1/24/73

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
South Carolina	
COUNTY:	
Charleston	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
14 SEP 1972	

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Fort Johnson/Powder Magazine

AND/OR HISTORIC: Fort Johnson/Powder Magazine

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: James Island [Charleston Harbor]

CITY OR TOWN: Approximately 3 miles southeast of Charleston

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
South Carolina	45	Charleston	019

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Building ☒ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☒ Public ☐ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☒ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☐ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☒ Other (Specify)	
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious	State-owned marine biology laboratory	
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: South Carolina Wildlife Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 1015 Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Columbia	South Carolina	45

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Charleston County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: Court House Square

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Charleston	South Carolina	45

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Works Projects Administration

DATE OF SURVEY: 1941 ☐ Federal ☒ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: South Carolina: A Guide to the Palmetto State

STREET AND NUMBER: Oxford University Press

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
New York	New York	36

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☒ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☒ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered		☐ Moved	☒ Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Of Fort Johnson itself, only considerably eroded Confederate earthworks remain, although other elements of the fort's foundations are discernible from ground swells and rubble.

In 1704, the British constructed a fort on the site, although there may have been fortifications before that date. While the details concerning the site's first fortification are unknown, Fort Johnson (sometimes spelled "Johnston") has undergone numerous physical transitions. A second fort, triangular in shape and of tabby construction, was built in 1759. During 1793-1794, a third fort of rather irregular design was built, utilizing elements of its two predecessors. Two batteries were prepared in 1812, but were nearly destroyed by a gale in the year 1813. Pursuant to surveys by the United States Engineers in 1821 and 1827, two permanent barracks buildings and a Martello tower (for observation) were raised; in 1861 a mortar battery was added for the purpose of firing upon Major Anderson's garrison in Fort Sumter and further imporvements were made around and about the fort during the course of the War Between the States. During the early part of 1865, Fort Johnson was evacuated and has since remained deserted.

Although the fort itself is in ruins, the powder magazine, erected in 1765, is intact. The powder magazine was buried until 1961; this fact probably saved the building from destruction (the magazine was buried during the War Between the States by Confederate soldiers). The building measures twenty-seven feet in length and twenty feet in width, is constructed of brick in Flemish bond, and was originally whitewashed. The front and rear gables are high, with one-dimensional linear extensions at their bases on the roofline; the roof is covered with a cement-like coating to prevent it from taking fire. There are but two openings in the front of the building: a semi-elliptical door and a small square window set immediately above the door for ventilation. The side walls are pierced in the center with slot windows measuring approximately seven by fourteen inches. While the exterior is original, the interior is barrel vaulted, probably by the Confederate forces during the early 1860s, to enable the roof to withstand the pressure of the earth when the building was buried. The interior was further fortified during the War Between the States with additional brickwork in common bond.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 15th Century
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 17th Century
- [X] 18th Century
- [X] 19th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)* 1704-1708 [construction dates of Ft. Johnson]
[1765 - construction powder magazine]

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- Aboriginal
  - [ ] Prehistoric
  - [ ] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [ ] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [X] Military
- [ ] Music
- [X] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [X] Other (Specify) Archeological

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Johnson is significant both militarily and politically, especially as the site of the first raising of the South Carolina flag in 1775 and as the site of the first shots fired upon Fort Sumter in 1861.

Located on the northeast point of James Island (then called Windmill Island), Fort Johnson was one of the first defensive works constructed to protect the harbor of Charleston against naval attack. The initial fortification was constructed by the British during the years 1704-1708 for defense against the French fleet during Queen Anne's War. The fort was named for Sir Nathaniel Johnson, Proprietary Governor of the Carolinas from 1703 to 1709.

There was continual reconstruction of the fort from 1704 to 1865, due primarily to damage incurred by storms and to ever-changing military situations.

In 1765, Fort Johnson became the object of the colonists' rage after the passage of the Stamp Act by Parliament. A cargo of stamped paper, brought to Charleston by a sloop of war, was stored in the fort under British guard; colonists swore to destroy the stamps, but they instead caused considerable damage to the homes of the local stamp officers.

In 1775, Colonel William Moultrie was ordered by the Council of Safety to attack Fort Johnson. Moultrie and his men took the fort and for the first time the South Carolina flag was flown.

Subsequent to its surrender by the British, Fort Johnson was staffed, but it played no major role during the Revolution, nor was it significant during the years between that and the War Between the States. George Washington, however, visited the fort while on his southern tour in 1791 and mentions it in his journal.

In 1861, with attack on Fort Sumter imminent, a mortar battery was moved to Fort Johnson; at four o'clock on the morning of April 12, a battery shell from Fort Johnson's mortar was exploded over Fort Sumter and signalled the opening of the War Between the States. Improvements were constantly made on Fort Johnson through 1865, although it did not come under federal fire during the remainder of the war. The fort was evacuated on February 17, 1865, and the works have been allowed to deteriorate.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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PLEASE REFER TO ATTACHED SHEET.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY									OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE						LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds				Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	32°	45'	11"	79°	54'	17"				°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	32°	45'	11"	79°	53'	51"									
SE	32°	44'	49"	79°	53'	51"									
SW	32°	44'	49"	79°	54'	17"									

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 90 acres [approximately]

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: [nomination originated by W. H. Byrnes, S. C. Parks, Recreation & Tourism]
Tray Stephenson [Historic Preservation Coordinator II]

ORGANIZATION: S. C. Department of Archives and History

DATE: March 8, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: 1430 Senate Street

CITY OR TOWN: Columbia

STATE: South Carolina

CODE: 45

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [X] State [ ] Local [ ]

Name: Charles E. Lee

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: March 8, 1972

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert W. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 9/14/72

ATTEST:

B. Madford
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 9/13/72

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Form 10-300a
(Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
South Carolina	
COUNTY	
Charleston	
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1 4 SEP 1972	

(Number all entries)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Burton, E. Milby. The Siege of Charleston (1861-1865). Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1970.

Cauthen, Charles Edward. South Carolina Goes to War (1860-1865). Chapel Hill, N. C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1950.

Henderson, Archibald. Washington's Southern Tour. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1923.

Salley, A. S. President Washington's Tour Through South Carolina in 1791. Columbia: The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1932.

The South Carolina Historical Magazine, volume 64. Mrs. Granville T. Prior, ed. Charleston: South Carolina Historical Society, 1963.

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, series i, volume i. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880.

Wallace, David Duncan. A Short History of South Carolina. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1961.

Year Book (1883): City of Charleston, South Carolina. Charleston: The News and Courier Presses, 1883.

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