



**Fort DeRussy**  
**Rock Creek Park**  
**Fort Circle Park | North**  
Cultural Landscapes Inventory  
National Park Service

**Urban Heritage Project | PennPraxis**  
University of Pennsylvania  
August 2014

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# Cultural Landscape Overview + Management Information



## Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan

### Inventory Summary

#### The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

##### CLI General Information:

###### Purpose and Goals of the CLI

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is an evaluated inventory of all significant landscapes in units of the national park system in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire any enforceable legal interest. Landscapes documented through the CLI are those that individually meet criteria set forth in the National Register of Historic Places such as historic sites, historic designed landscapes, and historic vernacular landscapes or those that are contributing elements of properties that meet the criteria. In addition, landscapes that are managed as cultural resources because of law, policy, or decisions reached through the park planning process even though they do not meet the National Register criteria, are also included in the CLI.

The CLI serves three major purposes. First, it provides the means to describe cultural landscapes on an individual or collective basis at the park, regional, or service-wide level. Secondly, it provides a platform to share information about cultural landscapes across programmatic areas and concerns and to integrate related data about these resources into park management. Thirdly, it provides an analytical tool to judge accomplishment and accountability.

The legislative, regulatory, and policy direction for conducting the CLI include:

*National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)).* Each Federal agency shall establish...a preservation program for the identification, evaluation, and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places...of historic properties...

*Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003.* Sec. 3(a)...Each agency with real property management responsibilities shall prepare an assessment of the current status of its inventory of historic properties required by section 110(a)(2) of the NHPA...No later than September 30, 2004, each covered agency shall complete a report of the assessment and make it available to the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Secretary of the Interior... (c) Each agency with real property management responsibilities shall, by September 30, 2005, and every third year thereafter, prepare a report on its progress in identifying... historic properties in its ownership and make the report available to the Council and the Secretary...

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998.* Standard 2: An agency provides for the timely identification and evaluation of historic properties under agency jurisdiction or control and/or subject to effect by agency actions (Sec. 110 (a)(2)(A)

*Management Policies 2006.* 5.1.3.1 Inventories: The Park Service will (1) maintain and expand the following inventories...about cultural resources in units of the national park system...Cultural Landscape Inventory of historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes,... and historic sites...

*Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22 issued pursuant to Director's Order #28.* As cultural resources are identified and evaluated, they should also be listed in the appropriate Service-wide inventories of cultural resources.

Responding to the Call to Action:

The year 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. A five-year action plan entitled, "*A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement*" charts a path toward that second century vision by asking Service employees and partners to commit to concrete actions that advance the agency's mission. The heart of the plan includes four broad themes supported by specific goals and measurable actions. These themes are: Connecting People to Parks, Advancing the NPS Education Mission, Preserving America's Special Places, and Enhancing Professional and Organizational Excellence. The Cultural Landscape Inventory relates to three of these themes:

**Connect People to Parks.** Help communities protect what is special to them, highlight their history, and retain or rebuild their economic and environmental sustainability.

**Advance the Education Mission.** Strengthen the National Park Service's role as an educational force based on core American values, historical and scientific scholarship, and unbiased translation of the complexities of the American experience.

**Preserve America's Special Places.** Be a leader in extending the benefits of conservation across physical, social, political, and international boundaries in partnership with others.

The national CLI effort directly relates to #3, Preserve America's Special Places, and specifically to Action #28, "Park Pulse." Each CLI documents the existing condition of park resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to improve condition. This information can be used to improve park priority setting and communicate complex park condition information to the public.

Responding to the Cultural Resources Challenge:

The Cultural Resources Challenge (CRC) is a NPS strategic plan that identifies our most critical priorities. The primary objective is to "*Achieve a standard of excellence for the stewardship of the resources that form the historical and cultural foundations of the nation, commit at all levels to a common set of goals, and articulate a common vision for the next century.*" The CLI contributes to the fulfillment of all five goals of the CRC:

- 1) *Provide leadership support, and advocacy for the stewardship, protection, interpretation, and management of the nation's heritage through scholarly research, science and effective management;*
- 2) *Recommit to the spirit and letter of the landmark legislation underpinning the NPS*

3) *Connect all Americans to their heritage resources in a manner that resonates with their lives, legacies, and dreams, and tells the stories that make up America's diverse national identity;*

4) *Integrate the values of heritage stewardship into major initiatives and issues such as renewable energy, climate change, community assistance and revitalization, and sustainability, while cultivating excellence in science and technical preservation as a foundation for resource protection, management, and rehabilitation; and*

5) *Attract, support, and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce, and support the development of leadership and expertise within the National Park Service.*

#### Scope of the CLI

CLI data is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries, archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance. The baseline information describes the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in the context of the landscape's overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit and generates spatial data for Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The CLI also identifies stabilization needs to prevent further deterioration of the landscape and provides data for the Facility Management Software System

#### **Inventory Unit Description:**

The Fort DeRussy is a component landscape of the Civil War Defenses of Washington cultural landscape and Rock Creek Park. A component cultural landscape is a definable physical area within the boundaries of a larger property or historic district. It is located in northwest Washington, DC, near the intersection of Military Road and Oregon Ave NW. The fort is approximately seven miles northwest of the United States Capitol and three miles south of Silver Spring, Maryland. The boundaries of Fort DeRussy, as considered for this cultural landscape inventory, are defined by Military Road to the south, Oregon Avenue NW to the west, the historic Milkhouse Ford Road trail to the north and Rock Creek to the east.

Fort DeRussy is listed on the National Register as part of the 1974 Civil War Fort Sites nomination and the 1977 Defenses of Washington revision of the 1974 nomination. The National Register lists Fort DeRussy's period of significance as 1861-1865. The fort is listed in the National Register for its military significance. This CLI maintains that the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape is eligible under National Register Criteria A, C and D and recommends adding a second period of significance: 1890-1922. This second period of significance will recognize Fort DeRussy's role (as part of Rock Creek Park) in the development in Parks and Recreation in Washington, DC, and its significance as an example of the City Beautiful Movement and the promotion of large urban parks throughout the United States in the last half of the nineteenth century. Fort DeRussy is significant as a contributing landscape within the original Rock Creek Park and was identified as early as 1867 as an important element within the park because of its historic associations and the views available from its high location.

## Fort DeRussy

### Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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Fort DeRussy was one of 68 forts built as a defensive ring around Washington at the start of the Civil War. Located on a high crest to the west of Rock Creek, DeRussy was sited to control movement across the valley below and coordinate fire with Fort Stevens to the east and Fort Kearny to the west. The fort, constructed by the 4th New York Heavy Artillery, was completed and garrisoned in fall of 1861. Fort DeRussy's parapet measured approximately 208 yards and enclosed an area of 0.6 acres. In addition to the trapezoidal earthworks, an extensive rear-ditched rifle trench wrapped around the north face of the hill and connected to Battery Kingsbury 380 yards southeast of the main fort and Battery Smeade, located west of modern day Oregon Avenue. The 86-acre complex around Fort DeRussy included a rammed earth magazine and bombproof, both located within the fort. Two barracks, two mess halls, five officers' quarters, two stables, an ordnance sergeant's quarters and a guardhouse, all built of log or frame construction, were built outside the fortification (Cooling and Owen 2010:165-169).

The armament at Fort DeRussy included three 32-pounder seacoast guns (en barbette), one 100-pounder Parrott (en barbette), five 30-pounder Parrott rifles (en embrasure), one 10-inch and one 24-pounder Coehorn mortar, and two vacant platforms. In 1863 the fort was expanded and the northeastern angle of the fort was reshaped to accommodate a 100-pounder Parrott rifle. The additional gun proved useful in providing long-range fire against Jubal Early's raid on Fort Stevens on July 11-12, 1864. Fort DeRussy is one of only three of the Defenses of Washington sites to participate in direct action during the Civil War.

The fort reverted to civilian ownership at the end of the Civil War. Outbuildings were dismantled and timber, bricks, nails and hinges sold off along with tools and roofing material at a public sale in October 1865 (Cooling and Owen 2010 171-172). The combined draw of the site's historical association and the expansive views from its parapets led surveyors to recommend Fort DeRussy be preserved as parkland as early as 1867. In 1890 the fort was incorporated as part of the newly founded Rock Creek Park. The creation of the park was promoted as a remedy for urban ills as well as for the protection of the valley. Large metropolitan parks such as Rock Creek provided the fresh air, meadows and sunshine of the country, and were perceived as an antidote to the stress of indoor work and congestion of the city.

The establishment of Rock Creek Park was also linked to this country's nascent conservation movement, which pioneered the concept of national park reserves. Park advocates stressed the importance of preserving Rock Creek's unrivaled natural scenery and Congress emphasized preservation of the park's natural resources and landscapes in its founding legislation, mandating that 'regulations shall provide for the preservation from injury or spoliation of all timber, animals, or curiosities within said park, and their retention in their natural condition, as nearly as possible' (The Rock Creek Park Authorization Fifty-First Congress, Sess. I. CH. 1001. 1890. September 27, Chap. 1001 as quoted in Bushong 1990:61-64). This early focus on landscape preservation ensured the survival of Fort DeRussy's earthworks into the twenty-first century.

In early 1902, the Senate Committee report on the 'The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia', also known as the McMillan Plan (written and developed in 1901), spurred efforts to preserve the Civil War Defenses as part of a circle of green spaces around the city. The original

## Fort DeRussy

### Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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proposal to create a 28-mile parkway connecting the Civil War forts of DC as a string of public parkland was a part of the re-envisioning of the District of Columbia based on the principles of the City Beautiful Movement. Already well preserved as a part of Rock Creek Park, Fort DeRussy was not included as part of the original chain of forts designed as part of the McMillan Plan, but later versions would include the site as a part of the planned ring of parks.

Today, Fort DeRussy is situated above a busy road that bisects Rock Creek Park. Mature tree growth and heavy vegetation insulate the site from much of the street noise to the south. Across Oregon Avenue NW is a Catholic prep school, St. John's College High School. Rock Creek Park continues to the north, south and east of the site and hiking, biking and horse trails were constructed by the National Park Service in the twentieth century to increase opportunities for passive recreation around Fort DeRussy. It is a popular spot among local dog walkers. While no evidence of outbuildings from the Civil War era is visible, the earthworks remain in a remarkably intact state of preservation. Though sections of the parapet have eroded and the magazines and bombproofs long ago collapsed, much of the fort and its outerworks retain their historic character.

This CLI finds that the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape retains integrity from the Civil War-era period of significance (1861-1865) as well a second period of significance, (1890-1922) covering the foundation of Rock Creek Park and the development of the McMillan Plan and is in Good condition. Fort DeRussy has retained many of its landscape characteristics and features and displays the seven aspects that determine integrity as defined by the National Register of Historic Places: location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association.



**Site Plan**

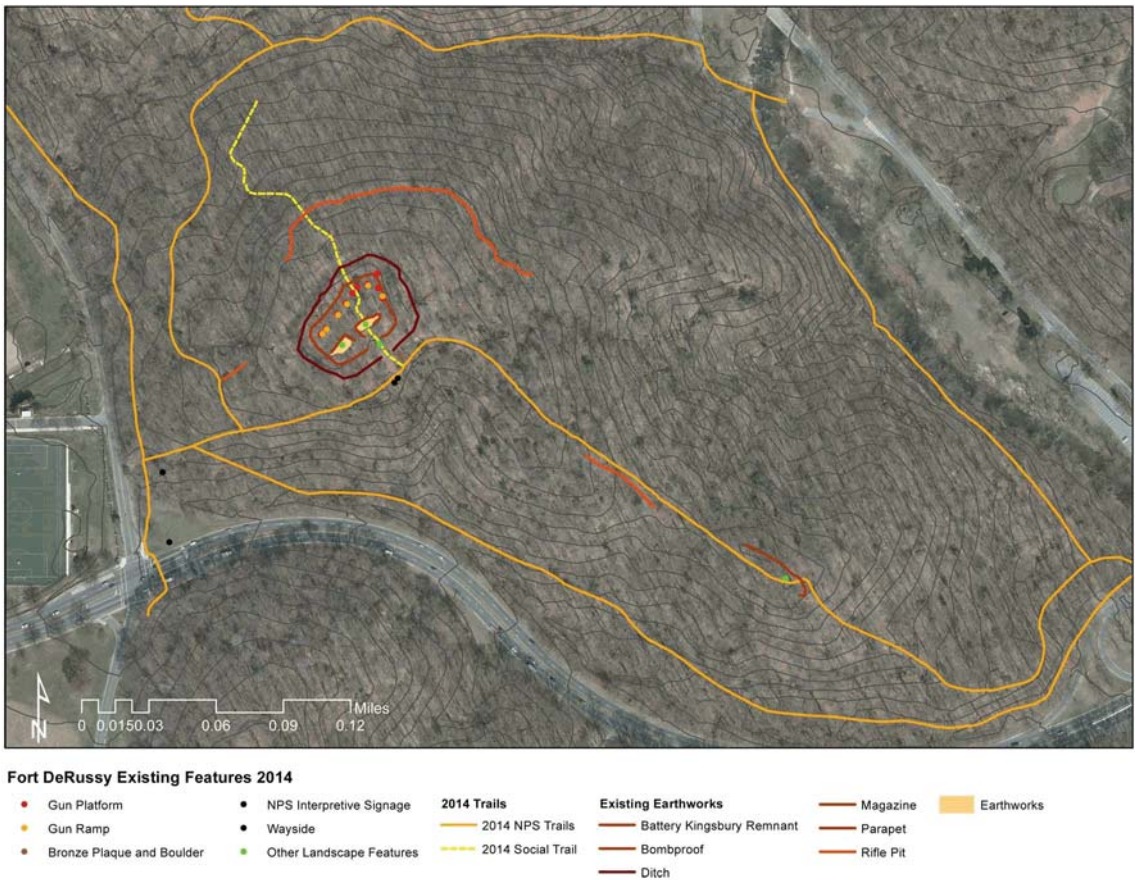


Figure 2: Site Plan

**Property Level and CLI Numbers**

**Inventory Unit Name:** Fort DeRussy  
**Property Level:** Component Landscape  
**CLI Identification Number:** 600259  
**Parent Landscape:** 600138

**Park Information**

**Park Name and Alpha Code:** Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North -ROCR  
**Park Organization Code:** 3472  
**Subunit/District Name Alpha Code:** Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North - ROCR  
**Park Administrative Unit:** Rock Creek Park

## Concurrence Status

**Inventory Status:** Complete

### **Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:**

This Cultural Landscape Inventory was researched and written by Shannon Garrison, Research Associate, University of Pennsylvania. Primary and secondary source material from within the National Park Service and local repositories was utilized to complete the inventory and is listed in the bibliography. Research and editorial assistance was provided by: Martha Temkin, Cultural Resource Specialist, National Capital Region, National Park Service; Maureen Joseph, Regional Historical Landscape Architect, National Capital Parks Region, National Park Service; David Lowe, Historian, National Capital Parks Region, National Park Service; Laura Waller, Cultural Resources Specialist/Museum Technician, Museum Resource Center, National Park Service; Kate Birmingham, Archeologist/Cultural Resources Specialist, National Capital Parks, East, National Park Service; Kym Elder, Program Manager, Civil War Defenses of Washington, National Capital Region, National Park Service; Randall F. Mason, Associate Professor and Chair, Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania; Karina Bishop, Research Associate, University of Pennsylvania.

**Concurrence Status:**

<b>Park Superintendent Concurrence:</b>	Yes
<b>Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:</b>	08/06/2014
<b>National Register Concurrence:</b>	Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
<b>Date of Concurrence Determination:</b>	08/25/2014

**National Register Concurrence Narrative:**

Fort DeRussy was listed in the National Register as part of the 1974 Civil War Fort Sites nomination and the 1977 Defenses of Washington revision of the earlier nomination. Fort DeRussy was listed for its military significance and the nomination provides 1861 - 1865 as its Period of Significance.

This CLI proposes a second Period of Significance for the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape: 1890-1922 during which time the site was acquired by the federal government and converted to public parkland as a part of the larger Rock Creek Park. The end date of 1922 was chosen as this is the last date that the research for this report shows changes made to the physical landscape. This CLI also proposes that the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, C and D. The Statement of Significance provides a detailed discussion of how the site meets the National Register criteria.

Though the National Register discusses the fort's role in the defense of Washington during the Civil War, it does not adequately document or describe the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape and its importance as part of a large urban park founded as a part of the City Beautiful Movement.

**Concurrence Graphic Information:**

Fort DeRussy  
Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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United States Department of the Interior  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
National Capital Region  
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20242

August 5, 2014

Memorandum

To: Cultural Landscapes Inventory Coordinator, National Capital Region  
From: State Historic Preservation Officer, District of Columbia  
Subject: Statement of Concurrence, Fort DeRussy Cultural Landscape CLI

I, David Maloney, District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer, concur with the findings of the Fort DeRussy Cultural Landscape CLI as per Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, submitted on August 5, 2014.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David Maloney  
District of Columbia Historic Preservation Officer

Date 8/25/2014

*Concurrence memo signed by the DC SHPO on 8/25/2014*



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
National Capital Region  
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20242

August 1, 2014

Memorandum:

To: Regional Landscape Architect, National Capital Region  
From: Superintendent, Rock Creek Park  
Subject: Statement of Concurrence, Fort DeRussy Cultural Landscape Inventory

I, Tara Morrison, Superintendent of Rock Creek Park, concur with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory for Fort DeRussy, including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must be Preserved and Maintained


CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

**Good:** indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

**Fair:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

**Poor:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory for Fort DeRussy is hereby approved and accepted.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent, Rock Creek Park

August 6, 2014  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Concurrence memo signed by ROCR superintendent on 8/6/2014.*

## Geographic Information & Location Map

### Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

The Fort DeRussy is a component landscape of the Civil War Defenses of Washington cultural landscape and Rock Creek Park. A component cultural landscape is a definable physical area within the boundaries of a larger property or historic district. It is located in northwest Washington, DC, near the intersection of Military Road and Oregon Ave NW. The fort is approximately seven miles northwest of the United States Capitol and three miles south of Silver Spring, Maryland. The boundaries of Fort DeRussy, as considered for this cultural landscape inventory, are defined by Military Road to the south, Oregon Avenue NW to the west, the historic Milkhouse Ford Road trail to the north and Rock Creek to the east. It is comprised of about 80 acres.

