

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Fortifications

By Dr. Thomas R. Flagel, Columbia State Community College

Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Flagel, Thomas R.	“The Fortress War: Effect of Union Fortifications in the Western Theater of the American Civil War.” PhD. Diss., Middle Tennessee State University, 2016.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. “Title,” in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
Ash, Stephen V.	<i>When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.
Ayers, Edward L., and Scott Nesbit	“Seeing Emancipation: Scale and Freedom in the American South,” in <i>Journal of the Civil War Era</i> 5 no. 2 (March 2011).
Clary, David A.	<i>Fortress America: The Corps of Engineers, Hampton Roads, and United States Coastal Defense</i> . Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1990.
Downs, Jim	<i>Sick from Freedom: African American Illness and Suffering During the Civil War</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
Hess, Earl J.	<i>Field Armies and Fortifications in the Civil War: The Eastern Campaigns, 1861-1864</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

_____.	<i>Trench Warfare under Grant and Lee: Field Fortifications in the Overland Campaign.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
_____.	<i>In the Trenches at Petersburg: Field Fortifications and Confederate Defeat.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.
Mahan, D.H.	<i>Complete Treatise of Field Fortifications with the General Outline of the Principles.</i> New York: Greenwood Press, 1836.
Slap, Andrew, Frank Towers, and Andrew Goldfield, eds.	<i>Confederate Cities: The Urban South during the Civil War Era.</i> Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.
Weaver, John R.	<i>A Legacy in Brick and Stone: American Coastal Defense Forts of the Third System, 1816-1867.</i> McLean, VA: Redoubt Press, 2001.

Organizations

Organization Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
Fort Negley Visitors Center and Park	Fort Negley Visitors Center and Park promotes the history and preservation of Fort Negley, built by Union troops after the capture of Nashville. Their website is: https://www.nashville.gov/departments/parks/historic-sites/fort-negley
Friends of Fort Fisher and Fort Fisher State Historical Site	Fort Fisher at Wilmington NC is preserved through the efforts of the North Carolina government and the Friends of Fort Fisher. Their websites are: https://www.friendsoffortfisher.org/ https://historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/fort-fisher

<p>Friends of Fort Davidson and Fort Davidson State Historical Site</p>	<p>Fort Davidson was the site of the Battle of Pilot Knob during Price’s Missouri Expedition fought on September 27, 1864. It is preserved through the efforts of the Missouri government and the Friends of Fort Davidson. Their websites are: https://www.battleofpilotknob.org/ https://fortdavidson.com/fort-davidson-historic-site/</p>
<p>Friends of Fort Defiance and Fort Defiance Interpretive Center & Park</p>	<p>Fort Defiance was captured by Federal forces in February 1862. It is preserved through the efforts of the Tennessee Government and the Friends of Fort Defiance. Their websites are: https://ftdefianceclarksville.com/ https://www.visitclarksvilletn.com/listing/fort-defiance-interpretive-center-%26-park/135/</p>
<p>Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Park</p>	<p>Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Park preserves these fortifications at Charleston Harbor SC. The website is: https://home.nps.gov/fosu/index.htm</p>

Web Resources

URL	Name and description
<p>National Park Service: Forts</p>	<p>National Park Service: Forts provides an interactive map of all forts under the management of the NPS with links to a website for each fort. The website is: https://www.nps.gov/subjects/forts/index.htm</p>
<p>North American Forts, 1526 to 1956</p>	<p>This resource lists and provides brief descriptions of forts from Central America</p>

	through to Canada. The website is: https://www.northamericanforts.com/
National Archives, Plans of Military Forts	This National Archives resource offers plans and maps of American forts. The website is: https://catalog.archives.gov/search-within/305749
National Park Service description of Washington, D.C. defenses.	This NPS resource provides a detailed description of the forts protecting Washington during the Civil War. The website is: https://www.nps.gov/cwdw/learn/historyculture/the-fortification-system.htm
The Petersburg Project	The Petersburg Project provides maps, lists of forts, and event details involving the siege of Petersburg and Richmond. The website is: http://www.petersburgproject.org/the-crater.html

