1. NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Fort Brown (Boundary Increase)

Other Name/Site Number: Fort Texas; Fort Taylor; 41CF96

Street and Number (if applicable)**:** South edge of Brownsville near intersection of International Boulevard and Gorgas Drive

City/Town: Brownsville **County:** Cameron **State:** Texas

Designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior December 19, 1960.
Updated documentation approved by the Secretary of the Interior September 2, 2024.

2. SIGNIFICANCE DATA

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Criteria Exceptions: 2

NHL Theme(s):
I. Peopling Places
- 3. migration from outside and within
- 5. ethnic homelands
- 6. encounters, conflicts, and colonization

IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
- 3. military institutions and activities

VIII. Changing Role of the United States in the World Community
- 1. international relations
- 3. expansionism and imperialism
- 4. immigration and emigration policies

Period(s) of Significance: 1846-1917

Significant Person(s) (only Criterion 2)**:** N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only Criterion 6)**:** N/A

Designer/Creator/Architect/Builder: Captain Joseph King Fenno Mansfield (earthen fort); US Army

Historic Contexts:
Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries to the Pacific, 1830-1898; *The Texas Revolution and Mexican War 1820-1853* (1959)
Political and Military Affairs, 1865-1912 (1963)
Scientific Discoveries and Inventions (Vol. 1) (1964)

African American Soldiers in the U.S. Army in the American West, 1866-1891 [draft]
American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study (2013)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement. We are collecting this information under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461-467) and 36 CFR part 65. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to evaluate properties nominated as National Historic Landmarks. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. We estimate the time to prepare an initial inquiry letter is 2 hours, including time to maintain records, gather information, and review and submit the letter. We assume that consultants will prepare nominations at an average cost of $32,680 per nomination. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this form to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Room 2C114, Mail Stop 242, Reston, VA 20192.

3. WITHHOLDING SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Does this nomination contain sensitive information that should be withheld under Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act?

__ Yes

_X No

4. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. **Acreage of Property:** Approximately 191 acres (Section A, 185 acres; Section B, 1.1 acre; Section C, 4.8 acres)

2. **Use either Latitude/Longitude Coordinates or the UTM system:**

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates:
Datum if other than WGS84:
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Latitude: **Longitude:**

OR

UTM References:	**Zone 14N**	**Easting**	**Northing**
Section A			
Point A		650,607	2,864,602
Point B		650,720	2,864,600
Point C		650,724	2,864,500
Point D		651,242	2,864,543
Point E		650,874	2,863,380
Point F		650,877	2,863,307

Section B

Point A	651,416	2,865,139
Point B	651,459	2,865,108
Point C	651,412	2,865,047
Point D	651,370	2,865,076

Section C

Point A	650,977	2,865,337
Point B	651,094	2,865,386
Point C	651,167	2,865,312
Point D	651,118	2,865,243
Point E	651,001	2,865,276
Point F	650,945	2,865,288
Point G	650,990	2,865,308

3. Verbal Boundary Description:

Fort Brown National Historic Landmark (NHL) comprises three discontiguous areas: Sections A, B, and C, as depicted on attached maps.

Section A:
When an NHL boundary for Fort Brown was first created in 1986, the Section A boundary was an 80 x 170-yard rectangle, approximately 2.8 acres, drawn to include the above-ground remains of the 1846 original Fort Brown site. With this revised nomination, the Section A boundary is enlarged southward to encompass the peninsula bound by the Rio Grande, which contains the fort, its associated sites, and surrounding landscape. The boundary for Section A begins at Point A (N 2,864,602; E 650,607) on the US bank of the Rio Grande and runs east approximately 375' to Point B (N 2,864,600; E 650,720), which is located on the top of International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) flood control levee. From Point B the boundary follows the levee south about 325' to Point C (N 2,864,500; E 650,724), where the levee makes a ninety degree turn to the east. The boundary continues to follow the levee eastward for roughly 1,810' to Point D (N 2,864,543; E 651,242). At Point D the boundary heads south from the levee and on an old levee road for about 4165' until it reaches Point E (N 2,863,380; E 650,874). From Point E the boundary heads south for about 238' until it reaches Point F (N 2,863,307; E 650,877), which is located on the US bank from the Rio Grande. From Point F the boundary follows the US riverbank upstream for approximately 5610' until it reaches Point A. The expanded Section A boundary contains approximately 185 acres (see attached map).

Section B:
The boundaries for Section B remain unchanged from those described in the 1986 nomination. The boundary for Section B has been drawn to include only the Cavalry Barracks and forms a rectangle approximately 80 x 60 yards, approximately 1.1 acre, which encloses the building and its immediate grounds. The boundary for Section B begins at Point A (N 2,865,139; E 651,416) which is located just off the northeast corner of the cavalry building and runs southeast approximately 196' to Point B (N 2,865,108; E 651,459), which is located on top of the curb of Ringgold Road. From Point B the boundary follows the curb to the southwest about 271' to Point C (N 2,865,047; E 6501,412), where there is a handicap ramp for the Gorgas Drive crosswalk. The boundary continues along the curb to the northwest for roughly 155' to Point D (N 2,865,076; E 651,370). At

Point D the boundary heads to the northeast for approximately 260' until it reaches Point A.

Section C:
The boundary of Section C is reduced from the 1986 listing due to the removal of several buildings at the west end of the area when the Texas Southmost College Arts Center was constructed in 2005. This update changes the west boundary of Section C to run along the curb line at the west side of May Street from Point A south to a sidewalk located just north of the Commandant's Quarters building. The boundary follows the inside edge of the sidewalk to the west to intersect with another walkway and follows its inside edge to the south and east back to May Street and the original boundary, to include the Commandant's Quarters in the Section C portion of the district, and to exclude the former area where historic Fort Brown buildings have been removed.

The boundary for Section C begins at Point A (N 2,865,337; E 650,977) on top of the western curb of May Street and runs east-northeast approximately 420' to Point B (N 2,865,386; E 651,094), which is located just off the southeast corner of the Texas Southmost College library building. From Point B the boundary runs to the southeast about 340' to Point C (N 2,865,312; E 651,167), which is located near the northwest corner of the college's old tennis courts. From Point C the boundary heads south-southwest for roughly 280' to Point D (N 2,865,243; E 651,118), which is located on the eastern curb of Gorgas Drive. From Point D the boundary runs to west-northwest for about 400' until it reaches Point E (N 2,865,276; E 651,001), which is located on top of the western curb of May Street. From Point E the boundary follows a curvilinear sidewalk to the west for about 197' until it reaches Point F (N 2,865,288; E 650,945) where the sidewalk intersects with another. From Point F the boundary follows the other sidewalk to east-northeast for approximately 160' until it reaches Point G (N 2,865,308; E 650,990), which is located atop the western curb of May Street. From Point G the boundary follows the curb for about 105' until it reaches Point A. Section C contains approximately 4.8 acres.

4. Boundary Justification:

Overall, the boundaries of the discontiguous district (Sections A, B, and C) are similar to those selected in the 1986 nomination. Section A is the most revised of the proposed National Historic Landmark update, with its much enlarged boundary to include the entire peninsula formed by a large bend in the Rio Grande as an intact historic site. Section A's boundaries are modified in part to reflect the results of recent non-invasive archeological investigations and a cultural landscape inventory. This research revealed that substantial subsurface remains of the fort exist as well as the potential for other features related to the 1846 siege of Fort Brown to be contained within the site. The expanded boundary of Section A encompasses most of the six-bastion, star-shaped fort site including both above- and below-ground remnants. Also within the boundary are the archeological remains of the Two Mortar/Ringgold's Battery site that was erected in 1846 to protect US soldiers as they constructed the fort. These subsurface remains were identified during a remote sensing project conducted by a University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (previously University of Texas Pan American) graduate student, but no report has been produced. There is also the potential for the revised boundary to possess archeological remains of a portion of Mexican breastworks that are now in the United States due to a change in the river's course; however, the river's migration south in this area may have compromised these remains.[1] Other archeological resources include intact munitions and other traces of the battle. These resources and their relationships to one another and to the river, constitute a cultural landscape that portrays the Fort Brown siege during the US-Mexican War (also known as the Mexican American War) and other uses over time,

[1] Suzanne Stone, *Final Fort Brown Earthworks: Baseline Report*, Prepared for United States Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District, Office of Border Patrol, US Customs and Border Protection, US Department of Homeland Security, (Englewood, CO: HDR Environmental, Operations, and Construction, 2012), Fig. 6.

and adds to understanding of the fort's national significance. North of the expanded Section A's north boundary, which runs along an east-west levee, is the Texas National Guard, a former Army Reserve armory, and Texas Southmost College. No substantial intact archeological remains were identified north of the levee during geophysical archeological investigations. Since it appears that the archeological remains of the portion of the fort north of the levee is mostly destroyed and the area currently contains a parking lot and modern buildings, the area north of the levee was not included in the expanded boundary.

The Section A boundary also includes an unidentified earthwork along the river at the northwest corner of the enlarged Section A. While there has been no archeological investigation of this site to determine what it was or whether it is significant, it appears to be in the vicinity of Civil War fortifications that were mapped in 1864.

Section B retains the same boundaries it received in 1986. This section encompasses only the Cavalry Barracks. It is separated from Sections A and C by intervening areas of non-historic and unrelated construction.

Section C lies to the west of Section B. The area between the two sections contains modern campus buildings and grounds. In Section C most of the area west of May Street has been eliminated from the boundary due to the removal of seven historic buildings when the Arts Center was constructed in 2005. Therefore, the portion of Section C that has been withdrawn has lost the qualities which caused it to be designated originally and justifies its removal from the NHL (see 36 CFR 65.8 (b) and 65.9 (b)(1)). Along the west side of May Street, Section C includes the Commandant's Quarters, moved to its current site in 2007 from a location at the west end of the military compound. Although this building no longer has integrity of location, it does retain integrity of setting, design, workmanship, feeling and association. Moreover, the Commandant's Quarters is the only representative building remaining of the group that was removed when the arts complex was built and retains its significance and adequate integrity to be included in the updated NHL. The remainder of Section C is unchanged from the original designation and includes significant key buildings from Fort Brown's history, such as the Hospital and, Medical Laboratory and Commissary, plus other buildings and their immediate landscaped grounds that retain a high degree of their definers of integrity.

5. SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION: SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Brown was administratively listed as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) on December 19, 1960, with documentation approved on June 12, 1986. This Fort Brown NHL nomination update revises the discontiguous district boundaries to encompass archeological and cultural landscape resources identified in studies completed in 2012. When referenced in the context of this nomination, cultural landscape alludes to the National Park Service definition of the term as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exciting other cultural or aesthetic values." The cultural landscape described is that within the proposed boundaries of the updated NHL nomination. The amended documentation addresses additional resources and establishes the national context of historic foundational population movements as discussed in *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study*.[2] It takes into account changes to the site that have occurred since

[2] *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study* (Washington, DC: National Park System Advisory Board and American Latino Scholars Expert Panel, 2013).

1986 as well as greater recognition of cultural landscape features of the battlefield and military campus. The nomination update, however, retains the original areas (Military, Science) and period of significance for which Fort Brown was designated.

2021 NHL Update Summary Statement of Significance:

Fort Brown is nationally significant under National Historic Landmark Criterion 1 for the central and evolving military role that it played over the course of its operation. Contributing to the physical affirmation of the international border, Fort Brown relates deeply to subsequent and longstanding regional dynamics affecting foundational population movements, including transnational border migration, trade relationships, and development of modern cultural identities, sometimes based on location. The geopolitical history represented by Fort Brown relates directly to the shifts in land ownership through the advantage of gain and the wounds of loss. Family and social units as well as national allegiances evolved from previous fluidity across the river. As point of fact, additional research into Mexican archival sources is undoubtedly warranted to delve more deeply into contemporary and ongoing Mexican and Mexican American sentiment regarding this history. Ultimately, the fort was critical in the opening battles of the US-Mexican War or Mexican American War (1846-1848), contested during the US Civil War (1861-1865), and a guardian of the US border in the period from the First Cortina War (1859) to the violence of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). Border conflicts between 1846 and 1917 highlight Fort Brown as significant in the area of American Latino ethnic heritage. Fort Brown served in the redefinition of the south Texas border in 1846, maintaining regional influence as a border sentinel into the early twentieth century and thus linking it to American Latino cultural experience and identity formation.

Criterion 6 has not been included due to the inconclusive nature of the non-intrusive archeological survey regarding nationally significant research potential and the as-yet unconfirmed nature of the remnants of earthworks throughout the peninsula. During development of the nomination update, National Park Service National Historic Landmarks staff determined that, due to threats to the site and the resources needed to explore Criterion 6, it was most prudent to pursue documentation of the strong case for Criterion 1 in the short term. Nevertheless, the entire battlefield represents an archeological site of a promising nature.

PROVIDE RELEVANT PROPERTY-SPECIFIC HISTORY, HISTORICAL CONTEXT, AND THEMES. JUSTIFY CRITERIA, EXCEPTIONS, AND PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE LISTED IN SECTION 2.

Thematic Development

Fort Brown meets NHL Criterion 1 under the NHL themes Peopling Places, Shaping the Political Landscape, and Changing Role of the United States in the World Community. Fort Brown, in its role as a catalyst for the US-Mexican War and through its evolving use, intersects with the historic contexts of American westward expansion, US-Mexico border conflicts, and the American Latino experience.

The theme Peopling Places references the complex history of the Rio Grande region and the evolving relationships between diverse nations, cultures, and communities. The 1846 construction of Fort Brown epitomized US territorial expansion driven by political and economic pressures and influenced by an Anglo-American effort to assert dominance. The new US-Mexico border followed the deepest points in the Rio Grande

channel at the conclusion of the war in 1848, left many former Mexican citizens on the US side of the border.[3] The extensive western territory ceded by Mexico generated a new wave of Anglo westward migration, resulting in new conflicts with American Indians and Hispanics or Latinos who occupied the land. After 1848, Fort Brown played a key strategic and geographic role in policing ongoing border conflicts.

The theme Shaping the Political Landscape provides a framework for understanding American pressures leading to the annexation of Texas, the construction of Fort Brown within disputed territory, and the resulting war with Mexico. Fort Brown was central to strengthening American geographic dominance and in shaping the coming Civil War. The theme Changing Role of the US in the World Community aids in understanding the US transformation from a young nation to an international power with ports on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. With its borders established and secured by a line of Rio Grande forts anchored by Fort Brown, US policy makers turned their attention outward, increasing US dominance in the western hemisphere. American determination to push European powers out of the region, particularly the Spanish, led to the 1898 Spanish-American War. These themes illustrate the strategic placement of Fort Brown on the Rio Grande, the decisions to expand and rebuild Fort Brown in 1848 and 1868, and its function as a border sentinel through the early twentieth century.

American Latino Heritage

Fort Brown is often presented in reference to the US military men who helped to build, defend, and command the fort through its century of service on the Rio Grande border with Mexico. However, Fort Brown's construction in 1846 and its long-lived impact and symbol of intimidation on the US-Mexico border also highlight the American Latino experience. One fundamental aspect of this is the loss of Mexican territory, first with the rush to claim land between the Nueces and Rio Grande rivers once the US annexed Texas in 1845. Preexisting Spanish and Mexican land grant claims, however, complicated this rush, as evidenced by the Bourland Miller Commission, for one, which reviewed Mexican claims within the Nueces Strip, finding the majority to be valid. Another trend was that of geophysical shifts in the alluvial delta, resulting in loss of land through storm and erosion, no less easy as loss from an individual or familial perspective.[4] Finally, elite Anglo entrepreneurs and merchants, such as Charles Stillman, actively pursued dispossession of land grant heirs, as outlined below. These corrosive examples have had long-standing effects that resonate even today.[5] Fort Brown's role in redefining the border in 1846 and maintaining security during conflicts into the early twentieth century tie it integrally to this cultural heritage. The National Park Service-sponsored American Latino Heritage Initiative provides cultural context to Fort Brown's symbolic role. Historian Ramón Gutiérrez, author of the essay "The Latino Crucible: Its Origins in 19th-Century Wars, Revolutions, and Empire," observed that, while most Latinos in the US are immigrants who crossed the border of their own accord, "many ethnic Mexican residents of the Southwest correctly explain, 'We did not cross a border; the border crossed us.'"[6] The tangible

[3] In Texas the Spanish-Mexican descendants were called *Tejanos* and thus this reference will be used throughout this documentation. Reference is also made to Latino American as part of the Latino American Heritage theme. Other references not used in this documentation include Hispano, Hispanic, and Chicano.

[4] US Department of State, *Proceedings of the International (Water) Boundary Commission United States and Mexico Treaties of 1884 and 1889: Equitable Distribution of the Waters of the Rio Grande*, Vols. 1 and 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903). These government reports reference shifting river channels and international relations amid land loss and change.

[5] These points were summarized in part from comments provided by an anonymous peer reviewer of this draft nomination, February 2022. Further discussion of land claims is presented below.

[6] Ramón A. Gutiérrez, "The Latino Crucible: Its Origins in 19th-Century Wars, Revolutions, and Empire," in *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study*, www.nps.gov/articles/latinothemeempires.htm, accessed 2 Jun 2017. See also, Douglas A. Murphy, *Two Armies on the Rio Grande*, Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series 148 (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2015).

role, however, is equally critical in that, as one anonymous reviewer of this nomination succinctly stated: "Mexico lost over half of its territory as a direct result of the creation of this military fort. That cannot and should not be overlooked."

Many *Tejanos* living on ancestral lands near Fort Brown experienced the shifting border.[7] Through the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the US-Mexico War, the US acquired nearly half of Mexico's national territory, including the areas of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and California. The resultant redrawing of the border effectively expatriated thousands of Mexican citizens, although individuals could voluntarily repatriate to Mexico, if they so chose, pursuant to the treaty. The impact was particularly strong along the Rio Grande in the newly established US state of Texas.[8]

The experience of Juan Nepomuceno Cortina exemplifies the *Tejano* experience of shifting political realities, the complex interplay of ethnicity at the borderlands, as well enduring tension around contested land claims, including at the land on which Fort Brown itself was built. Raised between Camargo, Brownsville, and Matamoros and owning land on both sides of the river, Cortina chose to defend his family's claims when the newly drawn border divided property. Historian Miguel Ángel González-Quiroga has summarized Cortina's experience as follows:

> Most important, after the war [Charles] Stillman [founder of Brownsville] bought an extensive property across the river from Matamoros from the children of José Narciso Cavazos and his first wife. However, Cavazos had remarried and transmitted that land to the children of this second wife, who fought the sale in court. The second wife's children eventually lost, and the bitterness of that experience made a deep mark on the eldest son, Juan N. Cortina. Stillman moved ahead, forming a company in 1848 with other investors and selling lots for a town he named Brownsville. Cortina's implacable hatred of land-grabbing *gringos* would maintain the border region in a state of turmoil for almost two decades.[9]

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[7] "Tejanos settled the land and established communities in the early eighteenth century. They established an economic foundation, practiced politics in defense of their interests, and evolved a culture that expressed their identity by at least the 1770s. From the 1770s through the 1840s, Tejanos faced considerable turbulence and change as active and involved citizens of Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, and, finally, the United States. While these journeys across sovereignties redefined the context within which their political, economic, social, and cultural community life evolved, Tejanos embarked on change with a clear understanding of and connectedness to their traditions and interests." See Gerald E. Poyo, ed. *Tejano Journey 1770-1850* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 20.

[8] Jerry Thompson, "Col. José de los Santos Benavides and Gen. Juan Nepomuceno Cortina: Two Astounding Civil War Tejanos," in Roseann Bacha-Garza, Christopher L. Miller, and Russell K. Skowronek, eds., *The Civil War on the Rio Grande, 1846-1876* Elma Dill Russell Spencer Series in the West and Southwest 46 (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2019), 138. See also p. 140: "In the lower valley, there was great insecurity over the ability of the Tejanos to hold on to their ancestral lands. In February 1850, there was even talk in Brownsville that the Americans, either in Austin or Washington, DC, would annul all the land titles in the Nueces Strip. One prominent American in the lower valley advertised in the Brownsville American Flag as early as June 2, 1847, that 'Mexican law and authority are forever at an end' in the Nueces Strip and that 'by the laws of Texas no alien can hold real estate within its limits.' In a number of instances, to defend their property the grantees were forced into expensive litigation and ruinous lawsuits. Several individuals in the lower valley went as far as to propose a territorial government that would adjudicate land titles. The Anglo-dominated separatist movement gained neither momentum or legitimacy; however, Sen. Thomas J. Rusk denounced the Separatists on the floor of the US Senate and Gov. Peter H. Bell and the Texas legislature moved to establish a commission to investigate and recommend for confirmation to the state legislature all land claims." The subsequent Bourland Commission commenced hearings on July 15, 1850.

[9] Miguel Ángel González-Quiroga, *War and Peace of the Rio Grande Frontier 1830-1880* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, published in cooperation with The William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies, Southern Methodist University, 2020) 94.

Frustrated by what Cortina and many *Tejanos* viewed as prejudicial law enforcement, he and his allies turned to rebellion. Labeled by Anglos a bandit, Cortina was a hero to many Hispanics. *Tejanos* along the Rio Grande faced a new identity as Americans of Mexican heritage in which they were subject to an Anglo economic and political system. This dynamic, as represented by the history of Fort Brown, emphasizes the polarizing context of borderlands conflict along the Rio Grande.

American history is fraught with instances of institutionalized and interpersonal prejudice regarding race, religion, ethnicity, and national identity. First imposed upon American Indians and African slaves, prejudice against "others" followed US expansion westward to include *Tejanos* and Mexicans in the southwest. Fort Brown was at the center of direct conflict arising from ethnic and economic tensions along the Rio Grande into the twentieth century.

Historic Contexts and Resource History

US Territorial Expansion and the Prelude to the US-Mexican War (1803-1846)

When US Brevet Brigadier General Zachary Taylor and his Army of Occupation began construction of the Fort Brown earthworks on the north bank of the Rio Grande in 1846, it served as a physical declaration that the United States intended to defend its claim to the disputed territory between the Rio Nueces and the Rio Grande. Its location on the river's peninsular curve immediately across from the Mexican port of Matamoros provided a prominent location from which to fly the US flag so that it could be seen clearly from the center of the Mexican town.[10] Fort Brown originated as a political statement intended to force Mexico to back away from any assertion of force and avoid war altogether. Mexico's response, in defense of its historic claim to the territory on which Fort Brown stood, marked the start of the US-Mexican War. The war would mark the final stage of US expansion to the Pacific. Expansion was hastened by Anglo-American and Anglo-European immigrants hungry for new land and natural resources, which came largely at the expense of Mexico and those American Indian and Mexican people who already occupied the land.

The establishment of Fort Brown represents US territorial policy driven both by economics and international dynamics. President Thomas Jefferson viewed the Louisiana Territory as a buffer between the US and other colonial powers, particularly Great Britain. The Louisiana Purchase also guaranteed US control of the Mississippi River, a vital trade route, and its lucrative Gulf Coast port at New Orleans. Though the fur trade established the initial American economic presence on the western frontier, it was trade in agricultural products – first tobacco, then wheat, cotton, rice, and sugar – that drove a seemingly insatiable desire for more land. The search for gold, silver, and other minerals was another powerful driver of territorial expansion, as was the quest for Pacific ports and to open trade with Asia. Gulf Coast trade and emerging dominance of cotton in the South were particular factors in the Anglo-American migration to Mexican *Tejas* (anglicized as Texas).

In 1819, US President James Monroe signed the Adams-Onís Treaty with Spain which established the southwestern boundary between the US and Spain's Mexican territory along the Sabine River. This marked the eastern border of the *provincia de Tejas* (province of Texas), which extended south to the Rio Nueces. *Tejas* and the adjoining parts of the Coahuila and Santander provinces north of the Rio Bravo del Norte (Rio Grande) were populated by descendants of Spanish soldiers sent to populate the remote northern territory in the early

[10] The fort's location on the river peninsula was militarily extremely vulnerable to crossfire from two points on the opposite bank of the river. For this reason, and its exposure to constant flooding, the fort was moved to higher ground at the head of the peninsula after 1848.

eighteenth century. By the time of Mexican independence from Spain in 1821, approximately 4000 *Tejanos* occupied the territory in isolated *rancheros* (ranches) or mission settlements. Beginning in 1823, with permission from Mexico's government, Stephen Austin initiated his Texas colony, in which approximately 1000 Anglos settled each year through 1830. By the 1836 Texas Revolution, 3500 *Tejanos* remained, while the tide of Anglos had reached nearly 30,000, along with 5000 enslaved African Americans.[11]

Westward migration of Anglo-Americans led to mass displacement of Americans Indians. As new indigenous groups pushed into the disputed area between Spain and the United States, groups who predated them such as the Lipan Apache and the Comanche spread deeper into the region.[12] It is estimated that tens of thousands of American Indians were present in Texas' borderland territory in the early nineteenth century.[13] Andrew J. Torget addresses how the economic and military power of American Indians helped shape the borderland culture in his book *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands (1800-1850).* Torget explains: "…Indian nations, the Comanches in particular, decimated the Spanish presence in the region, pushed Mexicans toward embracing American immigration, and fundamentally shaped Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo-American government policies by forcing non-Indians in the territory to address the demands and agendas of native groups."[14] One way in which these demands were met was through trade. By the 1820s, at a time when the southern United States' cotton industry was booming, American Indians in Texas embraced the thriving market as they traded buffalo hides, deerskins, and much needed horses for goods no longer available from the Spanish such as arms and ammunition.[15]

The explosion of Anglo settlers in the fertile northeastern section of what became the Republic of Texas (later the US state of Texas) was emblematic of the Anglo-American belief that the United States was destined to engulf the continent. It was a belief founded in the perceived superiority of Anglo-American culture over those who might stand in the way, specifically American Indians, but also English, French, Spanish, or Mexican interests. In an 1845 editorial for the *Democratic Review*, John L. O'Sullivan coined the phrase that would define American expansion to the Pacific Coast, accusing foreign nations of interfering with "the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence..."[16] With that phrase, O'Sullivan hoped to build public support for US acquisition of the Oregon Territory and annexation of the Republic of Texas as steps in extending US territory from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Canada to the Rio Grande. One year after O'Sullivan's article was published, construction of the Fort Brown fortification marked the beginning of the final stage of that hoped-for US westward territorial expansion.

When Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, it inherited the vast territories north of the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande) including *Tejas,* Alta California, and Nuevo Mexico. Mexico's struggle to establish a permanent government pitted those in favor of a centralized, autocratic government against those who favored a constitutional republic fashioned after the US confederation of states. Under the brief tenure of the federalist republican government established by the 1824 Mexican Constitution, the remote and sparsely populated *Tejas* lost its status as an autonomous province and was subordinated to the adjoining state of *Coahuila*. The *Tejano* ruling class, who maintained local control over the *Tejas* territory, viewed Austin's successful Anglo colony as

[11] Gutiérrez, "The Latino Crucible: Its Origins in 19th-Century Wars, Revolutions, and Empire."

[12] James David Nichols, *The Limits of Liberty: Mobility and the Making of the Eastern U.S.-Mexico Border*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 18-28.

[13] Andrew J. Torget, *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands (1800-1850),* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 25.

[14] Ibid., 10.

[15] Ibid., 36-39.

[16] As cited in Julius W. Pratt, "John L. O'Sullivan and Manifest Destiny," *New York History* 14.3 (Jul 1933), 222.

a way to increase the population and obtain full autonomy for *Tejas*. Unable to stop the Comanche whose raids intensified as access to arms improved through the lucrative horse trade, Mexico desired Anglo-American immigration into the Texas frontier. By filling this gap, they would become a buffer to help protect vulnerable *Tejano* settlements.[17] Thus American settlement in *Tejas* was encouraged and Mexican laws against slavery largely ignored in the territory. A growing Gulf Coast trade in beef, cotton, and sugar with New Orleans merchants enriched Anglos as well as some *Tejano* ranchers and enhanced an independent spirit in the population.[18]

The new Anglo Texans, however, chafed at regional *Tejano* authority, and more particularly at the increasingly autocratic central Mexican government under Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. Anglo Texans retained close ties with the American South, both culturally, through their Anglo-American heritage, and economically, through trade and an economy founded largely on enslaved labor. These cultural and economic divides within the Texas territory would lead to a violent rebellion resulting in Texas independence in 1836. The Texas Revolution lasted less than a year, but its implications along the Texas (later US)-Mexico border would be staggering. The 1836 Treaties of Velasco laid out the terms of peace between Mexico and Texas. General Santa Anna, who led the failed Mexican fight to keep Texas in Mexico, was a prisoner of the victorious Texan forces when he signed the treaties, in which he agreed to send his army "to the other side of the Rio Grande del Norte."[19] From the Texan point of view, this treaty agreement established the southwestern border of the Republic of Texas along the Rio Grande. The Mexican government refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the treaties and the border, claiming that Santa Anna was a prisoner under duress when he signed the agreement. More importantly, the Mexican government pointed out that Mexico had always drawn the southwestern boundary of the *Tejas* territory at the Rio Nueces. The boundary dispute would simmer for the next ten years, leaving thousands of acres – and thousands of people – in contested territory between the Rio Nueces and Rio Grande.

The Republic of Texas now included fewer than 3500 *Tejano* citizens, many living in the disputed territory along the Rio Grande. Anglos and *Tejanos* remained separated by language, culture, and for many, religion (Protestant versus Catholic) and resentment against the *Tejanos* grew among Texas Anglos in the new Republic. Though some *Tejanos* had joined with the Texans in the fight for independence, most supported re-establishing the *Tejas* state within the renewed federalist Mexico promised by Santa Anna. While under Mexican rule, *Tejanos* had occupied positions of authority. Under Texas rule, Anglos would now dominate government. Many *Tejanos* lost land their families had occupied for generations, based on lineage tracing back to Spanish soldiers who occupied the territory for Spain. Others, like Juan Seguin, managed to defend their property rights. In 1845, legislation was introduced in the Texas legislature that would have limited voting rights to "free whites." Seguin, one of only four *Tejanos* elected representative, led the successful fight to defeat the legislation, but it was a clear demonstration that Mexican or Spanish heritage in Texas was identified as non-white.[20] At the same time, agitation for United States' annexation of the Texas Republic was gaining traction in the US Congress. It was an idea that found little support within the *Tejano* community.

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[17] Torget, 50-51.

[18] William C. Davis, *Lone Star Rising* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 75-76.

[19] "The Treaty of Velasco (Public), May 14, 1836," *Texas State Library & Archives Commission*, www.tsl.texas.gov/treasures/republic/velasco-public-1.html, accessed 27 Jun 2017. Santa Anna was eventually released to return to Mexico, but by then support for his government had collapsed. William C. Davis, *Lone Star Rising* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 305.

[20] Timothy M. Matovina, "Between Two Worlds," in Gerald E. Poyo, ed. *Tejano Journey, 1770-1850* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 101-104.

The proposal to annex the independent Republic of Texas was hotly debated in US Congress over several years. The issue of Texas and territorial expansion was closely tied to the growing sectional (North-South) divide over slavery. Many Northerners (free states) opposed to expansion viewed it as a ploy to expand slavery and increase Southern (slave states') power in Congress.[21] Expansionists coveted not just the Texas territory, but all of the Mexican territory encompassing the southwest region and much of the Pacific Coast. Several US presidents tried to purchase the Mexican territories of Alta California and Nuevo Mexico, but all were rebuffed by the Mexican government. In 1845, expansionists won the fight for Texas when outgoing President John Tyler signed the resolution passed by Congress in favor of annexing Texas as the twenty-eighth US state. Mexico's reaction was immediate. In his letter of protest, Mexican Foreign Minister Luis G. Cuevas called the resolution "offensive" and warned that "diplomatic relations between the two countries cannot be continued."[22] In November 1845, President James K. Polk tried again to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the territorial dispute, sending US envoy John Slidell who, over the next several months, failed to even get a meeting with Mexican representatives.[23] As a precaution, Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor to Louisiana with 2000 troops, termed the Corps of Observation, available for defense of the new state of Texas and its US border along the Rio Grande if necessary.

Following the Texas legislature's approval of US annexation on July 4, 1845, General Taylor's troops moved into Texas, spending the fall and winter in Corpus Christi. In March 1846, Taylor's army of now more than 3500 men, renamed the Army of Occupation, began their march south "to take a position upon the left bank of the Rio Grande."[24] Taylor's plan was to first secure the harbor at Port Isabel as a supply depot, then move his troops along the Rio Grande. General Taylor felt confident in his force, writing to the US Army Adjutant General, "I do not believe that our advance to the banks of the Rio Grande will be resisted. The army, however, will go fully prepared for a state of hostilities, should they unfortunately be provoked by the Mexicans."[25] In the meantime, Mexican General Francisco de Mejia, commanding the garrison in the Mexican town of Matamoros immediately south of the Rio Grande, sent a request to Mexico City for reinforcements.

The dispute had become an international boundary issue and a potential pretext for war. For Mexico, any official US presence in the contested territory between the Nueces and Rio Grande would be considered an act of war.[26]

Construction of Fort Brown and the US-Mexico War (1846-1848)

By the end of March 1846, Taylor's command of now-more than 3800 men arrived on the north bank of the Rio Grande.[27] Taylor had chosen a site on the river immediately opposite Matamoros, where the presence of American troops – and the US flag – could be seen across the channel. There he ordered an earthen fort to be constructed. Located within a deep loop of the serpentine river, the flat ground of the open floodplain would

[21] See Cheryl LaRoche, "The Balance Principle: Slavery, Freedom and the Geography of Statehood," in Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery* (New Haven: Yale University, 2010) and Robert W. Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009).

[22] Mexican Foreign Minister Luis G. Cuevas to US Ambassador Wilson Shannon, March 28, 1845, quoted in Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs*, 176.

[23] See Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs*, for a complete discussion of the debates and negotiations surrounding Texas annexation and the southwest territories.

[24] Charles M. Robinson, *Texas and the Mexican War* (Texas State Historical Association, 2004), 16.

[25] Taylor to Adj. Gen., US Army, February 26, 1846, as cited in Robinson, *Texas and the Mexican War*, 15.

[26] Robinson, *Texas and the Mexican War*, 9.

[27] Matt M. Matthews, "The U.S. Army on the Mexican Border: A Historical Perspective," *The Long War Series Occasional Paper* 22, Fort Leavenworth, KS, Combat Studies Institute Press, 17.

provide a clear view from the fort parapets for observation of enemy movements and artillery fire if necessary. Captain Joseph King Fenno Mansfield (1803-1862) of the Army Corps of Engineers, designated chief engineer by General Zachary Taylor, oversaw the design and construction of the fortifications and survived the Mexican bombardment of the fort.[28] He described his use of the landscape in his placement of one of the batteries (Battery of Two Bombs):

> We have erected a regular breach battery complete of 4 eighteen pounders in a line perpendicular to the heart of the city and 1400 yards from the same but only about 600 yards from their batteries on the opposite shore which we disregarded in this work. This object being to command the city and hold them [in] check, which we most effectually do.

Mansfield continued with a description of the placement of the hexagonal or "star" fort with bastions at each of the six points:

> We have commenced our strong field fort 100 yards further off and on some rising ground of six bastions forts [sic] all of which have been commenced and every gun we have is now in place pointing towards the batteries on the opposite side. Three of the forts [bastions] are nearly completed and the work has a strong profile. Cover line from 9 to 10 feet above the general level on the crest, ditch about 8 feet deep and from 15 to 22 feet broad. Three regiments per day are detailed to work on the defenses. Six magazines are in contemplation but 2 only are about finished. Four of the points are 125 yards and two of them 150 yards. Our position is a bold and decisive one and will tell under any circumstances (Fig. 1)...[29]

The Mexican batteries mentioned included those that became known as the Mortar Battery and the Lower Fort Battery. Captain Mansfield produced a map of the earthworks (see Figs. 2 and 3).[30]

As he set his men to construct the earthen fortification initially called Fort Texas (later Fort Brown), more Mexican troops arrived in Matamoros.[31] Even as the Fort Texas earthworks began to rise on the riverbank, several US troops were killed by local *rancheros*. By April, the Mexican irregular force across the river numbered approximately 5000, under the command of Major General Pedro de Ampudia. Several attempts at

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[28] Jerry Thompson, ed., *Texas & New Mexico On the Eve of the Civil War: The Mansfield & Johnston Inspections, 1859-1861* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001) 4. See also Richard T. Marcum, "Fort Brown, Texas: The History of a Border Post," PhD dissertation (Lubbock, TX: Texas Technological College 1964).

[29] Letter, Captain J. K. F. Mansfield to Colonel Joseph Totten, 23 April 1846, quoted in Michael Scott Van Wagenen, *A Cultural Landscape Inventory of the Fort Brown Siege Site* (Jun 2012), 103, on file with the National Park Service, American Battlefield Protection Program. Additional descriptive details of the original Fort Brown earthworks can be found in Thomas Bangs Thorpe, *Our Army on the Rio Grande* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1846), and Letter, Napoleon Jackson Tecumseh Dana to Susan Sanford Dana, 12 May 1846, quoted in Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Monterrey is Ours! The Mexican War Letters of Lieutenant Dana, 1845-1847*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 62-64.

[30] Steven L. De Vore (formerly with the NPS Midwest Archeological Center) and Rolando Garza (formerly with the NPS Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park) conducted an electronic resistivity meter survey of the subsurface features of the fort within the boundaries of the National Historic Landmark: "… in spite of daily pedestrian and golf cart use, there is a clear underground footprint of the fort where the southern bastions once stood. This study gives compelling evidence that there may be significant subsurface features of the fort outside of the NHL boundaries. There may also be below ground features of the Battery of Two Bombs, Mortar Battery [now on the US side of the Rio Grande due to river channel movements], and Lower Fort Battery," Van Wagenen 77-78. See also Steven L. De Vore and Rolando L. Garza, *The Beginnings of the Mexican War in 1846: Geophysical Investigations of the Fort Brown Site, Cameron County, Texas,* Midwest Archeological Center Technical Report No. 4. (Lincoln: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 2014).

[31] "Although referred to as 'Fort Taylor' and 'Fort Texas' by its garrison, Zachary Taylor did not give the fortress an official name until he christened it 'Fort Brown' after the siege to honor its slain commander." Michael Scott Van Wagenen, "A Cultural Landscape Inventory of the Fort Brown Siege Site" (National Park Service, American Battlefield Protection Program, 2012), 10.

military diplomacy failed. Ampudia's initial contact with Taylor demanded the immediate withdrawal of US troops to the northeast bank of the Nueces, indicating that a failure to do so would "clearly result that arms, and arms alone, must decide the question."[32] Taylor responded by claiming that the US presence on the border was not meant to escalate tensions:

> I have been ordered to occupy the country up to the left bank of the Rio Grande, until the boundary shall be definitively settled. In carrying out these instructions, I have carefully abstained from all acts of hostility, obeying, in this regard, not only the letter of my instructions, but the plain dictates of justice and humanity.[33]

He continued that the onus of war would be Mexico's responsibility: "I regret the alternative which you offer; but, at the same time, wish it understood that I shall by no means avoid such alternative, leaving the responsibility with those who rashly commence hostilities." In the meantime, US warships were sent to blockade the mouth of the Rio Grande, effectively laying siege to the Mexican troops in Matamoros. Taylor wrote that the blockade would "compel the Mexicans either to withdraw their army from Matamoros, where it cannot be subsisted, or to assume the offensive on this side of the river," again effectively forcing Mexico to appear to be the aggressor.[34] On April 24, Mexican Major General Mariano Arista arrived with additional troops in Matamoros. Arista had already ordered 1600 cavalry troops to cross the Rio Grande in preparation for an attack on the Americans. On the 25th, a detail of sixty-three US dragoons sent to reconnoiter the Mexican position were ambushed. Taylor reported that sixteen men were killed or wounded, and the remaining soldiers were taken prisoner. General Taylor took this as an act of war, writing in his report to Washington, DC, "Hostilities may now be considered as commenced."[35]

It would be more than a week before General Taylor's report of hostilities on the Mexico-Texas border reached President Polk in Washington, DC. On May 9 the President sent a written request to Congress to "recognize the existence of the war" along with an appropriation request to resupply and expand Taylor's army. President Polk outlined his and previous administrations' attempts at diplomatic negotiations for the purchase of the southwest territories and settlement of reparations relating to earlier conflicts within Mexico. The US Envoy to Mexico, he noted, had recently been rejected by Mexico City:

> The Mexican Government not only refused to receive him, or listen to his propositions, but after a long-continued series of menaces, have at last invaded our territory and shed the blood of our fellow citizens on our own soil.
>
> ...In further vindication of our rights and defense of our territory, I invoke the prompt action of Congress to recognize the existence of the war, and to place at the disposition of the Executive the means of prosecuting the war with vigor, and thus hastening the restoration of peace.[36]

Polk pointedly claimed the disputed territory between the Nueces and Rio Grande as US territory, a claim firmly disputed by Mexico. Polk's concluding statement that Mexico had "shed American blood on American soil" was not universally accepted in the US, either. Abraham Lincoln, a freshman representative from Illinois,

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[32] General Pedro de Ampudia to General Zachary Taylor, 12 April 1846, in Van Wagenen 98.
[33] General Zachary Taylor to General Pedro de Ampudia, 12 April 1846, in Van Wagenen 99.
[34] As cited in Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs*, 241.
[35] Matthews, "The US Army on the Mexican Border," 20-21.
[36] *The Congressional Globe*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, May 11, 1846, pages 782-783, "A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 – 1875," *The Library of Congress*, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llcg&fileName=016/llcg016.db&recNum=829, accessed 24 Jun 2017.

famously introduced the "Spot Resolutions," requesting the president prove that the "spot of soil on which the blood of our citizens was shed" was indeed legally on American soil.[37]

The actual hostilities that began on the bank of the Rio Grande on April 25 did not wait for the May 13 declaration of war in Washington, DC, as the conflict continued to escalate through early May. On May 1, General Taylor issued Order No. 55. Upon receiving intelligence that Mexican General Torrejon's troops were heading toward Point Isabel, Taylor divided his army, marching the bulk of his men north to protect the supplies at Point Isabel, while leaving 500 men of the 7th Regiment of Infantry at Fort Texas under the command of Major Jacob Brown. On May 2, General Arista began crossing the majority of his troops over the Rio Grande with the aim of isolating Taylor in Fort Brown, but the crossing took a full day to complete. Arista left General Mejia in command in Matamoros. The men garrisoned at Fort Texas watched as the priests of Matamoros moved from battery to battery, blessing the cannons in preparation for the coming siege of the US fortification.[38]

The siege of Fort Texas began at dawn on May 3, 1846, with a bombardment from the Mexican Mortar Battery and Lower Fort Battery in Matamoros. On this day the first US casualty occurred with the death of Sergeant Horace Weigart.[39] One artilleryman was also injured. Major Brown returned fire, disabling two Mexican guns in the Lower Fort, but after firing nearly half his available rounds, he ordered the fort's cannons to discontinue. Because of the limited supply of shot and shell, Fort Texas guns remained relatively silent throughout the six-day siege. Instead, Brown kept the men busy finishing the fortifications and constructing bombproofs that would prove their worthiness over the next few days.

Two days after leaving the fort, General Taylor sent Captain Walker and several of his Texas Rangers to assess the fort's ability to hold until his return. Along the way they observed the gathered troops of Generals Arista and Torrejon encamped at Palo Alto, a wide plain bisected by the Camino de Santa Isabel. Walker arrived at the fort on May 4, three days into the siege. Major Brown reported that they could hold the fort "against any force the enemy could bring against him."[40] The following day, May 5, Walker and Brown found that part of Ampudia's force had been sent to occupy Taylor's former encampment to the north of the fort, effectively encircling the besieged fortification. They also had constructed a new battery at the crossroads to the northwest of the fort. Despite this, the Rangers eluded attempts to prevent their return to Taylor at Point Isabel where Walker delivered the news of the siege and Brown's resolve. Taylor reported to his Washington, DC, superiors that he would wait for reinforcements from Louisiana before returning to the fort to "resume offensive operations."[41]

On May 6, the daily bombardment continued, now coming from three directions. Though the accuracy of the Mexican shells had improved, still only one death and a few casualties were incurred among the US soldiers and civilians inside the fort. But that day, a shell from the crossroads battery found its mark, shattering Major Brown's left leg. As he was carried off to the fort surgeon, Brown reportedly ordered his anguished men, "go to your duties, stand by your posts; I am but one among you."[42] Assigning Captain Edgar S. Hawkins to assume

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[37] "Lincoln's Spot Resolutions," *National Archives Educator Resources*, www.archives.gov/education/lessons/lincoln-resolutions#documents, accessed 27 Jul 2017.

[38] Van Wagenen 18-19.

[39] The story of Weigart's death and burial was told by Napoleon Jackson Tecumseh Dana in a letter to his wife Susan Sanford Dana, May 4, 1846, see Ferrell 58-60.

[40] Thorpe, *Our Army on the Rio Grande*, quoted in Van Wagenen 151.

[41] General Zachary Taylor to Adjutant General of the Army, 5 May 1846, Van Wagenen 108.

[42] Thorpe, *Our Army on the Rio Grande*, in Van Wagenen 153.

command, Brown left his fate to the surgeon who amputated his leg above the knee and moved him to a bombproof to recover. Two days later, just hours before the siege was broken, Major Jacob Brown succumbed to infection and died.[43]

Captain Hawkins continued Brown's policy of conserving the fort's limited supply of shells until Mexican infantry and cavalry appeared to be threatening the fortification from the north. Hawkins promptly turned the maneuverable six-pounders to the north and fired grapeshot canisters at the exposed men. Those who survived quickly retreated. Several hours later, Mexican officers carrying a white flag appeared on the ground in front of the fort. They handed Hawkins a letter from General Arista requesting the fort's surrender. After consultation with the other officers of the fort, Hawkins sent his reply, "I must respectfully decline to surrender my forces to you."[44] The Mexican batteries responded with a renewed barrage. Hawkins fired back with the big eighteen pounders whose booming report served as a pre-arranged signal to General Taylor that the fort continued to hold. Meanwhile, the 7th Infantry Regimental band played *The Star Spangled Banner*, several regimental flags were posted on the parapets, and the US flag still clung to the fort's flagstaff, frustrating the efforts of the Mexican artillerymen.[45]

The morning of May 7 revealed a Mexican battery under construction northeast of the fort, dubbed by the defenders as the "Guardhouse Battery" for its location near an abandoned guardhouse. Captain Hawkins ordered a barrage of canister fired at the men building the battery, putting a stop to its construction. Later that day it became clear that Mexican infantry was testing a southern approach on the riverbank using an abandoned traverse constructed under General Worth's direction. Hawkins later reported: "As soon as it was dark enough, a party headed by our indefatigable engineer, Captain Mansfield, was sent out to level the traverse thrown up by General Worth, and cutting down the chapparal [sic] which served as a cover to the sharp shooters of the enemy."[46]

Unknown to the exhausted fort garrison as they endured the fifth day of the siege, General Taylor had finally begun his march southward, laden with supplies in a wagon train of 200 wagons, but without the hoped-for reinforcements. Taylor also brought with him two additional eighteen-pound cannons and eight "smaller guns."[47] General Taylor's movement in fact forced General Arista to delay a ground attack on the fort by Ampudia's forces. Arista rightly anticipated the coming battle and would need Ampudia's men to reinforce his own, now encamped south of Palo Alto at Tanques de Ramireño. On the morning of May 8, Arista ordered Ampudia to rejoin the forces at Palo Alto. Leaving their encampment north of the fort under cover of cannon fire from Matamoros, the Mexican troops arrived as Taylor was setting up his line at the northern edge of the wide plain. Using to their advantage the mobility of the light artillery, Taylor's US troops won the day.[48] As night fell, Arista's troops withdrew to camp, leaving their dead and wounded behind. General Taylor estimated the Mexican force at 6000 men (though Arista stated he had about 3000), along with 800 cavalry. He credited his artillery and "the excellent manner in which it was manoeuvred [sic]" – later dubbed the "flying artillery" – with their ability to answer every move of the exposed Mexican forces on the open plain of Palo Alto.[49]

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[43] Van Wagenen, 43.

[44] Van Wagenen, 32; see also Captain E. S. Hawkins to Division General Mariano Arista, 6 May 1846, Van Wagenen, 109.

[45] Ibid., 32, 43; "The Bombardment of Fort Brown," *Picayune*, 21 May 1846, and Captain E. S. Hawkins to Captain W. W. S. Bliss, 10 May 1846, in Van Wagenen, 114.

[46] Captain E. S. Hawkins to Captain W. W. S. Bliss, 10 May 1846, Van Wagenen, 113-114.

[47] Van Wagenen, 38.

[48] Ibid., 109-110.

[49] General Zachary Taylor to the Adjutant General of the Army, 9 May 1846, quoted in Van Wagenen 110.

The sound of the artillery fight at Palo Alto reached Fort Texas during a lull in the afternoon's bombardment from Matamoros, giving the men hope that Taylor would soon arrive to break the siege. Thorpe described their joyful reaction:

> The soldiers in the fort sprang as one man to their feet, and listened. The sounds of artillery continued to roll on the plain; a simultaneous shout rose from the men in the fort...they could scarce suppress their feelings; for amidst ball and bomb pouring into the fort, they could, hour after hour, hear that distant cannonading, growing more and more distinct. It was too much. Gen. Taylor was surely driving the enemy before them, and in despite of the deadly missiles that rattled as a storm of hail over the fort, the men sprang upon the parapets, and fairly silenced the thunder of the bombardment with their repeated cheers.[50]

On the following day, May 9, their joy turned to sorrow as Major Brown succumbed to his wound.