**State and County:**

**State:** DC

**County:** District of Columbia

**Size (Acres):** 80.00

**Boundary Coordinates:**

**Source:** USGS Map 1:100,000

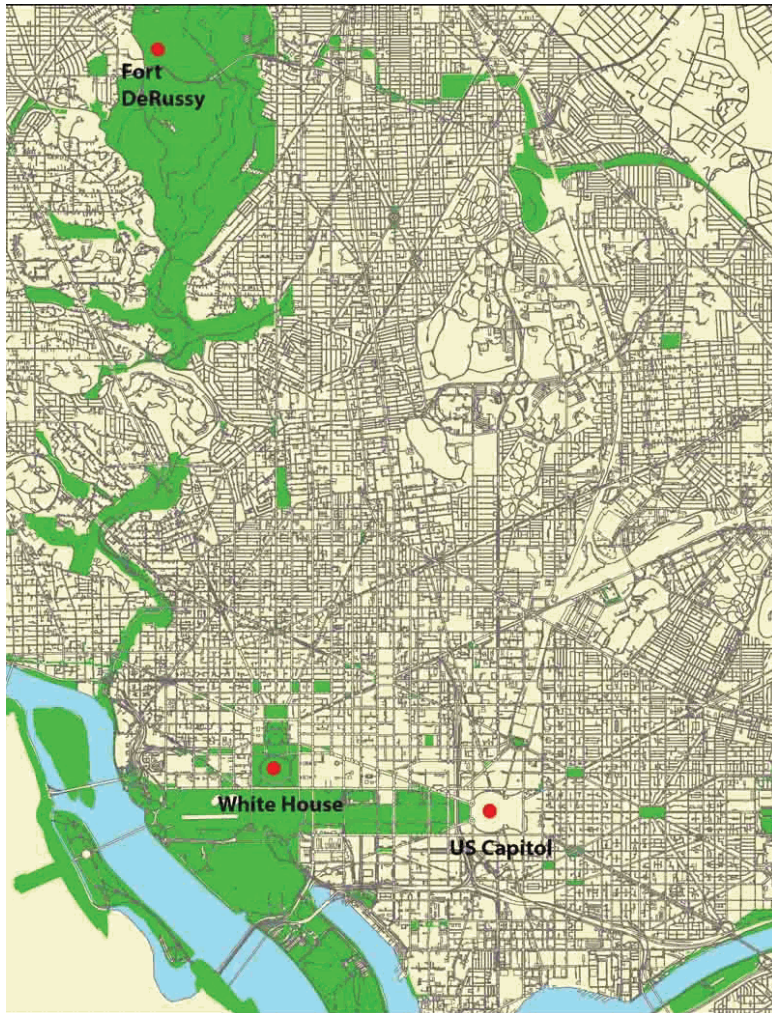
**Boundary Source Narrative:** Google Earth

**Type of Point:** Point

**Latitude:** -77.0302350000

**Longitude:** 38.5748560000

**Location Map:**



*Location Map: Fort DeRussy is located approximately 7 miles northwest of the United States Capitol and 3 miles south of Silver Spring, Maryland.*

**Management Information**

### General Management Information

**Management Category:** Must be Preserved and Maintained

**Management Category Date:** 08/06/2014

**Management Category Explanatory Narrative:**

Fort DeRussy is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its military significance and its association with the Civil War Defenses of Washington. The fort was one of 68 defensive forts constructed during the war to protect the nation's capital. Fort DeRussy is one of 19 forts surrounding Washington acquired by the National Park Service and listed as a group in the National Register

The Management Category Date is the date this CLI was first approved by the park superintendent.

### Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access

**Management Agreement:**

**Type of Agreement:**

**NPS Legal Interest:**

**Type of Interest:** Fee Simple

**Public Access:**

**Type of Access:** Unrestricted

**Explanatory Narrative:**

Park closes at dusk.

### Adjacent Lands Information

**Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?** Yes

**Adjacent Lands Description:**

Battery Smeade was originally located south west of Fort DeRussy and connected to the fort via rifle pits. The site is privately owned by St. John's College High School. It is divided from Fort DeRussy by Oregon Avenue NW and was located outside the boundaries of this CLI. It is unknown whether any remnants of the battery remain.

The land to the north, east and south of Fort DeRussy comprises the rest of Rock Creek Park and are therefore also contributing lands



## National Register Information

### Existing National Register Status

#### National Register Landscape Documentation:

Entered Inadequately Documented

#### National Register Explanatory Narrative:

Fort DeRussy was listed in the National Register as part of the 1974 Civil War Fort Sites nomination and the 1977 Defenses of Washington revision of the earlier nomination. Fort DeRussy was listed for its military significance and the nomination provides 1861 - 1865 as its Period of Significance.

This CLI proposes a second Period of Significance for the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape: 1890-1922 during which time the site was acquired by the federal government and converted to public parkland as a part of the larger Rock Creek Park. The end date of 1922 was chosen as this is the last date that the research for this report shows changes made to the physical landscape. This CLI also proposes that the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, C and D. The Statement of Significance provides a detailed discussion of how the site meets the National Register criteria.

Though the National Register discusses the fort's role in the defense of Washington during the Civil War, it does not adequately document or describe the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape and its importance as part of a large urban park founded as a part of the City Beautiful Movement.

#### Existing NRIS Information:

<b>Other Names:</b>	780043399 Circle Forts
<b>Primary Certification Date:</b>	07/15/1974

### National Register Eligibility

<b>National Register Concurrence:</b>	Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
<b>Contributing/Individual:</b>	Contributing
<b>National Register Classification:</b>	District
<b>Significance Level:</b>	National
<b>Significance Criteria:</b>	A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history
<b>Significance Criteria:</b>	C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values
<b>Significance Criteria:</b>	D - Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history

**Period of Significance:**

<b>Time Period:</b>	CE 1890 - 1922
<b>Historic Context Theme:</b>	Shaping the Political Landscape
<b>Subtheme:</b>	The Civil War
<b>Facet:</b>	Battles In The North And South
<b>Time Period:</b>	CE 1890 - 1922
<b>Historic Context Theme:</b>	Expressing Cultural Values
<b>Subtheme:</b>	Landscape Architecture
<b>Facet:</b>	The City Beautiful Movement

**Area of Significance:**

**Area of Significance Category:** Military

**Area of Significance Category:** Social History

**Statement of Significance:**

Periods of Significance 1861-1865, 1890-1922

Fort DeRussy is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the 1974 Civil War Fort Sites nomination and the 1977 Defenses of Washington, which is a revision of a 1974 nomination.

The National Register lists the period of significance as 1861-1865. This CLI recommends that an additional period of significance be added to include the years 1890-1922. This time period includes the site's acquisition by the federal government and conversion to public parkland as a part of the larger development of Rock Creek Park. The 1922 end date is based on research done for this report that shows that the physical landscape of the project area was last altered significantly in 1922 via the 1918 Olmsted Plan.

**CRITERION A**

The Fort DeRussy cultural landscape derives national significance under Criterion A: Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The Fort DeRussy cultural landscape is associated with several significant contributions to the broad patterns of our history, including the Civil War, the creation of Rock Creek Park and the City Beautiful movement, the National Capital Planning Commission and the creation of Fort Drive. The CLI also finds the cultural landscape is nationally significant under Criterion C: Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, as an example of Civil War-era earthworks.

## Fort DeRussy

### Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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Lastly, this landscape is also significant under Criterion D: Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. Fort DeRussy has the potential to yield information related to the site's pre-colonial settlement, as well as its Civil War construction and use and post-Civil War activity at the site.

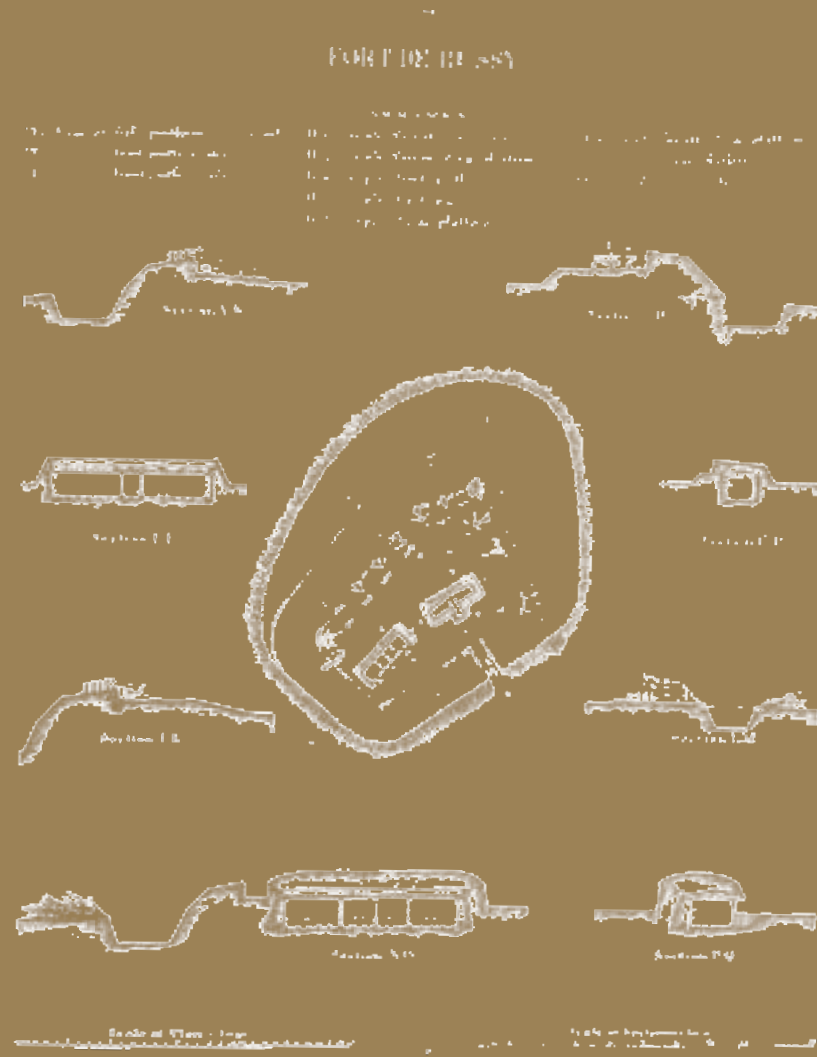
#### CRITERION A

The Fort DeRussy cultural landscape derives national significance under Criterion A for its association with the Civil War. The fort was part of the ring of 68 fortifications built around Washington at the start of the war. It was designed to control movement through the Rock Creek Valley and provide supporting fire for Fort Stevens to the east and Fort Kearney to the west. Positioned high on a hill overlooking Rock Creek, construction of the fort was completed in 1861. It is one of the few defenses of Washington to participate in direct military action during General Jubal Early's raid on the capital city. On July 9, 1864, Confederate General Early led his troops towards Washington following the Battle of Monocacy. On July 11 and 12, fighting broke out between Union and Confederate troops at Fort Stevens, Fort DeRussy and Fort Reno. Over 100 shots were fired from Fort DeRussy in the direction of Fort Stevens, where the majority of the fighting took place, and the soldiers stationed at DeRussy participated in skirmishes in front of the fort before the Union successfully fought off the Confederates and drove them back towards Maryland. The Battle of Fort Stevens was the only battle to take place within Washington, DC during the Civil War. Fort DeRussy remained in use until 1865, when the Army relinquished control of it along with many other Washington area forts.

Under Criterion A, Fort DeRussy is also eligible, both locally and nationally, in the areas of community planning and development (urban planning), as part of the development of parks in Washington, DC. Specifically, Fort DeRussy was included as part of Rock Creek Park in 1890, and later, was a feature of Fort Drive, the proposed parkway linking the Civil War forts in and around the city. The development of Rock Creek Park is significant as an example of the City Beautiful movement, an urban planning philosophy that flourished in the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century. The movement promoted the development of large urban parks where city dwellers could find refuge from the dirt, heat and crowds of America's rapidly growing metropolitan centers. Fort DeRussy is significant as a contributing landscape within the original Rock Creek Park and was identified as early as 1867 as an important element within the park because of its historic associations and the views available from its high location. The McMillan Plan of 1901-1902 was also part of the City Beautiful movement and recommended acquiring Civil War fort properties for the creation of future parks and a Fort Drive linking them together. The idea languished for two decades, but beginning in 1919, Fort DeRussy and the other defenses of Washington drew renewed interest and efforts on the part of the newly-created National Capital Parks Commission (NCPC). The Fort Drive concept is regularly referenced in planning documents to this day.

The establishment of Rock Creek Park was also linked to America's nascent conservation movement, which pioneered the concept of national park reserves. Park advocates stressed the importance of preserving Rock Creek's unrivaled natural scenery and congress emphasized preservation of the park's natural resources and landscapes in the founding legislation, mandating that 'regulations shall provide for the preservation from injury or spoliation of all timber, animals, or curiosities within said park, and

# Chronology + Physical History



## Fort DeRussy

### Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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their retention in their natural condition, as nearly as possible.’ (Bushong 1990:61-64).

The Fort DeRussy landscape is also locally significant in the area of community planning and development for its inclusion within the Rock Creek Park Historic District, which covers the entirety of Rock Creek Park, including the Pierce-Klinge Mansion and Pierce Mill in addition to natural attractions such as Rock Creek itself and the picturesque valley surrounding it. Fort DeRussy is the best preserved Civil War related site within this district.

#### CRITERION C

The Fort DeRussy cultural landscape is nationally significant under Criterion C as an example of Civil War-era fort technology and construction methods. Based on the specifications of Dennis Hart Mahan, a professor at West Point Military Academy whose 1863 ‘A Treatise on Field Fortification’ was an essential text for the Union army, DeRussy was designed by the Army Corps of Engineers and represented the height of fortification technology at the time of its construction. Some believed the completed system surrounding Washington, DC surpassed anything comparable in Europe at the time, and the capital was described as ‘the most heavily fortified city in the world.’ (Eicher: 2001: 715). Additionally, the Fort DeRussy landscape is locally significant as one of the best preserved examples of the 68 earthworks that once surrounded the city.

#### CRITERION D

In addition the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape is nationally significant under Criterion D: Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information in prehistory or history. Past excavations at Fort DeRussy have identified many Civil War-era artifacts. Further archeological excavation of the site and surrounding properties may provide additional information on pre-Colombian and pre-colonial history, fort construction, Civil War life and the Battle of Fort Stevens. Additionally, resources dating to the second period of significance may be discovered and would help shed light on the work that was conducted in the area between 1890 and 1922.

## Chronology & Physical History

### Cultural Landscape Type and Use

#### Cultural Landscape Type:

Historic Site

#### Other Use/Function

Outdoor Recreation

#### Other Type of Use or Function

Current

**Current and Historic Names:**

Name	Type of Name
Fort DeRussy	Both Current And Historic

**Chronology:**

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1608	Explored	Captain John Smith is first English settler to explore and map the Potomac River and its Eastern Branch.
CE 1612	Platted	Captain John Smith publishes General Historie of Virginia, which maps his explorations along the Potomac River, its Eastern Branch and the area around Rock Creek.
CE 1703	Land Transfer	In 1703 Charles Calvert, 5th Lord Baltimore, grants Henry Darnall 6,000 acres of land, which includes the land used to build Fort DeRussy and all of modern day Rock Creek Park.
CE 1711 - 1860	Developed	Over the course of several generations, the area north of Washington DC is developed for agricultural use by tobacco and wheat farmers.
CE 1790	Established	The Residence Act of 1790 establishes the District of Columbia. Pierre L'Enfant lays out the new federal city of the District of Columbia, sited between the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers.
CE 1801	Established	The 1801 Organic Act places the District of Columbia under the control of the US Congress and organized the unincorporated area north of the district into Washington County.
CE 1861	Land Transfer	At some point in the decades before the Civil War, B.T. Swart purchases land that extends from modern day Broad Branch Road to Rock Creek and includes the future site of Fort DeRussy.
	Engineered	Three units of infantry and military engineers make a reconnaissance mission around the District of Columbia on May 23, 1861, to scout locations for fortifications around the capital city.
	Land Transfer	Union Army seizes the land of B. Swart to build Fort DeRussy.

Fort DeRussy

Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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	Built	Union troops construct Fort DeRussy. The trapezoidal fort, completed in October 1861, includes eleven guns, two vacant gun platforms, a magazine and bombproof.
	Inhabited	Fort DeRussy is authorized to host approximately ten officers and 200 enlisted men in its two barracks and six officers quarters.
CE 1861 - 1862	Built	Military Road south of Fort DeRussy completed.
CE 1862 - 1863	Expanded	DeRussy is expanded. Three additional gun emplacements are constructed and the northeastern corner is reshaped to accommodate a 100-pounder Parrot rifle.
CE 1864	Military Operation	Confederate General Jubal Early attacks Fort Stevens on July 11th and 12th, 1864. Fort DeRussy provides supporting fired during the battle, firing 32 rounds from its 100-pounder Parrot rifle, and 72-rounds from the smaller guns. Soldiers stationed at DeRussy participate in skirmishes in the area directly around the fort.
CE 1865	Military Operation	At the end of Civil War, the Union Army announces the immediate dismantling of all but 11 forts in the Defenses of Washington.
CE 1865 - 1866		Fort DeRussy is designated a second class fort and closed. Military structures around Fort DeRussy are dismantled and components sold off.
CE 1865		Ownership of Fort DeRussy remitted to Swart.
CE 1867		Major, Nathaniel Michler, Corps of Engineers, submits a report to the Senate's Public Buildings and Grounds Committee, suggesting Congress acquire land in the valley of Rock Creek in northern Washington, DC, for a public park. The report suggests the acquisition of several of the Civil War Defenses of Washington, including DeRussy, to be included in the park.
CE 1884 - 1890	Demolished	Sections of rifle pit surrounding Fort DeRussy and Battery Kingsbury are demolished.

