Like Men Of War: Black Troops in the Civil War 1862-1865* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998); and John David Smith, *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life In A Black Regiment* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, and Company, 1870; Reprint edition, Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Collector's Library of the Civil War, 1982) is a classic memoir by the colonel of the 1<sup>st</sup> South Carolina Volunteers, Colored (later redesignated the 33rd United States Colored Troops or 33rd United States Colored Infantry).

<sup>42</sup> Suter to Hatch, 8 June 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:118.

<sup>43</sup> Foster to Rear-Adm. John A. Dahlgren, U.S. Navy, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, 3 October 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:307; see also Dahlgren to Foster, 3 October 1864, with Foster's indorsement, 3 October 1864, *O.R.* 35 pt. 2:307-08.

<sup>44</sup> Foster, indorsement, 3 October 1864, on Dahlgren to Foster, 3 October 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:308.

overlooking Skull Creek between Hilton Head Island and Pinckney Island, northwest of Fort Howell and near Fort Mitchel / Battery Mitchel.<sup>45</sup>

On 28 October Foster reported to Halleck, “matters remain about the same. The works on the fortifications are being pushed forward as rapidly as possible.” On 8 November, he reported, “everything remains in a quiet state, the troops being occupied in strengthening and improving the defenses and drilling.”<sup>46</sup>

Fatigue details from the 144<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry, which had been ordered to report to the “camp for instruction for colored troops” on Hilton Head Island on 9 June, completed the fort from mid-October to late November 1864, also under the supervision of the 1<sup>st</sup> New York Engineers. There is also some evidence that the regiment was camped near, or perhaps at, the completed fort, and guarding a camp of Confederate prisoners of war in the vicinity of Fort Howell in the winter of 1864-1865.<sup>47</sup>

Fort Howell never saw action, for by the time it was completed near the end of 1864 the Confederate Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida lacked the forces to offer much of a significant threat to the Federal presence on Hilton Head Island—or elsewhere in the state, for that matter. One of the last engagements of any real note in the South Carolina lowcountry occurred on 30 November 1864 at Honey Hill, in present-day Jasper County, when a Federal expedition—including both the 32nd United States Colored Infantry and the 144th New York Infantry—attempted to cut the Charleston and Savannah Railroad but was repulsed by Confederate defenders.

### **Archaeological Potential**

Fort Howell is adjacent to the historic location of Mitchelville, and the Fish Haul Archaeological Site (38BU805). That 33-acre site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 30, 1988, at the national level of significance under Criterion D in the Areas of Significance for Archaeology/Historic/Non-Aboriginal and Ethnic Heritage/Black, as an undisturbed area of the freedmen’s village at Mitchelville and for its potential to yield information about it.<sup>48</sup>

The previously-listed archaeological site and this fort, both closely associated with Mitchelville, retain a meaningful degree of integrity and ability to convey their association with and significance related to the freedmen’s village there. Several other portions of the village at Mitchelville and other sites nearby certainly retain their integrity and ability to convey that association and significance, and future archaeological investigations at those sites, and the preparation of nominations of eligible sites to the National Register of Historic Places, should be considered when possible. Further historical research and field examinations, and more extensive archaeological investigations as well, may be necessary in order to make preliminary determinations of eligibility for such sites, and such work is encouraged by the SHPO.

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<sup>45</sup> Legg, et al, p. 36, citing 32nd United States Colored Infantry Regimental Order Books, National Archives Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780s-1917, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (Hereafter cited as National Archives RG 94.)

<sup>46</sup> Foster to Halleck, 28 October 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:27; Foster to Halleck, 8 November 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:28.

<sup>47</sup> 1st Lt. Thomas J. Robinson, 21st United States Colored Troops, to Brig. Gen. John P. Hatch, District of Hilton Head, 9 June 1864, *O.R.* 35, pt. 2:122-23; Legg, et al, p. 37; J. Tracy Power, personal communication with James B. Legg, Columbia, S.C., 15 March 2011.

<sup>48</sup> Trinkley, National Register Nomination for Fish Haul / Mitchelville.