Though the morning of May 9 had begun as all the others with a cannonade from Matamoros, the moment of Brown's death was reportedly eerily silent.[51] The quiet continued for an hour when it was suddenly broken by the sound of artillery fire four miles to the north at Resaca de la Palma. There Taylor's column again clashed with the Mexican force, this time entrenched within the wooded ravine. Three regiments of US infantry and a squadron of dragoons overran the Mexican lines. Lieutenant Dana recalled the intensity of the fight, "The Mexicans stood their ground for some minutes like men, fighting hand to hand with sword and bayonet...the Guarda Costa from Tampico, would not give an inch and were entirely cut to pieces," concluding, "Our fellows fought like devils."[52] The Mexican line collapsed in a panic as men ran for safety south of the Rio Grande.

Lookouts on the Fort Texas parapets observed the flood of retreating Mexican infantry and cavalry approaching the wide plain around the fort seeking a quick crossing over the river to safety in Mexico. They were quickly followed by Taylor's men in pursuit. At the sight of the US flag still flying over the fort's parapet, wrote Thorpe, the men "raised to the glory of its defenders, a shout...and it was sent back from the fort until cheer answering cheer, reverberated along the valley of the Rio Grande."[53] The siege was over. As Major Brown was laid to rest next to the flagstaff, General Taylor officially named the seemingly indestructible fortification, Fort Brown, after its gallant commander.

In 1849 Nathan Covington Brooks wrote in his book *A Complete History of the Mexican War: Its Causes, Conduct, and Consequences*, that the defense of Fort Brown "was undoubtedly one of the most brilliant achievements of the war." The earthen fort had been hit with thousands of shells, he observed, "and every ten feet of its area ploughed up by a bomb," proof of its structural integrity and the bravery of the men who defended the fort.[54] Only two men were killed, Major Brown and Sergeant Weigart, and a handful were injured. After the siege was broken, Fort Brown immediately went into service as a hospital for the hundreds of injured, both US and Mexican, following the battles at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. The adjoining landscape filled with tents as the men set up camp to rest, recover, and await new orders. Significantly, the Fort Brown siege ended on the same day that President's Polk's war message to Congress was delivered, May 9, 1846, with the declaration of war coming four days later. Lieutenant W.H. Chatfield, who was stationed at Fort Brown around 1890, wrote in 1893 that the fort had remained "a strongly fortified position on the frontier throughout the

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[50] Thorpe, *Our Army on the Rio Grande*, quoted in Van Wagenen, 156.
[51] Ibid., 157.
[52] Napoleon Jackson Tecumseh Dana to Susan Sanford Dana, 13 May1846, quoted in Van Wagenen, 133.
[53] Thorpe, *Our Army on the Rio Grande*, quoted in Van Wagenen, 158.
[54] Nathan Covington Brooks, *A Complete History of the Mexican War: Its Causes, Conduct, and Consequences* (Philadelphia: Grigg, Elliot & Company, 1849), in Van Wagenen, 176.

Mexican War," the damages incurred by the bombardment having been "thoroughly" repaired before Taylor's advance into Mexico.[55] On May 18, Taylor's forces crossed the Rio Grande and occupied Matamoros.

Fort Brown's strategic position and open landscape continued to be utilized as camp and training ground for some of the thousands of volunteers responding to the US government's call to arms.[56] The fort served as supply depot, passing supplies across the river to occupied Matamoros, from which they followed the US troops as they moved deeper into Mexico. Robert N. Pruyn, who enlisted in the 7th Regiment at the age of twelve in New York, was still a young drummer boy during the siege at Fort Brown and followed with the regiment into Mexico, where Taylor took Matamoros and later Monterrey. In a 1913 interview, he recalled events of 1846 following the conclusion of the Fort Brown siege,

> …we had to sit down and toil through the summer, drilling, waiting for wagon trains, for provisions, for almost everything there is needed for an army… It took all of June, July, and August...Finally we got away on the march to Monterrey, with our Texas Rangers and the dragoons in the vanguard, and other Texans covering our flanks and great creaking ox trains of provisions and water and ammunition behind the plodding infantry and the rear guard.[57]

The Mexican army proved to be no match for US troops. General Winfield Scott's "Army of Invasion" not only captured Veracruz, Santa Anna's home port city, but defeated forces under General Santa Anna's command at Mexico City, capturing the capital city on September 14, 1847 in the last battle of the war.[58] On February 2, 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo officially ended the war that began with the construction of Fort Brown.

The terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo satisfied the Polk administration's goal of territorial expansion with the "Mexican Cession," amounting to nearly half of Mexico's territory. Article V ceded the departments of Alta California (today's California) and Nuevo Mexico (New Mexico), which also included an area covering today's Arizona, parts of Utah, Nevada, and Colorado. Mexico also surrendered its claim to the Texas territory and agreed to the middle of the Rio Grande as the boundary between the US and Mexico. Following the boundary lines identified on the 1847 *Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Méjico*, by American mapmaker John Disturnell, the US southern boundary would continue from the Rio Grande along the southern New Mexico territory line to the Gila River, then to its junction with the Colorado River and across in a straight line between Upper and Lower California to the Pacific Ocean. Article XII of the treaty provided for the payment of fifteen million dollars by the US to Mexico in exchange for the acquired territory. The US government additionally assumed payment of the three million dollars claimed by US citizens as reparations against the Mexican government for loss of property during earlier Mexican conflicts.

Significantly, Article IX (as amended by Congress) provided for the rights and citizenship of Mexicans who now found themselves within US borders and determined to stay there:

> The Mexicans who, in the territories aforesaid, shall not preserve the character of citizens of the Mexican Republic...shall be incorporated into the Union of the United States and be admitted as soon as possible, according to the principles of the Federal Constitution, to the enjoyment of all

[55] Lt. W. H. Chatfield, *The Twin Cities of the Border and the Lower Rio Grande* (New Orleans: E.P. Brandao, 1893), 1.
[56] John S. D. Eisenhower, *So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 99.
[57] Robert N. Pruyn, *Recollections of the Siege of Fort Brown*, 1913, in Van Wagenen, 139.
[58] For an excellent analysis of the events and "cast of characters" of the US-Mexico War, see Eisenhower.

> the rights of citizens of the United States.[59]

This was an important provision for the thousands of former Mexican citizens living on the north side of the Rio Grande. Many had already faced attempts to seize their ancestral lands.

Legal scholar Sara C. Bronin's 2022 article, "Land Grab: The Untold Story of Fort Brown," published in the *Latino Book Review*, details the sequence of land claims in their pertinent complexity.[60] José Salvador de la Garza was first granted ownership of a four-hundred square mile tract, known as the *Portero del Espíritu Santo*-grant, in 1781. This claim was honored in 1821 with Mexican independence and again under the new Republic of Texas in 1836. By 1802, María Francesca Cavazos, widow of Salvador de la Garza's son, had inherited the grant. In 1835, Miguel Salinas, who leased 23 acres of the grant beginning in 1826, purchased this acreage from a successor owner who acquired them in 1833.[61] Ultimately, however, María Francesca Cavazos transferred the same property twice, resulting in decades of legal proceedings, the first part between Salinas family descendants against the United States government, beginning with Salinas's son and brother of Juan Nepomuceno, José Antonio, as well as lawsuits involving Anglo businessman Charles Stillman into the 1890s.[62] The Salinas family and niece María Josefa Salvador's descendants also remained in dispute against one another.

> The Stillmans' connections likely were crucial in leading a Congressional committee in 1885 to appropriate $160,000 to compensate property owners for the Fort Brown taking. The Secretary of War asked a critical question to the Attorney General of Texas: under state law, who gets the money? After review, the Attorney General suggested that the proceeds be split between Charles Stillman and another of Stillman's associates. He acknowledged Salinas's claim for unpaid rent but opined that the unpaid rent should not be compensated by the Congressional grant. Despite trips to the Fifth Circuit and even the Supreme Court of the United States, the Salinas heirs ultimately received nothing. A 1905 visit to the U.S. Supreme Court seemed to end the mess of poorly-reasoned (or at least poorly-explained) decisions. The Court found that once compensation had been distributed to Stillman and his associates, the Court lacked jurisdiction to award a dime to the Salinas-descended claimants.[63]

Meanwhile, Fort Brown had been constructed, as General Zachary Taylor claimed the property with its improvements for use by the federal government on April 14, 1846. The lease authorizing land seizure to make way for Fort Brown and displace those who occupied the area was signed by Miguel Salinas. Salinas did not

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[59] "Peace, friendship, limits, and settlement (Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo)," in Charles I. Bevans, ed., *Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America, 1776-1949*, Vol. 9, Department of State Publication 8615 (1972), https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/lltreaties//lltreaties-ustbv009/lltreaties-ustbv009.pdf, accessed 27 Jul 2017. The amended Article IX also guaranteed free practice of the Roman Catholic religion.

[60] Sara C. Bronin, "Land Grab: The Untold Story of Fort Brown," *Latino Book Review* (9 Jul 2022), https://www.latinobookreview.com/8203land-grab-the-untold-story-of-fort-brown-by-sara-c-bronin--latino-book-review.html, accessed 23 Sep 2022. This article should be considered critical to understand and interpret fully a site history that includes not only development and military use of Fort Brown, but the cultural and ownership history with its attenuant social and economic relationships to communities and families at the borderlands.

[61] Bronin, 4, contains important additional detail.

[62] Ibid., 7.

[63] Ibid., 9.

speak the language (English) in which the lease was written, thereby suggesting to Bronin that the agreement was an "unconscionable" lease.[64]

In 1847, Rafael García Cavazos took to US federal court to evict Mexican squatters from the land. They received their "labor rights" for land within the then-disputed territory from the government in Matamoros. The court vacated the squatters' claims, but not before Charles Stillman purchased them. Stillman's new town of Brownsville soon followed. Cavazos sued Stillman, the court case lasting from 1848 to 1850, when Cavazos finally sold his claim to Stillman rather than face additional court fees.[65] Stillman was not the only speculator in the Brownsville area. Local judge Rice Garland reportedly "bought land certificates in Matamoros," then "advertised in the *Brownsville American Flag* on June 2, 1847, that 'Mexican law and authority are forever at an end...by the laws of Texas no alien can hold real estate within its limits,'" adding in Spanish, presumably for the Mexican landowners, that "preparations are being made to locate other claims on the land covered by such titles."[66] In light of the treaty provision, Garland's threats were not entirely correct. Under the annexation agreement between the US and Texas, the state government would maintain authority over public lands and land disputes. The Texas State Land Office was inundated with claims from settlers – and speculators – who had followed the "Army of Occupation" into the Rio Grande valley where they established headright claims on land often occupied by *Tejanos* with ancestral claims.[67] In 1850, the Texas legislature authorized the Bourland and Miller Commission to review the contested claims. *Tejanos* holding Spanish or Mexican land grants to disputed property were required to produce proof of their ownership. Of the 343 claims reviewed by the commission, 234 were confirmed.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo further addressed the question of securing the border. Article XVI allowed both Mexico and the US "the entire right to fortify whatever point within its territory, it may judge proper so to fortify, for its security."[68] This provision proved significant for the continued use of Fort Brown and a new line of similar installations along the Rio Grande boundary. The treaty, as amended, was ratified by the US Senate on March 10, signed by President Polk on March 16, and finally, ratified by Mexico and "Entered into force May 30, 1848."[69]

Re-envisioning Fort Brown (1848-1861)

While Article XVI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo allowed for fortifications such as Fort Brown to be in place along the US-Mexico border, the treaty also included two provisions that laid the groundwork for an extended US Army presence along the Rio Grande border between Mexico and the United States. Article XI established the US government's responsibility for guarding the border against Indian raids. The Plains tribes, including Comanche, Apache, and Kiowa, among others, were legendary horsemen who, in addition to hunting

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[64] Bronin, 5, writes: "No doubt Salinas was stunned and confused. Surrounded by a hostile occupying force of 4,000 troops, he had no choice but to 'sign' a written lease with the quartermaster, G.H. Crossman. The lease was written in English, a language Salinas did not speak (…) the soldiers stationed at Fort Brown benefited not only from its perfect strategic location, but from the work Salinas had put into the land. The structures he had built became officers' quarters, storage, and hospital facilities. The Army used some of Salinas's fencing to bomb-proof Fort Brown, and one of the cattle pens for his horses."

[65] Armando Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy: Rancheros and Settlers in South Texas, 1734-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 147-148.

[66] Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy*, 147.

[67] Galen D. Greaser and Jesus F. de la Teja, "Quieting Title to Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in the Trans-Nueces: The Bourland and Miller Commission, 1850-1852," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (4 Jan 1992): 446, https://digital.library.txstate.edu/handle/10877/3859, accessed 13 Feb 2018.

[68] "Peace, friendship, limits, and settlement (Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo)," 801.

[69] Ibid., 791.

buffalo, frequently raided Mexican and American ranches.[70] The tribes did not acknowledge the international border, reportedly crossing and re-crossing the Rio Grande. The other significant treaty provision addressed the impact of the new border on the Mexicans who now found themselves or their property within US territory. Article VIII guaranteed the property rights of Mexican citizens on the north side of the Rio Grande. Though the treaty promised equal treatment, "as if the same belonged to citizens of the United States," in practice many Mexican and *Tejano* landowners lost their land to "eager Anglo entrepreneurs."[71] Growing mistrust and resentments between Mexican, Anglo, and *Tejano* residents along the Rio Grande led to decades of strife along the border. These two issues of border security identified by the 1848 treaty prompted the US Army to make improvements to the Fort Brown installation and begin construction of a line of forts along the Rio Grande and north along the Texas frontier. The US commitment to maintain the peace along the US-Mexico border would extend the US Army presence on the border well into the twentieth century.[72]

Following the treaty resolution of the US-Mexico War in 1848, the Fort Brown facility was re-evaluated by the US War Department for use pursuant to the treaty provisions. A more permanent cantonment had already been constructed on the high ground northwest of the *resaca*, an oxbow remnant of an earlier river course generally called a "lagoon" on US Army maps. The cantonment, which is shown on the Whiting map originally draw in January 1849, included officer's quarters, infantry barracks, a hospital, and Quartermaster supply buildings. In January 1849, Lieutenant William H. C. Whiting, Army Corps of Engineers, recommended the construction of a redoubt and "small Bastion work" on the higher ground well northwest of "old Fort Brown." Whiting believed the additional fortification was needed to protect the garrison from attack from the northeast, observing that an attack from the peninsula "between the Lagoon & River" was unlikely as it "would expose the enemy to heavy loss." His plan provided for an escape route from the redoubt to the "Bastion" using the bank of the resaca as cover.[73] These additional earthworks were never constructed at Fort Brown. With the "old Fort Brown" earthworks all but abandoned, it was perhaps decided that fortifications were no longer needed to serve the fort's purpose.

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[70] Robert M. Utley, *Lone Star Justice: The First Century of the Texas Rangers* (New York: Berkley Books, 2002), 22; see also, Article XI, "Peace, friendship, limits, and settlement (Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo)."

[71] "Peace, friendship, limits, and settlement (Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo)," 796.

[72] Matt M. Matthews, *The U.S. Army on the Mexican Border: A Historical Perspective*, The Long War Series, Occasional Paper 22, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2007. Ringgold Barracks (1848, later Fort Ringgold), Fort McIntosh (1849), and Fort Duncan (1849) were all located on the left bank of the Rio Grande (see Comparative Sites section). A line of additional forts ran north along the settlement frontier. These were supplemented through the 1850s as the frontier moved west. See "The Frontier Forts of Texas," *Texas State Historical Association, Texas Almanac*, http://texasalmanac.com/topics/history/frontier-forts-texas, accessed 27 Jul 2017. While many Anglos viewed the troubles with Mexicans and *Tejanos* as banditry, many of the men accused of being *banditos* were viewed by other Mexicans and *Tejanos* as cultural heroes (see section below: *The Cortina Wars (1859-1861): Two Sides of the Story*).

[73] Lt. Wm. H.C. Whiting, "Sketch of a portion of The Military Reserve near Fort Brown with a plan for its defense," Jan. 22, 1849, (NARA, Record Group 77, Series "Miscellaneous Forts File: Plans of Military Posts in the United States, 1840 – 1920"). Transcription of Whiting's description: "It is seen from the drawing, that owing to the unfortunate location of the Northern limit, the high ground, the only site worth having is somewhat restricted, the town of Brownsville being built directly outside the limit. The small Bastion work however having a command over the Town, the latter would serve as an outpost for the garrison. The flat on the opposite bank of the river is very low and completely swept by the fire of the work which is in good shell range of Matamoros. Attack by the neck between the Lagoon & River would expose the enemy to heavy loss & it becomes necessary to advance therefore by the North East. This involves the taking of the Redoubt which fires on the capital of the attacked Bastion. This little work should have a strong profile and be fraised. Its capture would be difficult & when forced out its garrison have a secure means of retreat under cover of the bank to the main works." (Note the definition of "fraise" is, "an obstacle of pointed stakes driven into the ramparts of a fortification in a horizontal or inclined position." (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fraise).

Several additional unfortified army installations were established in 1849 on the north bank of the Rio Grande northwest of Fort Brown. The Ringgold Barracks was located near the new Texas town called Rio Grande City, approximately 100 miles upriver from Brownsville, constructed in 1848 to protect the crossing to the Mexican town of Camargo. Another 100 miles up the Rio Grande, Camp Crawford, later called Fort McIntosh, was established in March 1849. Located near Laredo, a former Mexican village now within the US border, the camp sat on a bluff overlooking a ford of the Rio Grande known as "Indian Crossing." Fort Duncan was the remotest of the early posts on the Rio Grande, established in March 1849.[74] From Fort Duncan, another line of new forts ran northeastward along the Texas frontier – a frontier that quickly out-paced fort construction as settlers continually pushed further west.

Despite the quick designation of the Texas forts, President Polk and Congress failed to man the garrisons to the levels sought by army officials. On July 6, 1848, Polk informed Congress that he believed "the old army, as it existed before the war with Mexico…will be a sufficient force to be retained in service during a period of peace."[75] The army was thus reduced to a peacetime total of 10,000 men and only three of the fifteen US Army regiments were mounted. [76] Fort Brown, like the newer Rio Grande forts, was garrisoned variously by one to four companies during this period, anywhere from fifty to two hundred men.[77] The 1849 plat of the Fort Brown facilities appears to indicate that only infantry was stationed at the fort at that time.

As Mexico continued to struggle to create a stable government, the border region remained "in constant political and military turmoil."[78] Exorbitant Mexican tariffs spawned a lively smuggling trade in cotton and beef across the Rio Grande. The "brisk trade" between Brownsville and Matamoros, according to Lt. Col. William G. Freeman on his inspection of Fort Brown in July 1853, had been slowing due to the "late unlawful expeditions against Mexico, of which it was the centre."[79] Freeman was likely referring to the exploits of *Tejano* revolutionary José Carbajal, who sought to create an independent republic from the northern Mexican provinces.[80] Ultimately, in this period Matamoros and Brownsville shared deep transnational commercial as well as social connections; exchange and passage between the two was frequent and not easily disrupted.[81]

US boundary survey commissioner Major William H. Emory was in the vicinity of Brownsville in the summer of 1853 and noted in his official report that Carbajal (spelled Caravajal) "had retired to the American side of the

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[74] "Fort Duncan," *TSHA: Texas State Historical Association*, https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbf17, accessed 27 Jul 2017; M. L. Crimmins, ed., "W.G. Freeman's Report on the Eighth Military District (continued)," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 52 (July 1948-April 1949): 100-108, Texas State Historical Association, Austin, TX, https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth101121/m1/107/, accessed 11 Sep 2017.

[75] James K. Polk, "Special Message," July 6, 1848, American Presidency Project, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=68017, accessed 7 Feb 2018.

[76] Richard W. Stewart, ed., *American Military History* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, US Army, 2009), 194. The army was expanded to nearly 13,000 in 1850, and again in 1855 – this time with the addition of two infantry regiments and two cavalry regiments, the 1st and 2nd Cavalry, whose primary role would be north of the Rio Grande border.

[77] "War Department. Fort Brown, Texas. 1865-1945," Administrative History Note, *National Archives Catalog*, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/10454120, accessed 29 Aug 2017.

[78] Utley, *Lone Star Justice*, 94.

[79] Crimmins, "W.G. Freeman's Report on the Eighth Military District (continued)."

[80] In 1835, politician José María Jesús Carbajal aided the Texas insurgents and he or his brother Mariano may have signed the Goliad Declaration of Independence. In 1846, he advocated for an independent republic in northern Mexico and fought with the Mexican army against the US. From 1850 through 1853 "he led American merchants and filibusters in the border engagements known as the Merchants War." See "Carbajal, José María Jesús," *TSHA: Texas State Historical Association*, https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fca45, accessed 21 Sep 2017.

[81] Jerry Thompson and Lawrence T. Jones III, *Civil War & Revolution on the Rio Grande Frontier: A Narrative and Photographic History* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2004) 5, 16.

river, and was occupied in making occasional forays into Mexico, aided by some American volunteers."[82] American filibusters were opportunists who sought monetary gain by agitating Mexican instability, and they were an ongoing problem according to Emory. US troops stationed at the river forts conducted aggressive operations "to break up the enlistment of men and the concentration of filibustering forces on our side of the river." These operations apparently had little effect on illegal border activities, which Emory noted were being perpetrated by "the majority of persons on the frontier."[83]

Clearly, the unstable conditions along the Rio Grande border called for a continued US Army commitment to the border forts. Given Fort Brown's strategic position opposite Matamoros, a significant point of entry for both legal and illegal trade across the US-Mexico border, particular attention was paid to improvements at the fort. By 1853 the Fort Brown cantonment had taken on a more permanent appearance with new buildings surrounding a parade ground, and to the east a brick building housing the stables.[84] Lt. Col. Freeman's inspection tour, which occurred several months before Major Delafield's survey visit, described the Fort Brown facilities:

> The present post does not occupy the site of old Fort Brown, but is above it. It has no defenses and the command are quartered, in framed houses.... Being the principal point on the river, a garrison must always be maintained here as long as the opposite bank is Mexican soil. Some arrangements for defense should therefore be made and barracks provided for at least a regiment of men. The present force is entirely inadequate.[85]

The garrison included only two companies, both from the 4th Artillery Regiment, including Light Company B, fifty-two men who Freeman described as "recently remounted," and Company K, with fifty-one men who operated as infantry. Freeman noted that the battery included "two pieces and two Howitzers," which, according to his sketch map of the fort, would be housed in the "Brick Gun Shed...unfinished." Two months later, Major Delafield's detailed survey map showed the same brick building described as "Stables...unfinished, yet occupied," which likely housed the newly remounted artillerymen's horses. Freeman's sketch also provides a view of the buildings missing from Delafield's damaged map, including the Company barracks, Quartermaster supply buildings, a guard house, and sutler's store, and a substantial hospital building. Major Freeman remarked on the growing incidents of epidemics, including "yellow fever, cholera, and the dengue twice," noting that Fort Brown had, up to about 1851, been considered to be in a "healthy position."[86]

In 1856, Colonel Joseph K. F. Mansfield inspected the forts within the Department of Texas (formerly the 8th Military District). On May 2, 1856, Mansfield arrived at Fort Brown where he stayed through the 8th to include a visit to the Quartermaster supply depot at Brazos Santiago. The Fort Brown garrison by then had three companies from the 4th Artillery Regiment in residence, including Company K with thirty-two men, Company M with twenty-one men, and Light Company B with sixty-three men, for a total of one hundred sixteen enlisted men (eighty-seven active) and seven officers. The mounted artillery (Co. B) had thirty-four "serviceable horses"

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[82] *Report on the United States and Mexican boundary survey: made under the direction of the secretary of the Interior, by William H. Emory, Major First Cavalry, and United States Commissioner* (Washington DC: Wendell, printer,1857-59), 61, www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/213, accessed 20 Sep 2017.

[83] Emory, *Report*.

[84] Maj. Richard Delafield, Corps of Engineers, "Survey of part of the ground occupied by the United States near Fort Brown and adjoining Brownsville," Sep 1853, on file with NARA, Record Group 77, Series "Miscellaneous Forts File: Plans of Military Posts in the United States, 1840 – 1920".

[85] Crimmins, "W.G. Freeman's Report on the Eighth Military District (continued)." In 1853, Lt. Col. Freeman was deputy inspector to Major J.F.K. Mansfield, Inspector General, who was then inspecting the forts in New Mexico territory.