Other Sources

Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
American Battlefield Trust: Civil War Forts in Four Minutes	The American Battlefield Trust publishes a four minute video on Civil War Forts. The website is: https://www.battlefields.org/learn/videos/fortifications-civil-war
Camp Nelson National Monument	The National Park Service Camp Nelson National Monument preserves the fortified supply depot established by the US Army in 1862 in Kentucky. The website is: https://www.nps.gov/cane/index.htm

Scholars

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Steve T. Phan, National Park Service	tuan_phan@nps.gov
Fred Prouty, formerly of the Tennessee Wars Commission	

Topic Précis

Symbolically the Civil War began and ended at fortifications, with the April 1861 shelling of Fort Sumter to the May 1865 imprisonment of Jefferson Davis at Fortress Monroe. Between those events, military strongholds would become one of the most impactful, transformative, and decisive factors of the war with over 1,000 built. Fort complexes induced urbanization, population spikes, pandemics and environmental destruction but also, particularly Federal forts, became points of stability and economic growth. When hostilities did erupt at Sumter, new fortifications began piecemeal, as neither of the warring parties foresaw a prolonged contest. The preserved forts we see today are just the axles to what used to be massive gears, interconnecting and forming expansive, carefully engineered defenses in depth. Unlike the quiet and unpopulated fortifications we visit in our time, during the war these were large, loud, bustling machines continually in motion. The forts built between 1861 and 1865 were usually constructed of piled earth and sod, with internal walls of lumber, logs, or gabions (wicker baskets), and steep external slopes leading down to deep, dry moats. In most cases, just beyond the moats stood a ring of abatis. The most significant effect of widespread fortifications the unforeseen impact it would have on American slavery. Both sides relied on African American labor to build their forts and Southern slaves saw forts as opportunities for self-emancipation. By the end of 1863 slaves were escaping to Federal jurisdictions at a rate of more than 2,000 a day. Forts also damaged humans and ecosystems. There is growing evidence that areas of fortified occupation and siege were where the Civil War was its most destructive. The chief causes were massive alterations to landscape but also spikes in human and draft animal populations. For example, military and civilian migrations into the defensive rings of Atlanta, Chattanooga, Memphis, Nashville, Richmond, and Vicksburg tripled local populations. And overcrowding fueled airborne contagion like measles and tuberculosis. Pressures on water tables and waste disposal led to outbreaks of cholera and diarrhea. Over time the Federal fort systems saw disease and supply shortages abate and commerce improved over prewar levels. Confederate coastal fortifications played an important role in breaking the Federal naval blockade but ultimately succumbed to Federal naval power. Confederate land fortifications between the capitols prolonged the war giving defensive advantage to them at Richmond and Petersburg. In the west Confederate fortifications were less effective due to the ability of Federal forces to maneuver as the fall of Vicksburg Port Hudson and Atlanta illustrated. Soon after the cessation of armed hostilities, the US War

Department began abandoning its fort systems. Into the vacuum returned the prewar authority of white property owners. Losing their protection and employment by way of Federal forts, African Americans were exposed to Black Codes and domestic terrorism, resulting in near total return of the old guard. Though recent historiography recognizes Grant 's sincere efforts to enforce and expand Federal law concerning African American rights, historians also recognize his failures concerning the treatment of Native Americans, conducted mostly through the use of force, and forts. It is often said that the Civil War involved over ten thousand battles and skirmishes. Far less recognized is that the national contest also involved more than one thousand forts and bastions. While pitched engagements lasted for hours and days, fortifications operated for months and years. Control of transportation hubs, manufacturing centers, lines of communication, even entire cities and regions depended on their existence. Ultimately, the Union crushed the Confederacy through a massive southward proliferation of these citadels – strongholds of earth and timber increasingly built and sustained by a population that ran towards them in search of freedom.