## **Engineering**

Fort Howell is one of the most intact and best-preserved Civil War field fortifications in South Carolina, and is particularly significant as a fine example of a sophisticated Federal earthwork built in an area occupied by the United States Army for an extended period. Federal field fortifications of this size and complexity are rare in a state in which most surviving earthworks, whether temporary or semi-permanent, were constructed by the Confederate States Army near the coast, either on major sea islands near Charleston such as James Island or John's Island in present-day Charleston County, or in the interior protecting the line of the strategic Charleston and Savannah Railroad in present-day Beaufort, Charleston, Colleton, and Jasper Counties.<sup>49</sup>

This fort is a outstanding example of the larger semi-permanent earthworks designed by United States Army engineers and intended to be significant defensive positions, usually standing alone but sometimes built in conjunction with and cooperating with a system of linear field fortifications manned by infantry. The standard field fortification of the war followed a pattern established by Professor Dennis Hart Mahan of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, who was considered the leading American authority on military engineering. Mahan's *A Complete Treatise of Field Fortifications*, first published in 1836 and revised and reprinted several times before and during the Civil War, was based in part on European models, most of them French, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>50</sup>

While its method of construction—built-up earth, reinforced by wooden timbers and supplemented by wooden platforms as necessary—was typical of field fortifications for infantry and artillery alike, its design was necessarily more elaborate than those manned by infantry, as it was intended to maximize the effectiveness of an artillery fortification whose guns were fixed, or essentially so. Though designed by engineers, it was constructed by infantrymen under their supervision.

It features an essentially pentagonal form with two bastions and a priest-cap, four magazines, and emplacements for mounting up to 27 guns, 16 of them garrison guns (also called “seacoast” or siege guns) but the other 11 of them field guns.

### **Significant Extant Confederate Field Fortifications in Lowcountry South Carolina**

Although there are numerous Civil War field fortifications with varying degrees of integrity and preservation in the lowcountry, the vast majority of them are Confederate earthworks constructed for the defense of Charleston, Charleston Harbor, and the neighboring sea islands.

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<sup>49</sup> See Hess, Chapter 11, Charleston, pp. 240-58, and Chapter 12, The Reduction of Battery Wagner, pp. 259-88, for a detailed and useful description and analysis of Confederate and Federal field fortifications constructed and employed for or against the defense of Charleston, Charleston Harbor, and the neighboring sea islands from 1861 to 1863.

<sup>50</sup> See, for a typical Civil War edition, Dennis Hart Mahan, *A Treatise on Field Fortification: Containing Instructions on the Methods of Laying Out, Constructing, Defending, and Attacking Intrenchments, with the General Outlines Also of the Arrangement, the Attack and Defence of Permanent Fortifications* (New York : J. Wiley, 1861).

These extant Confederate field fortifications or portions of them in Charleston County, in varying degrees of integrity and preservation, have been previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places:

	Date of Listing
Fort Johnson / Powder Magazine, James Island	14 September 1972
Fort Pemberton, James Island	21 November 1978
Battery LeRoy, James Island (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982
Battery No. 1, James Island (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982
Battery No. 5, James Island (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982
Battery Tynes, James Island (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982
Fort Pringle, James Island (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982
Fort Trenholm, James Island (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982
Unnamed Battery, St. Andrew's Parish (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982
Unnamed Battery No. 1, James Island (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982
Unnamed Battery No. 2, James Island (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982
Battery Cheves, James Island (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982
Fort Palmetto, Christ Church Parish (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982
Battery Wilkes, St. Andrew's Parish (Civil War Defenses of Charleston)	11 August 1982

### **Significant Extant Federal Field Fortifications in Lowcountry South Carolina**

There are very few extant Federal field fortifications in the South Carolina lowcountry. There are a few in Beaufort and environs, most of them earthworks on Hilton Head Island, constructed to defend the headquarters of the Department of the South, United States Army, and the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, United States Navy, both of which occupied Hilton Head from late 1861 through the end of the war in 1865 and into the Military Reconstruction period.

No other Federal field fortifications in South Carolina, however, are as large, as sophisticated, as intact, or as well-preserved and well-maintained as Fort Howell.