[86] M. L. Crimmins, ed., "W.G. Freeman's Report on the Eighth Military District (continued)," 100-108.

and fourteen "condemned" horses. Mansfield described the stable, which in 1853 was still under construction, as "a miserable old brick stable two stories high formerly a gun shed and too dangerous to keep horses in."[87] Though he suggested that a new stable be built, he urged that the Light Battery should instead be moved to a better location, noting that "this locality is either very dusty or muddy, & of course, very bad for this drill." Colonel Mansfield observed that the services of the mounted artillerymen "are not at all required," later saying that "there are no Indians about here."[88]

Little else had changed at Fort Brown since Freeman's inspection in 1853. Mansfield praised many of the other buildings, including "a good bakery" and "a good brick magazine" (also noted by Freeman), and found "the store houses & quarters at this post all sufficient and probably the best in Texas." He described the hospital as "ample & in excellent order," and reiterated Freeman's observation that the post was "unhealthy" noting, "There has been yellow fever here, and in 1853 fifty seven died of that disease."[89] The recurring incidences of tropical fevers at Fort Brown would later be the focus of study at the fort hospital in the 1880s. Interestingly, Major Mansfield made no mention of the old earthen fortification he designed, helped build, and occupied during the siege of 1846.[90]

The 1850s improvements at Fort Brown came even though the Military Reservation on which the fort and cantonment stood was embroiled in a land dispute with the founders of Brownsville and the descendants of the previous landowner José Narciso Cavazos. At the time of its establishment in 1846, Fort Brown and its adjoining "camping grounds" was located within the eighteenth-century Spanish land grant of José Salvador de la Garza. The grant included land on both the south and north sides of the Rio Grande, the northern lands often used for cattle and sheep grazing. According to Texas historians Alicia A. Garza and Christopher Long, a settlement had begun to grow on José de la Garza's land on the north bank of the river opposite Matamoros as early as 1836, while his ranch was located sixteen miles to the northwest.[91] That settlement was in place at the time of then-Captain Mansfield's 1846 map of the Fort Brown vicinity, located along the path leading to the lower ferry.

In 1848, Charles Stillman purchased part of the de la Garza tract from "the children of the first wife of José Narciso Cavazos," and the settlement would form the nucleus of Brownsville. The town was platted in December 1848 by Stillman, Samuel Belden, and Simon Mussina, partners in the Brownsville Town Company. Though the town company claimed the land on which Fort Brown stood, by 1854 that claim appeared to have been settled by the court. A map drawn by Major Delafield in March of 1854, indicated that the land area "bounded by the River & fence [was] valued by a Jury at $50,000." Delafield noted that this map was a copy of one loaned to him by "Judge Dunlop, Trustee of the lands claimed the City of Brownsville," adding "Other parties claim the same property."[92] Those "other parties" were the heirs of Cavazos' second wife, including Juan N. Cortina. Their claim was not settled until 1879 when the US Supreme Court found in favor of Stillman and

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[87] M.L. Crimmins, ed., "Colonel J. K. F. Mansfield's Report of the Inspection of the Department of Texas in 1856 (continued)," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 42.3 (Jan 1939): 216-217, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30235837, accessed 18 Sep 2017.

[88] Crimmins, "Colonel J.K.F. Mansfield's Report," 217 and 220.

[89] Crimmins, "Colonel J.K.F. Mansfield's Report," 218.

[90] Ibid., 237.

[91] Alicia A. Garza and Christopher Long, "Brownsville, TX," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdb04, accessed 1 Sep 2017. See also Terri Myers, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Rio Grande City, Starr County, Texas," National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), 2004, page E-5, for a good discussion of Spanish Colonization in the Lower Rio Grande region.

[92] Maj. Richard Delafield, Corps of Engineers, "Ground enclosed and occupied by the United States," 26 Mar1854, on file with NARA, Record Group 77, Series "Miscellaneous Forts File: Plans of Military Posts in the United States, 1840 – 1920."

the City of Brownsville.[93] Cortina's connection to this land claim would soon impact what Colonel Mansfield described in 1856 as a "friendly intercourse" between the people of Brownsville and Matamoros.[94]

The Cortina Wars (1859-1861)

Just as the original fortification served as a symbol of the US claim to Texas territory, the physical improvements made to the Fort Brown installation in 1853 were the material manifestation of US enforcement and occupation along the Rio Grande border. However, during the 1850s, the army's focus increasingly turned to protecting Texas frontier settlers and the migrants following the California trails.[95] Thus, in 1859, Department of Texas commander Brevet Major General David E. Twiggs decided to vacate the border forts and assigned the troops to a "strike force into Indian territory."[96] General Twiggs' decision to abandon the Rio Grande forts left the border essentially unattended. Despite Mansfield's rosy picture of Mexican-Texan relations, tensions had been simmering for decades. In 1859, those tensions boiled over in the form of Juan Nepomuceno Cortina, whose border incursions became known as the "Cortina Wars."

Depending on who described him, Juan Cortina was either the "Robin Hood of the Rio Grande" or a dangerous bandit. Lieutenant W. H. Chatfield, author of the 1893 promotional booklet, "The Twin Cities of the Border and the Country of the Lower Rio Grande," described Juan Cortina as a lawless strongman. Wanted for murder and horse stealing, according to Chatfield, Cortina "visited Brownsville openly, well-armed and surrounded by sturdy followers. Any attempt to arrest him would have been extremely hazardous and he was generally given a wide berth."[97] But others, particularly Mexicans and *Tejanos*, viewed Cortina quite differently. Cortina advocated for Mexican residents and the poor of the Rio Grande valley, earning his reputation on both sides largely through his activities in and around Brownsville in 1859 and 1861.

In July 1859 during a visit to Brownsville, Cortina witnessed the violent arrest of a former ranch hand (or servant) by the town marshal. Outraged, Cortina shot the lawman and escaped with the prisoner. In September 1859, taking advantage of the absence of troops at Fort Brown, Cortina and his men returned to Brownsville on a mission to free Mexicans held in the city's jail. They took possession of the town, killed four men they claimed had committed injustices against Mexican people, and occupied "the deserted garrison of Fort Brown," according to Major Samuel P. Heintzelman, who was dispatched with a detachment of 165 army regulars to dislodge Cortina and his men.[98] Cortina retreated to his family's ranch outside of Brownsville where he issued

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[93] Garza and Long, "Brownsville, TX." Juan N. Cortina's mother, Estéfana Goseacochea de la Garza, was the daughter of José Salvador de la Garza.

[94] Crimmins, "Colonel J.K.F. Mansfield's Report," 220.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Matthews, *The U.S. Army on the Mexican Border*, 33.

[97] Lieutenant W. H. Chatfield, *The Twin Cities of the Border and the Country of the Lower Rio Grande* (New Orleans: E.P. Brandao, 1893), 2.

[98] Major Heintzelman, March 1, 1860 report as cited in Chatfield, *Twin Cities*, 2. See also Jerry Thompson, *Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2007), regarding the Cortina attack on September 28, 1859: "Disarming the lone guard in charge of the powder magazine, the raiders attempted to batter down the iron doors, hoping to explode 125 barrels of powder; besides, the keys to the magazine were kept at the ordnance depot on Brazos Santiago. Just as dawn broke over the gulf, several of the *Cortinistas* attempted to raise the Mexican flag on the flagstaff on the parade ground but could not find enough rope to do so." See also p. 43, "Another victim, George Morris, a blacksmith by trade and town constable, had worked for the army and was still living at Fort Brown. Hearing gunshots, Morris jumped out of bed only to see a band of men heading into the fort. Struggling to put on his pants, he grabbed a pistol, stumbled outside, and hid under the house. When Morris's wife, Luciana, persuaded the raiders that her husband was not at home, and when they turned to leave, one of the men spotted Morris under the house. Springing for safety, Morris raced across the parade ground only to be cut down by a withering rifle and pistol fire."

his famous proclamation in which he stated, "Mexicans! …To me is entrusted the work of breaking the chains of your slavery…. On my part, I am ready to offer myself as a sacrifice for your happiness…."[99] Cortina's success in bringing *Tejanos* to his cause – or insurgency, depending on the point of view – was emblematic of the despair many *Tejanos* felt about their losses of land and status in Texas. Heintzelman concluded, "He was the champion of his race—the man who would right the wrongs of the Mexicans and drive back the hated Americans to the Nueces."[100]

Major Heintzelman's force fought Cortina and his men, estimated at nearly 400, at Rio Grande City where Cortina was defeated and escaped to Mexico. Cortina was again repulsed near Rio Grande City by a force led by Colonel Robert E. Lee, then commander of the Eighth Military District. It was more than a year later before Cortina would return to Texas soil in May 1861, this time taking advantage of the distraction of Texas' recent secession from the United States at the start of the American Civil War.[101] But Cortina's window of opportunity was closed.[102] The border forts, including Fort Brown, were now reoccupied, first briefly by US troops, then by Confederates.

The American Civil War (1861-1865)

Much of the political pressure for US territorial expansion through the first half of the nineteenth century came from representatives of Southern states whose economies depended upon enslaved African and African American labor. In order to balance representation between states where slavery was legally allowed (mostly Southern, slave states) and the states where slavery had been outlawed (mostly Northern, free states), Congress followed a careful, unofficial "balance principle" in the creation of new states from acquired territories.[103] There was widespread resistance in the Northern states to Texas annexation (a slave-holding territory) and expansion into Mexican territory, fearing a Southern plan to expand slavery and tip the balance of power in their favor. In the end, the US expansion to the Pacific Coast in 1848 tipped the balance of power toward the free states. The country's North-South sectional divide widened through the 1850s and finally erupted in 1861 into civil war.

In January 1861, an elected Texas convention passed a resolution of secession, removing the state of Texas from the union of the United States and joining the Confederate States of America. Citing the failure of the US government to protect Texas citizens from "Indian savages" and Mexican "banditti," the document also made it clear that the primary reason for removal was to enable the perpetuation of institutionalized enslavement of African Americans. With approval by the citizens of Texas by a three-to-one margin, Texas joined six other Southern states in forming the Confederacy, which eventually numbered eleven states.[104] Responding to this rending of the union, US President Abraham Lincoln led the remaining "Union" states in a four-year civil war to end the rebellion and restore the United States to its former configuration.

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[99] As cited on "Explorations: Songs of Mexican American Resistance and Cultural Pride," *Digital History*, www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/mexican_songs/cortina.cfm, accessed 24 Sep 2017.

[100] Major Heintzelman, March 1, 1860, report, as cited in Chatfield, *Twin Cities*, 2.

[101] Confederate Captain Santos Benavides defeated Cortina in 1861 and forced his retreat into Mexico. Cortina then became involved in Mexico's fight against the French.

[102] However, for discussion of *Cortinistas* raids on cattle ranches between 1871 and 1875, see Thompson, *Cortina*, 208, 226.

[103] LaRoche in Ellis and Ginsburg, eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery*, 234.

[104] "Declaration of Causes: February 2, 1861," *Texas State Library and Archives Commission*, www.tsl.texas.gov/ref/abouttx/secession/2feb1861.html, accessed 24 Sep 2017.

Throughout the war, the Confederacy depended on the sale of the cash crops of the American South, particularly cotton, to support their war effort. With US Navy blockades of the southern Atlantic and Gulf Coast ports beginning in April 1861, the Confederacy turned to the Texas-Mexico border to move their products to international markets. Brownsville became a major Confederate port, with cotton passing south through Mexico on its way to Europe in exchange for war supplies for the Confederacy passing north into Texas.[105] Teamster John Warren Hunter described "a never ending stream of cotton pouring into Brownsville…the greatest shipping point in the South," while "Matamoros became a great commercial center, [with] cotton and other commodities...pouring into her warehouses."[106] Clearly Fort Brown would be a vital Confederate possession to oversee protection of the important Brownsville-Matamoros trade route.

In February 1861, the Texas Committee of Public Safety entered negotiations with Brigadier General David E. Twiggs, commander of the US military Department of Texas, "for the surrender of all Federal property in the state."[107] In exchange for safe passage out of Texas and retention of their side-arms, Twiggs agreed to evacuate US Army troops from Fort Brown and the other Texas forts. In their place arrived Confederate troops, largely volunteers recruited in Texas. Fort Brown and Brazos Santiago were first occupied by the Confederate Second Texas Cavalry, commanded by Colonel John S. Ford, a former Texas Ranger who had served in the US-Mexican War and more recently helped to defeat Cortina. While at Fort Brown, Colonel Ford reportedly negotiated the trade agreement between the Confederacy and Mexico, which he and his men also protected on their border patrols.[108]

Confederate repairs of the old Fort Brown earthwork began in May 1861, according to a report published in the *Daily True Delta*:

> The old fort, overgrown with trees and weeds, swarmed with men armed with axes and spades, to clear off and repair it for a fight; and, as we write, its walls, ditches, bastions, and magazines are coming to the light in all their original strength.

The "battery of 48-pounders" planned for the old fort's bastions included "long guns and howitzers and 10-inch mortars," with ammunition and stores enough to last a year or more. The report concluded, "and if Mr. Lincoln's friends come along, they had better bring eighteen months stores with them, and a medicine chest filled with yellow fever antidotes.[109] Despite this bravado and the preparations on the fortifications, Union troops under the command of Major General Napoleon Jackson Tecumseh Dana did retake Fort Brown in November 1863.

Since the start of the war, Union ships had blockaded Southern ports to prevent the sale of cotton, rice, and sugar to European markets, depriving the South of important income. It was part of a plan developed by General Winfield Scott in 1861 known as the "Anaconda Plan" to fight the Confederacy by strangling its economy and

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[105] "Fort Brown," National Historic Landmark documentation, 1986; Alwyn Barr, "Texas Coastal Defense, 1861-1865," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (July 1961), 1.

[106] John Warren Hunter, "The Fall of Brownsville on the Rio Grande, November, 1863," (typescript, Biographical File, Barker Texas History Library, University of Texas, Austin), 4-5, cited in Ronnie C. Tyler, "Cotton on the Border, 1861-1865," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 73 (Jul 1969-Apr 1970): 456.

[107] Jeanne T. Heidler, "'Embarrassing Situation': David E. Twiggs and the Surrender of United States Forces in Texas, 1861," in Robert Wooster and Ralph Wooster, eds., *Lone Star Blue and Gray: Essays on Texas and the Civil War* (Texas State Historical Association, 2015), 65, https://muse.jhu.edu/, accessed 19 Sep 2017.

[108] Stephen B. Oates, ed., *Rip Ford's Texas* Personal Narratives of the West (University of Texas Press, 1987).

[109] "Later from the Rio Grande," *Daily True Delta*, May 10, 1861, courtesy Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park, 25 Sep 2017.

dividing it along the Mississippi River. It was not until 1863, long after Scott's retirement, that Union generals revisited other elements of the plan as events west of the Mississippi drew their attention. The lucrative Texas-Mexico cotton trade needed to be stopped, particularly now with French Emperor Napoleon III engaged in an overthrow of the Mexican government.[110] The Confederacy had been courting France (and Britain) in the hope of gaining legitimacy through recognition – and help – from a foreign government. In August 1863, President Abraham Lincoln wrote to General Ulysses S. Grant that "in view of recent events in Mexico, I am greatly impressed with the importance of re-establishing the national authority in Western Texas as soon as possible."[111] Lincoln's General-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck agreed, pressing General Grant to conduct a campaign west of the Mississippi, being "necessary as a matter of political or state policy, connected with our foreign relations, and especially with France...that our troops should occupy and hold at least a portion of Texas."[112]

Thus, in the fall of 1863, Major General Nathaniel P. Banks, commander of the Department of the Gulf, led the troops to reoccupy Texas.[113] General Dana's Second Division of the Thirteenth Army Corps, with approximately 4500 men including an attachment of the 1st Engineers and 16th Infantry of the *Corps d'Afrique* ("colored" troops), formed the Rio Grande Expedition to secure the US-Mexico border.[114] On November 5, 1863, Confederate General Hamilton P. Bee at Fort Brown reported "that he had been forced to evacuate Fort Brown, and was then retiring with a large and valuable train and 100 men; that he would await orders at King's ranch..."[115] As the Confederates retreated in the face of the Union advance, they set fire to the fort's garrison buildings, which also burned several adjoining blocks of Brownsville, according to General Banks' report. General Bee reported that the fire burned "some commissary stores and a considerable amount of quartermaster's stores" and also set off an explosion of 8000 pounds of power stored at the fort.[116]

General Dana, who in 1846 helped build the old Fort Brown earthwork and endured the seven-day siege of the fort, took charge in Brownsville on November 13 as General Banks moved to acquire the remaining Texas Gulf ports to the north. In light of the Confederate destruction of the fort buildings, the Union troops that remained at Fort Brown were garrisoned in "temporary huts" in Brownsville, the fort becoming known as the "Post at

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[110] Thomas W. Cutrer, *Theater of a Separate War: The Civil War West of the Mississippi River, 1861–1865* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 286, https://muse.jhu.edu/, accessed 19 Sep 2017. Napoleon III installed "the puppet emperor" Maximillian, archduke of Austria, as the head of the Mexican government, but met determined resistance from the Mexican army.

[111] Louis P. Masur, *Lincoln's Last Speech: Wartime Reconstruction and the Crisis of Reunion,* Pivotal Moments in American History (Oxford University Press, 2015), 46.

[112] Cutrer, *Theater of a Separate War*, 286.

[113] "Instructions from Gen. Halleck," Nov. 9, 1863, reprinted in "THE RED RIVER EXPEDITION; Minority Report on the Responsibility of Gen. Banks for its Failure," *New York Times*, May 25, 1865, www.nytimes.com/1865/05/25/news/red-river-expedition-minority-report-responsibility-gen-banks-for-its-failure.html?pagewanted=all, accessed 8 Feb 2018.

[114] Maj. Gen. N. T. Banks to Maj. Gen. H. W. Halleck, November 6, 1863, from the Headquarters of the Department of the Gulf at Brownsville, Texas, *The war of the rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*, Series 1, Vol. 26 (Part I), 398, http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu, accessed 26 Sep 2017. Dana had taken command of the Second Division following Maj. Gen. F. J. Herron's leave of absence.

[115] Clement Anselm Evans, ed., Col. O. M. Roberts, *Confederate Military History, a library of Confederate States Military History: Volume 11.1, Texas*, 119, www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2001.05.0255%3Achapter%3D14, accessed 9/25/2017.

[116] Banks to Halleck, Nov. 6, 1863; Brig. Gen. H. P. Bee to Capt. Edmund Turner, Assistant Adjutant-General, District of Texas [CSA], Nov. 8, 1863, *The war of the rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*, Series 1, Vol. 26 (Part I), 434.

Brownsville."[117] Dana then turned his attention to building new fortifications to protect the Union garrison, starting work on November 16, 1863. By January 7, 1864, Dana reported the First Regiment Engineers, Corps d'Afrique had "about completed" the work on the new fort.[118] On January 15, Major General F. J. Herron, now at Brownsville having returned to his command of the Second Division, reported that General Dana had determined to forego repair of the old earthwork in favor of constructing new fortifications "at a point three-fourths of a mile above Brownsville," within the next curve of the Rio Grande above the old fort. Dana's reasoning, wrote Herron, was "That the latter work was not large enough to accommodate the garrison and hold the supplies and public property, should it be necessary...to withdraw from the town and occupy the fort." Herron continued:

> The new work situated in the first bend of the river, above Fort Brown, was laid out by Capt. A. Hoeppner, and consists of several well-built redoubts, connected by rifle-pits, the works extending across the bend, having a front of 600 yards, and inclosing in the rear at least 100 acres of ground. I consider the site much the best in this neighborhood, and the work infinitely superior in every respect to old Fort Brown.[119]

In a February 11 report, Herron noted the works, now called Fort Montgomery, were "constructed of sand, and, although not as strong as could be wished, would nevertheless enable the garrison to make a stout defense."[120] The garrison at that time consisted of over 3000 men, including two "partially formed" Texas cavalry regiments, seven infantry regiments, and two batteries.

Despite Herron's assessment of the defensive capabilities of the new earthworks, Major General Edward O. C. Ord, commanding the Thirteenth Army Corps, strongly suggested that old Fort Brown should be repaired. After personally inspecting the new works Ord appeared to be appalled, describing them as "not reliable either in arms or construction":

> The revetments will fall down from the shock of our own guns; you will strengthen them. The enemy can, by crossing the river, enfilade and take in reverse the whole line of works, which is entirely open on that side, and the river only 300 or 400 yards wide. You will therefore erect such field-works within the present line on the river bank as will prevent an attacking force establishing batteries on the opposite bank within range, except by regular approaches. Close the gorges of the small works by traverses. You will raise the parapet of the work in front of each gun so that the cannoneers will not, as now, have half their persons exposed. Construct embrasures for the guns. Build sheds and magazines within the works for thirty days' supply of ammunition and provisions. Repair Fort Brown and mount six heavy guns therein, as soon as you can get them.[121]

In response to Ord's February 12 assessment, General Herron set his men to work immediately. On February 23 Herron reported, "Major Hamilton is at work on Fort Brown, and will push it to completion with the greatest

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[117] "War Department. Fort Brown, Texas. 1865-1945," Administrative History Note, *National Archives Catalog*, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/10454120, accessed 29 Aug 2017.

[118] Maj. Gen. N. J. T. Dana to Brig. Gen. Charles P. Stone, Jan. 7, 1864, *The war of the rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*, Series 1, Vol. 34 (Part II), 38.

[119] Maj. Gen. F. J. Herron to Brig. Gen. Charles P. Stone, Jan. 15, 1864, *The war of the rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*, Series 1, Vol. 34 (Part II), 85.

[120] Maj. Gen. F. J. Herron to Maj. Gen. E. O. C. Ord, Feb. 11, 1864, *The war of the rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*, Series 1, Vol. 34 (Part II), 295, 297.

[121] Maj. Gen. E. O. C. Ord to Maj. Gen. F. J. Herron, Feb. 12, 1864, *The war of the rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*, Series 1, Vol. 34 (Part II), 309.

rapidity. The force is engaged at present on the outer works, near each end of the lagoon."[122] A plan showing the new and repaired Fort Brown fortifications was prepared in June 1864.

In the end, all of these preparations came to nothing. The Matamoros cotton trade continued, though along a more difficult route through Laredo and Eagle Pass to the northwest of Brownsville. Confederate Colonel Santos Benavides and his men of the 33rd Cavalry provided protection for the precious cargo as it made its way down the Rio Grande to Matamoros, slipping by the improved earthworks at Fort Brown.[123] Then on July 5, 1864, General Herron received orders to abandon "Fort Brown and its dependencies on the Rio Grande."[124] The force was moved to New Orleans, while a detachment of men occupied Brazos Santiago with the Fort Brown supplies. These changes came following General Grant's promotion to Commanding General of the Army or General-in-Chief, replacing General Halleck. Grant believed the war would be won in the Eastern Theater and within eight months he would be proven correct. On April 9, 1865, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia, bringing the US Civil War to an end. Except in Texas.

When the Union troops vacated Fort Brown in July of 1864, Confederate Colonel John S. Ford and his men returned to fill the void. They held Fort Brown through the remainder of the war and continued to maintain a defensive posture into May 1865, a full month after Lee's surrender. The Battle of Palmito Ranch on May 13, 1865, also called the "last land battle of the war,"[125] took place along the Brownsville and Brazos Island Road, south of Fort Brown near the Palmito (Palmetto) and San Martin ranches. Colonel Ford's men routed Union skirmishers, but cut short the chase toward Brazos after their horses grew fatigued.[126] Of this engagement Colonel O. M. Roberts, author of the *Confederate Military History, a library of Confederate States Military History* (1899), remarked: "This was the last battle of the war in Texas. Why, under the then existing circumstances, it was brought on and fought, was not explained."[127]

In 1867, the Brownsville National Cemetery was established on the "island" in the middle of the lagoon on the Fort Brown Military Reservation. Burials from the US-Mexico War, located in the post cemetery near the riverbank, were removed to the National Cemetery in Pineville, Louisiana, where Union dead from the Civil War were also interred. The cemetery grounds, which are not part of the National Historic Landmark, also included the graves of "six hundred colored soldiers" who died during a small-pox epidemic at the fort, according to Lieutenant Chatfield, and others from a yellow fever outbreak in 1885-86.[128]

The US Army Asserts the Monroe Doctrine on the US-Mexico Border (1865)

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[122] Maj. Gen. E. O. C. Ord to Maj. Gen. F. J. Herron, Feb. 23, 1864, *The war of the rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*, Series 1, Vol. 34 (Part II), 402.

[123] "Under the Rebel Flag: Life in Texas during the Civil War," *Texas State Library and Archives Commission*, https://www.tsl.texas.gov/exhibits/civilwar/1864_2.html, accessed 13 Feb 2018.

[124] Major and Assistant Adjutant General C. T. Christensen to Maj. Gen. F. J. Herron, July 5, 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. 41 (Part II), 46.

[125] The actions of *CSS Shenandoah* continued to militarily engage at sea after May 1865.

[126] As cited in Clement Anselm Evans, ed., Col. O. M. Roberts, *Confederate Military History, a library of Confederate States Military History: Volume 11.1*, *Texas*, Atlanta, Ga. 1899, 127-128.

[127] Evans, ed., *Confederate Military History*, 129.

[128] Chatfield, *Twin Cities of the Border*, 28; *Brownsville Herald*, 22 Mar1936, quoted in "National Cemetery, Brownsville, Cameron Co.," *Cemeteries of TX*, www.usgennet.org/usa/tx/topic/cemeteries/Etx/Cameron/Cemetery/national.htm, accessed 9/28/2017. See also Therese Sammartino, "Civil War Era National Cemeteries," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service 1994.