Fort DeRussy

Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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CE 1890		Congress passes Rock Creek Park Act and approves the acquisition of 2,000 acres north of Klinge Ford Bridge.
CE 1895	Land Transfer	Fort DeRussy and other lands owned by B. T. Swart and/or other owners transferred to US Government.
CE 1901	Designed	The McMillan Plan calls for the design of a new Fort Drive connecting former fort sites in a green parkway around the city.
	Built	Beach Drive, which runs along Rock Creek and intersects with the historic Milkhouse Ford Road three quarters of a mile northeast of Fort DeRussy is completed.
CE 1918	Built	Sometime between 1899 and 1918 Military Road is widened, re-graded and surfaced with gravel.
	Designed	The Olmsted plan for Rock Creek Park includes recommendation on care and preservation for earthworks at Fort DeRussy including clearing of invasive and unsightly species around the site.
CE 1922	Removed	Shrub pines on and around Fort DeRussy are cleared in accordance with recommendations in the 1918 Olmstead Plan.
CE 1924	Established	National Capital Park Commission (NCPC) created to oversee the establishment of parks and greenways in the District of Columbia.
CE 1925	Established	The Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital established and appointed as managers of Washington`s park system, taking over management of Rock Creek Park from the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds.  NCPC receives first authorization to purchase land related to the Civil War Defenses of Washington.
CE 1926	Established	NCPC replaced with National Capital Park and Planning Commission which continues to push further funding for what was now known as Fort Drive.



Fort DeRussy

Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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CE 1933	Land Transfer	Under Executive Orders 6166 and 6228 management of Rock Creek Park and Fort DeRussy is turned over to the National Park Service.
CE 1938	Established	A Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp is established at Camp Goodwill, north of Fort DeRussy, laborers are tasked with projects at Fort DeRussy and other sites in Rock Creek Park.
CE 1947	Abandoned	The Fort Drive plan to link the Defenses of Washington is officially halted though pressure to complete the project continues.
CE 1958		Military Road reconstructed, widened into a four-lane freeway.
CE 1960 - 1979	Built	Paved bike paths built throughout Rock Creek Park, including the path south of Fort DeRussy.
CE 1968	Designed	Fort Circle Drive Master Plan published, recommends Fort DeRussy be preserved in its current state.
CE 1988		New signage, describing the Civil War Defenses as the Fort Circle Parks installed at Fort DeRussy.
CE 2004	Designed	New Fort Circle Master Planned published.
CE 2009		New and replacement signage installed.

**Physical History:**

1608-1790

PRE-COLONIAL HISTORY AND SETTLEMENT

Archeological and historical evidence suggests that the area around present day Washington, DC has been inhabited by humans for approximately 13,000 years. For nearly ten thousand years, the land between the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, including the future site of Fort DeRussy, appears to have been used by temporary foraging groups. Around 2,000 BC, during the Late Archaic period, Native Americans began to establish more permanent settlements. They constructed new tools, including large, heavy stone points called ‘broadspears.’ Huge numbers of quartzite cobbles were taken from the hillside beds of ancient river cobbles that are exposed along some of the bluffs around Rock Creek, south of Military Road. These cobbles were chipped and shaped into tools at nearby campsites. Soapstone was also quarried around Rock Creek and used for bowls and cooking vessels. Around 3,000 years ago, Native Americans in the Middle Atlantic Region began to experiment with farming, cultivating crops such as maize as early as 1000 AD. Populations grew and large permanent villages were founded along the Potomac River (Bedell 2011:9-12; Louis Berger Group 2008:3).

In 1608 Captain John Smith explored the area along the Potomac River. His maps and writings document encounters with the Nacotchtanks, an Algonquin speaking tribe that inhabited the area in and around modern day Washington. A large Nacotchtank village, located on the eastern banks of the Potomac, directly south of the Anacostia, was part of an extensive trading network that existed throughout the region. The English explorer Henry Fleet, sometimes credited as the first European to set foot on the land that is now Washington, observed hundreds of Native Americans in the vicinity ‘bartering furs and other wares’ (Bushong 1990: 20).

European settlement of the area around Fort DeRussy began in the last quarter of the seventeenth century and was predominantly Scotch-Irish. Though they would displace the Native American population within a generation, white settlers were profoundly influenced by the tribes of the Potomac Valley. Early settlements survived on Indian-cultivated corn and trade with the surrounding tribes. In the fertile soil around Rock Creek, settlers planted the same crops (corn and tobacco) as the Native Americans (Bushong 1990:12,16).

Formal acquisition of land began in 1668, when Charles Calvert, 3rd Baron Baltimore and Proprietary Governor of Maryland, granted Colonel Henry Darnall 6,000 acres of land in Prince Georges County, Maryland (Bushong 1990:13). Among Darnall’s extensive holdings, ‘Gyrle’s Portion,’ encompassed 1,776 acres extending north of Washington’s original boundary to modern day Forest Glen and Silver Spring and included much of the area around Fort DeRussy, Fort Stevens, Battleground National Cemetery and the communities along the Washington-Maryland border (Bushong 1990:13; Gahn 1969:33).

The Rock Creek lands later passed to Daniel Carroll, who married Henry Darnall’s daughter, Eleanor. Carroll built a manor house at Forest Glen, Maryland and was thereafter known as ‘Daniel Carroll of Rock Creek,’ differentiating himself from his nephew ‘Daniel Carroll of

Duddington' who held land in the modern day Capitol Hill neighborhood (Bushong 1990:13).

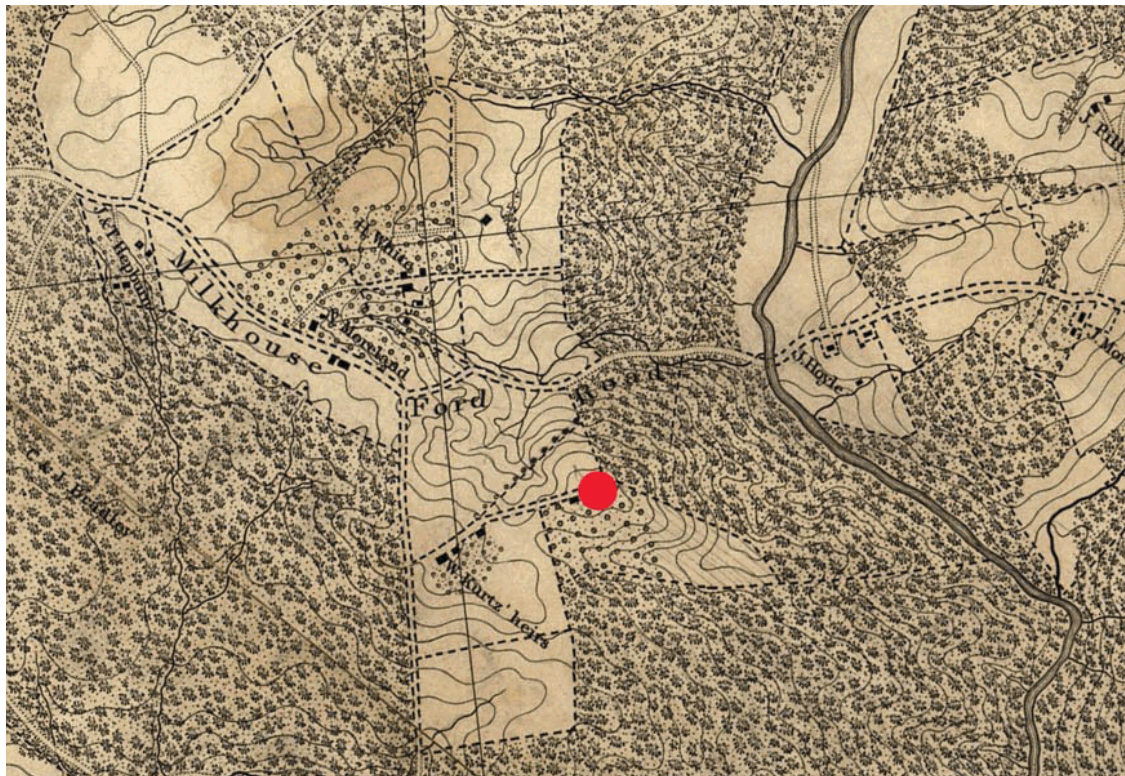
1790 - 1861

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEDERAL CITY AND PRE-CIVIL WAR HISTORY

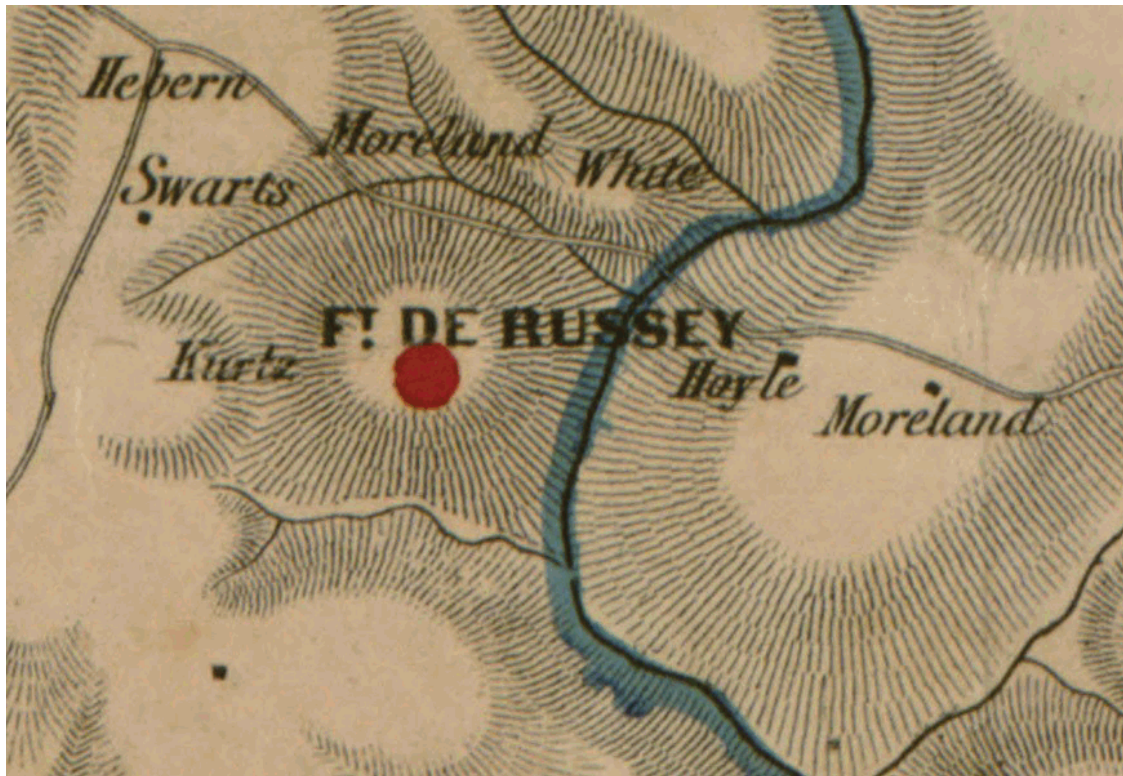
In accordance with the Residence Act of 1790, which established a permanent seat of the United States government between the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, Maryland ceded the area that is now Washington, DC to the federal government. Lands north of the planned capital city, including the future site of Fort DeRussy, were part of the cession. When Pierre L'Enfant laid out his city plan in 1791 northern Washington was largely still the holdings of wealthy landed gentry. Though well outside the planned urban center, L'Enfant considered the hills surrounding the city, future sites of the Civil War Defenses, as an important part of his design, providing a natural frame for the new capital (Bushong 1990: 24).

In addition to larger country estates, the banks of Rock Creek were also home to a number of small farms, many situated near Milkhouse Ford Road, which crossed the creek directly northeast of the future Fort DeRussy. One of the earliest roads in the region, Milkhouse Ford provided the only reliably shallow crossing over Rock Creek in the northern section of Washington. Farmers, including Jacob Hoyle, James Pilling, J. Moreland and Frederick Titnum, settled to the east of Rock Creek in the first half of the nineteenth century. Much of the land to the west of Rock Creek remained uninhabited forest, owned by heirs of the Carroll and Clegett families (Bushong 1990:33).

Records indicate Barnett T. Swart (sometimes listed as Swartz or Schwartz) was the owner of the land the army seized in 1861 to build Fort DeRussy, Battery Kingsbury and Battery Smeade. Though he is not included in the Boschke Map, prepared between 1856 and 1857, Swart's farm is described in later filings made with the Committee of War Claims and is included on post-Civil War maps. The original plot likely extended from the western shore of Rock Creek, north to Milkhouse Ford Road, south to Military Road and east to modern day 30th Street NW. Swart's farm consisted of approximately 26 acres of woodland, '30 acres of meadowed land, 53 acres of plowed land, 10 acres of peach and apple trees' and two acres on which a 'house and other farm buildings were situated' (U.S. Congressional Serial Set 1892:5-7). More research is needed to trace the exact ownership of the land prior to Swart. He may have purchased his plot from Notley Moreland, who settled in the area directly north of Milkhouse Ford Road in the early part of the nineteenth century, or from Horace White or the Kurtz Heirs, whose land bordered Moreland's to the north and south, respectively. (Bushong 1990:48). It is equally possible that Swart purchased the plot directly from a Carroll or Clegett heir. What the Boschke map does make clear is that prior to the Civil War, the site was densely forested and sparsely populated (Boschke Map 1861).



*Figure 3: 1861 Boschke's map of Washington, DC showing future site of Fort DeRussy. The land owned by B. Swart is not listed on this map (Library of Congress Geography and Map Division)*



*Figure 4: 1862 Topographic Map of Washington, DC showing land owned by Swartz. (Library of Congress Geography and Map Division)*

1861

#### FORTIFICATION OF THE FEDERAL CITY

As civil war loomed, the atmosphere in Washington was one of apprehension and uncertainty. After the British attack on the capital in 1812, the federal government was all too conscious of Washington's defenseless borders. John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry in 1859 heightened tensions in the border states, as Southern states feared slave insurrection, and Northern states—as well as the federal capital—rushed to strengthen their militias (Billings 1960/1962:123-4).

On April 12, 1861, Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter, marking the beginning of the Civil War. Three days after the attack, Lincoln called for volunteers from loyal states to protect Washington. Only a few hundred marines, a handful of officers and fifty-three 'men of ordnance' located at the Navy Yard were available to guard the capital immediately prior to the outbreak of the war (Cooling and Owen 1988:4; Cooling 1991:19). By the end of April, an additional 11,000 soldiers had traveled to Washington to guard the city (Cooling 1991:31). On April 17, 1861 Virginia seceded from the Union.

Concerned about the close proximity of its secessionist neighbor and the southern sympathizer

## Fort DeRussy

### Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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state of Maryland, Union troops in the capital crossed the Potomac in late-May 1861 to establish a presence in Northern Virginia. Rudimentary defenses were built in Arlington during the first weeks of the war. Fort Corcoran, Haggerty, Bennett, Runyon and Ellsworth were located on low ground and primarily used for guarding roads and bridges crossing the Potomac River. These early forts, eventually incorporated into the larger system surrounding Washington, provided a foothold in enemy territory and established a foundation for future development (Cooling and Owen 1988:4-5).

On May 23, 1861, three infantry units accompanied military engineers on a reconnaissance mission around the capital as they scouted locations for a more complete ring of fortifications (Miller 1976:3-4). On July 8th, the House of Representatives voted in favor of the construction of a ring of forts around Washington. General George McClellan, Union Army Commander on the Potomac, appointed General John G. Barnard, chief engineer of the Corps of Engineers, to oversee the construction of the Civil War Defenses of Washington. Barnard was a West Point graduate who helped construct defenses in New York, Florida and Louisiana during the 1846 Mexican War. At the time of his appointment the only permanent fort protecting the city was Fort Washington. Located twelve miles south of the capital, Fort Washington was completed following the War of 1812, as a replacement for Fort Warburton. But by 1861 Fort Washington was considered outdated and ineffective (Cooling and Owen 1988:6); Cooling 1991:57).

1861-1865

#### CIVIL WAR

Working swiftly in the summer and fall of 1861, the US Army bought, seized, and confiscated land for military posts and battlements around the edge of the city. After strengthening their positions in Arlington Heights, engineers turned their attention to the proper defense of northern approaches to Washington. Works were located along major arteries of travel. The first fortification, Fort Reno (originally named Fort Pennsylvania), was completed in August and commanded the turnpike from Rockville, Maryland leading to Georgetown. Fort Stevens (originally Fort Massachusetts) covered the Seventh Street Pike (Cooling and Owen 2010:9). Once cleared of trees Barnett Swart's land, situated high on the west bank of Rock Creek, offered a commanding view of Rock Creek valley, including Milkhouse Ford Road and the shallow crossing of the creek – an ideal location for controlling movement below.