Significant extant Federal fortifications on Hilton Head Island, in varying degrees of integrity and preservation, include:

- Fort Welles (38BU1154 / Port Royal Plantation), on the northeastern shore of Hilton Head Island guarding the entrance to Port Royal Sound. Built in 1861-62, it replaced a Confederate earthwork built in 1861 and named for Confederate Secretary of War Leroy Pope Walker (1817-1884). Abandoned by the Confederates after the Battle of Port Royal Sound on 7 November 1861, Fort Walker was occupied by the Federals, who constructed a completely new earthwork which they named for United States Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles (1802-1878). Fort Welles retains approximately half of its structure as built by the Federals, but is not open to the public.
- Fort Sherman (38BU1156 / Port Royal Plantation), near Hilton Head, the point on Port Royal Sound which lends its name to the entire island. It was a large bastion constructed in 1864 instead of an enclosed earthwork, and was intended to supplement an 1862 line of defenses running from northeast to southwest. It was named for Brigadier General Thomas W. Sherman (1813-1879), the first commander of what would later become the Department of the South, November 1861-March 1862. Fort Sherman is in very good condition, but is in a restricted area and not open to the public.

- Fort Mitchel or Battery Mitchel (38BU1167), at Seabrook's Plantation, overlooking Skull Creek between Hilton Head Island and Pinckney Island, northwest of Fort Howell. It was constructed in 1863 and named for Major General Ormsby M. Mitchel (1809-1862), who commanded the Department of the South, September-October 1862, and for whom Mitchelville was also named; it was dismantled in 1864. Fort Mitchel is in very good condition, but is in a restricted area and not open to the public.

While these fortifications may retain sufficient integrity and ability to convey their design and significance to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, they are neither as intact nor as significant as Fort Howell. Fort Howell furthermore, is the only Federal field fortification on Hilton Head Island open to the public.

Further historical research and field examinations, and perhaps additional archaeological investigations as well, may be necessary in order to make preliminary determinations of eligibility for the remnants of Fort Welles, Fort Sherman, and Fort Mitchel and any archaeological sites associated with them, and such work is encouraged by the SHPO.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

**Brigadier General Joshua Blackwood Howell**

On 26 September 1864, General Orders No. 139, Department of the South, officially named Fort Howell for Colonel (posthumously Brigadier General) Joshua Blackwood Howell (1806-1864) of Pennsylvania, who had briefly commanded the Hilton Head District, Department of the South, earlier that year.

Howell, born in Woodbury, New Jersey, on 11 September 1806, was a lawyer in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, before the war and a brigadier general in the Pennsylvania Militia at its outset. He helped organize and was the first colonel of the 85<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry. Howell commanded his regiment in Virginia for the first months of the war, then commanded a brigade in the Army of the Potomac during the Peninsular Campaign of March-May 1862 and in the Department of North Carolina during the New Bern Campaign of January-February 1863 before being transferred to the Department of the South in February 1863.

He commanded his brigade during the Siege of Charleston from April 1863 to May 1864, including service on Folly Island and Morris Island, and was wounded in action at Battery Wagner 16 August 1863. Howell briefly commanded the Hilton Head District of the Department of the South from 6 February to 26 April 1864. His brigade was then transferred to the Army of the James and sent to Virginia, where it participated in the Bermuda Hundred and Petersburg Campaigns of May and June 1864-April 1865, respectively, and Howell briefly commanded a division for a few days in June and again in September. He was commanding a division near Petersburg when his horse fell on him on 12 September 1864, and he died of his injuries two days later, at the age of 58, on 14 September. Howell was posthumously promoted to brigadier general of volunteers, to rank from the day of his accident.<sup>51</sup>

**Captain Charles Russell Suter, Chief Engineer, Department of the South, United States Army,  
May 1864-October 1865**

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<sup>51</sup> Eicher and Eicher, pp. 306; Warner, p. 240; "Joshua Bradford Howell," in Luther S. Dickey, *History of the Eighty-fifth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry 1861-1865, Comprising an Authentic Narrative of Casey's Division at the Battle of Seven Pines* (New York: J.C. & W.E. Powers, 1915), pp. 422-30; see also the account of Howell's accident and death on pp. 377-81.