Within days of the Battle of Palmito Ranch, General Philip Sheridan arrived in Texas with orders from General Grant to 1) put an end to the rebellion in Texas and 2) make a show of force on the border with Mexico to encourage the French to vacate the hemisphere. US President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward were pursuing a diplomatic route to remove "Emperor" Maximilian and return elected Mexican President Benito Juarez to power. General Grant, however, believed only a "vigorous military response" would persuade the French to leave. Grant cautioned Sheridan in his unofficial orders to "act with great circumspection, since the Secretary of State, Mr. Seward, was much opposed to the use of our troops along the border in any active way that would be likely to involve us in a war with European powers."[129]

Under the pretext of preventing "escaping Confederates from joining Maximilian," General Sheridan moved large numbers of US troops to stations around Texas, including divisions of the United States Colored Troops (USCT). Some Union troops were already in place at Brownsville, including several United States Colored Troops (USCT) regiments, which fanned out along the borderlands.[130] US Army Combat Studies Institute Press historian Matt M. Matthews detailed:

> Three regiments of the USCT entered the Rio Grande Valley in the fall of 1864. Encamped at Brazos Santiago, a detachment of the 62nd Infantry fought Confederates at the Battle of Palmito Ranch on May 13, 1865. Two weeks later, on May 30, the 62nd, along with other U.S. Army units, moved into Brownsville. By May 1865, nearly 16,000 USCT veterans of the 25th Corps arrived at Brazos Santiago from City Point, Virginia, and were quickly dispersed to Fort Brown at Brownsville, Ringgold Barracks at Rio Grande City, Fort McIntosh at Laredo, and Fort Duncan at Eagle Pass, as well as to smaller posts where they were assigned to prevent former Confederates from establishing their defeated government and army in Mexico.

Anthropologist Antonio Zavaleta also sought to present as comprehensive list of USCT contributions in the Brownsville vicinity as possible, beginning with the 62nd and 65th Regiment Infantries at Brazos Santiago in the 1864-1866 period.[131] The 68th, 76th, 85th (consolidated with the 77th), 87th, and 95th Regiment Infantries USCT fought at the Battle of Palmito Hill, along with the 34th Regiment Indiana Infantry USCT. Zavaleta notes that the 38th Regiment Infantry and 28th Regiment Indiana Regiment Infantry USCT also saw action at Palmito Hill, returning to Fort Brown in February 1866. Mustering out from Fort Brown in 1865 were also the 29th Regiment Connecticut Infantry USCT, 22nd, 127th, 41st, and 45th Regiments USCT, as well as the 25th, 9th, 19th Regiments and 114th, 117th, and 122nd Kentucky Regiments. Ultimately, a comprehensive detailing of United States Colored Troop movements, service, and sacrifice specific to Fort Brown is a rich area for additional research and interpretation. Zavaleta references USCT regiments ultimately stationed at or near Fort Brown between 1864 and 1906 to have been the 2nd, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 16th, 19th, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 28th, 29th, 31st, 34th, 36th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 45th, 46th, 62nd, 65th, 67th, 68th, 76th, 77th, 80th, 81st, 85th, 87th, 91st, 94th, 95th, 99th, 101st, 109th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th, and 127th.

General Sheridan later recalled that the movements were "in fact, to concentrate at available points in the State an army strong enough to move against the invaders of Mexico if occasion demanded."[132] General Sheridan moved his headquarters to Fort Brown – by then called simply "the post at Brownsville" – on June 1, 1865.

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[129] Matthews, *The U.S. Army on the Mexican Border*, 42.

[130] Matthews, *The U.S. Army on the Mexican Border*, 44; "Rio Grande Valley Civil War Trail: U.S. Colored Troops," *The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley*, www.utrgv.edu/civilwar-trail/civil-war-trail/colored-troops/index.htm, accessed 27 Sep 2017,

[131] Antonio N. Zavaleta, "Colored Death: The Tragedy of Black Troops on the Lower Rio Grande 1864-1906," originally published in *Studies in Rio Grande Valley History* UTB/TSC Regional History Series Vol. 6 (2005): 343-360, available at https://drtonyzavaleta.com/colored-death-the-tragedy-of-black-troops-on-the-lower-rio-grande-1864-1906/, accessed 25 Sep 2022.

[132] As cited in Matthews, *The U.S. Army on the Mexican Border*, 43-44.

From there he launched his most direct show of force. His purpose was to give the impression that the US Army "intended hostilities." Informed by his spies in Matamoros that former Confederates had given over their weapons to the "Mexican imperialist commander" there, Sheridan demanded the material be returned to the United States government. The Mexican commander complied, fearful of the build-up of military strength on the American side. In Washington, DC, the French ambassador protested to Secretary of State Seward, who insisted that Sheridan's belligerent demonstrations on the border be stopped. Instead, Sheridan took to creating rumors of preparations for war with the French in Mexico.

Military historian Matthews notes that Sheridan's 1865 border campaign resulted in French and Austrian soldiers withdrawing from their positions in northern Mexico. By March 1867, the French had completely withdrawn from Mexico. The Monroe Doctrine was preserved, notes historian Richard O'Connor, by Sheridan's "skillful show of bluff and deception along the Mexican border...and warned other intruders from the shores of the Western Hemisphere for many years."[133]

Construction of the Permanent Fort Brown Installation (1867-1882)

The events surrounding the French imperialist take-over of Mexico from 1861 to 1867 likely influenced the US Army's decision to permanently restore Fort Brown as a military installation. Plans for permanent buildings were approved in the spring of 1867, this time with buildings constructed of bricks made on the fort grounds. Just as work on the first building was underway, on October 7 and 8, 1867, a hurricane hit the Gulf Coast at the mouth of the Rio Grande.[134] Brazos Santiago, Port Isabel, Brownsville, and Matamoros all suffered extensive damage in the storm. In November, local Brownsville newspaper *The Daily Ranchero* reported the storm's fury nearly six weeks later, when its office was finally reopened:

> The hour following 10 o'clock was one of awful and appalling grandeur. The rain came like the dashing of ocean breakers; there was constant crashing of timbers; debris rained upon the standing houses; tin roofs went bodily banging through the streets; brick houses went rumbling to the earth, and the hurricane hissed and roared and made everything shake and tremble which it could not crush. During its greatest violence, the cities of Brownsville and Matamoros were converted into a howling, earthly hell...[135]

Then, suddenly, the eye of the storm passed over the city and "all was as dismal and silent as the tomb." As the residents came out to view the destruction in the hour past midnight on the morning of October 8, the southwestern side of the storm hit harder than the first. The editor described it as a tornado that lasted for three hours, "Wherever the monster had opportunity to show its full power, the strongest masonry yielded like reeds, and newly built tenements were taken up bodily into the air and wrenched into a thousand fragments, and then dashed back upon the city with fearful violence..."[136]

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[133] Matthews, *The U.S. Army on the Mexican Border*, 45. In June 1867, Emperor Maximilian was captured and executed by a Mexican firing squad. President Juarez, representing a liberal government, stabilized Mexico during his tenure, which lasted until his death in 1872.

[134] "War Department. Fort Brown, Texas. 1865-1945," Administrative History Note, *National Archives Catalog*, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/10454120, accessed 29 Aug 2017.

[135] "The Storm, Hurricane and Tornado of Oct. 7th and 8th, 1867," *The Daily Ranchero* (Brownsville, Tex.) 3, no. 25, ed. 1, November 15, 1867, 2, https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth846827/m1/2/zoom/?q=October%201867&resolution=8&lat=6740.792541363006&lon=2976.249257324411, accessed 28 Sep 2017.

[136] Ibid.

The storm destroyed nearly everything in its path, including the new construction at Fort Brown and the temporary "huts" that had served as quarters for the garrison since 1865. Following the October storm, construction at Fort Brown began again. By January 1869 the post included officer's quarters, commandant's quarters, "Commissary & Quartermaster's Store Houses," and a "Blacksmith Shop," all shown on the "Plan of the U.S. Military Reservation at Brownsville, Texas." A February 1877 map of Fort Brown, described as a tracing of a March 1869 map, but with the "Buildings as they are now located (Feb. 1877)" shows a more detailed plan that likely reflected the official plan from 1867.[137]

The 1877 map of Fort Brown shows the layout of the various fort buildings in great detail. Research conducted by acting post surgeon Major Dr. William Crawford Gorgas (1854-1920) at Fort Brown between 1882 and 1884 worked to reveal the mosquito's function as transmitter of yellow fever as an epidemic disease endemic in hot, wet, low-lying climates.[138] Dr. Gorgas' work with yellow fever patients, discussed below, utilized both the Medical Laboratory and Dead House (Linen Storage/Morgue). The Chapel was reportedly constructed in 1882.

Border Incidents through the 1870s

From 1875 to 1881, Fort Brown served as the headquarters of the District of the Rio Grande with jurisdiction over eight border forts, including four new forts in the territory between Fort Duncan and El Paso. With approximately 100 miles between each fort, a total of 2500 men garrisoned the eight forts, tasked with patrolling the immense and porous border. Many were members of the United States Colored Troops (USCT), created by the War Department's issuance of General Order N. 143 in 1863. Colloquially known as Buffalo Soldiers, members of six all-black US regiments (subsequently consolidated to four) reportedly so-nicknamed by American Plains Indians because their hair resembled that of the plains buffalo. Black regiments serving in the Brownsville vicinity are referenced above. Cavalry had become standard in post garrisons, along with infantry. Historian James Leiker's research focus on the experience of the USCT and Buffalo Soldiers historically serving along the Rio Grande, including describing Mexican and Anglo alliances against the presence of Black soldiers, despite the latter's anti-Mexican violence and racism and the community's reliance on their role to keep public safety.[139] The Black soldiers were charged to defend the region and its citizens against Indian raids and frequent Mexican and American banditry. The USCT troops played a critical role in border defense and their role at this location should not be undervalued; ultimately, the troops protected American border interests, including stage lines and the mail, defended against Mexican and "Indian depredations," fought French soldiers, and physically created buildings and roads. At the same time, Zavaleta has described the intense hardship these troops faced in no small part due to unequal treatment, separate and

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[137] National Archives research was not included in this project, however, NARA Record Group 77, Series "Miscellaneous Forts File: Plans of Military Posts in the United States, 1840-1920," includes "Maps and Plans for the Military Reservation at Brownsville, Texas," described as "maps and plans for the military reservation at Brownsville, Texas including plans of the fort, the officers' quarters, the company barracks, the guard house, the store shed, the fortifications around the city of Matamoros and the locations of Fort Brown and the city of Brownsville. Also included are survey maps of a portion of the Rio Grande, the reservation and Fort Brown."

[138] Marie Gorgas, "Fort Brown Days" [typescript manuscript], ca. 1925, William Crawford Gorgas Papers, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama (http://guides.lib.ua.edu/ld.php?content_id=15174646). See also William Crawford Gorgas Papers, 1857-1919, Library of Congress, http://findingaids.loc.gov/db/search/xq/searchMferDsc04.xq?_id=loc.mss.eadmss.ms013094&_faSection=contentsList&_faSubsection=series&_dmdid=d7761e22&_start=1&_lines=125.

[139] James N. Leiker, "The Black Military Experience in the Rio Grande Valley," in Bacha-Garza, Miller, and Skowronek, eds., 253. See also James Leiker, *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2002).

poor accommodation, as well as the general unsanitary conditions of Fort Brown area, as reflected in their disproportionately high rates of disease and death.[140]

The ever ongoing changes in the river's course, and thus the US-Mexico boundary, continued to complicate border loyalties, as it would, according to General Sheridan, "leave a slice of Mexico on our side of the river, and in some cases with inhabitants."[141] War Department records indicate the fort prison held "both garrison and general prisoners" as the troops patrolled the border for "bandits, hostile Indians, and violators of the neutrality laws of the United States."[142] In 1872, incidents of "Indian depredations" and cattle theft along the Rio Grande and interior Texas frontier prompted the US Congress to establish a commission to review the situation on the ground. Though the commissioners intended to visit and interview victims of the alleged incidents along the Rio Grande from the Gulf Coast to El Paso, the number of "parties aggrieved" at Brownsville prevented them from taking testimony anywhere else. In their official report, which included transcriptions of the numerous interviews, the commissioners noted that the incidents in the Rio Grande valley could be divided into two classes; "First, the cattle-stealing along the Rio Grande," occurring primarily along the lower Rio Grande as far up as Laredo, and "Second, the Indian depredations on the line of the Rio Grande," which occurred mostly above Laredo and were committed by tribes living in Mexico.[143]

Many of the victims claimed that the cattle thieves were from Mexico, though the complicated system of open range, cattle-branding, and rules for sale of cattle "without the authority of the owner" would make it difficult to determine.[144] Still, the commission report concluded: "The commissioners feel fully warranted in expressing the opinion that for years past, especially since 1866, and even before, armed bands of Mexicans have continually employed the safe refuge of an adjoining territory and the favorable river frontier to cross from Mexico into Texas, in strong parties, collect and drive away into Mexico unnumbered herds of cattle from this region."[145] The commissioners particularly called out the duplicity of General Juan N. Cortina in the conduct of border cattle thefts. Cortina was eventually arrested in Mexico in 1875, ending years of border agitation.[146]
In answer to the US claims, the Mexican government set up its own commission, "to have the matter investigated on its side, and as impartially as possible, for it felt the necessity of being prepared against the plots of some malicious claimants and other ambitious private parties in this country [US]."[147] The Mexican commission toured the region, interviewed 278 witnesses, and conducted research in local archives before coming to their conclusion, "that the complaints of the Texans are groundless, inasmuch as the cattle stealing

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[140] See Zavaleta, "Colored Death: The Tragedy of Black Troops on the Lower Rio Grande 1864-1906": "The year 1865 saw the heaviest causalities evidenced by the burials at the Fort Brown National Cemetery. Cemetery records indicate that a toral of 414 soldiers died that year, 351 Colored troops and 63 White troops. Eight-seven percent of the deaths in 1865 were Colored troops. Of those who died, more than 70 percent died of disease."

[141] Matthews, *The U.S. Army on the Mexican Border*, 48.

[142] "War Department. Fort Brown, Texas. 1865-1945," Administrative History Note, *National Archives Catalog*, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/10454120, accessed 29 Aug 2017.

[143] *Report of the United States Commissioners to Texas* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1872), 2.

[144] This according to the *Reports of the Committee of Investigation, Sent in 1873 from the Mexican Government to the Frontier of Texas* ("Translated from the official edition made in Mexico," New York: Baker & Godwin Printers, 1875), 388.

[145] *Report of the United States Commissioners to Texas* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1872), 5.

[146] Jerry Thompson, "Cortina, Juan Nepomuceno (1824-1894)," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fco73, accessed 28 Sep 2017.

[147] "Preface to the Translation," *Reports of the Committee of Investigation, sent in 1873 from the Mexican Government to the Frontier of Texas* (translated from the official edition made in Mexico, New York: Baker & Godwin Printers, 1875).

done among them is not the work of any residents in the adjoining country, but of Indians belonging to the United States, and their own outlaws disguised as Indians."[148]

In all likelihood it was dishonest men on both sides of the border who were responsible for the loss of cattle from Texas ranges and horses from Mexico. The US Army's fight against banditry and American Indian incursions continued through the 1870s and into the 1880s.

Dr. William C. Gorgas at Fort Brown and the Spanish-American War (1880s-1890s)

Yellow fever outbreaks at Fort Brown and along the lower Rio Grande were an established fact of life – and death – from as early as 1851, according to Deputy Inspector Lieutenant Freeman in his 1853 report. After that, the fever epidemics seemed to occur with regularity. Fifty-seven men at the fort died of yellow fever later in 1853, according to Colonel Mansfield's 1856 report. During the Civil War, Confederate General J. B. Magruder worried that yellow fever cases in Havana, Cuba, where his blockade runners hired crews, might bring the disease to his men in the Texas Gulf ports.[149] In his 1942 post overview, US Army Chaplain Joseph C. Sides collected statistics and reports relating to insalubrity, in particular referencing the poor quality of water, high rates of death and illness from 1868 to the turn of the century, and prevalence of malarial diseases.[150]

Brought to the western hemisphere by the African slave trade, yellow fever found a permanent home in the US South in the nineteenth century. As westward migration increased, much of it along southern routes, yellow fever continued to spread. In the 1870s, large outbreaks of yellow fever occurred in Louisiana, Florida, Virginia, and Tennessee, with the largest in Memphis in 1878. "By the end of the year," notes author Molly Caldwell Crosby of the Memphis epidemic, "it would suffer losses greater than the Chicago fire, San Francisco earthquake, and Johnstown flood combined."[151] The newly created US National Board of Health reported after the disaster, "To no other great nation of the earth is yellow fever so calamitous as to the United States of America."[152]

As early as the 1870s, Dr. Juan Carlos Finlay, working in the nearby Spanish island colony of Cuba, had studied the possibility of yellow fever being an insect-borne disease. In 1881, after preliminary experiments, Finlay presented his theory to the Royal Academy in Havana, titled *The Mosquito Hypothetically Considered as the Agent of Transmission of Yellow Fever*. His presentation reportedly met with stunned silence and Finlay was "rejected by the medical community."[153] Dr. William C. Gorgas, then a lieutenant and assistant surgeon in the US Army, was said to be dismissive of Finlay's mosquito theory, though baffled by the fever's "suddenness of appearance, its puzzling choice of victims, and the inutility of ordinary means of disease prevention."[154] In 1882, Dr. Gorgas was transferred to Fort Brown. There he treated victims of several yellow fever outbreaks among the fort's garrison through 1884.[155] In the fort's Morgue Lieutenant Gorgas was arrested for doing an

[148] Ibid. On page 383 the committee cited "a report of the grand jury, who stated that for over five years a numerous band of American outlaws had been committing the atrocities for which the Kickapoos and Mexicans had been blamed."

[149] Charles J. Helm to Maj. Gen. J. B. Magruder, July 22, 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. 41 (Part II), 1020.

[150] Joseph C. Sides, *Fort Brown Historical: History of Fort Brown, Texas Border Post on the Rio Grande* (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1942)

[151] Molly Caldwell Crosby, *The American Plague* (New York: Berkley Books, 2006), 226.

[152] Ibid., 226.

[153] Ibid., 135.

[154] AMEDD Center of History & Heritage. "William Crawford Gorgas," https://achh.army.mil/history/surgeongenerals-w-gorgas, accessed 29 Sep 2017.

[155] *Annual Report of the Board of Regents, The Smithsonian Institution...for the Year Ending June 30, 1921* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922), 616.

autopsy on a victim of the fever, in defiance of a direct order by General Crowder "that no officer should come in unnecessary contact with a case of this disease."[156] Gorgas did contract the fever but survived the illness. His resulting immunity led to a career in working to eradicate yellow fever at US Army posts.

Dr. Gorgas left Fort Brown in 1884. While he continued to work to control outbreaks of the disease while stationed elsewhere in the Gulf of Mexico, it was not until Dr. Walter Reed's experiments in 1900 that confirmed the *Aëdes aegypti* mosquito as the carrier of the disease that Gorgas adopted the eradication measures that would make him famous. As Chief Sanitary Officer of Havana, Gorgas cleared the city of mosquitos and subsequently yellow fever in less than three months, according to one account. Beginning in 1904, he would apply the same tactics to the camps along the Panama Canal construction site.[157] Promoted to Colonel, Gorgas acted as Chief Sanitary Officer on construction of the Panama Canal beginning in September 1904. He became Surgeon General in April 1914 through his retirement in 1918.

Throughout this period the buildings at Fort Brown were either improved or added as needed, with some abandoned when they were no longer of use. During the tenure of Dr. Gorgas, the hospital complex was a priority. Lieutenant Chatfield described the fort in 1893, including some of the changes that had occurred there since the 1870s:

> At a later period, the post was enlarged to accommodate a garrison of cavalry (two troops), artillery (two batteries), and infantry (eight companies), with suitable buildings for each branch of service separate and distinct from the others, constituting three posts in one. Many changes have occurred since the buildings were first constructed; some have fallen into decay and others have been removed from their original locations, owing to the inroads of the Rio Grande, which now flows over the sites of numerous buildings.

Chatfield added that the old Fort Brown earthwork "still withstands a determined siege," its ramparts serving as the "bullet-stop" during target practice on the military reservation.[158] During the Spanish-American War of 1898, Fort Brown served as a training ground. The 9th and 10th Cavalries and 24th and 25th Infantries USCT participated critically to victory in the charge of San Juan Hill in Cuba on July 1, 1898.[159]

The 1906 Brownsville Affair

The 1906 Brownsville Affair, also known as the Brownsville Affray, Raid, or Riot, highlighted rampant racism as experienced by the African American 25th Infantry Regiment.[160] Amidst an atmosphere of routine civilian

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[156] John H. Jopson, ed., *Transactions of the American Surgical Association, Volume 39* (Philadelphia: William J. Dornan, 1921), li, https://books.google.com, accessed 29 Sep 2017.

[157] Jopson, *Transactions*, lii; AMEDD, "William Crawford Gorgas."

[158] Chatfield, *The Twin Cities*, 28. The text section titled "Fort Brown," is noted as "From the compiler's notebook, 1890 (revised)."

[159] Zavaleta, "Colored Death: The Tragedy of Black Troops on the Lower Rio Grande 1864-1906." See also Edward Van Zile Scott, *The Unwept: Black American Soldiers and the Spanish American War* (River City Publishing, 1995).

[160] John D. Weaver, *The Brownsville Raid* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992). See also Theodore Roosevelt, *December 19, 1906: Message Regarding Disturbances in Texas* (Washington, DC: 1906); Benjamin R. Tillman, *The Race Problem. The Brownsville Raid. Speech of Benjamin R. Tillman of South Carolina in the Senate of the United States* (Washington, DC: 1907); US Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, *Affray at Brownsville, Texas*, doc. 402, 60th Congress, 1st session (Washington, DC: 1908); James A. Tinsley, "Roosevelt, Foraker, and the Brownsville Affray," *Journal of Negro History* 41 (January 1956): 43-65; Emma Lou Thornbrough, "The Brownsville Episode and the Negro Vote," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 44 (December 1957): 469-493; Ann J. Lane, *The Brownsville Affair: National Crisis and Black*

prejudice, Black troops were falsely accused of a murderous shooting spree that took place on August 13, 1906. As historian James Leiker chronicled, Fort Brown had garrisoned several companies of Black soldiers between May 1899 and the summer of 1906, including Company L of the 9th Cavalry from May 1899 to January 1900, and their replacements, Company E of the 10th Cavalry from January 1900 to February 1901. At the time, town news sources had noted the orderly conduct of the 9th Cavalry, and likewise no conflicts were reported in the press concerning the 10th Cavalry. Despite the press silence, witnesses after the fact attested that the Brownsville police had seemed "eager and overzealous to do their duty, especially with the soldiers."[161]

Companies B, C, and D of the 25th Infantry arrived at Fort Brown on July 28, 1906. Barely two weeks later, the tension in Brownsville began to boil over. The events that would become known as the Brownsville Affair reportedly began when the Ruby Saloon, which previously accommodated Black patrons at the rear of the establishment, ceased doing so on August 10, at which point two soldiers, Private John Hollomon and Private Ernest Allison, opened a new bar. A white woman filed a complaint of assault, resulting in confinement of the soldiers to their post on August 13. Around midnight, shots were fired throughout the town of Brownsville into nearby homes and businesses, killing one person. That night, Major Charles Penrose ordered a roll call and found no troops missing at Fort Brown and weapons and ammunition were accounted for.[162]

The following day a citizen-led committee initiated proceedings focused on gathering against the soldiers. Leiker recounted: "Later testimony suggested that Mexican police had staged the August 13 shooting in order to force the closing of the new establishment, or even to run the blacks out of town."[163] Meanwhile, a local newspaper editor accused the soldiers of taking on airs of superiority, which Leiker attributes to an increasing intolerance on the part of the soldiers to submit to segregation or abuse.[164] Seven additional inconclusive inquests by the military, Texas Rangers, and county Grand Jury followed. The troops themselves were transferred to Fort Reno in Oklahoma Territory in the interim to await a decision.

The situation in Brownsville came on the heels of the 1903 Indianola Affair, which was a public relations disaster for President Theodore Roosevelt. Minnie Cox, a college-educated and upper middle class school teacher in Indianola, Mississippi, was appointed the first Black postmistress of Holmes County and later Sunflower County, Mississippi, in 1897. By 1902, amidst economic decline in the Mississippi Delta, Republican party maneuvering in the South brought gubernatorial candidate James Kimble Vardaman to Indianola. Vardaman's stump speech incited white Indianolans to threaten Cox and her family with violence. Cox attempted to resign, to which Roosevelt responded, "I cannot consent to take the position that the door of hope—the door of opportunity—is to be shut upon any man, no-matter [sic] how worthy, purely on the grounds of race and color." Unfortunately for all involved, this did little to quell the threats and Cox and her family fled town. Roosevelt was heavily criticized for his handling of the "Race Question" by Southern senators,

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Reaction (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press National University Publications, 1971); John D. Weaver, *The Senator and the Sharecropper's Son: Exoneration of the Brownsville Soldiers* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997); Milo Kearney, ed., *Studies in Rio Grande Valley History* (Edinburg, TX: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, 1986); Garna L. Christian," The Brownsville, Texas, Disturbance of 1906 and the Politics of Justice," *Trotter Review* 18, no. 1 (2009): 23-28.