According to Barnard's 1871 report on the Defenses of Washington, once a site was decided upon, 'possession was taken at once, with little or no reference to the rights of the owners or the occupants of the lands' (Barnard 1871:85). The Union army seized Swart's 200-acre farm in September 1861. In addition to Fort DeRussy, Batteries Kingsbury and Smeade were also constructed on Swart's land. Rifle pits connecting the batteries with Fort DeRussy were dug across the entire front of the farm. (US Congressional Serial Set 1892:5-7). Swart filed his first claim for compensation from the army on December 15, 1862, stating that they had occupied his farm for Fort DeRussy, preventing him from cultivating his land to support his family, and felled his timber for buildings. He asked for rent and either permission to use his wood or 'receive recompense for it' (CEP Inc, II-I:10-11). Claims such as Swart's were not considered until after the war was over.

## Fort DeRussy

### Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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Construction was completed on Fort DeRussy (briefly called Camp Holt) in October 1861. A trapezoidal work, 208-yards in perimeter (after an 1863 expansion), the fort addressed a gap in the defense system between the already completed Forts Kearny and Stevens. DeRussy was strategically placed to form, with Batteries Kingsbury, Sill, and the 'Battery to the Left of Rock Creek,' formidable resistance to any enemy with designs on moving down the Rock Creek Valley (Bushong 1990: 40). It is unknown whether DeRussy was named in honor of Colonel Gustavus A. DeRussy of the New York Heavy Artillery, who helped construct the fort, or his father, Brigadier General Rene Edward DeRussy, a well-known engineer officer and superintendent at West Point from 1838-1845.

In addition to providing controlling movement along Milkhouse Ford Road and Rock Creek Valley, Fort DeRussy was sited in order to coordinate fire with Fort Stevens to the east and Fort Kearney to the west. The initial trapezoidal design consisted of seven gun platforms, with one magazine and a guardhouse located within the walls of the fort. A rear-ditched rifle trench wrapped around the front of the hill immediately north of the fort and connected it with Battery Kingsbury, located approximately 273 yards southeast of the main fort and Battery Smeade to the west (Lowe 2013:1). DeRussy was armed with three 32-pounder seacoast guns (en barbette), one 100-pounder Parrott (en barbette), five 30-pounder Parrott rifles (en embrasure), one 10-inch and one 24-pounder Coehorn mortar. Two gun platforms were originally left vacant. The surrounding 86-acre complex included two barracks, made of lumber and measuring 20x100 feet, two mess halls, also lumber and 20x52 feet, five officers' quarters and two stables, both of log construction, and an ordnance sergeant's quarters, constructed of lumber. An 1865 'Plan for Quartermaster Property' shows the mess halls, barracks and ordnance sergeant's quarters all located directly behind the fort, to the left and right of the sally port. It is likely that the officers' quarters and stables would have been located on the flat land just east of the mess halls, though more research is needed to confirm their exact location (Cooling and Owen 2010:165-169).

As with all the forts in the Civil War Defenses of Washington, Barnard based his design for Fort DeRussy on the specifications of Dennis Hart Mahan, a professor at West Point Military Academy. Mahan's 'A Treatise on Field Fortification' written in 1863, would become an essential text for the Union army. As specified by Mahan, forts were constructed of dirt shoveled into 12-18 foot-wide berms (Handly 1996:15). All parapets had a uniform exterior slope of 45 degrees from their height to the ditch below. Timber posts, called revetments, supported the interior slope of the wall. The posts were usually five and a half feet long and four to six inches in diameter. Embrasures were cut out of the parapet at a 45-degree angle and spaced between 23-30 feet apart (Brown 1968:23-24; Handly 1996:15). Cannons rested on gun platforms built on packed soil and logs, to protect against recoil following firing and prevent the gun from damaging the revetments (Brown 1968:35).

By the close of 1861, 23 forts south of the Potomac River, 14 forts and three batteries between the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. and 11 forts beyond the Anacostia had been completed and approved for garrisoning.

In addition to building forts, the Army Corps of Engineers also constructed an extensive system

## Fort DeRussy

### Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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of roads—23 miles in total—during the Civil War. Construction of Military Road directly to the south of Fort DeRussy was completed in September 1862. The road initially connected Fort Sumner, located near present day Bethesda, Maryland to Fort Stevens, one mile northeast of DeRussy. It was later extended to Fort Lincoln in northeast Washington (Barnard 1871:77-78). The modern Military Road, a major east-west connector, maintains its original path between Beach Drive and Oregon Ave.

Daily life at Fort DeRussy was filled with regular maintenance and upkeep of the fort and its surrounding buildings. Conditions varied for the 11 officers and 233 enlisted men stationed at the fort. Though some complained of the ants, flies and lizards, most remembered the cheering visits from notable Washington ladies and regular escapes to the capital and Georgetown. When not engaged in their duties, nearby Rock Creek provided a diversion, with opportunities for swimming and exploring. Major Robert R. Honeyman of the 31st New Jersey, engaged in the building of Military Road in 1862, described Fort DeRussy as follows: ‘The scene before me is enchanting. This is the wildest and most romantic country you were ever in. The woods are full of game, and the streams stocked with fish’ (Louis Berger Group, 2008: 52; Cooling and Owen 2010: 166-170).

In the spring of 1863, DeRussy received a 100-pounder, center-pintle Parrott rifle, bringing the total number of guns at the fort to 11. The northeastern corner of the fort had to be reshaped to accommodate this additional weapon. Though difficult to operate, the 100-pounder proved useful a little over a year after its delivery, when General Jubal Early’s troops attacked Fort Stevens. (Cooling and Owen 2010:166)

On July 9, 1864, General Early, following his victory at Monocacy (located 45 miles from the city, in Maryland), led his troops towards Washington. The city was vulnerable – General Ulysses S. Grant had ordered reinforcements of troops from Washington for his Virginia campaigns, leaving the capital short of soldiers. An estimated 9,000-9,500 men were present at the forts, with only 17,277 total available to fight, far below the estimated 37,000 soldiers needed to defend the city. On July 10, Grant sent approximately 6,000 additional troops. Meanwhile, all able-bodied men were rounded up and stationed at the forts, in order to free up soldiers for fighting (Cooling and Owen 2010:19; CEHP Inc. 2004:VII:5-6).

On the morning of July 11, Confederate troops, under the leadership of Brigadier General John McCausland, arrived in front of Forts Kearny and DeRussy. The 62nd Virginia Mounted Infantry approached Fort Stevens around noon and scattered into the surrounding fields, with sharpshooters taking up positions in nearby farmhouses (CEHP Inc. 2004:VII: 6;). Under the leadership of General Alexander McCook, who commanded Union troops from Fort Stevens, soldiers stationed at DeRussy were concentrated in the rifle trenches on either side of the fort. The 151st Ohio National Guard was sent to command the troops and line near Fort DeRussy and spotted enemy skirmishers approaching Fort Stevens around noon. Guns from Fort Stevens, DeRussy and Slocum opened fire on Confederates shortly after (Barnard 1871:113-118). Early deployed troops just as Union reinforcements began to arrive, but the Confederates still managed to get within fifty yards of Fort Stevens before encountering heavy fire from the forts. During the course of the two-day battle, DeRussy’s 100-pounder provided long-range fire at a



## Fort DeRussy

### Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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distance of 4,200-4,500 yards. Thirty-two shells were fired at Confederate soldiers from this gun alone (Cooling and Owen 2010:166).

In front of Fort DeRussy, the heaviest fire came from the Claggett farmstead where snipers had occupied the house and infantry had taken positions in the yard. Artillery fire failed to dislodge the Confederate sharpshooters, so Gile's Veterans Reserve Corps troops were ordered to clear the position. They encountered enemy fire from behind a breastwork of logs and bush before they were able to reach the house. However, their attack did serve the purpose of bringing another Confederate regiment out into the open as they marched to reinforce the troops at the Claggett farm. This allowed the big guns of Fort DeRussy to drive them back (Louis Berger 2010:61).

The Battle of Fort Stevens was the only battle to take place in Washington during the Civil War, with Fort DeRussy among only three of the Civil War Defenses to engage in direct action with enemy. The combined fire of DeRussy, Stevens and Slocum over the course of two days successfully repelled Jubal Early and his troops, who retreated north to Maryland on the night of July 12, 1864. By Early's own account the forts surrounding Washington 'were found to be exceedingly strong and consisted of what appeared to be enclosed forts of heavy artillery, with a tier of lower guns, the whole being connected by curtains with ditches in front, and strengthened by palisades and abattis. The timber has been felled within cannon range all around and left on the ground...as far as the eye could reach, the works appeared to be...impregnable (Kelly1986:37).

For four years the ring of forts around the District of Columbia served as topographical, psychological, strategic and military buffers to nearly all Confederate attacks on the capital. By the time of Robert E. Lee's surrender in April 1865, the defenses' circumferential system comprised 68 enclosed forts (with perimeters totaling 13 miles); 93 unarmed batteries; 1,421 gun emplacements; 20 miles of rifle trenches; and 30 miles of military roads—all constructed in just four years (Cooling 1971/72:330-332). Post war the majority of forts were dismantled or abandoned. Sites were sold or ceded to their original owners. DeRussy, designated a category II fort, was scheduled for immediate dismantling. The buildings around Fort DeRussy were torn down and the property returned to Swart. On October 14, 1865 a public sale was held to dispose of barracks, stables, tools, timber and other materials and commodities from forts and engineer camps nearby (Cooling and Owen 2010 171-172).



Figure 5: Modified 1865 map of the Defenses of Washington, distinguished by their current ownership and management status. (National Park Service)

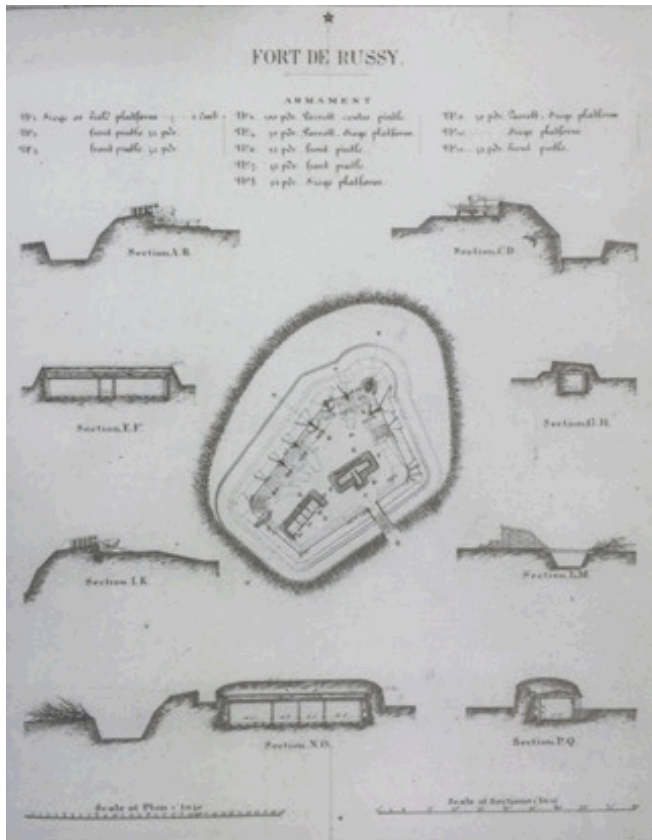
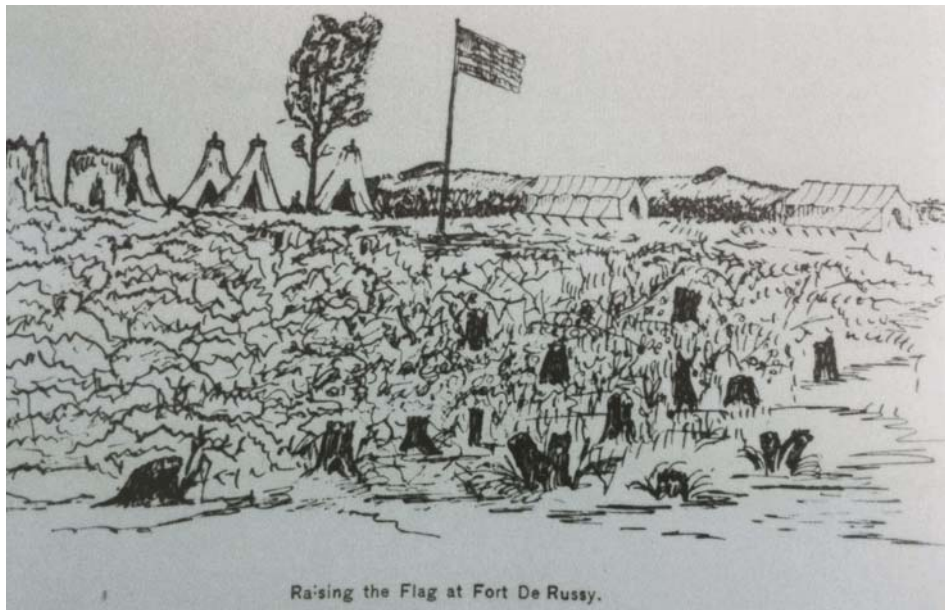
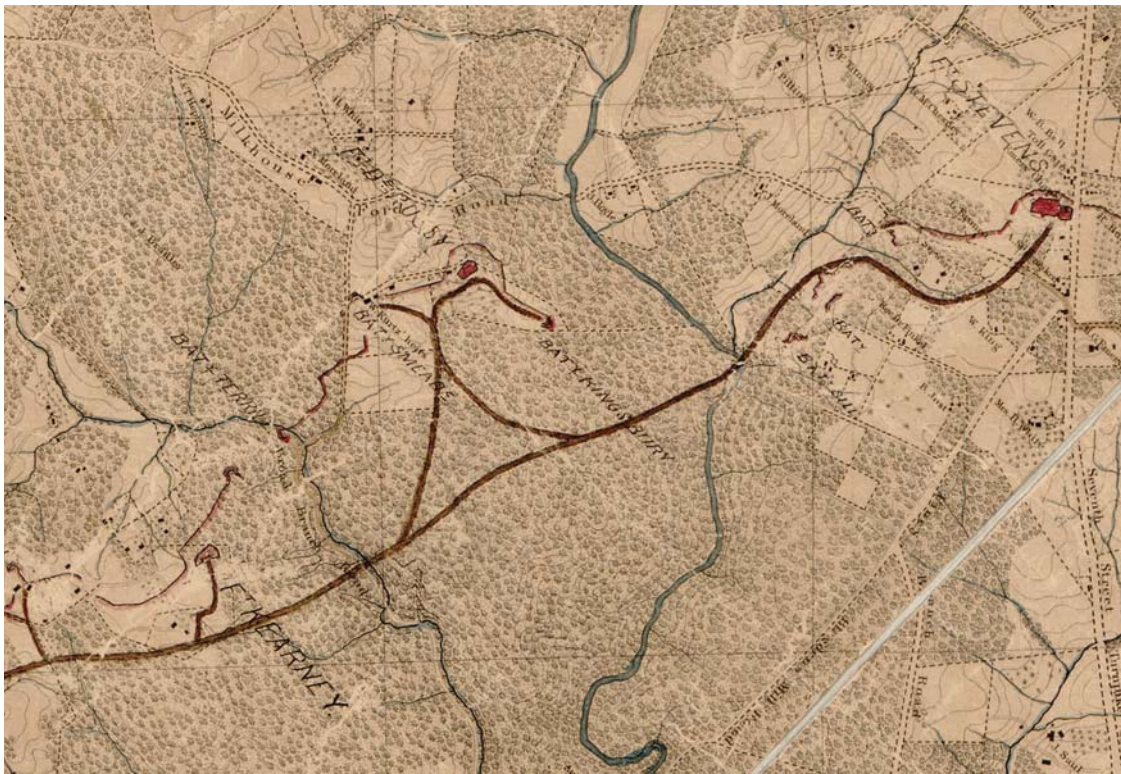


Figure 6: 1866 Engineer Drawing of Fort DeRussy (National Archives, as printed in Mr. Lincoln's Forts)



*Figure 7: Undated Civil War soldier's drawing of temporary camps around Fort DeRussy (National Archives, as printed in Mr. Lincoln's Forts)*



*Figure 8: Barnard's 1867 map of Civil War Fortifications, showing relationship between Fort Kearney, Fort DeRussy, and Fort Stevens. (Library of Congress Geography and Map Division)*

1865-1890

#### POST-WAR DEVELOPMENT

Though military buildings were pulled down and property returned to original owners, the landscape of fort sites, including DeRussy, was left much altered by the Civil War. While it appears that none of Swart's buildings were demolished during the construction of Fort DeRussy, the effect on the land was significant. Approximately 56 acres of trees surrounding the fort were cleared for sight lines, or to provide lumber for building; Union troops trampled the fields and destroyed Swart's orchards (U.S. Congressional Serial Set 1892:5-7). A comparison of the Boschke Map of 1860 and Major Nathaniel Michner's map from 1866-1867 reveals a stark new landscape. The heavily forested hillside and small family farms along Rock Creek were 'swept bare or left with stands of tree stumps' (Judge 1994:279). In 1868 the federal government paid Barnett Swart \$3,156 'as rent' for use of his farm during the war. Swart filed a claim for further compensation for the 300 peach trees and 50 apple trees that were destroyed, 70 cords of timber taken for fortifications, 1,540 cords of fire-wood used by troops, 1,900 panels of fencing that were torn down and destroyed, 1,400 wagon loads of paving stones removed, 30 bushels of wheat and 37 acres of corn lost. Held up in committee for over ten years, the claim was finally settled in 1890 with the court recommending an additional payment of \$6,013—\$972 in rent for the twenty-seven acres of Swart's property that was occupied by

## Fort DeRussy

### Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

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the engineer department and \$5,041 in compensation for the timber that was cut (U.S. Congressional Serial Set 1892:5-7).