Fort Howell was designed by Captain Charles Russell Suter (1842-1920), who by late 1864 was the chief engineer of the Department of the South, United States Army.

Suter, born in the state of New York on 5 May 1842, graduated fourth in the Class of 1862 at the United States Military Academy at West Point, on 17 June 1862.

He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers and immediately appointed an assistant engineer in the Third Army Corps, Army of the Potomac, operating in northern Virginia. Suter participated in the Second Bull Run (or Second Manassas) Campaign that August, was transferred to service as an assistant engineer with the First Army Corps and later the Engineer Battalion, and participated in the Antietam (or Sharpsburg) Campaign of September 1862. As engineer of the Grand Centre Division, Army of the Potomac, he participated in the Fredericksburg Campaign of December 1862, and commanded an engineer company in northern Virginia in February-March 1863, winning promotion to first lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers on 3 March 1863.

Suter was transferred to duty with the Department of the South on 16 March 1863, and ordered to report to department headquarters at Hilton Head Island. As assistant engineer of the department, Suter participated in the Siege of Charleston from April to September 1863, including the descent on Morris Island on July 10, the siege of Battery Wagner on Morris Island, July 10-September 7, and the bombardment of Fort Sumter, August 17-23 and November 1-10. He was promoted to the brevet rank of captain, to date from 18 July 1863—the date of the major Federal assault on Battery Wagner—“for gallant and meritorious services” during the Siege of Morris Island.

Appointed in charge of all engineer operations on Hilton Head Island and Port Royal Island on 5 December 1863, Suter continued in that position until 31 March 1864, when he was appointed chief engineer of the District of Florida, Department of the South, with headquarters at Jacksonville. He remained in Jacksonville until 3 May 1864, when he returned to Hilton Head as assistant engineer, Department of the South.

Promoted to chief engineer, Department of the South, on 28 May 1864, Suter was also promoted to the rank of captain in the Corps of Engineers on 17 June 1864, two years to the day from his graduation from West Point as a second lieutenant. He served at the rank of captain and as chief engineer of the department for the remainder of the war, and designed Fort Howell during that period.<sup>52</sup> He was promoted to the brevet rank of major, to date from 13 March 1865, “for faithful and meritorious services during the Rebellion.”

Immediately after the war he was chief engineer of the new Department of South Carolina and in charge of conditions assessments of Federal installations at Charleston and Savannah in 1865-1866, before becoming assistant engineer on the survey of the Upper Mississippi River in 1866.

Suter’s most significant postwar service was as an engineer in charge of major projects on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and later as division engineer of the Pacific Division in San Francisco and the Northeast Division in Boston. Promoted to major in 1871, to lieutenant colonel in 1887, and to colonel in 1895, he was promoted to brigadier general upon his retirement on 5 May 1906. Suter died at the age of 78 in Brookline, Massachusetts, on 7 August 1920.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See Suter’s Journal of Engineering Operations, Department of the South, United States Army, 1863-1864, National Archives RG 77, copy on file at South Carolina SHPO.

<sup>53</sup> Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, From Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*, Volume 1 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1903), p. 937; George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register*

### **Brief History of the 32nd United States Colored Infantry**

The 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry worked on this fort from late August or early September to mid-October 1864.

The regiment, commanded for its entire history by Colonel George W. Baird, was organized in Pennsylvania and made up of volunteers from Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, almost all of them free blacks and not former slaves as was the case with several early units of United States Colored Troops, which had been organized in Federal-occupied areas of the South in 1862 and 1863. It was one of several new regiments of black infantry, cavalry, and artillery raised in the winter of 1863-64 and the spring of 1864 in states such as Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.<sup>54</sup>

The 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry was organized at Camp William Penn, Philadelphia, in February and March 1864. In April 1864 it was ordered to report to Hilton Head and join the Hilton Head District, Department of the South. When it arrived on Hilton Head on 27 April 1864, the regiment was attached to Bayley's Brigade, Hilton Head District, commanded by Colonel Thomas Bayley. Soon after its arrival, the regiment was ordered to Morris Island and Folly Island near Charleston, where it spent May through July 1864. It was ordered back to Hilton Head in August and began building this fort in early September.