[161] Leiker, *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande*, 133.

[162] This summary is derived from Steven D. Smith and James A. Zeidler, *A Historic Context for the African American Military Experience* (Champaign, IL: US Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratories, 1998), 141-142. See also Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1861-1900: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, 2017).

[163] Leiker, *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande*, 135.

[164] Leiker, *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande*, 137.

particularly South Carolina Senator Benjamin R. Tillman who used the incident to protest Republican political appointments in the South and the seeming rule of the African American "masses."[165]

With tensions in Indianola barely settled, Roosevelt ordered Brigadier General E.A. Garlington, Inspector General of the Army, to investigate the 1906 Brownsville Affair and recommend punishment. Despite the regiment's alibi and consistent denial of responsibility even amid harassment and threats, Garlington concluded guilt, although he could not identify responsible individuals. The President ultimately ordered discharge "without honor" and without a hearing of all 167 soldiers, timing the announcement immediately after the Congressional midterm elections so as to avoid negative repercussions for Republican candidates.

The handling of the Brownsville Affair marked a turning point, calling into question the future loyalty of Black voters to the Republican Party.[166] Historian Lewis N. Wynne's article, "Brownsville: The Reaction of the Negro Press," relayed how Black communities nationwide condemned Roosevelt for upholding the dubious accusations and playing politics with the lives of Black soldiers. The *Richmond Planet* and *Atlanta Independent* accused Roosevelt of withholding his decision, denying Black voters the opportunity to respond at the polls.[167] The *Cleveland Gazette* denounced the order to dismiss the soldiers as an "undeserved and unmerited triumph of Southern prejudice against the black race."[168] Black religious leaders echoed similar sentiments in response to the injustice served to the "Black Battalion."[169] Reverend Adam Clayton Powell with the Emanuel Baptist Church in New Haven remarked:

> Say what you please, these soldiers were dismissed because the white people of Brownsville wanted them dismissed...It is hard to believe that the man with the big stick disarming and crushing the colored soldiers is the same Theodore Roosevelt who three years ago declared that as long as he was President every man should have a 'square deal.'[170]

In response to the shocking order, Mary Church Terrell—civil rights activist, journalist, and founding president of the National Association of Colored Women—met with Secretary of War William Howard Taft.[171] She requested Secretary Taft suspend the order until a fair trial was held so blameless soldiers "shall not be sent forth branded as murderers."[172] The order was only temporarily suspended until the President returned from travels. Terrell continued to advocate for the troops and wrote a profile piece on First Sergeant Mingo Sanders, the highest ranking soldier to be discharged without honor.[173]

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[165] Shennette Garrett-Scott, "Minnie Geddings Cox and the Indianola Affair, 1902-1904," Mississippi History Now, Mississippi Department of Archives and History (April 26, 2018), https://mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/minnie-geddings-cox-and-the-indianola-affair; Willard B. Gatewood "Theodore Roosevelt and the Indianola Affair," *The Journal of Negro History* 53, no. 1 (1968): 48–69. https://doi.org/10.2307/2716390;); Benjamin R. Tillman, *The Race Problem. The Brownsville Raid. Speech of Benjamin R. Tillman of South Carolina in the Senate of the United States* (Washington, DC: 1907).

[166] Emma Lou Thornbrough, "The Brownsville Episode and the Negro Vote," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 44 (December 1957): 469-493.

[167] Lewis N. Wynne, "Brownsville: The Reaction of the Negro Press," *Phylon* 33, no. 2 (1972): 155.

[168] Thomas Joseph Frusciano, "Theodore Roosevelt and the Negro in the Age of Booker T. Washington, 1910-1912," master's thesis University of Montana Missoula, 1975), 116. See *The Cleveland Gazette* (January 12, 1907).

[169] Lewis N. Wynne, "Brownsville: The Reaction of the Negro Press," *Phylon* 33, no. 2 (1972): 156.

[170] *The New York Times (*December 18, 1906).

[171] Debra N. Ham, "African-American Activist Mary Church Terrell and the Brownsville Disturbance," *Trotter Review* 18, no. 1 (2009): 31-33.

[172] Frusciano, 118. "Secretary Taft and the Negro Soldiers," *Independent* 65 (July 23, 1908): 189-190: Weaver, *The Brownsville Raid*, 105.

[173] Mary Church Terrell, "A Sketch of Mingo Saunders," *Voice of the Negro* 4 (March 1907): 123-131.

Sanders became a symbol of the injustice suffered by the three companies of the 25th Infantry. At the time of his discharge, Sanders had nearly 26 years of military service, which included fighting in the 1898 Spanish-American War with Roosevelt and the Rough Riders in Cuba. By the time of the Brownsville Affair, Sanders was less than two years from retirement. With his reputation tarnished by the dismissal and his pension revoked so close to retirement, Sanders tried to clear his name and applied for reenlistment. In December 1906, the *New York Times* featured front-page stories on Sanders: "a gallant soldier all his life, but never achieved anything like the celebrity that is likely to come to him now."[174] A follow-up piece noted, "Sanders's application for re-enlistment is now pending before the President and the War Department. Those who have been backing him assume that it will be denied."[175] The following month, the cover of the *Harper's Weekly* featured a sketch of Sanders in uniform with the caption "Dishonorably Discharged."[176] Following a 1909-1910 Court of Inquiry, fourteen of the dismissed troops were allowed to reenlist, but not Sanders.[177] While his application was never approved, Sanders found brief government employment in 1912 through an executive order by President Taft allowing him to work as a messenger for the Department of the Interior.[178]

In 1970, Weaver's influential book, *The Brownsville Raid,* was published and prompted California Congressman Augustus Hawkins to introduce legislation rectifying the injustice.[179] As a result, in 1972 under President Richard Nixon, the Department of Defense changed the military records for each of the soldiers, granting them honorable discharges. Only two soldiers were alive to witness it: Edward Warfield (age 82), who had previously been reinstated in 1910, and Dorsie Willis (age 88), who never saw reinstatement. Willis lived long enough to receive a tax-free settlement of $25,000. When asked by a reporter if he was bitter, Willis said:

> They can't pay me for the sacrifice I've made, the sacrifice that my family had to undergo. You can't pay for a lifetime. Some people feel the world owes them a living. I never thought that, but I figure the world owed me an opportunity to earn a living. They took that away from me. That dishonorable discharge kept me from improving my life. Only God knows what it done to the others.[180]

Evaluation of the integrity of resources associated with the Brownsville Affair, nationally significant in its own right, has yet to be undertaken. Leiker has argued that the lack of attention to the role of Latino individuals in this racial conflict has oversimplified and falsely created a binary in understanding of the event. The Brownsville Affair was one of the key events that changed the focus of Black activism and political thought in the first decade of the twentieth century, including the Niagara Convention and the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). As Leiker argues, "the Brownsville affair at the least contributed toward a shifting focus on the ideas and policies of W.E.B. Du Bois and away from the accommodationist approach advocated by Booker T. Washington."[181]

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[174] *The New York Times (*December 22, 1906).

[175] *The New York Times (* December 25, 1906).

[176] *Harper's Weekly* (January 12, 1907).

[177] *Report of the Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry*, (US Senate Docs., 61 Congress, 3 Sess., doc. no. 701, vol. VI), 1635. James A. Tinsley, "Roosevelt, Foraker, and the Brownsville Affray," *Journal of Negro History* 41 (January 1956), 61.

[178] *The New York Times (*August 4, 1912).

[179] William H. Leckie and Shirley A. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers A Narrative of the Black Cavalry in the West* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 286-287.

[180] Leckie and Leckie, 287, 292. See Weaver, *Senator and the Sharecropper's Son,* xii-xvi, 212-213.

[181] Leiker, *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande*, 142.

The denial of benefits for Black soldiers—and erasure of Black presence—at Fort Brown extended even to their interred remains. In operation since 1848, the Brownsville National Cemetery at Fort Brown on the island in the resaca was closed in 1909, three years following the Brownsville Affair. Between 1909 and 1911, the deceased, many of whom were USCT veterans, were supposed to have been exhumed by a contractor and transported to Alexandria National Cemetery in Pineville, Louisiana.[182] Even though the Brownsville National Cemetery reportedly contained over 3000 soldiers, Alexandria National Cemetery seems to only contain the remains of 1538 Fort Brown soldiers: Major Jacob Brown and 1537 "Unknown Federal Soldiers." The unknown soldiers were reinterred in a mass grave marked by a 1911 granite memorial.[183] These remains were not unknown when they were at Fort Brown, but their "tombstones were sold locally, some to stone cutters, and some for use as foundation stones for buildings."[184] In the 1980s Chula Griffin, Sam Griffin, and Bruce Aiken conducted burial record research to identify people buried in Brownsville National Cemetery, re-identifying those who had been intentionally displaced and anonymized. Anthropologist Antonio Zavaleta summarized the significance of this work in undoing historic erasure: "We know their names, their Regiments and Companies, where they served and died as well as their race. In no way are they unknown."[185] Within a three-year span, Black soldiers were physically removed from Fort Brown, discharged without honor, and barred from accessing the life-changing benefits offered in exchange for military service. Even those who had already served and passed away were not spared the arbitrary punishment of racially motivated erasure.

The Mexican Revolution and Border Disturbances (1913-1917)

The turn of the twentieth century was marked in the US by stability and economic growth, while on the south side of the Rio Grande border, Mexico continued to struggle with political instability. With the conclusion of the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States was firmly established as the dominant power in the western hemisphere. Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam became US territories acquired from Spain and Cuba was freed from Spanish colonial rule. Beginning in 1904 under the direction of President Theodore Roosevelt, the US completed construction of the Panama Canal in 1914, opening a direct shipping route from the Atlantic to the Pacific. As the US became stronger, Mexico suffered under the authoritarian government of Porfirio Díaz from 1876 to 1911, a period known as the "Porfiriato." Though Diaz modernized Mexico's industry, transportation, and education systems, it was a repressive regime that ultimately led to revolution.[186] The volatility along the US-Mexico border as a result of the Mexican Revolution necessitated a large military presence at the Fort Brown facility beginning in 1913.

In 1913 President Woodrow Wilson's administration assigned the US Army Second Division to the border forts. Fort Brown was designated the headquarters of the Brownsville District, where Brigadier General James

[182] Therese T. Sammartino, "Alexandria National Cemetery" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, 1997), Section 8, 8.

[183] US Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, "Alexandria National Cemetery, LA," https://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/alexandriala.asp, accessed 23 Sep 2022.

[184] Sammartino, Section 8, 8.

[185] Zavaleta, "Colored Death: The Tragedy of Black Troops on the Lower Rio Grande 1864-1906," 356-358.

[186] "The Mexican Revolution and the United States in the Collections of the Library of Congress," *Library of Congress*, "Exhibitions," www.loc.gov/exhibits/mexican-revolution-and-the-united-states/, accessed 29 Sep 2017. The Mexican Constitution of 1857 allowed for one four-year presidential term. Benito Juarez was elected president in 1860 but was deposed by the imperialist French regime of Emperor Maximilian, though Juarez never relinquished his official position as president of Mexico. Juarez was re-elected president in 1867 and again in 1871, technically his third and fourth terms, which Diaz and his supporters took issue with as unconstitutional.

Parker commanded the 1st Cavalry Brigade, beginning in March 1913.[187] Tasked with "keeping the revolution south of the Rio Grande," the army struggled to prevent battles from spilling across the border and injuring American citizens. Civilian order broke down along ethnic lines as some Anglos agitated for "military intervention" in Mexico, while some *Tejanos* supported the Mexican revolutionaries.[188] Just two months after his arrival at Fort Brown, General Parker was faced with the violent capture of Mexican federal troops in Matamoros by revolutionary militia under Colonel Lucio Blanco.

Blanco was an early supporter of Revolutionary Constitutionalist (Maderist) Venustiano Carranza, then-governor of Coahuila, in his fight against the Victoriano Huerta government.[189] Blanco led the resistance in Tamaulipas. On June 4, 1913, Blanco, a colonel in Carranza's Constitutional Forces, entered Matamoros, taking the town from the small garrison of federal soldiers and volunteers. More than 100 were killed and as many as thirty were executed for their association with the Huerta regime.[190] Brownsville lawyer and author Frank Cushman Pierce reported that eighty-four soldiers and volunteers escaped to Brownsville, where General Parker ordered them disarmed and held at Fort Brown. Blanco remained in Matamoros through the summer.[191]

On April 11, 1914, US naval forces invaded the city of Veracruz, a Mexican port city that handled much of US and other foreign corporate trade. In July 1914, the Huerta government fell. Venustiano Carranza assumed the presidency and was soon at odds with his former ally, Francisco "Pancho" Villa. Though the US officially recognized the Carranza government and discontinued the arms trade, Villa refused to end the revolution. In March 1915, Villa's men, or *Villistas*, made a failed attack on Carranza forces in Matamoros, raising fears in the Texas border towns. Cross-border bandit raids reportedly increased over the following months, said to have been the work of Mexican Americans Luis de la Rosa and Aniceto Pizana and their followers.[192]

Texas Rangers were sent to the border to reinforce the US troops, creating additional problems in the tense border atmosphere. In August 1915, after the "de la Rosa gang" attacked a King Ranch property, Rangers hunted down local Mexicans suspected of aiding the gang, killing more than 100 and as many as 300 by some accounts, most refugees from the violence in Mexico.[193] Though the 26th Infantry Regiment was sent to reinforce the three squadrons of cavalry and two batteries already assigned to Fort Brown, they still had little impact on the volatile border. The situation was resolved in October 1915 by US recognition of the Carranza government, a move which placed responsibility of south border security on the shoulders of Carranza's soldiers. Violence again threatened the border itself in 1916, resulting in an influx of thousands of National Guard troops to the Brownsville area. According to military historian Matt Matthews, border raids soon

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[187] *Cullum's Register*, Vol. VI, 215, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/America/United_States/Army/USMA/Cullums_Register/2623*.html, accessed 9 Feb 2018.

[188] As cited in Matthews, *U.S. Army on the Border*, 61-62.

[189] The Revolutionary Constitutionalists, known as "Maderists," were supporters of Francesco Madero, who initiated the Mexican Revolution in 1910 before being assassinated in 1913. José Victoriano Huerta rose to power after Madero's death.

[190] Alfonso Sapia-Bosch, "The Role of General Lucio Blanco in the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1922," PhD dissertation. Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 1977, 20-25.

[191] Frank Cushman Pierce, *A Brief History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley* (George Banta Publishing Company, 1917), 81-82. "Pierce was one of four residents designated by Gen. Frederick Funston of Fort Sam Houston and Gen. James Parker of Fort Brown to assist in reassuring citizens of Mexico during the Border Incident, 1915–16, by personal contact and circulation of a manifesto in Spanish," see "Pierce, Frank Cushman," TSHA: Texas State Historical Association, https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpi09, accessed 9 Feb 2018.

[192] Matthews, *U.S. Army on the Border*, 63. The two were reportedly part of the "Plan of San Diego" to incite a race war in Texas.

[193] Matthews, *U.S. Army on the Border*, 65.

ceased.[194]

In March 1916, Pancho Villa made one last raid, crossing into Columbus, New Mexico, where he and his men killed at least fifteen Americans. Now considered an enemy of the United States, Villa was pursued into Mexico by a small US force known as the Punitive Expedition, led by Brigadier General John J. Pershing through February 1917. Villa was never captured.[195] While Pershing's expeditionary force of more than 14,000 men, many drawn from border garrisons, patrolled Mexican territory, another 140,000 men, most of them federalized National Guardsmen, were assigned to patrol the US-Mexico border.[196] The training these men received at Fort Brown and the other border forts proved to be important preparation for the coming years of war in Europe.[197] Significantly, it appears some of that training took the form of new aviation experimentation, with evidence that an airstrip was prepared south of the old Fort Brown earthworks.[198]

On April 6, 1917, the US entered World War I. Matt Matthews, in his history of the US Army on the US-Mexico border, summarized the relations between the United States and Mexico at the start of World War I:

> …the emergence of the United States onto the world stage in 1917 had a calming effect on Mexico…. Although the U.S. Army continued to perform limited missions on the Mexican border for the rest of the 20th century, nothing equaled the strife and conflict of those turbulent years.[199]

As the United States turned its attention to Europe, the international border along the Rio Grande settled into a familiar routine of cross-border trade but with a cultural divide that would continue across the years.[200]

Fort Brown 1917-present

Fort Brown saw significantly increased activity in the months leading up to US entrance into World War I, as American troops prepared for overseas duty. The men stationed at Fort Brown also continued to patrol the US-Mexico border.[201] With the passage of the Labor Appropriation Act of 1924, the US Army's role in maintaining

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[194] Ibid., 67.

[195] "“The Mexican Revolution and the United States in the Collections of the Library of Congress,” Library of Congress, “Exhibitions,” www.loc.gov/exhibits/mexican-revolution-and-the-united-states/, accessed 29 Sep 2017. The number of American dead referenced varies. See sixteen described in “Punitive Expedition in Mexico, 1916-1917,” US Department of State Archives, https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/wwi/108653. Meanwhile, George R. Adams, "Village of Columbus and Camp Furlong,” National Historic Landmark Nomination Form (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, 1974) acknowledges there is not agreement regarding the number of American dead, with figures ranging from fifteen to twenty-four (see fn 1)."

[196] Mitchell Yockelson, “The United States Armed Forces and the Mexican Punitive Expedition: Part 1,” *Prologue Magazine* 29, no. 3 (Fall 1997) , www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1997/fall/mexican-punitive-expedition-1.html#T3, accessed 29 Sep 2017.

[197] Richard W. Stewart, ed., *American Military History, Volume 1, The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation, 1775–1917* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2009), 385.

[198] “Not until 1914 did Congress authorize establishment of a full-fledged Aviation Section in the Signal Corps. The few military airplanes available for service on the Mexican border in 1916 soon broke down (…),” see Stewart, *American Military History*, 378; “Early in the twentieth century the area immediately south of the fort was plowed to create an airstrip for U.S. military planes patrolling the border during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920),” see Van Wagenen, 76. See also circa 1929 aerial photography.

[199] Matthews, *U.S. Army on the Border*, 69.

[200] Local photographer Robert Runyon took a series of photos of Fort Brown, documenting “the border, including the Mexican Revolution, the US military presence at Ft. Brown and along the border prior to and during World War I.” See “The South Texas Border, 1900-1920,” *The University of Texas at Austin*, http://runyon.lib.utexas.edu/, accessed 29 Sep 2017.

[201] “War Department. Fort Brown, Texas. 1865-1945,” Administrative History Note, *National Archives Catalog*, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/10454120, accessed 29 Aug 2017.

the US-Mexico border ended when Congress established the Border Patrol as an agency within the Immigration Bureau of the Department of Labor.[202] Fort Brown remained a regular army post until 1944, when it was abandoned during US involvement in World War II. In 1949, the US War Assets Administration transferred to USIBWC 241.06 acres comprising part of the Fort Brown military reservation.[203] The Texas National Guard eventually assumed control of the United States Department of Agriculture facilities previously used for research into heat-tolerant crops and citrus production. Today (2017) the eight remaining former Fort Brown garrison buildings are used as administrative and classroom buildings on the campus of the Texas Southmost College. The old Fort Brown earthworks, located on the peninsula formed by the Rio Grande, suffered damage from the ravages of time and repeated flooding. Construction of the river levee further damaged the earthwork in 1943. In cooperation with Mexico, the USIBWC has managed numerous flood protection projects (levees, revetments, drain cleanouts) since the February 3, 1944, Water Treaty for the "Utilization of Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande," that allowed more such measures to be installed.

In 1956 the USIBWC leased the property to the City of Brownsville on condition that it be preserved as a historic site. The city converted it to a municipal golf course, which suddenly closed in 2015. Since this time, the property has reverted to the USIBWC and is monitored by USIBWC personnel from the Mercedes Field Office and locally by Palo Alto National Historical Park pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Several instances of Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) activity and looting have occurred at Fort Brown. Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park has monitored, reported, and recorded such instances for USIBWC under a MOU. The USIBWC established an MOU with Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park in 2012 for 60 days for the Levee Rehabilitation Monitoring. A new MOU in 2014 and subsequent Amendment in 2019 for monitoring and archeological assistance will expire in 2024. A CBP Emergency Migrant Camp was established in early 2023 due to an influx across the river. This impacted the earthworks, and an MOU was drawn up with CBP on mitigation measures for this camp at the former Fort Brown Golf Course. Steel posts and orange plastic safety fencing was installed around the earthworks by USIBWC to close the area off and prevent foot and vehicle traffic from crossing the earthworks and damaging the structure.

Fort Brown continued to offer the opportunity to better contextualize an important aspect of the American Latino experience in the Rio Grande Valley, where loss of land due to geopolitical and economic factors, in addition to shifting physical geographies, has had significant multi-generational impacts in the region. These tensions at times continue to be felt in the borderland region of Texas today.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Fort Brown National Historic Landmark, as reflected by this updated documentation, is exceptional for its role at the start of the US-Mexican War in 1846 and additionally significant as the oldest in the chain of border forts built to maintain security along the US-Mexico border from 1848 through the 1917 conclusion of the Mexican Revolution. The extension of US territory to the Pacific Coast, which came as a result of the US-

[202] US Customs and Border Protection, "1924: Border Patrol Established," www.cbp.gov/about/history/1924-border-patrol-established, accessed 29 Sep 2017. See also Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *Migra!: A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010).

[203] H.R. 1338, Public Law 122, *authorizing the transfer to the National Boundary and Water Commission of a portion of Fort Brown at Brownsville, Tex*., June 23, 1949, in 82nd Congress ,1st Session, Senate, Report No. 1, *Activities of the Senate Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, Eight-First Congress* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1951). See also Betty Bird, "Fort Brown Commissary and Guard House (Building 88)," HABS No. TX-3278, 1977, on file with the Library of Congress. Personal communication, Douglas A. Murphy, Mar 2018.

Mexican War, profoundly impacted the lives of Mexicans and *Tejanos* living in the southwest territories who witnessed the border move across their land. Fort Brown's location – initially symbolic and provocative against the backdrop of the disputed border and as a deterrent during subsequent conflicts – contextualizes the American Latino experience along the Rio Grande border. Fort Brown at once exhibits an evocative setting, high degree of historic integrity, and strong potential for archeological resources associated with both American and Mexican battle positions.

The following comparable sites are significant for their associations with one or more of the periods of history connected to Fort Brown, specifically the Mexican American War (as at Palo Alto Battlefield and Resaca de la Palma), Rio Grande border security (Fort Ringgold, Fort McIntosh, Fort Duncan), and American Latino heritage (Chamizal National Memorial). Fort Brown, however, is exceptional as the single property that can evoke all of these periods (1846-1917) and themes via its rich assemblage of built resources as well as a cultural landscape with its contributing archeological resources.

Mexican American War Sites:

Palo Alto Battlefield and Resaca de la Palma are the two US-Mexican War battlefield sites that comprise the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park, located in and near Brownsville, Texas. The engagements occurred in succession as General Zachary Taylor attempted to break the ongoing siege of Fort Brown.

Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park

On May 8, 1846, the infantries and cavalries of General Mariano Arista and General Taylor clashed in battle on the broad coastal prairie known as Palo Alto, sparking the two-year-long US-Mexican War.[204] General Arista's forces suffered heavy casualties due to US use of cannons and light field artillery, prompting Mexican forces to withdraw before dawn to Resaca de la Palma, where another battle ensued. On May 9 at Resaca de la Palma, a dry river channel also known as Resaca de Guerrero, General Arista hoped to engage the infantry in dense vegetation to stem the US use of artillery. However, the US was victorious, capturing the Mexican artillery and ending the six-day siege of Fort Texas. The north bank of the lower Rio Grande was in US hands. The battle also had an enormous effect on the morale of the two armies.[205]

The Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park, which includes the Resaca de la Palma Battlefield, is the only National Park Service unit to interpret the war. The 3400-acre Palo Alto Battlefield retains good physical, visual, and archeological integrity as a battlefield. While relic collecting, vegetation removal, and attempts at crop cultivation have compromised artifact patterning in several key Palo Alto battlefield areas (Site number 41CF92), there are densely vegetated areas that preserve the archeological record.[206] While no structures associated with the Palo Alto battlefield are known to exist, historic roads in use at the time of the battle and topographic features remain an important component of the site. A multi-disciplinary investigation demonstrated its archeological potential to enhance understanding of this battle. The study used systematic

[204] See Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park, Texas, https://www.nps.gov/paal/index.htm, accessed 3 Apr 2018.

[205] See Resaca de la Palma Battlefield National Historical Park, Texas, https://www.nps.gov/paal/learn/historyculture/resacadelapalma.htm, accessed 3 Apr 2018.