In addition to his original property, Swart retained ownership of the portion of Military Road that passed through his land, though it was maintained and eventually sold to the federal government in 1891 (Congressional Series of Public Documents: 285). Post-war, Military Road replaced Milkhouse Ford Road as the main east-west thoroughfare between the neighborhoods of Tennallytown (Tenleytown) and Brightwood. The significance of the road's construction remains apparent today. Though realigned, widened and modernized it continues to be the major east-west traffic arterial in this section of Washington (Bushong 199:40-45).

Above Military Road, the land around Fort DeRussy remained relatively unchanged until the formation of Rock Creek Park. The antebellum farms on the east side of Rock Creek, owned by Hoyle, Moreland, Pilling, and Titnam, were sold to new owners. On the west side of the creek, several small tracts owned by Horace White, Notley Moreland, and the Kurtz heirs were farmed by successors. The land owned by the Swart family seems to have been divided at some point and maps from the 1880s show it was owned for a short time by John R. Dos Passos, the father and namesake of the famous American author.

A reporter in 1890 described the landscape in the area to be 'comparatively bare and uninteresting' and suggested that the services of a landscape gardener would be required in this section of the proposed Rock Creek Park (Bushong 1990: 48-49).



*Figure 9: 1892 US Coast & Geodetic Survey shows extant earthworks and rifle pits northwest of a fenced area (dashed blue lines). Battery Kingsbury and the rifle pits southeast of the fence were likely demolished before 1892. (LOC Geography & Map Division)*



Figure 10: 1903 Baist Survey of Washington DC showing Fort DeRussy and land surrounding as owned by John R. Dos Passos. (Library of Congress Geography and Map Division)

1890 - 1901

#### FOUNDATION OF ROCK CREEK PARK

In the years immediately following the Civil War there was a major drive to landscape the District's public reservations and beautify the city by developing parkland. An urban parks movement was spreading throughout the United States in the last half of the nineteenth century, emphasizing the need for spaces where city dwellers could find refuge from the dirt, heat and crowds of America's rapidly growing metropolitan centers (Louis Berger 2008:84).

In 1866 Congress authorized a search for nearby lands that could be used for a new public park



and presidential mansion. Major Nathaniel Michler, tasked with surveying the District, quickly identified the Rock Creek Valley as an ideal site for a large park. Much of the area around Rock Creek, north of Georgetown remained undeveloped, open pasture or woodland. In his report to Congress, submitted in 1867, Michler recommended treating the park and executive mansion as separate subjects and enthusiastically endorsed Rock Creek, calling attention to the valley's natural features and picturesque scenery. He outlined two park alternatives, the first, encompassing 2,540 acres, would include several of the Civil War Defenses of Washington, which he noted as desirable features for both their historical association as well as the expansive views from their parapets (Mackintosh 1985:3; Bushong 1990:63).

Fort DeRussy was among the defenses Michler urged Congress to acquire as part of the future park, as well as Forts Reno, Kearney and Stevens. He recommended Congress act swiftly, and purchase the land before the area became occupied by 'costly suburban villas' (Mackintosh 1985:3). Congress did not heed Michler's warning and for the next two decades major public works projects focused largely on central Washington. Ideas about creating a large public park within the District of Columbia were revived during the early 1880s. Civic leaders in Washington lent their support to the proposal, which was also advanced by Congress. In 1884 Senator Thomas Bayard of Delaware introduced legislation to further review the Michler report. After further studies on the feasibility and benefits, Representative John Hemphill of South Carolina brought a bill to Congress for the establishment of a 2,500-acre park along Rock Creek. The bill outlined acquisition plans that included eminent domain. In March 1889 Congress approved the bill creating the National Zoological Park (Mackintosh 1985:I-2).

The 1890 legislation establishing Rock Creek Park set aside land in the District of Columbia for the purpose of creating a 'public park and pleasure ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States.' (The Rock Creek Park Authorization Fifty-First Congress, Sess. I. CH. 1001. 1890. September 27, Chap. 1001). A pleasure ground in the nineteenth century was usually considered to be a naturalistic park designed primarily for the quiet contemplation of scenery. These green urban expanses provided the fresh air, lakes, meadows, and sunshine of the country and were perceived as an antidote to the stress of indoor work and congestion of the city. Pleasure grounds soon evolved into important urban recreational spaces that provided children with play areas and adults with carriage drives, horseback riding trails, walking paths and fields organized for outdoor sports activities. While the creation of Rock Creek Park was promoted as a remedy to urban ills, park advocates also stressed the importance of preserving the area's natural scenery, linking the establishment of Rock Creek Park to the nascent conservation movement in this country. Congress emphasized preservation of the park's natural resources and landscape scenery in the legislation, mandating that 'regulations shall provide for the preservation from injury or spoliation of all timber, animals, or curiosities within said park, and their retention in their natural condition, as nearly as possible' (Bushong 1990:61-64; The Rock Creek Park Authorization Fifty-First Congress, Sess. I. CH. 1001. 1890. September 27, Chap. 1001).

The Rock Creek Park Commission, founded as part of the 1890 legislation, was created for the sole purpose of setting boundaries and purchasing land for the park. Captain William T. Russell, the Assistant Engineer Commissioner for the District of Columbia, headed the commission,

which also included General Thomas A. Casey, Chief of Engineers of the US Army, and Lieutenant Colonel Henry Robert, the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia. Robert had worked on building the Civil War Defenses in 1861. After making several visits to the area, an acquisition plan was set forth for 1,960 acres. A reporter for *The Evening Star*, accompanying the commission on one of its initial tours of potential park sites recounted the visit the engineers made to Fort DeRussy and ‘the wartime stories’ they exchanged while visiting the site. The reporter stated that the fort was sure to be preserved as part of the future park. Of the four forts included in Michler’s original design for Rock Creek Park, Fort DeRussy was the only one included in the final plan (Bushong 1990:73-75).

More research is needed to determine the owners of Fort DeRussy during this period and the exact date that the site was purchased by the Rock Creek Park Commission. In the 1890s the Kurtz heirs and John Dos Passos are variously listed as owners of land once farmed by Swart. An 1884 map of DC shows Swart still owned all of the land where DeRussy was situated, but an 1892 map shows the area between DeRussy and Rock Creek fenced off as a separately owned property. It is likely that sometime between 1884 and the date when the land was surveyed for the 1892 map, Swart divided and sold some of the land around Fort DeRussy. He may have retained ownership of the fort itself, as he did with the portion of Military Road that ran through his property. The 1892 map indicates that the new owner of the property to the immediate east of DeRussy was likely responsible for filling in the rifle pits and leveling Battery Kingsbury. Neither of these features appear on the 1892 map and the rifle pits on this map have been filled in exactly to the fence dividing the two properties (1884 Topographical Map; 1892 U.S. Coast and Geodesic Survey; Bushong 1990:49).

The Commission negotiated the purchase of land with each individual landowner and records of all the sales, along with a map drawn up of each property purchased for the purpose of creating Rock Creek Park are held in the National Archives (Record Group 77). Commissioners met with property owners in the proposed park in April and May of 1891. One by one these individuals were interviewed concerning compensation for their land. Most owners stated that they wanted reimbursement for what they had paid for the land, plus the valuation of improvements. Few were willing to accept the Commission’s offers and some owners bitterly opposed the acquisition of their property. The commission was able to come to terms with all but two of the owners in the period mandated by the park legislations. On December 13, 1894 the Commission transferred administration of the park over to the Rock Creek Board of Control, and on January 1, 1895 this body assumed responsibility for the new park, which consisted of 1,605.97 acres purchased for a total of \$1,740,511.45. By 1895 nearly all the original owners had moved and their homes, now located within the boundaries of the park, had been dismantled (Bushong 1990:77-85; Louis Berger Group 2008:84-85).

The establishment of Rock Creek Park in 1890 is undoubtedly the reason Fort DeRussy remains in the impressive state of preservation that it is in today. Though efforts to preserve Civil War battlefields began in the 1880s and the first national military parks were formed at Chickamauga and Chattanooga in 1890, most of the remaining Civil War Defenses of Washington were still privately held at this time and threatened by development in the rapidly growing city. In the 1890s a few individuals and organizations began to advocate for the

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preservation of some of the forts in the Defenses of Washington, focusing primarily on Fort Stevens. The Brightwood Avenue Citizens Association proposed a battlefield memorial park at the site and suggested that the federal government should purchase enough land to establish battlefield parks in connection with Forts DeRussy and Reno (CCHP Inc. 2004:II-13). While many forts continued to deteriorate and in some cases were lost completely, Congress's emphasis on the preservation of Rock Creek Park's 'curiosities' ensured that DeRussy was protected. In the ensuing decade, public interest in the preservation of the forts expanded to include the ring of defenses around the city. Together, the fortifications became a prime focus of the city beautification efforts introduced a few years later under the McMillan Plan.



*Figure 11: 1866 map of future site of Rock Creek Park, as surveyed by Major Nathaniel Michler, showing Fort DeRussy, Battery Smead and Battery Kingsbury. The area around all three earthworks was cleared of dense forest during the Civil War.*

1901-1933

#### PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Between Rock Creek Park's authorization in 1890 and its transfer to the National Park Service in 1933, the modern character of the park was largely determined and Fort DeRussy, once a remote rural tract, was suddenly transformed into a part of a significant public landscape. In 1918, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., son of the celebrated Frederick Law Olmsted, and himself a distinguished landscape architect and city planner, submitted the first comprehensive plan for the future development of Rock Creek Park. Olmsted Jr.'s principles for the growth and

development of Rock Creek were based on the dual objective of creating a usable public space for public recreation and enjoyment while simultaneously conserving the natural features and landscape qualities that inspired the foundation of the park in the first place. The plan was adopted by park management and served as a guiding document as they made their first attempts to integrate the park into the city. The Olmstead Plan serves as an essential document in the development of Rock Creek Park to this day.

In 1901, as part of the McMillan Plan that redesigned much of downtown Washington, city officials began to consider the restoration and preservation of all the remaining Civil War Defenses—with a new use as parks. Named after Senator James McMillan of Michigan, the McMillan plan was spearheaded by the United States Senate Park Commission, which was founded in 1900 to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the relocation of the national capital from Philadelphia to Washington (Robinson and Associates 2004:48). With roots in the City Beautiful Movement, the McMillan Plan sought to realize sections of the city's original L'Enfant plan that had never been implemented and to reorient the city with an infrastructure of green spaces (<http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/lenfant.htm>).

As part of an effort to renew the city's overlooked and undervalued areas, the plan included in its objectives a proposal to create a 28-mile parkway connecting the Civil War forts of DC as a string of public parkland. It promoted the forts not only for their history, but as a network of civic green space that would benefit the growing city:

'It is necessary to mention the chain of forts which occupied the higher summits... The views from these points are impressive in proportion to their commanding military positions, and they are well worth acquirement as future local parks, in addition to any claim their historical and military interest may afford.' (Moore 1901:111).

Already well preserved as a part of Rock Creek Park, Fort DeRussy was not included as part of the original chain of forts, but later versions of the plan would include the site as a part of the ring of parks. Though support for linking the forts continued to grow in the early twentieth century, engineers and city planners focused their attention on projects within central Washington and no real effort was expended to purchase the forts or coordinate the development of links between them.

Though never fully realized, the McMillan Plan paved the way for other preservation and planning initiatives within Rock Creek Park and around Fort DeRussy. Among its many recommendations was that a comprehensive plan was needed in order to better manage future development in the park. Lack of funding from 1899-1912 had limited the Board of Control's operations prior to 1916. Congress understood the park to be a 'natural preserve' and therefore not in need of funds for development. Guidelines, presented in the legislation, largely determined the Board's direction of the park's physical development during its managerial tenure. The limited appropriations received by the park between 1899 and 1918 were primarily used to construct new roads, bridges, bridle paths and walking trails. Beach Drive which runs along the Rock Creek Valley to the east of Fort DeRussy was completed during this time, and Military Road, which runs directly south of the fort, was widened, re-graded and surfaced with gravel.

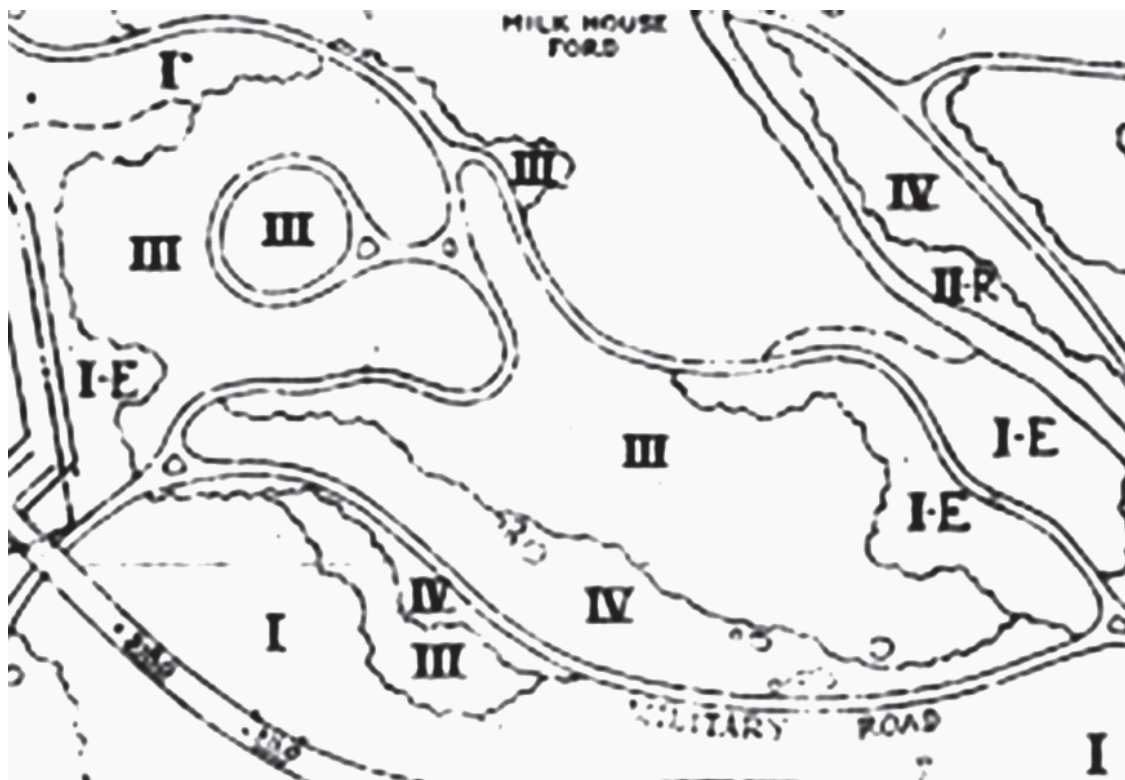
(Bushong 1990:103-105).

In 1917 the Board of Control commissioned the Olmsted Brothers to prepare a planning study. The resulting report, completed by the landscape architecture firm in December 1918, quickly became a seminal planning document for the improvement and expansion of Rock Creek Park. The final Olmsted Plan declared ‘the dominant consideration, never to be subordinated to any other purpose in dealing with Rock Creek Park, is the permanent preservation of its wonderful natural beauty, and the making of that beauty accessible to people without spoiling the scenery in the process.’ Natural growth areas were defined in the study and suggestions proposed for the systematic preservation and enhancement of the landscape. Rock Creek Park was divided into four fundamental units defined as natural forest (Type I), open woodland (Type II), an area of growth primarily of cedars (Type III), and open grassland (Type IV). Fort DeRussy was categorized as a majority Type III landscape. In addition to cedars, the Olmsted Report noted that sassafras, locusts, sumac, occasional pine trees and low bushy ground cover existed on the slopes near Fort DeRussy, and contributed to an ‘interesting and valued variation in the general landscape of the park’ (Bushong 1990:99). These trees would have been relatively young, as the area surrounding the fort was cleared of nearly all vegetation just fifty years earlier. But regrowth at the site seems to have occurred rapidly, and the Olmsted Report noted that the area would need to be systematically cut back and weeded in order to avoid ‘inharmonious or injurious growth...Scrub pines and large-growing deciduous trees foreign to the character of the type are now checking the cedars and other desirable growth and in some cases even killing them.’ Additionally, the report recommended the removal of the ‘large-growing oaks on the picturesque cedar clad hill top around Fort DeRussy’ which were deemed ‘undesirable on account of the disproportionate quantity in which they appear’ (Olmsted Report 1918:23, 52, 9).

The Olmsted Plan also defined administrative units in the park, identified Military Road as a part of the main arterial system, and discussed trails and bridle paths, recommending they should be built to exhibit the ‘variety and charm of the scenery’ and planned to appear as though they belonged where they were placed (Bushong 1990:100). The Olmsted Report was approved by the Fine Arts Commission and in February of 1919 Colonel Clarence Ridley of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds announced its adoption, declaring ‘Nothing will be done hereafter in this park which is contrary to the letter or spirit of this report’ without his specific approval, in writing. While not all of the Olmsted Report’s recommendations for the improvement of the area around DeRussy were enacted, scrub pines were cleared in and around the fort in the 1920s at which time some replanting was done. No specific documentation of planting types or additional work done at this time has been found. A 1926 newspaper article reported plans for Fort DeRussy to be ‘restored and grassed,’ but this never happened (Mackintosh 1985: <http://www.nps.gov/rocr/historyculture/adhi3.htm>; CCHP Inc.:II-III-7).