In mid-October 1864 the companies of the 32<sup>nd</sup> United States Colored Infantry were transferred to other locations on Hilton Head or elsewhere in present-day Beaufort and Jasper Counties. It participated in the Battle of Honey Hill on 30 November 1864, then spent December in present-day Jasper County. From January through March 1865 its companies served in present-day Beaufort, Berkeley, and Charleston Counties. After participating in Potter's Raid through present-day Georgetown, Sumter, and Kershaw Counties, including actions at Dingle's Mill, Boykin's Mill, and Beech Creek in April 1865, its companies served garrison duty at Charleston, Beaufort, and Hilton Head until it was mustered out of the United States Army 22 August 1865.<sup>55</sup>

### **Brief History of the 144<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry**

The 144<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry completed this fort from mid-October to late-November 1864.

The regiment was organized at Delhi, Delaware County, New York, in August and September 1862. It served in the defenses of Washington, D.C., from October 1862 to April 1863, participated in the Siege of Suffolk, Virginia, in April and May 1863, and in Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Maryland from June through July 1863. Ordered to report to the Department of the South in August, it participated in the Siege of Charleston, including the Battles of Battery Wagner and Battery Gregg on Morris Island, the continued bombardment of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, and service on Folly Island from August 1863 to January 1864. Ordered to report to Hilton Head in January, it was transferred to Jacksonville, Florida, in February, and

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*of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy. . . .*, Volume II: 1841-1867, Revised Edition (New York, 1890), pp. 847-48; Supplement, Volume IV: 1890-1900 (New York, 1900), p. 135; Supplement, Volume V: 1900-1910 (New York, 1910), p. 106; Supplement, Volume VI: 1910-1920 (New York, 1920), p. 99.

<sup>54</sup> Cornish, pp. 254-58.

<sup>55</sup> Dyer, p. 1729; Samuel P. Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-5; Prepared in Compliance with Acts of the Legislature*, Volume V (Harrisburg: B. Singerly, State Printer, 1871), pp. 1047-65, including a regimental roster of officers and men; Janet B. Hewitt, Noah Andre Trudeau, and Bryce A. Suderow, eds., *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 100 volumes in 4 parts (Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1994-2001), Part II: Record of Events, Volume 77, pp. 719-32.

remained there until June 1864. Ordered again to Hilton Head in June, it participated in actions on James and John's Islands near Charleston in July, and was ordered to Hilton Head once more in October to finish building this fort. It was then commanded by Colonel James Lewis.

The 144<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry participated in the Battle of Honey Hill on 30 November 1864, then spent December in present-day Jasper County. It served garrison duty at Hilton Head until it was mustered out of the United States Army 25 June 1865.<sup>56</sup>

### **The Postbellum History of Mitchelville and Vicinity**

With the end of the Civil War, the United States Army continued to occupy Mitchelville and the rest of Hilton Head Island (in the new Department of South Carolina, and subsequently the Department of the Carolinas, a new Department of the South, and finally the Second Military District) for the next two years, but by 1867 it began to leave, eventually selling government buildings, reducing steamer service to and from the island, and leaving the freedmen to largely fend for themselves. The headquarters of the department had already moved most of its operations to Charleston in the spring and summer of 1865, and the military post on Hilton Head was officially abandoned on 14 January 1868.<sup>57</sup> The village was essentially intact, with regularly laid out streets, defined lots, and fences around blocks, until the mid-1870s.

In 1875 the heirs of Mary Baynard Pope (d. 1856), the last antebellum owner of Fish Haul / Fish Hall Plantation—the abandoned/confiscated tract that had become the site of Mitchelville in 1862-63—acquired approximately 1,300 acres (including the sites of Mitchelville and Fort Howell) from the Federal government, and they began selling parcels of it in 1876. The freedmen's village, and postwar African-American community, remained well into the twentieth century.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Dyer, pp. 1459-60; Frederick Phisterer, *New York in the War of the Rebellion 1861 to 1865*, 3rd Edition, Volume 5 (Albany: J.B. Lyon and Company, State Printers, 1912), pp. 3667-3679, including a regimental roster of officers and men; Hewitt, et al, Part II: Record of Events, Volume 47, pp. 55-62.