[206] Charles M. Haecker and Jeffrey G. Mauck, *On the Prairie of Palo Alto: Historical Archaeology of the U.S.-Mexican War Battlefield*, (College Station: Texas A&M, 1997), 179.

metal detection surveys, topographic analysis, and Geographic Information System analysis to assess artifact distribution and ultimately portray more accurately Palo Alto's battle sequences.[207]

The Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma battlefields are defined by mostly intact natural areas with pockets of archeological preserves with high information potential. Fort Brown also maintains portions of its cultural landscape and likely intact archeological deposits, but it also features standing ruins from the original 1846 earthen fortification. A portion of associated Mexican breastworks could be preserved within the Fort Brown NHL boundary due to changes in the course of the Rio Grande; however, the shifting river might have erased these remnants.[208] If confirmed to be present, then Section A of the Fort Brown NHL would possess exceptional archeological potential to learn about the defensive works from both sides of the US-Mexican War.

Rio Grande Border Forts:

With the conclusion of the US-Mexican War in 1848 and the establishment of the 1900-mile border, the US Army began constructing new forts along the Rio Grande to maintain border security. Fort Brown, already in place at Brownsville, was improved with new buildings on higher ground. In 1848 and 1849, three new installations were established approximately 100 miles apart from one another: the Post at Davis Landing (later Fort Ringgold) at Rio Grande City, Camp Crawford (later Fort McIntosh) near Laredo, and Fort Duncan near Eagle Pass. Like Fort Brown, these were occupied by Confederate forces during the Civil War and continued to serve on the frontline of US-Mexico border security through 1917. Fort Brown, a catalyst for the Mexican American War, exhibits a high level of historic integrity, such that it is evocative of its historic associations. Meanwhile, post-war properties such as Forts Ringgold and McIntosh were used subsequently as local educational facilities, with more marked impacts to their historic integrity. Fort Duncan has been used as a recreational park since 1933.

Fort Ringgold

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1993 under Criteria A and C at the state level of significance, Fort Ringgold was the southernmost of the western forts constructed at the end of the Mexican War. [209] In October 1848, two companies of the First United States Infantry arrived near Rio Grande City. First known as the Post at Davis Landing, the fort became Camp Ringgold and Ringgold Barracks before being renamed Fort Ringgold in 1878. The post was ultimately occupied for 96 years, with periods of interruption and regarrisoning. Major occupation was from 1848 to 1861, 1865 to 1906, and 1917 to 1944, when the fort was declared surplus. Permanent construction dates to the mid-1870s-era frame and brick buildings located along a palm-lined parade ground, with additional improvements in 1917.

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[207] John E. Cornelison Jr., Rolando L. Garza, Michael A. Seibert, and Charles M. Haecker, with contributions by Sarah Kovalskis and Bruce Kaiser, *Archeological Survey of the Core Battlefield Area At Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park 2005-2007, 2010-2012: Redefining the First Battle of the U.S.-Mexican War,* SEAC Accession 2283 (Tallahassee: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service Southeast Archeological Center: 2016).

[208] Steven L. De Vore and Rolando L. Garza, *The Beginnings of the Mexican War in 1846: Geophysical Investigations of the Fort Brown Site, Cameron County, Texas,* Midwest Archeological Center Technical Report No. 4. (Lincoln: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 2014). See also Stone, *Final Fort Brown Earthworks: Baseline Report*.

[209] This summary derives from Garna L. Christian, "Fort Ringgold," TSHA: Handbook of Texas Online, https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbf42, accessed 29 Sep 2017. See also David Moore, Terri Myers, and Matt Goebel, Fort Ringgold Historic District National Register of Historic Places Nomination (Austin: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992), on file with the Texas Historical Commission.

Fort Ringgold provided community and economic stability in an otherwise isolated area, particularly during the Cortina War and Mexican Revolution. However, an 1899 incident involving the African American Troop D of the Ninth United States Cavalry revealed racial tensions. On November 20, post commander 2d Lieutenant E. H. Rubottom responded to a presumed assault by ordering Gatling gunfire. Only one minor injury resulted, and resultant investigations failed to result in charges, but many townspeople insisted that soldiers had feigned an attack. Governor Joseph Sayers supported local demand that the Ninth Cavalry be relocated in favor of a white garrison.

The Rio Grande Consolidated Independent School District purchased Fort Ringgold for a campus in 1949, resulting in new construction both at that time and subsequently. A Revive Fort Ringgold committee is now seeking to restore some of the standing military buildings. Recognized as one of the best-preserved 19th-century military posts in Texas, Fort Ringgold is comprised of dozens of post-1850 buildings with one pre-Civil War structure standing—the Robert E. Lee House.[210] Site number 41SR142 represents the archeological component of the earlier fort and much of this area has since been paved over with its subsurface integrity unknown.

Fort McIntosh

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, Fort McIntosh (41WB11) near Laredo, initially named Camp Crawford, was established in 1849 on the site of a former Spanish presidio in use by the Laredo Guard of Texas Volunteers since 1846.[211] Second Lieutenant Egbert Ludovicus Vielé was dispatched from Ringgold Barracks with a company of the First United States Infantry to set up a tent camp. In January 1850 the strategic post was renamed Fort McIntosh in honor of Colonel James Simmons McIntosh and acted as a link in the chain of forts along the Rio Grande. Due to Comanche and Lipan Apache activity, the nearby river ford was known as "Indian Crossing." The fort was initially a star-shaped earthwork later expanded due to Indian incursions. Major Caleb Chase Sibley of the U. S. Army Third Infantry received orders to evacuate shortly after Texas voted to secede on February 1, 1861.[212] Confederates occupied Fort McIntosh during the Civil War until 1865. In 1868 permanent construction began, with additional temporary buildings constructed during World War II. An October 1899 incident where members of Company D of the 25th Infantry beat a peace officer in response to complaints of police brutality foreshadowed events in Brownsville and Houston. The two world wars prolonged use of Fort McIntosh, which closed May 31, 1946. The Boundary Commission and City of Laredo acquired the property, now in part occupied by Laredo Junior College. Although the Fort was altered to meet the needs of the college, several buildings and some of its subsurface archeological integrity remain intact.[213]

Like the Fort Brown earthwork, development and public recreation has damaged Fort McIntosh original star fortification. In the 1930s, Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects bisected Fort McIntosh's southwest

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[210] Advisory Council on Historic Preservation "Rio Grande City, Texas," https://www.achp.gov/preserve-america/community/rio-grande-city-texas, accessed 8 Aug 2019.

[211] This summary is derived from Garna L. Christian, "Fort McIntosh," TSHA: Texas State Historical Association, https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbf35, accessed 29 Sep 2017. See also Joe R. Williams and Marie D. Landon, Fort McIntosh National Register of Historic Places nomination (Austin: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1975), on file with Texas Historical Commission.

[212] Jerry Thompson, *Tejano Tiger: José de los Santos Benavides and the Texas-Mexico Borderlands, 1823-1891*, The Texas Biographies Series 5 (Fort Worth: Center for Texas Studies at TCU and TCU Press, 2017), 83-84.

[213] Alton K. Briggs, *Archaeological Investigations of an Area Proposed for Vegetation Management at Fort McIntosh, USA (1849-1946), Laredo, Webb County, Texas*, Report 19 (Georgetown: Lone Star Archaeological Services, 1982).

quarter. The WPA reconstructed Fort McIntosh's deteriorated earth walls.[214] By the 1990s, all-terrain-vehicle and off-road-motor-bikes courses stretched across its embankments. US Border Patrol roads were established in the 2000s. The site has also been picked over by metal detector hobbyists leaving behind piles of modern trash. Backhoe trenches excavated in 2011 found that Fort McIntosh's magazine and traverse have been dismantled with its large sandstone slabs removed for use elsewhere. However, investigations may have relocated where the stone originated.[215]

Fort Duncan

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971, Fort Duncan (Site number 41MV2) was established on the east bank of the Rio Grande in March 1849 as the fifth post to protect the frontier. The temporary post of Camp Eagle Pass preceded it in 1846.[216] There was an abundance of stone at hand suitable for building, but no lumber. Despite poor conditions, in 1851 leadership directed, however, that no more permanent buildings be erected until a lease for the site could be obtained. By 1856, when Colonel Mansfield inspected the Department of Texas, the fort had become a permanent establishment, leased for twenty years at $130 per month from John Twohig of San Antonio. By this time most of the permanent buildings and quarters had been completed.

Although originally garrisoned as an outpost to protect against American Indian incursions, the fort also oversaw the trade with Mexico that crossed at Eagle Pass along the California road. Despite this strategic location, the fort was abandoned in May 1859. In March 1860, Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee ordered the fort regarrisoned due to the unrest caused by Juan Cortina. During the Civil War, the post was known as the Rio Grande Station and served as a station for the Frontier Regiment, a unit raised by the Texas legislature. The post was a vital supply point for munitions acquired in Mexico for the Confederacy. Federal troops reoccupied Fort Duncan in March 1868 and in 1870 Seminole Indians were added to the command. The post saw active service until 1883. It was then renamed the Camp at Eagle Pass, acting as a sub-post of Fort Clark until the government was able to purchase the property in 1894. From 1890 to 1916, the fort served as a basic base for National Guard units deployed due to border disturbances. With World War I, Fort Duncan activated as a training site in 1917 and finally was abandoned in 1920. In 1933, the City of Eagle Pass began operating the site as a public park, with the exception of its brief use during World War II for officers' recreation.

As was the case at Fort McIntosh, the WPA reconstructed and repaired much of the remaining buildings at Fort Duncan. Seven original buildings have been restored and a museum occupies the former headquarters. The 1971 National Register nomination calls into question the integrity of the remaining Fort Duncan buildings noting that none are in an unaltered condition and that most of the original interior design is gone. Whereas the eight contributing buildings from Fort Brown retain a high integrity of location (except for one building that has been relocated), setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association thus representing the full development of Fort Brown in the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

American Latino Heritage Sites:

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[214] Joe R. Williams and Marie D. Landon, Fort McIntosh National Register of Historic Places Nomination (Austin: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1975), on file with the Texas Historical Commission.

[215] John E. Keller, James E. Warren, and Herbert G. Uecker, *Cultural Resource Investigations for the Proposed Fort McIntosh Star Fort Restoration Project, Laredo, Webb County, Texas*, Report No. 749, Archaeology Consultants, Inc. (George West: 2011).

[216] This summary is derived from "Fort Duncan," TSHA: Texas State Historical Association, https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbf17, accessed 3 Apr 2018. See also Wayne Bell and Gary Hume, Fort Duncan National Register of Historic Places Nomination (Austin: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1971), on file with the Texas Historical Commission.

The experience of Mexicans and *Tejanos* who lived in the Rio Grande valley at the time of the US-Mexican War, through its aftermath, and beyond, is one of involuntary immigration in which, as historian Ramón Gutiérrez described: "We did not cross a border; the border crossed us." Fort Brown's role in establishing the new border and policing (or exacerbating) the ethnic conflicts that followed provides an important window into the American Latino experience. The shifting river around Fort Brown exemplifies how land formerly in Mexico, including the suspected site of at least one of the historic Mexican defensive batteries, shifted to the north of the US border.

Chamizal National Memorial

The Chamizal National Memorial honors diplomatic resolution of border lands disputes in the latter half of the twentieth century. Congress established the memorial to commemorate the Chamizal Convention of 1963, a treaty ending border dispute caused by the movement of the river. While the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo established the Rio Grande/Río Bravo as the international boundary, the river naturally moves south, depriving Mexico of land, a previous source of tension between the two countries. At this location US President Lyndon B. Johnson and Mexican President Adolfo Lopez Mateos met to discuss the "Chamizal Issue: and determine a diplomatic solution.[217] The countries agreed to share the cost of cementing the riverbed and building ports of entry in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. The US ceded the Chamizal Tract and the countries share Cordova Island. Citizens of both countries were displaced through the treaty, echoing some of the issues highlighted at Fort Brown in an earlier historic context. The Chamizal National Memorial honors goodwill, understanding, and cultural exchange between the two countries.

6. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

Ownership of Property		**Category of Property**	
Private:		Building(s):	
Public-Local:	X	District:	X
Public-State:		Site:	
Public-Federal:	X	Structure:	
		Object:	

Number of Resources within Boundary of Property: 15

Contributing		**Noncontributing**	
Buildings:	8	Buildings:	3
Sites:	1	Sites:	0
Structures:	0	Structures:	3
Objects:	0	Objects:	0
Total:	9	Total:	6

[217] National Park Service, Chamizal National Memorial, Texas, https://www.nps.gov/cham/learn/historyculture/index.htm, accessed 3 Apr 2018.

PROVIDE PRESENT AND PAST PHYSICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PROPERTY
(Please see specific guidance for type of resource[s] being nominated)

Fort Brown Description National Historic Landmark Update: Summary

The Fort Brown National Historic Landmark consists of three separate areas (Sections A, B and C) as originally presented in the 1986 nomination. Section A encompassed only a small portion of the original Fort Brown earthworks, constructed in 1846. As described in 1986, Section A enclosed the above ground remnant of the fort within a rectangular boundary. Sections B and C capture surviving buildings of the later Fort Brown, which were constructed between 1867 and 1944. Sections B and C are approximately ¼ mile to the north and east of Section A, located on the Texas Southmost College campus. Section B includes only the Cavalry Barracks built in 1869 and Section C, located approximately 1000' to the west of Section B, contains the Post Hospital, Medical Laboratory, Linen Storage/Morgue, Commissary, and Commandant's Quarters (Building 44).

As discussed below, the Commandant's Quarters and Chapel were moved to their current locations in Section C. Since 1986, the Officers' Quarters at the west end of Section C dating to 1868, have been removed, and a large arts center constructed in their place. The lone surviving building of the eight that stood west of May Street is the Commandant's Quarters. It was relocated in 2007 from the far west end of Section C to a new site along the west side of the street, near the intersection with Gorgas Drive.

This National Historic Landmark additional documentation adjusts the boundaries to increase the land in Section A to include the historic surrounding landscape and reduce the land in Section C where buildings were removed in 2005.

Fort Brown Cultural Landscape

Van Wagenen's Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) presents KOCOA military terrain analysis based on recent pedestrian survey and historical primary documents.[218] While the full report should be consulted for additional detail, the following summary speaks to significant cultural landscape features at Fort Brown National Historic Landmark.

At the time of the siege, key terrain included the peninsulas, sharp curve, and deep water of the Rio Grande. The American forces occupied the east peninsula (north of the river) and the Mexicans the west peninsula (south of the river). Strategically, the Fort's position enabled American engagement with any ships arriving to supply the Mexican city of Matamoros as well as American control of the Lower Ferry crossing (lower Camino de Santa Isabel). General Ampudia was able to occupy the Frontón de Santa Isabel ranch and crossroads to the north of the fort, where he established a mortar battery. Due to subsequent changes in hydrology and modern urban development, the ferry crossing, ranch, and crossroads areas are no longer extant.[219] As for observation and fields of fire, amidst the largely flat alluvial plain, the modest rise of the fort's southern parapets and the right bank of the river were important in the course of the siege and have not substantially altered.[220] Regarding cover and concealment, steep river banks, vegetation (chaparral and mesquite trees), and manmade structures were significant, although what remains of the latter [batteries, breastworks, *jacales* (straw, pole, and adobe shelters),

[218] A methodology devised by the Army War College to study battlefield features, the acronym represents Key Terrain, Observation and Fields of Fire, Cover and Concealment, Obstacles, and Avenues of Approach.
[219] Van Wagenen, 50-51.
[220] Ibid., 52.

and trenching] are largely only partially extant as archeological features.[221] The major natural obstacle during the siege was the Rio Grande itself and its attendant features of the *resaca* (a major landscape reference point, even despite changes in the course of the river) and marshes to the northeast.[222] The main avenues of approach were the Upper and Lower ferry crossings (largely effaced), Camino de Santa Isabel (now International Boulevard), and the crossroads.[223]

Other critical contributions that lend an understanding to the cultural landscape and are referenced in Van Wagenen's CLI are Dr. Jude Benavides' hydrological and georeferenced mapping analysis of the changing course of the river and Rolando Garza's 2011 archeological survey summary of a narrow strip of land west of the modern levee and east of the current river channel (west of Fort Brown). Benavides' work considers historical maps and images from 1846, 1895, 1943, and 1963 as well as two hydrologic methods, river point bar formation from lateral migration and ox-bow formation.[224]

The 2011 archeological technical summary identified remnants of an old levee road and an "L"-shaped breastwork possibly dating to the Civil War.[225] Another linear feature may relate to the Mortar Battery, subject to further study. The preliminary archeological assessment included in the CLI documents impacts to the site beginning in the early twentieth century. The recent focus has been on subsurface potential as related to Fort Brown, Battery of Two Bombs, and the Mexican Mortar and Lower Fort batteries (now on the US side). The latter three features had not previously been identified in the field, nor had a previously unknown potential Civil War-era earthwork to the northeast of the fort.[226] The site as described promises excellent potential for additional archeological study.[227]

Fort Brown's southwestern bastion is the major confirmed physical feature of the site, although difficult of access or visibility at present. Historic viewsheds have been obstructed by modern encroachment, including construction of the levee and development of the golf course, as well as vegetation growing on (and damaging) the fort itself.

The revised boundary for Section A follows the river's edge and levees to encompass most of the peninsula in order to include the cultural landscape that provides the setting and surroundings of the original Fort Brown and archeological remains of the earthen fortification and of Ringgold's Battery (Two Mortar Battery). In addition, the new boundary includes a potential Civil War period breastworks located between the river and the levee to the northwest of the fort site. The reduced Section C removes land to the west and north of the relocated Commandant's Quarters. Other boundaries remain as previously drawn.

In particular, Section A evokes the historic setting, vistas, and surroundings that illustrate the importance of the Rio Grande, the proximity of Matamoros, and their strategic relationship to the siege. It now takes in the entire modern peninsula formed by a loop in the river, with the top of the modern USIBWC flood control levee as the northern boundary. Michael Scott Van Wagenen characterized the significance of Fort Brown's location in a Cultural Landscape Inventory for the earthworks:

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[221] Ibid., 52-57.
[222] Ibid., 57-58.
[223] Ibid., 58-59.
[224] Van Wagenen, 69.
[225] Ibid., 73-75, for maps of the survey area.
[226] Ibid., 76-77.
[227] Ibid., 85-87.

> Contemporary military maps show that the placement of Fort Brown to be of considerable strategic importance. Not only did it situate the U.S. artillery within range of the city plaza of Matamoros, it also controlled a sharp southerly bend in the Rio Grande. As marine traffic moved upstream from the Gulf of Mexico, it would have to slow down to negotiate the extreme turn in the river. U.S. artillery at the fort was therefore in position to enfilade any approaching ships bringing supplies or reinforcements to the city of Matamoros.[228]

The flat expanse of the peninsula allowed for a clear view from the fort to Matamoros and its surrounding area, with the site ultimately selected as much for its political significance as military; its location allowed the US flag to be seen clearly from Matamoros, making a statement that the United States was claiming the border. Strategically, the location was vulnerable to Mexican crossfire.

Section A: The revised boundary for Section A essentially follows the river and levee system to include additional archeological resources associated with the 1846 Siege of Fort Brown and the onset of the Mexican War. At the site of Fort Brown, the river makes a loop to the south, leaving a U-shaped peninsula along which a system of flood control levees, maintained by the US International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC), were constructed in 1943. In addition to the levees paralleling the river, another levee dating from the 1930s and reconstructed in 2012 and 2013 crosses the peninsula east to west, at its north end, slicing through the north edge of the Fort Brown earthworks. After the levees were constructed, the river changed course again, veering to the east just above the south end of the peninsula, leaving the east length of north-south levee well back from the river. In 1956 the Riverview Golf Course was constructed within the levee system on the peninsula. It was later renamed Fort Brown Memorial Golf Course. The golf course ceased operation in May 2015, and the formerly manicured landscape has become overgrown with native vegetation, taking on a more historic appearance. The former golf course property holds the above-ground and archeological remains of most of the original Fort Brown, the archeological remains of Major Ringgold's (Two Mortar Battery), and perhaps even the potential archeological remains of the Mexican earthworks that in 1846 were in Mexico at the river's edge. The above-ground remnants of the Fort Brown's earthen walls, including Bastion 3 as noted on 1846 maps, are clearly visible as ridges on the landscape.

The location of Fort Brown was chosen because of its strategic advantage with clear visual connection to Matamoros and the Mexican shore, as well as river traffic, over the flat plain of the peninsula. In addition, the area south of the fort was the battlefield during the siege of Fort Brown. According to maps and drawings of the Fort Brown post, the peninsula later saw use as a location for a corral and stables, US brickyard site, Civil War fortification, drill field, and as the location of other troop activities, subsequent to closure in 1944.

Fort Brown was made of the local earth, a combination of clay and sand, packed into place: "Fort Brown was 300 yards by 200 yards with walls nine and a half feet high. Its six bastions commanded the surrounding terrain on all sides. A ditch eight feet deep and twenty feet across surrounded the structure."[229] The ditch around the fort's perimeter was a byproduct of construction of the walls, where the clay and sand were excavated. A lunette was first built for protection just south of the fort site during construction of the fort. It became known as Ringgold's Battery or Two Mortar Battery. Under construction during April 1846, the fort was not quite completed when the siege began on May 3. The fort was a substantial structure despite how quickly it was created. The wide defensive ditch, high parapet walls, and six bastions gave Fort Brown its distinctive star

[228] Ibid.
[229] Van Wagenen, 11.

shape, a style which has its origins in mid–fifteenth-century Italy.[230] Fort Brown shares stylistic and design attributes with eighteenth-century European fort design and the influence of French military engineer Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707).[231]

At the northwest corner of Section A, between the river and the levee are visible manmade earthworks that may be fortifications from the Civil War period. There is evidence that both the Union and Confederate occupiers maintained fortifications along the river, and intended to restore the old Fort Brown earthworks that had been abandoned after the Mexican War. In June 1864 Major General F. J. Herron, commander of the Army of the Frontier, thereafter the Second Division Thirteenth Army Corps, ordered compilation and drawings of a "Plan of Fortifications and Profiles" of the old Fort Brown. In addition to renovations to the old fort, the plan drawing showed earthworks to be constructed, extending from the point of Bastion 2, the northwest bastion, westward to the river. Any remains of Bastion 2 now lie under the levee. Another earthwork extension is depicted from the point of Bastion 3 to the river. Bastion 3 is still largely intact. No archeological investigation has been done on these potential extensions of the old Fort Brown, but it is possible that the earthwork feature that currently exists between the levee and the river at the northwest corner of Section A is the remains of the 1864 extension of Bastion 2.[232] NPS personnel believe that the remnant earthworks date from the Civil War, and this could indeed be the case.

The eastern portion of a line of Mexican earthworks, the Mortar Battery and the Lower Fort Battery, are now within the United States and within the NHL's revised, expanded boundary. The remainder of the Mexican earthworks is in the present channel of the Rio Grande. This possible archeological site has not yet been investigated.

As an expanded area containing most of the peninsula, Section A is a cultural landscape that provides the setting and vistas that portray the scene of the 1846 conflict. Although the river has changed course since then, placing more land within the United States, the views of Matamoros and its landmark church building remain from the site of Fort Brown, as they did in 1846. The larger setting for the first Fort Brown is important to an understanding that the river and other natural features played an important role in the defense of the fort: "The northern flank of the fort was bordered by an oxbow lake known in Spanish as a 'resaca.' This horseshoe shaped feature was surrounded on either end by cultivated fields, chaparral, and swampy marshlands. While this protected the fort from a surprise assault, it also offered concealment for Mexican troops operating on the left bank. They used this natural cover for harassing small arms fire at various points during the siege."[233] The river and vegetation patterns, as the landscape returns to its natural appearance, contribute to the integrity of the feeling, association, and setting of the property.