Meanwhile, the ensuing decades saw regular attempts to revive the McMillan Plan’s circumferential park system, and the piecemeal purchase of individual sites throughout the city. In 1924 Congress passed legislation creating the National Capital Park Commission (NCPC) to oversee the establishment of parks and greenways in the District. Within a year NCPC received its first authorization and appropriation for the purchase of land related to the Civil

War Defenses of Washington. A year later, on April 30 1926, Congress replaced NCPC with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission which continued to push for further funding for what was now known as the Fort Drive Plan. But by the end of the 1940s, DC officials acknowledged that the Fort Circle Drive could exist only in fragments, rather than as a continuous green belt around the city. The initial enthusiasm for the vision of the McMillan Plan had languished over 45 years of land acquisition hurdles, rising construction costs, the Great Depression and two World Wars. The Fort Drive Plan was officially halted in 1947, but pressure to complete the project continued. In 1958 the Civil War Centennial Commission urged the completion of Fort Drive in time for the upcoming centennial of the Civil War (Washington Post, March 1, 1958). The Fort Circle Drive concept was again examined in 1968. A plan developed that year emphasized recreation and a system of linked parks known as the Fort Circle Parks. Biking and walking trails and interpretation of the defenses of Washington were included in the plan. Nearly all of the many designs for the circle of forts recommended that Fort DeRussy be preserved as is.



*Figure 12: 1918 map of area around Fort DeRussy from the Olmsted Plan showing existing circulation paths and determining vegetation surrounding earthworks as majority Type III. (National Park Service)*

1933-2014

#### ROCK CREEK PARK IN THE MODERN ERA

While adoption of the Olmsted Plan in 1918 gave Rock Creek Park direction in terms of

development, Rock Creek Park's administration was roundly criticized in the 1920s for its management practices, which allowed for 'wild...unkempt growth' throughout the park in addition to 'haphazardly developed, amateurish attempts at embellishment' (Mackintosh 1985: [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/rocr/adhi/adhi4a.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/rocr/adhi/adhi4a.htm)).

In 1925 the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds was abolished and its function as managers of Washington's park system assigned to a new agency, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. For the next eight years army engineers continued to administer Rock Creek Park, but faced increasing scrutiny from a growing group of professional architects, landscape architects and planners. On August 10, 1933, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital was abolished and responsibility for Rock Creek Park was transferred to the National Park Service (Mackintosh 1985: [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/rocr/adhi/adhi4a.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/rocr/adhi/adhi4a.htm)).

One of the justifications for consolidating federal parklands under the National Park Service in 1933 was the Service's reputation for communicating the values of its parks to the public. It is unknown when Fort DeRussy was first officially interpreted for the public, but as the offices previously responsible for Rock Creek Park had done little or no interpretation, it is likely that interpretation of the site began during the NPS period of management. In 1937 a Washington Post reporter noted the lack of signage or markers at the site. (Mackintosh 1985: [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/rocr/adhi/adhi4a.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/rocr/adhi/adhi4a.htm); Washington Post, Oct. 10, 1937).

In 1938 the amount of maintenance work needed in Rock Creek Park was sufficient justification to establish a Civilian Conservation Camp (CCC) on the site of Camp Goodwill, just north of Fort DeRussy. The camp, designated NP-14, was opened with a company strength of 154 enrollees. The CCC was created at the height of the depression, in 1933. Across the country, millions of young men found employment at CCC camps, where they lived and worked in exchange for uniforms, shelter, food and a stipend. In general, CCC enrollees worked with the Department of the Interior or the Department of Agriculture, with projects that included the construction and maintenance of roads or picnic areas, the creation of athletic fields or cabin camps, and the repair and reconstruction of historic resources (Davidson 2004:2). Of the many fort sites in the DC area where the CCC worked, their role was most evident at Fort Stevens, where they reconstructed many of the fort's original features. More research is needed to determine their work at Fort DeRussy but it likely included basic maintenance and some replanting of trees and shrubs. The CCC program was officially terminated in 1942 (Bushong 144; Mackintosh 1985: [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/rocr/adhi/adhi4a.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/rocr/adhi/adhi4a.htm)).

Rock Creek Park's trail system evolved from adaptive reuse of old roads and paths existing in the 1890s. With the passage of time, succeeding park managers have cut new trails and obliterated older paths to increase safety or modify the system. The trails around Fort DeRussy date from various periods of park management. Exact dates for the construction of the trails have not been determined but maps from the early twentieth century show that the oldest extent trail on the site runs along the historic Milkhouse Ford Road. Bridle paths and a carriage road were constructed around the earthworks in the early twentieth century. A major

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non-historic addition to the trail system of the park was the paving of bicycle routes in the 1960s and 1970s. This included the construction of the multi-use path running along the south edge of the Fort DeRussy site (Bushong 1990: 147). Military Road was reconstructed in 1958, at which time it was widened into a four-lane freeway (Bushong 1990: 147).

The land area north of Military Road has experienced few changes since World War II and the area around Fort DeRussy has remained largely unchanged since 1890, with the exception of the natural re-growth of trees around the fort and occasional replanting campaigns. The inclusion of Fort DeRussy as part of Rock Creek Park saved the earthworks from the kind of damage suffered by many of the other Civil War Forts over the past 150 years. In 1902 DeRussy was described as ‘the best preserved of all the Defenses of Washington’ by The Evening Star and it remains among the best preserved of the Civil War Defense sites today (‘The Defenses of Washington During the War,’ The Evening star., October 09, 1902).

Recently, there’s been a renewal of interest in the Fort Drive concept. A report entitled ‘Final Management Plan for the Fort Circle Parks’ was developed in 2004 and called for a program similar to the 1968 proposal. The plan emphasized recreation and interpretation along the twenty-three mile chain circling the city. Walking and biking trails linking the Civil War sites and tennis and basketball courts were suggested. The interpretive component included car tours, waysides, visitor center exhibits, brochures and connections with other Civil War sites in Maryland and Virginia.

In 2014, mature tree growth and heavy vegetation insulate Fort DeRussy from the heavy traffic on Military Road. While no evidence of outbuildings from the Civil War era is visible, the earthworks remain in a remarkable state of preservation. Though erosion has affected sections of the parapet, and the magazines and bombproofs long ago collapsed, much of the fort and its outerworks retain their historic character. Interpretive signage, originally installed by the National Park Service in the second half of the twentieth century, and updated as recently as 2009, contributes to the strong sense of historic feeling at the site.

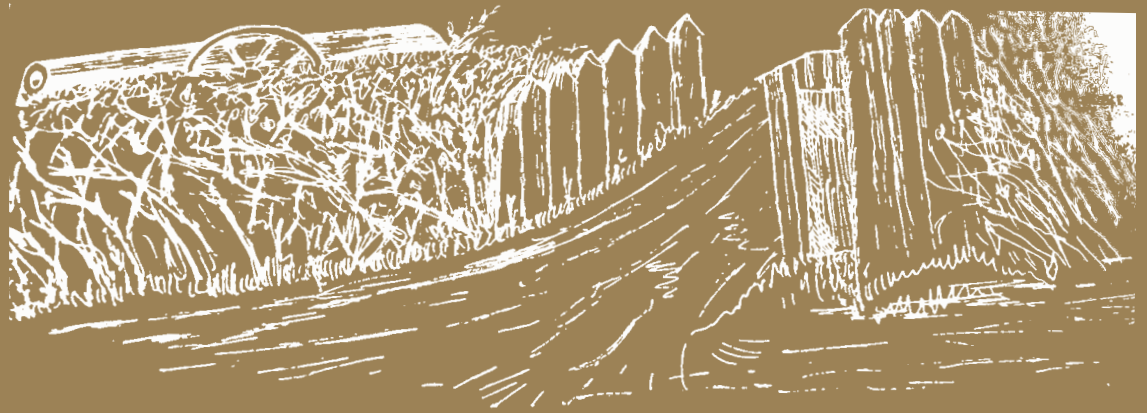
Fort DeRussy is a popular spot for dog walking and visits to the fort during the course of fieldwork conducted for this CLI resulted in regular encounters with curious locals hiking and exploring around the fort. It is clear the community values the site and is eager to learn more about the specific role Fort DeRussy played in defending the city during the Civil War.





*Figure 13: 1982 photo of Fort DeRussy earthworks showing mature tree growth and leaf cover. (Vegetative Threats to Historic Sites and Structures 1983:73)*

# Analysis + Evaluation of Integrity



Entrance to Fort De Russy.

## Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

### Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

This section provides an evaluation of the physical integrity of the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape, a component landscape of the Civil War Defenses of Washington and Rock Creek Park, by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the periods of significance (1861-1865 and 1890-1922) with existing conditions. Landscape characteristics are the tangible and intangible aspects of a landscape that allow visitors to understand its cultural value. Collectively, they express the historic character and integrity of a landscape. Landscape characteristics give a property cultural importance and comprise the property's uniqueness. Each characteristic or feature is classified as contributing or non-contributing to the site's overall historic significance.

Landscape characteristics are comprised of landscape features. Landscape features are classified as contributing if they were present during the property's period of significance. Non-contributing features (those that were not present during the historical period) may be considered 'compatible' when they fit within the physical context of the historic period and attempt to match the character of contributing elements in a way that is sensitive to the construction techniques, organizational methods or design strategies of the historic period. Incompatible features are those that are not harmonious with the quality of the cultural landscape and, through their existence, can lessen the historic character of a property. For those features that are listed as undetermined, further primary research, which is outside the scope of this CLI, is necessary to determine the feature's origination date. Landscape characteristics and features, individually and as a whole, express the integrity and historic character of the landscape and contribute to the property's historic significance.

Landscape characteristics identified for Fort DeRussy are topography, spatial organization, land use, buildings and structures, circulation, vegetation, views and vistas, small-scale features and archeology. The buildings and structures already documented through the List of Classified Structures (LCS) are described here in the context of the landscape setting. This section also includes an evaluation of the property's integrity in accordance with National Register criteria. Historic integrity, as defined by the National Register, is the authenticity of a property's identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the site's historic period. The National Register recognizes seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Several or all of these aspects must be present for a site to retain historic integrity. To be listed in the National Register, a property not only must be shown to have significance under one or more criteria, but must also retain integrity.

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES

Contributing landscape characteristics identified for Fort DeRussy are topography, spatial organization, land use, buildings and structures, circulation, vegetation, views and vistas, small-scale features and archeology.

The site for Fort DeRussy was selected for its topography. Its position over 400 feet above sea level

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provided an elevated vantage of the surrounding landscape, including strategic military sites such as Fort Stevens and Fort Kearny, that Fort DeRussy was designed to support and protect. The topography remains the same as it was throughout the historic period, and has a high degree of integrity.

The current spatial organization of the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape is similar to that of the first period of significance. At that time the main earthworks were located at the topographic crest of the hill with a rifle pit to the north connecting the fort to Battery Kingsbury and Battery Smeade. Battery Kingsbury and the rifle pit were partially demolished and auxiliary buildings directly to the south of the fort were torn down after the war, but the landscape retains partial integrity of spatial organization. Battery Smeade, which was located west of modern day Oregon Avenue, is located outside the boundaries established for this CLI. Though no research has been conducted to establish the exact date the Battery was demolished, its site is now a high school campus. It is unlikely that there are any extant remains of Battery Smeade or the rifle pits west of Oregon Avenue.

The Civil War-era military land use aspect of Fort DeRussy ended when the government returned the property to its original owner in 1865. However, the land use of the project area has not changed since the second period of significance, when it was included as part of Rock Creek Park in 1890. This site remains a public park and is used for recreation, education and interpretation. Land use at Fort DeRussy retains a high degree of integrity to the second period of significance.

The landscape has partial integrity of buildings and structures. The earthworks, though deteriorated, are well preserved and remain extant as ruins. Rifle pits that connected Fort DeRussy with Battery Kingsbury and Battery Smeade are partially extant and some traces of Battery Kingsbury are visible. None of the Civil War-era buildings that were located directly south of the earthworks remain extant.

Fort DeRussy's Civil War circulation pattern partially survives in the form of a path leading through the original sally port and the remains of rifle pits connecting the fort with Batteries Kingsbury and Smeade. The historic Milkhouse Ford Road, which forms the northern border of the site is also extant and has been incorporated into Rock Creek Park's trail system. Military Road retains its original Civil War-era route south of Fort DeRussy, although it was expanded and modernized in the twentieth century. Existing NPS trails partially trace original bridle paths and carriage roads constructed in the early 20th century. Partial integrity from the first and second periods of significance remains.

There was limited vegetation at Fort DeRussy during the Civil War, in keeping with the site's strategic design and use. The current vegetation pattern is consistent with the later periods of significance, when the successive forest was allowed to grow, the site was replanted and some species were cleared, as recommended in the Olmstead Report of 1918. In recent years invasive species have affected the early twentieth century plan for the site and oak (*Quercus* sp.) and tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) now appear to be the dominant species of tree, whereas cedar (*Cedrus* sp.) was noted as dominant in the area in 1918. Vegetation retains partial integrity from the second period of significance.

Fort DeRussy was sited to control movement in the Rock Creek Valley and the area/hillside around it

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was cleared in September of 1861 to afford a direct view of the valley, including Milkhouse Ford Road and Rock Creek. These views were impacted by replanting that occurred during the second period of significance and continued growth of vegetation on the site has blocked them completely. The present day views retain no integrity to the first period of significance and no significant views were designed during the second period of significance.

The small-scale features at Fort DeRussy all post-date the second period of significance. Existing features include wayfinding, regulatory and interpretive signage. These features are consistent with the site's land use as a public park during the second period of significance, and are therefore compatible but non-contributing.

#### The Seven Aspects of Integrity

1. The location aspect of integrity involves the place where the landscape was constructed. Fort DeRussy is now part Rock Creek Park, which occupies an exponentially larger area than the original fort site. The location of Fort DeRussy remains unaltered since its construction and retains a high degree of integrity. The current boundaries of the site, as defined by this CLI, are based on the historic boundaries of the fort complex and topographic significance of the earthworks.
2. Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a cultural landscape or historic property. Although the earthworks have deteriorated, they still retain their original forms from the Civil War. The site retains integrity from the first period of significance.
3. Setting is the physical environment of a cultural landscape or historic property. During the Civil War, the area around Fort DeRussy's was rural, densely forested and occupied by only a few local landowners. During the later period of significance, as the surrounding neighborhoods became more populated, the site's immediate setting was preserved as part of the larger landscape of Rock Creek Park. The area around Fort DeRussy was reforested. The fort retains partial integrity to the first period of significance and a high degree of integrity to the second period of significance—as a component landscape within a large urban park.
4. Materials are the physical elements of a particular period, including construction materials, paving, plants and other landscape features. Fort DeRussy's earthworks retain partial integrity of materials. While some original elements have been removed, the natural materials date to the earliest period of significance.
5. Workmanship includes the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular period. This characteristic is most present in the form of the earthworks, which displays the design work of the Army Corps of Engineers and craftsmanship of soldiers and laborers who constructed the fort. Both design and building elements are particular to the Civil War-era. Because certain aspects of Fort DeRussy were dismantled after the war and the earthworks have eroded, the landscape retains a

partial degree of integrity of workmanship to the first period of significance.

6. Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period. Because portions of the site's Civil War-era layout, design and features are extant today, historic feeling from the nineteenth century period of significance is preserved. Moreover, Fort DeRussy remains a park in the midst of an urban neighborhood with vegetation and circulation pattern that contribute to and maintain the integrity of feeling from the second period of significance.

7. Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Fort DeRussy is associated with the Civil War as well as the foundation of large urban parks in cities throughout the U.S. Links to these historic events and movements are still evident at the park. The extant earthworks offer the most explicit connection between the historic significance of the site and its present-day forms. Several park features including the vegetation and parts of the circulation pattern date to the second period of significance. Fort DeRussy retains integrity of association from both periods.

## CONCLUSIONS

After evaluation of the landscape features and characteristics within the context of the seven aspects of integrity established by the National Register, this CLI finds that the Civil War-era cultural landscape remains extant and retains integrity to both periods of significance. While the integrity to the Civil War era is impacted by the loss of some landscape features, the landscape retains a high degree of integrity to the later period of significance, during which it was included as part of the larger Rock Creek Park.

Aspects of Integrity:      Location

Design

Setting

Materials

Workmanship

Feeling

Association

## Landscape Characteristic:

### Topography

#### HISTORIC

The topography of the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape determined its placement in the

landscape. The site's elevation was the primary consideration when army officials scouted locations for Fort DeRussy in 1861. Its position overlooking Rock Creek Valley, and its views of the Milkhouse Ford Road and Rock Creek, as well as its position between Forts Kearny and Stevens were the primary reasons for situating the fort at its present location.

#### EXISTING

Fort DeRussy's topography has not changed since the period of significance.

#### EVALUATION

Fort DeRussy's topography contributes to the historic character of the site and retains a high degree of integrity.

### **Spatial Organization**

#### HISTORIC

Fort DeRussy's elevation, together with the views it provided, was the organizing principle for the site's original spatial organization. Fort DeRussy was located at the topographic crest of the hill overlooking Rock Creek Valley to the north. In addition, the fort was sited to coordinate fire with Fort Kearny to the west and Fort Stevens to the east. Fort DeRussy was oriented so that weaponry and armaments covered both of these directions. The sally port, or entrance, to the fort was located on its southeast facing side. Auxiliary buildings, including barracks and mess halls, were originally located directly behind the sally port, just outside the parapet walls and beyond the ditch. Rifle pits connecting Fort DeRussy with Battery Kingsbury and Battery Smeade were dug across the north face of the site, along the ridge of the hill. A trail leading up the hill near the intersection of modern day Oregon Avenue and Military Rd. provided the main access to the site.

In the decades between the end of the Civil War and the site's second period of significance, the earthworks and rifle pits remained largely unchanged. Battery Kingsbury was likely leveled during this period and the rifle pit connecting it to DeRussy partially filled in. All wartime buildings were dismantled. The site was purchased by the federal government ( in 1890 as part of the formation of Rock Creek Park and retained a spatial organization largely consistent with that of the Civil War-era until sometime between 1865 and 1890.