<sup>57</sup> Eicher and Eicher, pp. 822, 845; Trinkley, ed., *Indian and Freedmen at Fish Haul*, pp. 95-108.

<sup>58</sup> Trinkley, ed., *Indian and Freedmen at Fish Haul*, pp. 62, 101-02.

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Fort Howell  
Name of Property

Beaufort County, South Carolina  
County and State

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Fort Howell  
Name of Property

Beaufort County, South Carolina  
County and State

**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:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 5.54 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>528738</u> Easting	<u>3566181</u> Northing	4	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>528727</u> Easting	<u>3565975</u> Northing
2	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>528792</u> Easting	<u>3566166</u> Northing	5	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>528658</u> Easting	<u>3566020</u> Northing
3	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>528861</u> Easting	<u>3566080</u> Northing	6	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>528640</u> Easting	<u>3566131</u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundary of the nominated property is shown by the shaded line on the accompanying Beaufort County Plat Map, around the "Fort Howell Parcel" of 4.12 acres and the adjoining parcel of 1.42 acres, both owned by the Hilton Head Island Land Trust, Inc.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nominated property, owned by the Hilton Head Island Land Trust Inc., includes the historic earthwork fortification (on 4.12 acres) and a small parking area and access to the property from Beach City Road (on 1.42 acres). It contains no noncontributing resources.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Martha H. Hocutt, Board Member, Hilton Head Island Land Trust, Inc.  
J. Tracy Power, Ph.D., National Register Co-Coordinator, S.C. State Historic Preservation Office  
James B. Legg, South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology

organization South Carolina Department of Archives and History date 27 April 2011

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**Property Owner**

Hilton Head Island Land Trust, Inc.  
P.O. Box 21058  
Hilton Head Island, S.C. 29925  
<http://hhilandtrust.org>

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Photographs:**

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Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Fort Howell  
City or Vicinity: Hilton Head Island  
County: Beaufort  
State: South Carolina  
Photographer:  
and Date Photographed: Martha Hocutt, Hilton Head Island Land Trust, Inc., August and September, 2010  
James B. Legg, South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology,  
29 March 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and Number:

1. Southeast Rampart, Looking Northeast
2. Southeast Rampart, Viewed from the Moat
3. Southwest Rampart, Looking Northwest
4. Closer View of Southwest Rampart, Looking Northwest
5. Southwest Rampart, Looking Northwest
6. Moat, Looking West
7. Southwest Bastion, Looking West
8. Southwest Bastion, Looking East
9. Moat, Looking West from Traverse Area
10. Moat, Looking West
11. View of Traverse
12. View of Traverse, with Interpretive Sign
13. Southeast Rampart, from Traverse, Looking Southeast
14. Trail Following East Rampart

15. Terreplein, Viewed from Southeast Rampart
16. Trail Following Southwest Rampart
17. Moat, Viewed from Southwest Rampart
18. Ditch, Viewed form Northwest Rampart
19. West Rampart, Looking from the West
20. North Bastion, Viewed from the Ditch
21. North Bastion, Viewed from the Ditch
22. Priest-Cap from Below, Looking West
23. Center of Fort, Looking Toward Southwest Bastion
24. Center of Fort, Looking West
25. Exterior of Southwest Bastion, Looking West
26. North Bastion, Looking East Across Bastion
27. South Parapet, Looking West
28. Southwest Bastion, Looking Northeast
29. Southwest Bastion, Looking South
30. Southwest Bastion, Looking West

#### Historic Plans

31. Plan of Fort Howell Prepared in 1864 by A. Riviere, Company D, 47th New York Volunteers, and Approved by Captain Charles R. Suter, Chief Engineer, Department of the South, U.S. Army [National Archives]
32. 1864 Plan of Fort Howell with Captions Identifying Components

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.