#### EXISTING

Fort DeRussy's spatial organization retains a high degree of integrity to the earliest period of significance. The original road to the fort, though partly paved over, remains similar to the approach used during the Civil War-era. The original southeast-facing entrance to the fort remains extant. Erosion makes it difficult to determine the orientation of artillery, or original circulation patterns within the fort, but the original spatial organization is still legible. 273 yards of the original rifle pit, approximately 36 percent, is extant, clearly visible and located directly north of the fort. The historic Milkhouse Ford Road, which predates the Civil War period of

significance, also remains and has been incorporated into the park's trail system.

The auxiliary buildings, originally located behind the fort are no longer extant and much of Battery Kingsbury and the rifle pits to the east and west of DeRussy have been destroyed. The original shape of Battery Kingsbury can be partially traced, but mature vegetation in the area makes its identification as a battery difficult.

#### EVALUATION

Fort DeRussy's current spatial organization retains partial integrity from the first period of significance and contributes to the historic character of the site.

#### **Land Use**

##### HISTORIC

Fort DeRussy's periods of significance represent two distinct uses of the landscape, military and recreation/interpretation. Built in 1861 as one of the Defenses of Washington, the land use at Fort DeRussy was military until it was abandoned by the Union army and returned to its original owner in 1865. For two and a half decades the fort remained a wartime relic, while the land surrounding it was returned to agricultural use.

As early as 1866-1867 the site was surveyed for potential inclusion in a proposed park in northern Washington. Major Nathaniel Michler of the Army Corps of Engineers suggested DeRussy be acquired for future inclusion in the large park that he proposed for the area in his 1867 report to the Senate's Public Buildings and Grounds Committee. The land was finally purchased in 1895 and converted to public parkland in 1890 as a part of Rock Creek Park. The Office of Public Buildings and Public Grounds managed the site, along with the whole of Rock Creek Park, until 1925. Between 1925 and 1933, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital administered Rock Creek Park and Fort DeRussy. In 1933 management was turned over to the National Park Service.

##### EXISTING

Today the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape remains public parkland, and is a place for public recreation and interpretation of an historic site.

#### EVALUATION

Military use of Fort DeRussy ended with the abandonment of the fort and its return to its original owner in 1865. Its use as a recreational landscape has not changed since the second period of significance, which begins in 1890 with its inclusion as a component landscape within the larger Rock Creek Park. Land use at the site retains a high degree of integrity from this period.

#### **Character-defining Features:**



Feature: Recreational Use  
Feature Identification Number: 169773  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

### **Circulation**

#### **HISTORIC**

At the time of its construction in 1861, Fort DeRussy was bounded by Milkhouse Ford Road to the north, Rock Creek to the east and Daniels Road to the west (now Oregon Avenue). Military Road, completed in 1862, formed the fort's southern boundary. The main access to the fort was via modern-day Oregon Avenue, just north of Military Road. The site's Civil War circulation paths also included rifle pits that connected DeRussy to Battery Smeade to the west and Battery Kingsbury to the east. Footpaths through the fort and around the site also existed but no documentation of them has been found.

The destruction of circulation paths via the rifle pit connecting Fort DeRussy and Battery Kingsbury likely dates to the period between the end of the Civil War and the sites designation as park land in 1890. Trails, such as the ones along the historic Milkhouse Ford Road and Rock Creek were originally constructed as bridle trails sometime between 1899-1916. A carriage road leading from Oregon Avenue to the fort was constructed sometime between 1907-1916. Military Road was expanded and modernized for the first time between 1899-1916 and again in 1958, at which point it was widened into a four lane highway. Previous studies of Rock Creek Park have determined that not all of Military Road retains historic integrity of location, though the section running below Fort DeRussy follows the original path of the 1862 road.

#### **EXISTING**

Most visitors access the fort site via the Fort DeRussy Trail, leading up from Oregon Avenue, and nearly identical with the original Civil War access road. Past a sign directing visitors to the fort, an unpaved trail leads east. At the fort the trail divides, with a short path leading north through the sally port and another further east, past the fort and along the ridge of the hillside. Southeast of Fort DeRussy the trail passes along a partially visible remnant of a Civil War-era ditch and over a parapet that was once part of Battery Kingsbury. From here the trail descends down the hillside, curving around an onramp for Military Road and intersecting with the paved trail that runs along Rock Creek. Parts of this trail date to the second period of significance.

The paved multi-use trail that runs along Military Road and the Western Ridge trail leading south from Milkhouse Ford date to the National Park Service-era and are outside the periods of significance for this site. The multi-use trail was constructed between 1967 and 1969, as part of a system of trails constructed throughout the park. The Western Ridge Trail was designated as such in 1978, by volunteer members of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and ROCR staff. It is a compilation of existing or abandoned trail segments that were improved, reopened, and designated as the trail. It started as a bridal trail and includes the multi-use segment described above (Rock Creek Historic Trails Cultural Landscape Report, NPS, 127:2013).

There are social trails along the parapet of the earthworks and through an eroded portion of fort's northern face, down to the rifle pit on the hill below. These trails have been used as bike and horse trails in the past, but are now mainly used by hikers exploring the site.

#### EVALUATION

Though altered, the trail leading up from Oregon Avenue and through the sally port entrance on the southeast side of Fort DeRussy, the Milkhouse Ford trail and rifle pits to the north of the fort all date to the Civil-War period of significance. Sections of these, and other present-day NPS trails, also follow original bridle and carriage paths that were constructed during the second period of significance. Thus, the Fort DeRussy cultural landscape retains partial integrity to both periods of significance.

#### Character-defining Features:

Feature: Milkhouse Ford Trail

Feature Identification Number: 169775

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude Longitude

0.0000000000 0.0000000000

IDLCS Number: 100196

LCS Structure Name: Rock Creek Park; Milkhouse Ford Trail

LCS Structure Number: 339-46

Feature: Fort DeRussy Hiking Trail

Feature Identification Number: 169777

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude Longitude

0.0000000000 0.0000000000

IDLCS Number: 100194

LCS Structure Name: Rock Creek Park; Fort DeRussy Trail

LCS Structure Number: 339-44

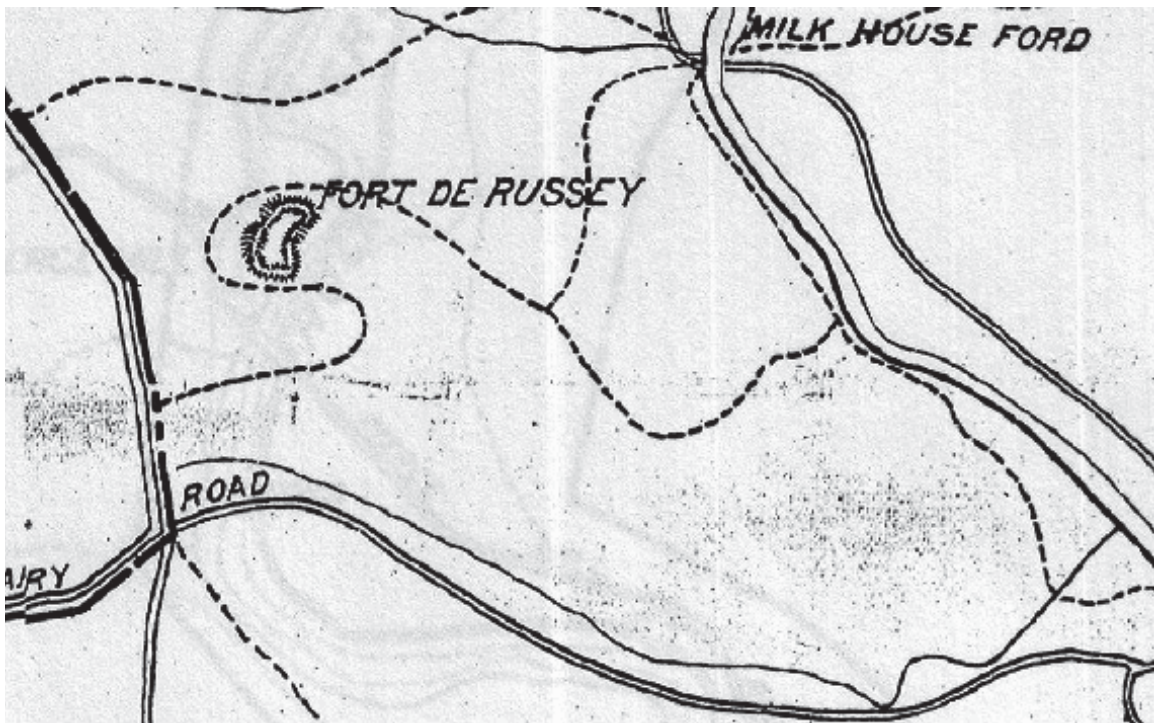
Feature: Western Ridge Equestrian Trail

Feature Identification Number: 169779

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude	Longitude
0.0000000000	0.0000000000
Feature: Paved Bike Trail No.3	
Feature Identification Number:	169781
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Latitude	Longitude
0.0000000000	0.0000000000
Feature: Social Trails	
Feature Identification Number:	169783
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – incompatible
Latitude	Longitude
0.0000000000	0.0000000000

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Fig 14: 1907 Map of Bridle Paths in Rock Creek Park (Rock Creek Park Historic Trails Cultural Landscape Report)*



Fig. 15: 1916 Survey of Rock Creek Park (Rock Creek Park Historic Trails Cultural Landscape Report)



*Fig. 16: 1933 National Park Service Map of Trails (Rock Creek Park Historic Trails Cultural Landscape Report*

Fort DeRussy  
 Rock Creek Park - Fort Circle Park - North

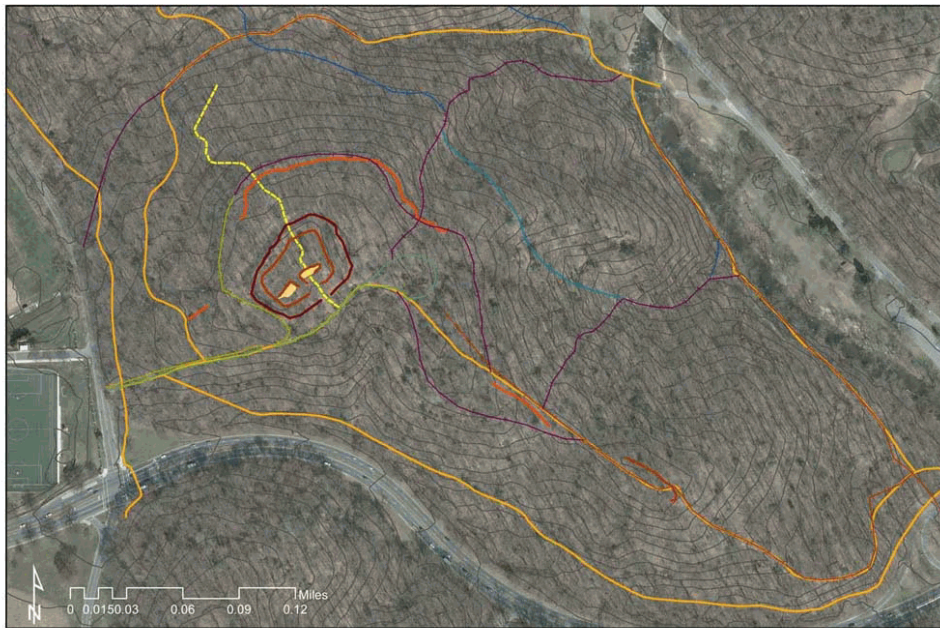


Fig 17: Circulation Map-Historic and Current



*Fig 18: 2014 photo for paved hiking path leading to Milkhouse Ford Road.*



*Fig 19: 2014 photo of dirt hiking trail leading to Fort DeRussy Earthworks*

## **Vegetation**

### **HISTORIC**

Although no known photographs exist of Fort DeRussy during the Civil War, the army's general treatment of the Defenses of Washington and period maps indicate that the hilltop was cleared of all trees beginning in 1861. At Fort DeRussy this included the removal of large tree stands on all slopes of the site, approximately 56 acres in total, enabling views of the Rock Creek Valley, Milkhouse Ford Road, Fort Stevens and Fort Kearny. The army also destroyed the peach and apple orchards of Barnett Swart and trampled fields used for farming.

According to late nineteenth century maps, the hilltop remained clear of trees and most growth for several decades after the war. Light tree cover seems to have returned to the hillsides north and west of the fort first, but in 1892 much of the site remained bare. In 1895 the site was officially transferred to the federal government as part of Rock Creek Park. The site was untended during this period and regrowth around Fort DeRussy occurred naturally over the next twenty years.

The Olmsted Report of 1918 describes the vegetation around DeRussy as consisting

predominantly of cedar trees interspersed with sassafras (*sassafras* sp.), locust trees (*Robinia* sp.), sumac (*Rhus* sp.), some pine trees (*Pinus* sp.) and oak (*Quercus* sp). An unspecified ‘low bushy ground cover’ characterized the hillsides, contributing to a ‘varied and interesting landscape’. The report recommended the systematic clearing of scrub pines and large oaks in the area, which threatened to overtake the cedars and ruin a ‘picturesque hilltop.’ The only documentation of replanting and tree clearance around DeRussy is from 1922 and the tree types and location of new plantings are not specified. Though documentation of CCC work in the area has not been found it is likely that the CCC did minor clearance and upkeep of vegetation around DeRussy between 1938-1942.

#### EXISTING

The Fort DeRussy cultural landscape has largely returned to the densely forested habitat that characterized the area before the Civil War. The cedar trees noted in the 1918 Olmsted Report are no longer the dominant vegetation at the site. Like much of the surrounding Rock Creek Park, the area is now dominated by a mix of beech (*Fagus* sp.) and oak (*Quercus* sp.) community, the majority of which is classified as second growth forest. Though younger than much of the forest in the park, the majority of trees around Fort DeRussy are more than 100 years old. In addition to beech and mixed oak, the area immediately surrounding the fort also includes large tulip poplars that have grown up on the earthworks themselves and in and around the surrounding ditch. The tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) was relatively uncommon in Rock Creek Park historically but has become common on sloping sites that have been cleared in the past 150 years. A large number of mature chestnut oaks (*Castanea dentate*) are also found around Fort DeRussy. Ground cover is thick throughout the site and largely consists of English ivy (*Hedera helix*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).

#### EVALUATION

The vegetation patterns at Fort DeRussy have shifted radically from the Civil War-era period of significance and vegetation has no integrity to this period. The earthworks, hillsides and crest of the hill are now covered with mature trees, which are at least partly consistent with the later period of significance. Though exact age has not been determined, the lack of programmatic clearing and replanting at the site and the size and type of trees suggests that the majority of the forest surrounding DeRussy is at least 100 years old and retains integrity to the second period of significance.

#### Character-defining Features:

Feature:	Mature Trees and Brush
Feature Identification Number:	169785
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Latitude	Longitude
0.0000000000	0.0000000000



**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Fig 20: 2013 Photo showing mature tree growth along northern face of Fort DeRussy earthworks and in surrounding ditch.*



*Fig 24: 2013 Trees on north face of Fort DeRussy*



*Fig 22: 2014 Successional forest of oak, beech and tulip trees that have grown up around the fort since the end of the Civil War*

## **Buildings and Structures**

### **HISTORIC**

The Civil War-era buildings and structures at Fort DeRussy were comprised primarily of the earthworks, within which were also located a bombproof and magazine. Rifle pits connected the fort with Battery Kingsbury to the east and Battery Smeade to the west. Various structures, including two barracks, two mess halls, five officers' quarters, two stables, and an ordinance sergeant's quarters were located just south of the earthworks.

A trapezoidal work, 208-yards in perimeter, Fort DeRussy was circumscribed by 20-foot high parapet walls and a ditch. According to specifications used when building all of the Civil War Defenses, the walls were 12-18 feet thick. All parapet walls had an exterior slope of 45 degrees extending from the top of the parapet to the ditch that encircled the earthworks. Soldiers originally entered the fort using a wooden drawbridge on the southeast side, which was supported by a stockade sally port with log gates. The northeast corner of the fort was reshaped in 1863 to accommodate a 100-pounder, center pintle Parrot rifle that arrived at the fort that same year.

The bombproof and magazine were located within the rammed-earth walls and sunken below the level of the gun platforms, with entrances that faced the sally port. The bombproof doubled

## Fort DeRussy

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as a guardhouse and was located to the left of the magazine, which was directly in front of the sally port, in the center of the fort. Both were constructed of piled earth and supported by log shoring.

Outside the fort's perimeter, DeRussy's camp also included two barracks, made of lumber and measuring 20x100 feet, two mess halls, also lumber and 20x52 feet, five officers' quarters and two stables, both of log construction, and an ordnance sergeant's quarters of lumber. The barracks and mess halls were located directly behind the fort, to the left and right of the sally port, respectively. More research is needed to determine the location of the other buildings, though it is likely they were located on the flat ground to the right and left of the barracks and mess halls.

The ownership of Fort DeRussy reverted to Barnett Swart in 1865. Before abandoning the fort the army dismantled all of the buildings, selling timber, and other materials used at the site. At some point between 1884 and 1892 Swart divided his land, selling the section located to the east of the earthworks. It is unclear if Swart retained ownership of the earthworks themselves or sold that portion of the land as well. The Kurtz heirs and John Dos Passos are variously listed as owners of land once owned by Barnett Swart, and by 1890 the act that would create Rock Creek Park had passed, allowing the government to purchase property in the area. An 1892 map shows a section of land to the east of the earthworks fenced off. The rifle pit and Battery Kingsbury are no longer extant on this map and were likely filled in by the owner, as the remaining rifle pit in front of DeRussy runs directly up to the fenced property line to the east.

No buildings or structures were constructed on site during the second period of significance.

#### EXISTING

The inclusion of Fort DeRussy as a part of Rock Creek Park in 1890 preserved the earthworks in their 1890 state for use as public parkland. Fort DeRussy remains substantially intact and although they have eroded over time and are almost completely covered with vegetation, the earthworks are the dominant feature in the landscape. (Note that allowing vegetation growth on historic earthworks is a current management strategy to reduce further erosion.) A social trail running on the top of the parapet and lack of leaf cover in some sections of the fort are threats to the site. During the twentieth century, an unofficial horse trail ran through the center of the earthworks causing damage and a major section of the fort's north face eroded and is now part of a social trail leading through the fort. The magazine and bombproof have both collapsed but they are still evident, despite thick tangles of thorny ground cover. Traces of all the gun platforms, gun ramps, embrasures and parapets are deteriorated but evident. The ditch that surrounded the earthworks and acted as a dry moat is still extant, as well as a portion of the rifle pit, which runs for 273 yards north of the fort. A shallow remnant of Battery Kingsbury is visible, approximately 380 yards southeast of the main fort though a trail has been cut through the center of it. No other buildings or structures exist on the site.

EVALUATION

Fort DeRussy retains integrity of buildings and structures from the first period of significance. While all auxiliary buildings from this period have been lost, the Civil War era earthworks remain extant as ruins.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Fort DeRussy Earthworks: Parapet

Feature Identification Number: 169787

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude Longitude

0.0000000000 0.0000000000

Feature: Fort DeRussy Earthworks: Gun Platforms (1-10)

Feature Identification Number: 169789

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude Longitude

0.0000000000 0.0000000000

Feature: Gun Ramps (1-6)

Feature Identification Number: 169791

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude Longitude

0.0000000000 0.0000000000

Feature: Fort DeRussy Magazine

Feature Identification Number: 169793

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude Longitude

0.0000000000 0.0000000000

Feature: Fort DeRussy Bombproof

Feature Identification Number: 169795

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

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Latitude	Longitude
0.0000000000	0.0000000000

Feature: Fort DeRussy Sally Port

Feature Identification Number: 169797

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude	Longitude
0.0000000000	0.0000000000

Feature: Fort DeRussy Ditch

Feature Identification Number: 169799

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude	Longitude
0.0000000000	0.0000000000

Feature: Fort DeRussy Outerworks

Feature Identification Number: 169818

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude	Longitude
0.0000000000	0.0000000000

Feature: Battery Kingsbury

Feature Identification Number: 169820

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude	Longitude
0.0000000000	0.0000000000

Feature: Remnant Ditch

Feature Identification Number: 169822

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Latitude	Longitude
0.0000000000	0.0000000000

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Fig 23 2014 North face earthwork with social trail.*



*Fig 24: 2014 photo showing collapsed magazine with a social trail running through it.*





*Fig 25 2014 photo of commemorative plaque and boulder placed at Fort DeRussy by the National Park Service*

### **Views and Vistas**

#### **HISTORIC**

Prior to the Civil War, the site of Fort DeRussy was heavily forested and surrounded by small family farms. According to Congressional documents detailing the destruction of Swart's farm land, the Union Army cut down all trees and vegetation for two miles around Fort DeRussy in the summer and fall of 1861. This was done in order to clear sightlines to the Rock Creek Valley, Milkhouse Ford Road and Forts Stevens and Kearney. The fort was positioned on the topographic crest of the hill to allow commanding views of the surrounding landscape to the

north, east and west. The views from Fort DeRussy were essential to the design and function of the fort. They allowed the army to control movement through the valley below, covering a gap in the Defenses between Forts Stevens and Kearney.

Vegetation slowly returned to Fort DeRussy after it was abandoned by the Union Army in 1865. Topographic maps from the second half of the nineteenth century suggest slow re-growth of trees, first along the northeast slope of the hill. Successional forest was allowed to grow during the second period of significance, when DeRussy was incorporated into Rock Creek Park. Some clearance of invasives and species described as ‘unharmonious’ in the 1918 Olmsted Report was undertaken in the 1920s, but no effort was made to preserve the Civil War-era views from the site, and no significant new views were designed during this time. By 1919, the hills around DeRussy had been repopulated by young trees and the Civil War views would have been largely obscured.

#### EXISTING

The Civil War views from Fort DeRussy are presently entirely obscured by dense, mature forest in and around the fort and covering the surrounding hillsides. Even during the winter, views to the Rock Creek Valley and surrounding landscape are obstructed by trees.

#### EVALUATION

The views from Fort DeRussy do not retain historic integrity. They have been altered by natural regrowth of vegetation on the fort and the surrounding hillside and none of the views which were so critical to the site during the Civil War are currently visible.

### **Small Scale Features**

#### HISTORIC

Civil War era maps and drawings of Fort DeRussy do not depict any small scale features at the site. Abatis surrounded the northern hillside of the fort and consisted of trees that were felled during the 1861 construction of the fort. Many of these trees would have had their ends sharpened to a point and been positioned facing outward toward potential attackers. This abatis was removed when the site was dismantled in 1865.

With the exception of the abatis, little evidence has been found documenting other small-scale features from the Civil War-era. A typical fort in the ring of defenses around Washington included features such as a flagpole, a well and fencing. None of the known drawings of DeRussy depict any of these features.

There is no documentation of installation of small scale features at Fort DeRussy during the second period of significance, 1890-1922.

#### EXISTING

No small-scale features from the Civil War period of significance survive on the site today. Instructional and identifying signage at the site includes: a wayside near the entrance to the footpath at Oregon Avenue, which depicts historic maps and the engineering drawing of Fort DeRussy from Barnard’s Report; signage in front of the earthworks with a short description of the fort and its role in the Battle of Fort Stevens; and a conservation sign instructing visitors to stay off of the earthworks. Additional signs instruct visitors that horses and bikes are not permitted on the trails around the earthworks. A bronze memorial plaque is affixed to a large boulder, approximately four feet long, located in front of the sally port. The boulder and plaque were installed by the National Park Service and the plaque describes the armament present at Fort DeRussy during the Civil War and its purpose of protecting Rock Creek Valley from enemy attack. This memorial is similar to ones placed at Fort Stevens by a veteran’s group in 1920 and at Fort DuPont by the Colonial Dames in 1955. More research is needed to determine the date this memorial was installed but the remaining signage was added after the second period of significance and is therefore non-contributing.

**EVALUATION**

The small-scale features at Fort DeRussy retain no integrity from either period of significance. The bronze memorial plaque will be listed as Undetermined until further research reveals the date it was erected.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Bronze Commemorative Plaque and Boulder

Feature Identification Number: 169824

Type of Feature Contribution: Undetermined

Latitude Longitude

0.0000000000 0.0000000000

Feature: Wayside

Feature Identification Number: 169826

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – incompatible

Latitude Longitude

0.0000000000 0.0000000000

Feature: Signage

Feature Identification Number: 169828

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – incompatible

Latitude Longitude

0.000000000

0.000000000

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Fig 26 2014 interpretive signage near Oregon Ave.*



*Fig 27 2014 interpretive signage near earthworks. Commemorative boulder visible outside sally port. Visitors to fort seen using social trail on top of parapet.*

### **Archeological Sites**

#### **HISTORIC**

Fort DeRussy was garrisoned by hundreds of men between 1861 and 1865 and such a concentration of humanity generally leaves an architectural signature. In 2008 the Louis Berger Group published the results of archeological excavations at Fort DeRussy. Excavations were conducted at the site of the fort's trash dump, and hundreds of items dating to the first period of significance were discovered there. Items included bottle glass, dishes, buttons and bullets.

## Fort DeRussy

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During additional archeological exploration of the south-facing slope directly north of the site archeologists identified what they believe to be the location of Confederate breastworks which were erected during the Battle of Fort Stevens.

No archeological discoveries from the second period of significance were noted.

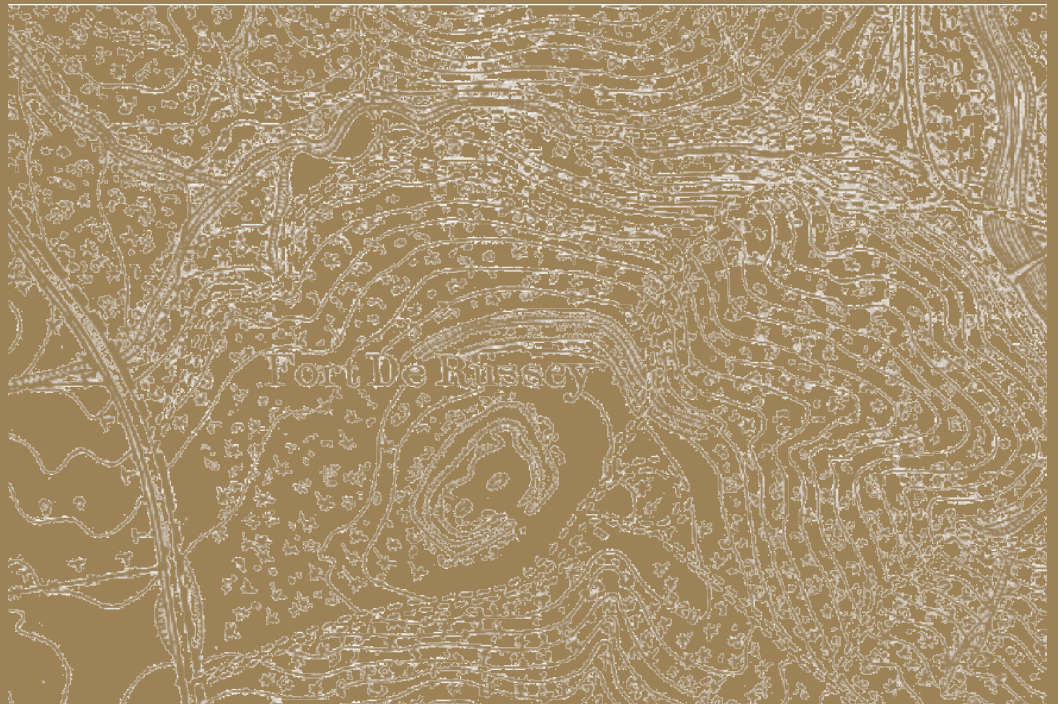
#### EXISTING

Existing conditions in and around Fort DeRussy are conducive to further archeological explorations.

#### EVALUATION

It is extremely likely that future archeological study of the area around DeRussy will locate additional resources from the Civil War-era of significance. Additionally, resources dating to the second period of significance may be discovered and would help shed light on twentieth century work that was conducted in the area. Evidence of prehistoric occupation/use of the site may also be revealed by further archeological investigation. Fort DeRussy retains a high degree of archeological integrity.

# Condition



## Condition

### Condition Assessment and Impacts

**Condition Assessment:** Good

**Assessment Date:** 08/06/2014

#### Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

This determination takes into account both the landscape and the buildings situated therein. In order to maintain the condition of the property as 'good' the park should consider regularly raking leaves over areas that have little or now leaf cover in order to prevent further erosion and damage caused by the impacts discussed below

**Condition Assessment:** Fair

**Assessment Date:** 07/02/2002

#### Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Met with Chief of Maintenance Benny Goodman and Cultural Resource Specialist Perry Wheelock to discuss condition of known landscapes within Rock Creek Park. No site visit was conducted.

## Impacts

**Type of Impact:** Erosion

**External or Internal:** Internal

**Impact Description:** Evidence of damage caused by erosion is noticeable on the parapet and a major section of the fort's north face which eroded at an undetermined point and is now part of a social trail leading through the fort. Thick leaf cover and thorny ground cover protects much of the fort's interior, including the magazine and bombproof, but lack of leaf cover and a social trail that runs along the parapet threaten the earthworks by accelerating natural erosion.

**Type of Impact:** Vegetation/Invasive Plants

**External or Internal:** Internal

**Impact Description:** English Ivy and other invasive vegetation is affecting the historic character of the landscape.

**Type of Impact:** Other

**Other Impact:** Visitation



**External or Internal:**

Internal

**Impact Description:**

Visitors impact the site by exacerbating the damage caused by erosion as they climb on the parapets and in the ditch. They also misuse the trails and bikers have occasionally used the parapet walls for bike jumps, though this is not as big of a problem at Fort DeRussy as it is at other sites. Visitors frequently leave litter in and around the earthworks, and along the path leading to the fort and walk along the parapet. Dogs are sometimes let off leash to run through the fort and up and down the parapet walls and ditches. During the twentieth century, an unofficial horse trail ran through the center of the earthworks causing damage and deterioration. .

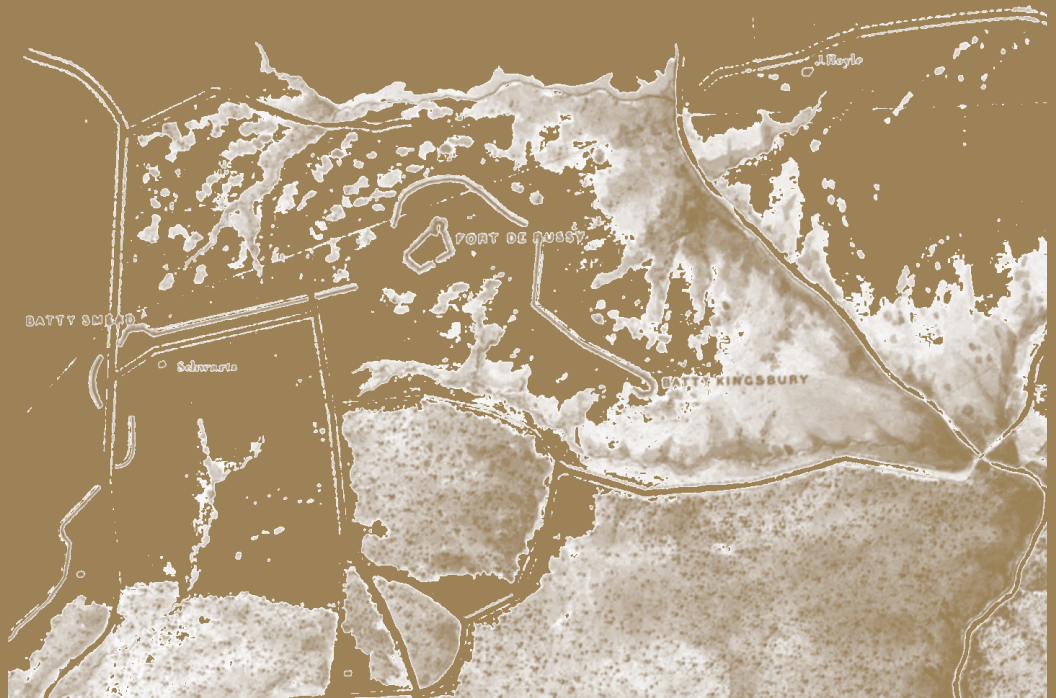
## **Treatment**

### **Treatment**

**Approved Treatment:**

Undetermined

# Bibliography & Supplemental Information



## Bibliography and Supplemental Information

### Bibliography

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**Citation Title:** Topographical Map of the Original District of Columbia and Environs Showing the Fortifications Around the City of Washington  
**Year of Publication:** 1862  
**Citation Publisher:** G. Woolworth Colton, New York, NY  
**Citation Number:** G3851.S5 1862 .A7  
**Citation Type:** Graphic  
**Citation Location:** <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3851s.cw0674000>
- Citation Author:** Baist, G. W.  
**Citation Title:** Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Washington, District of Columbia, Volume Three, Sheet 20  
**Year of Publication:** 1903  
**Citation Publisher:** Baist, G. W., Philadelphia, PA  
**Citation Number:** G1275 .B2 1903  
**Citation Type:** Graphic  
**Citation Location:** <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3851bm.gct00131a>
- Citation Author:** Barnard, Brevet Major General John Gross  
**Citation Title:** A Report on the Defenses of Washington: to the Chief of Engineers, US Army  
**Year of Publication:** 1871  
**Citation Publisher:** Government Printing Office, Washington, DC

**Citation Author:** Barnard, Brevet Major General John Gross  
**Citation Title:** Washington, DC 1861 to 1865 Lines of Defense Wall Map  
**Year of Publication:** 1865  
**Citation Publisher:** Barnard, J.G.  
**Citation Number:** US1598678  
**Citation Type:** Graphic  
**Citation Location:** Historic Map Works Rare Historic Maps Collection, from Library of Congress

**Citation Author:** Bedell, John  
**Citation Title:** Bold, Rocky and Picturesque: Archeological Identification and Evaluation Study of Rock Creek Park  
**Year of Publication:** 2008  
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**Citation Title:** A Path Through the Mountains: The Archeology and History of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park  
**Year of Publication:** 2011  
**Citation Publisher:** The Louis Berger Group, Inc., Washington, DC  
**Citation Type:** Narrative  
**Citation Location:** National Park Service

**Citation Author:** Benjamin, Marcus  
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**Year of Publication:** 1902  
**Citation Publisher:** Grand Army of the Republic, Washington, DC

**Citation Author:** Billings, Elden E.  
**Citation Title:** Military Activities in Washington in 1861, Vol. 60/61  
**Year of Publication:** 1960  
**Citation Publisher:** Historical Society of Washington DC, Washington, DC

**Citation Author:** Boschke, Albert  
**Citation Title:** Topographical Map of the District of Columbia, Surveyed in the Years 1856 `57 `58 and `59  
**Year of Publication:** 1861  
**Citation Publisher:** A. Boschke, Washington, DC  
**Citation Number:** G3850 1857 .B61  
**Citation Type:** Graphic  
**Citation Location:** <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3850.ct001206>

**Citation Author:** Boschke, Albert  
**Citation Title:** Topographical Map of the District of Columbia, Surveyed in the Years 1856 `57 `58 and `59  
**Year of Publication:** 1880  
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