Section A: Historic Appearance

In 1846, General Zachary Taylor ordered Captain Joseph K. F. Mansfield (1803-1862) to design and direct the construction of fortifications along the Rio Grande just months prior to the conflict with Mexico. As originally designed, Fort Brown was a star-shaped earth-walled fort with six bastions. It is one of only two earthen star forts built by the US Army during the US-Mexican War—the other being Fort Marcy in Santa Fe, New Mexico

[230] Christopher Duffy, *Siege Warfare: The Fortress in the Early Modern World 1494–1660* (London: Routledge, 1979).
[231] See Fortifications of Vauban, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1283, accessed Mar 2019.
[232] F. H. Arlitt, "Plan of Fortifications and Profiles," Jun 1864.
[233] Ibid., 53.

where very little surface evidence exists today to indicate it was a star fort.[234]

Excavation to construct Fort Brown resulted in a circumferential ditch from which earth and sand was removed to create the fort's packed earth walls. The ditch abutted directly against the fort's wall along the exterior perimeter, as shown in Mansfield's detailed April-June 1846 plan.[235] The drawing either depicts the plan for the fort before it was completed, or the as-completed appearance in June 1846 after the siege. According to this measured drawing, the entrance to the fort and the drawbridge was along its northeast side, between bastions 1 and 6, but at the time of the siege, the north and east walls were incomplete. In a letter dated April 23, 1846, Captain Mansfield described the progress on the fort to Colonel Joseph Totten: "Cover line from 9 to 10 feet above the general level on the crest, ditch about 8 feet deep and from 15 to 22 feet broad. Three regiments per day are detailed to work on the defenses. Six magazines are in contemplation but 2 only are about finished. Four of the points are 125 yards and two of them 150 yards."[236] In addition to the still-under-construction fort, there was an earthworks that accommodated two mortars, and called the Two Mortar Battery (Ringgold's Battery). It was located to the south for the purpose of providing defense for the fort as it was being constructed. Seeing the United States' fortification activity, Mexicans also began constructing earthworks, linked by a trench and earthen berm on their side of the river. Later changes in the course of the river placed one of these Mexican fortifications, a mortar battery, in the United States, to the south and west of the fort and the Two Mortar Battery. The uncompleted fort, with a garrison of 500 men came under siege for seven days, from May 3-9, 1846. The land to the south of the fort, which later became the Fort Brown Golf Course, although a much smaller area in 1846, was at the time of the siege cultivated agricultural land.[237]

In the 1846 drawing, there were magazines adjacent to bastions 2, 4 and 5. There was a bombproof/guard house and covered passage, 5' wide and 6' tall just behind the entrance. One section of the bridge over the ditch closest to the fort entry was hinged to open upward and cut off access to the fort. Each bastion had a different angle. No two were alike.[238] An 1846 hand drawn sketch of the fort by P. McNeely shows the layout and placement of troops, guns, and features of the fort's interior. Crossing the interior of the fort between Bastion 1 and Bastion 4 was a bomb shield. Behind it was the commissary or food and supply storage area, a well, and the hospital. There were also bomb shields at several of the bastions. A flagstaff was planted near the southwest bastion. Beneath the flagstaff were two graves, one for Major Brown and one for Sergeant Weigart, who were killed during the siege.[239] The McNeely sketch uses a different numbering system for the bastions, but references in this paragraph use the bastion numbers from the 1846 Mansfield measured drawing to avoid confusion.

Section B: North of Section A is the oxbow lake that was present in 1846. Beyond it is the campus of Texas Southmost College. After the Mexican War, the army left the earthen Fort Brown fortification and constructed a new permanent and less flood-prone facility about one fourth mile to the north. It was intended to be a long-term military installation with a collection of purpose-built buildings. Confederate forces destroyed the new

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[234] Cordelia Thomas Snow and David Kammer, *"'Not Occupied…Since the Peace:' The 1995 Archaeological and Historical Investigations at Historic Fort Marcy, Santa Fe, New Mexico*," NMCRIS Project Number 41184, NMCRIS Activity Number 49311 (Dec 1995).

[235] J. K. F. Mansfield, "Fort Brown, Opposite Matamoros, Texas [map]," Jun 1846, on file with the National Archives and Records Administration.

[236] Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Letters Received, National Archives Record Group 77, quoted in National Park Service, *Selected Sources for the Battle of Fort Brown May 3-9, 1846* (Brownsville, TX: National Park Service, 1996), 5-6.

[237] Mansfield, "Fort Brown, Opposite Matamoros, Texas," 1846.

[238] Ibid.

[239] P. McNeely, sketch of Fort Brown, 1847.

installation during the Civil War as they abandoned the fort to Union troops in November 1863. No buildings survive from before the Civil War. The fort was rebuilt beginning in 1867, following authorization for construction. A hurricane destroyed the partially constructed fort in October 1867, after which work began anew.

Cavalry Barracks (1869, contributing building)
Section B of the revised NHL retains the same boundaries as originally, a 60 x 80-yard rectangle (approximately one acre). The Cavalry Barracks stands at the northwest corner of the intersection of Gorgas Drive and Ringgold Road. As described by Assistant Surgeon General William Wilson in 1870:

> The cavalry barrack is a long, one-story building, 26 by 20 feet, elevated some 3 feet above the surface of the ground and surrounded by a covered veranda, 9 feet in width. This building is divided by an archway, 12 feet in width, into two large rooms, each 24 by 92 by 14 feet, used as day-rooms for the men, and also as dormitories, Though an extremely comfortable barrack in every respect, still I believe a barrack built on this plan, where a common room is used by the men both as day-room and dormitory, is objectionable, as the men, during the day, are accustomed to lounge in their beds, which would not be so much the case were the dormitory in a different story. In this climate, where diseases of a malarious type prevail, the dormitory should, in my opinion, be in the second story. As in infantry quarters, the men sleep in single, two-tier bunks, on bedsacks filled with hay, and covered by the ordinary government blanket. Each room of the barrack is sufficiently ventilated by doors at each end, and by twelve windows, six on each side, and also by ridge ventilator, through lattice-work in the ceiling. Projecting backward from the center of the building is a large mess-room, 40 by 40 feet, divided into two rooms by four open arches. It is fitted up with a sufficient number of tables and wooden benches. There are two small store-rooms, one 14 ½ by 10 feet, the other 19 feet eight inches by 10 feet, at one end of the mess-room, in which commissary stores are kept. One of these was, I believe, intended for a kitchen, but it was utterly inadequate form the purpose, and a small, temporary wooden building was erected in rear of all, in which the cooking is done, and answers the purpose. This barrack, for an average strength of 80 men, gives an air space of 775 cubic feet per man (…) To all these barracks water-closets are provided, situated some little distance in the rear, and all built on the same general plan, being small, frame buildings, elevated some 3 feet above the ground, with a trough which slides underneath, and can be drawn out as often as necessary, emptied, and washed out in the Rio Grande below the reservation, and disinfected. The water-closets attached to the cavalry and artillery barracks are, like the quarters, built of brick.[240]

The building is a large, one-story brick building with an elongated T-plan with a shortened stem. The long side of the building runs approximately north-south with the stem extending approximately to the east and facing onto Ringgold Road. The brick walls are laid in common bond, with a 5 to 1 stretcher-header row ratio, made of red-orange brick that has been painted buff/yellow. The east wing, or stem of the T, intersects the long side of the building just south of its mid-point. An addition has been attached at the north end of the building, probably dating from the 1940s. The building has a low-pitched hipped roof, mostly concealed behind a parapet with two courses of decorative corbeling. The corbeling extends around the entire building. Unlike the remainder of the building, the addition at the north end has a flat roof.

The long west wall which has the main entrance contains 14 bays. There are no openings in the addition at the

[240] "Fort Brown, Texas: Report of Assistant Surgeon William J. Wilson, United States Army, dated July 19, 1870," in John Shaw Billings, *A Report on Barracks and Hospitals: With Descriptions of Military Posts* Circular No. 4 (Washington, DC: War Department, Surgeon General's Office, 5 Dec 1870): 209-210.

north end. The east wing is five bays in length and three bays wide. A shed roofed porch extends around all four sides of the long section of the barracks and along the east side of the east wing. Windows have six over six sash with narrow muntins, below wide wood lintels. All windows have pairs of louvered shutters with adjustable louvers. Entrances are located in each of the three end walls and into the east wing from the east porch of the long section. Additionally, there is an entrance in the east wall of the long section at its north end to access the addition. In the west wall there are three entrances. This wall was the original front of the building. The entrances are in the fourth, eighth and eleventh bays from the north end of the building. All but three entrances have standard-sized openings, which have been replaced with modern metal doors. Some entrances have rectangular transoms. All have wide wood lintels. Three entrances, the central opening in the west wall and the two openings from the east wing onto the east porch of the main section are large arched openings. These entrances are wide, round arches with each arch lined with a brick soldier course. Currently the arched entrances are enclosed with louvered panels surrounding a center standard size metal door.

From the central west entrance, the once open archway leads to a corridor that bisects the long west wing and opens into the perpendicular east wing. Long corridors lead north and south the length of the long wing with rooms opening onto them. Floors are paved in red-orange bricks laid in a herringbone pattern. Ceilings consist of tongue-and-groove paneling. Arcaded brick walls separate the east wing from the west (north-south) wing, and another arcaded brick wall bisects the east wing long ways, from east to west. The interior woodwork is naturally finished oak featuring flat-topped crossettes and four-panel doors. The woodwork is fairly new, applied by Texas Southmost College when this and other former fort buildings were rehabilitated.

Section C: This area of the Fort Brown NHL lies about 1000' to the west of Section B. The area between the two sections contains modern campus buildings and grounds. The boundary is reduced from that designated in 1986 due to the aforementioned removal of the Officers' Quarters at the site of the 2005 Arts Center. The revised boundary includes the Commandant's Quarters in Section C, relocated to the corner of May Street and Gorgas Drive.

Section C therefore includes the Commandant's Quarters, Hospital, Medical Laboratory, Morgue/Linen Storage building, Commissary/Guard House, and Commissary Annex. The Chapel/Officers' Guest House is also in Section C, relocated just north of the Commissary building. These buildings were also designed in the Military Territorial style.

Commandant's Quarters (Building 44): According to a historical marker placed in front of the Commandant's Quarters, the building was constructed in 1868 as one of seven such buildings along the east boundary of the Parade Ground as Officers' Row. This building was moved to its current location, facing May Street, in 2007 and rehabilitated by Texas Southmost College in 2009.

The Commandant's Quarters is a one-and-a-half-story frame, side-gabled dwelling resting on brick piers. Constructed in the Greek Revival style, it has gabled dormers (two on the façade and three at the rear), three-light frieze band/eyebrow windows, and an entrance with transom and sidelights. The T-shaped house is five bays wide with a central entrance and sheathed with wood horizontal lap siding. A one-story wing extends to the rear (west). A one-story, L-plan, wrap-around porch with a very low-pitched hipped roof covers the front (east) and south sides. The porch has chamfered square posts with decorative diagonal bracing. Front windows are elongated with single pane sash. A variety of other window types appear on the building, including six-over-six-light sash at the side and rear walls, four-over-four-sash in the dormer windows and the three light eyebrow windows. Pairs of operable louvered shutters flank the windows. Two interior chimneys of corbeled brick construction extend from the roof peak. The roof is covered with asphalt architectural shingles, while the porch

roof is standing seam metal.

Assistant Surgeon William Wilson described the Commandant's Quarters in 1870:

> The commanding officer's house is a one and a half story frame building, 39 by 33 feet, elevated on brick piers about two feet above the ground. It contains on the ground floor four rooms, each 16 by 16 by 12 feet, with a hall, 6 feet wide. There are four attic rooms on the second story, each similar in size to those below, but only about 8 feet in height. A covered porch, 7 feet wide, is in front of the house. The porch at the rear of the house is 12 feet wide, and by means of a lattice-work at the sides is converted into a dining-room. In the rear of this is a kitchen, 16 by 12 feet. Extending backward for about 60 feet, and inclosed [sic] by a lattice-work, is a yard, and, at the lower end of this is a small water-closet, 11 by 11 feet, situated over a brick vault about 8 feet in depth. Underneath the stairs leading to the second story is a small closet or pantry.[241]

The Commandant's Quarters was altered following the 1933 hurricane through the addition of a second floor and a two-story porch, likely as a result of subsequent fire and hurricane damage. Selective demolition circa 1995 restored the building to its nineteenth century appearance.

The front entrance opens into a central stair hall with rooms on either side. The interior includes original pine tongue-and-groove flooring, molded baseboards, square newel posts, and beveled handrails. Crossetted window trim, doors, and other interior woodwork appear to have been installed as part of the 2009 rehabilitation of the building.

Hospital Building (Gorgas Hall/Administration Building, 1869, contributing building): Wilson described the Hospital in 1870 as follows:

> The post hospital is a handsome brick building, recently erected, and only fitted for occupation about May 1, 1869. It was built in accordance with the plans of Circular No. 4, Surgeon General's Office, for the year 1867. A covered veranda, 9 feet wide, surrounds the entire building. Extending laterally from the executive building, and separated from it by a covered archway, 10 feet 3 inches in width, are the wards, each of which is 24 by 66 by 14 feet, intended for twenty-four beds. These wards afford sufficient accommodation for the sick of the command, and seem admirably adapted for hospital purposes. A constant breeze (sometimes almost too strong) blows through each ward, thus securing perfectly free ventilation. Each ward is intended for twenty-four beds, though, at present, I have only fourteen in each, and the amount of sickness in the garrison, for several months past, has been so small that one ward is quite sufficient to accommodate them. Each ward is ventilated by thirteen windows and one door on the side, and a door on each end; there is also ventilation through the ridge by lattice-work in the ceilings. The windows are 11 ½ feet high by 5 feet wide, and are furnished with venetian blinds, opening down to the floor. In the winter months a large wood stove is used in each ward, which gives sufficient heat. The fuel used in the "mesquite," the same as supplied to the post, and excellent fuel, making almost too hot a fire. The hospital is lighted by candles and lard-oil lamps in each ward.[242]

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[241] "Fort Brown, Texas: Report of Assistant Surgeon William J. Wilson, United States Army, dated July 19, 1870," 206-207.
[242] Ibid., 209-210.

The largest and most imposing of the surviving buildings of Fort Brown is the Hospital. The large T-plan building features a hipped roof concealed behind brick parapets, punctuated by a two-story cross-gabled central block. The long axis of the Hospital, the top of the T, runs east-west, with the stem extending to the south. Portions of the short wing appear to be additions, although constructed in character with the rest of the building. A circa-1880s addition, when the facility was the site of groundbreaking research into the cause and treatment of yellow fever, is attached at the east end. It has a semi-hexagonal façade on its north side and massive stone lintels over the openings. The Hospital faces north toward the Paseo walkway, the original main access through the fort.

The building is constructed of red-orange brick with remnants of buff/yellow paint. It is entirely wrapped with a wide inset brick arcade. Most of the building is one story, with the exception of the two-story central block, two sections on the stem of the T, and the addition at the east end. Walls are laid in common bond. Vertical brick corbelling trims the parapets. Other embellishments include corbeled brick pilasters between the arches of the arcade and brick corbeling at the springing of the arches. The central block's projecting arcade features brick finials that tie into a metal balustrade. Most openings are topped with brick jack arches. Windows in the one-story sections and the first story of the two-story central block are elongated nine-over-nine, double-hung sash with sills at the porch floor level. Other windows are six-over-six, double-hung sash. Most windows have pairs of louvered shutters and wood screens. The first-story windows on the east end addition are four-over-four lights. Doors are either double or single, four panel, with transoms.

The interior of the Hospital has been converted to administrative offices for Texas Southmost College. The originally open wards of the one-story wings have been partitioned to accommodate offices and meeting rooms. However, several original features remain, including interior window and door architrave trim, Greek Revival peaked or "gabled" architraves, and tongue-and-groove wood ceilings. An 1882 interior view shows spaces open to the rafters and interior louvered shutters at each window.[243]

Medical Laboratory (Building 84, A.A. Champion Hall, ca. 1867, contributing building): The Historic American Building Survey documentation (HABS No. TX-3279) for this building lists a construction date of 1867, based on War Department records. The building does not appear on an 1877 map of Fort Brown, although that map appears not show all buildings present at that time.[244] Constructed by the Quartermaster General of the United States Army, the Medical Laboratory is a two-story, six-bay brick building situated at the corner of May Street and Gorgas Drive, facing west toward May Street, opposite the Commandant's Quarters. It is just south of the west end of the Hospital. It is similar stylistically to the other buildings, with red-orange brick and a hipped roof hidden by a corbeled parapet. Decorative vertical corbeling embellishes the parapet. Remnants of buff/yellow paint remain on the exterior walls. Brick jack arches top the windows and doors. At the south end a steel fire escape staircase is attached to the building, with doors at the first- and second-story levels. One-story porches with low-pitched hipped roofs and chamfered wood posts extend along the east and west walls. Windows have six-over-six, double-hung sashes and pairs of louvered shutters. Exterior doors are modern, four-panel replacements. There are two entrances in the west wall, in the first and fourth bays from the north end. In the east wall, there are three entrances, in the first, second and fourth bays from the north end. The interior of the building has been modified to accommodate offices. Some interior features, such as original four-panel doors remain.

[243] Logan Hawkes, "Texas Most Haunted Place? Brownsville on the Rio Grande," Texas Less Traveled, http://www.texaslesstraveled.com/30f12de40.jpg, accessed 22 Mar 2017.

[244] http://www.history-map.com/picture/002/Brown-Texas-Fort.htm, accessed 24 Mar 2017.

According to the 1986 NHL nomination, the building was originally designed to be the medical office, but soon expanded to house a variety of other functions, including orderly quarters and isolation wards. The HABS documentation indicates that Surgeon General William Crawford Gorgas likely conducted research on yellow fever in the building during his tenure at Fort Brown from 1882-1884. The 1942 Quartermaster's Report details the layout of the building's functions at that date and installation of lighting and plumbing. Interior rehabilitation occurred in 1960 and again in 1977.

Dead House (Linen Storage/Morgue, ca. 1870s, contributing building): The 1986 nomination dates this building to the 1870s, when it was originally two small, square separate buildings with hipped roofs hidden by brick parapets. The two buildings were joined ca. 1940 by means of a five-bay, flat-roofed infill section. Another flat-roofed addition, a garage, was attached to the east end of the morgue. The parapet on the morgue building is higher than the remainder of the building. The single building is an elongated narrow rectangle in plan, running parallel to and south and east of the hospital building. It is constructed of red-orange brick with buff/yellow paint residue. The infill section and linen storage unit are wider than the morgue and attached garage addition. The width difference is visible on the south side of the building. The north side's walls are flush.

The morgue section features vertical decorative corbeling on its parapet and corbeled pilasters at its corners. Brick jack arches top the windows. The linen storage section at the west end has vertical corbeling, but lacks the brick pilasters. The additions have simple horizontal corbeling. Windows have four-over-four light sash, except for the infill which has single six-light windows. All windows have horizontal metal bars applied to the exterior.

Commissary (Building 88/Art Building, 1903-4, contributing building): The Commissary stands at the east edge of Section C. Although it was built for food and supply storage, it was converted to a prison/guard house even prior to use for Mexican insurgents from the Battle of Matamoros in June 1913. The 1977 HABS documentation documents the individual history of the building, which was constructed according to Departmental Office of the Quartermaster General of the Army Standard Building Plan 106A.

The Commissary's placement is angled to the Morgue and Hospital. The one-and-a-half-story building features the red-orange brick of the other military buildings at Fort Brown, but original construction may have been adobe with iron window grates. It features a raised brick basement and gabled roof (slate by the 1940s). The building's east-facing façade is six bays in length. A cast stone water table extends around the side and back walls at the first-floor level. Along the front wall is a raised deck and loading dock, sheltered by a shed-roof extension supported by diagonal braces. A decorative iron railing has been added to the edge of the dock.

Windows have cast stone sills and are topped with brick segmental arches. Six-over-six, double-hung sash windows are used at the main and upper levels, with single-hung six-pane sash at the basement level. Windows are protected with vertical iron bars. A gabled dormer with double-hung, six-over-six sash windows extends from the east slope of the roof. This feature could be an addition from ca. 1920 or later. There are two entrances in the east wall, side by side at the second and third bays from the south end. The doors have five panels and are hung beneath transoms. In addition, at the back of the building there are two large bulkhead cellar entrances. A metal fire escape stairs and a second-floor exit door have been added to the north gable end. Chimneys with decorative corbelling are located inside each gable end.

The interior of the building has been modified to accommodate a chemistry laboratory and then offices, where to the west once housed the Guard Room and to the south the Guard Office. For its purpose as a commissary, the building was originally designed to have an open floor plan. At the main (first) floor level, the framing is

exposed, consisting of two parallel summer beams supported by wood columns. The attic level is partially open to the first floor. Canted queen posts with diagonal bracing support purlins and collar beams. The basement, like the main floor, has two summer beams. These are supported by brick columns. The areas between the columns are enclosed with iron partitions and doors to create jail cells, along the east third of the basement space.

Bachelors' Non-commissioned Officers' Quarters/Commissary Annex (ca. 1868-1877, contributing building): The 1986 nomination lists the construction date for this building as 1868, but it does not appear on the 1877 map of Fort Brown. Moreover, its architectural features, which are like those of the Commissary suggest that the date of construction is likely in the early twentieth century. The 1986 nomination also says that the building was used as the Sergeant of the Guard's Quarters and as the Communications Office. The campus map refers to the building as the Commissary Annex.

The building is gable fronted and faces east. It is constructed of the same red-orange bricks as the other fort buildings, with yellow paint residue. This building is distinctive for its monitor roof. It is three bays wide across its gable front and four bays long. It is one-and-a-half stories with full-sized windows at the main level and half windows at the upper level. All first- and upper-story windows are protected with iron bars. There is a round window in the gable. Like the adjacent Commissary, this building's windows have cast stone sills and brick segmental arches above the windows. The sashes are two-over-two panes, and the upper windows each have a single two-pane sash. The entrance is quite large in the east gable end, double wide with two five-panel doors and a segmentally arched two-light transom over them. The top of the arch is approximately at the level of the upper story windowsills.

Chapel/Officers' Guest House/Regiment House (1882, relocated 1992, contributing building): A historical marker located behind the Chapel dates the building to1882. Originally at the north edge of the parade ground, this building was subsequently located along the river near the Gateway International Bridge and moved again to its present location in 1992. Its original use was as the Officers' Guest House. The 1986 nomination listed it as non-contributing due to loss of integrity, but the building has since been restored. It is situated to the north of the Commissary and Commissary Annex, east of the Hospital.

The Chapel features the same red-orange brick as the other buildings. Based on photographs, in 1986 the building was whitewashed. The T-plan, one-story building features a gabled roof. The corner of the T on the north side of the building features a shed-roofed entrance porch. The porch rests on brick piers and is supported with square wood posts. There are two bays under the porch, and one bay in the projecting front gable. Double four over four sash windows flank the entrance. A second entrance opens onto the porch from the projecting gable. There is also a double window in the east gable. The west wall has three bays with double four-over-four windows, and the south side rear has an entrance and single four-over-four windows. Stick Style gable brackets embellish the overhanging roof. An interior brick chimney extends from the central section of the building.

Sections B and C: Historic Appearance

According to the original nomination, by 1893 the permanent post of Fort Brown had accommodations for two batteries of artillery, one garrison of cavalry, and eight companies of infantry. Also located within the expanded Fort Brown was the resaca or lagoon, an old channel of the Rio Grande which wrapped around a small area of land containing 25.5 acres. Maps variously depict the lagoon as completely encircling the landform, creating an island (see 1869 and 1877 maps) or as an oxbow wrapping around an area of land. In 1846, the chaparral was removed from this neck of land to prevent its use as possible cover for Mexican troops. Later, in 1867, the Brownsville National Cemetery was placed on the island. The cemetery closed in 1911, following the aftermath

of the so-called 1906 Brownsville Raid, with burials removed to Pineville, Louisiana. A hotel was later built on the cemetery site. Currently, the neck of land extending into the oxbow features buildings associated with Texas Southmost College, including housing and parking lots. West University Boulevard bisects the parcel.

Historic maps and photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries show Fort Brown to have been a busy and expansive place. While the original Fort Brown was abandoned and gradually returned to nature, the date of effective abandonment is uncertain. The fortification appears to be intact and possibly in some sort of use on maps from 1853, 1869 and 1877. It was restored and used during the Civil War, by both Confederate and Union forces according to military records. The Fort Brown earthworks was abandoned a final time in the late nineteenth century. The Army continued to use parts of the enlarged peninsula upon which the fort stood as a corral, brick yard and drill field.

The main part of the second fort site was a wedge-shaped landscape that extended from the river on the west along what is today International Boulevard to Ridgley Road approximately to East Jackson Street at the east end of the Texas Southmost College campus. Much of this area is today's campus. The fort's land also extended to the south, along the Rio Grande and the resaca to include the original fort site and its peninsula.

By 1853, the "new" fort area had expanded to the north of the old Fort Brown and contained substantial buildings. A detailed survey map drawn in that year depicted commandant's, surgeons', and officers' quarters to the north of old Fort Brown, between the river and the lake. Stables were located to the east. As drawn, the officers' quarters were shown to be gable roofed with wrap-around porches. The stables were identified as brick with a hipped shingle roof, "unfinished yet occupied."[245] An earlier, more primitive map, drawn for the army in 1849, depicted quartermaster's stores, hospital, and barracks in the same general area. This drawing may have been for planning purposes and thus may not depict buildings that were actually built. A drawing from 1856 by Colonel K. F. Joseph Mansfield depicts soldiers' barracks and officers' quarters arranged around the perimeter of a square, open parade ground located above the lagoon and adjacent to the river. Artillery grounds and a brick stable were located to the east. Another stable and laundry facilities stood along the river to the south, closer to the old Fort Brown earthworks.

Major Samuel Peter Heintzelman, in command of the Brownsville Expedition of the US Army in the Lower Rio Grande Valley during the Cortina War, detailed some first-hand references to the physical extent of his post at Fort Brown, beginning December 6, 1859.[246] For example, on December 10 of that year, Heintzelman wrote: "Dr. Carswell & I walked to old Ft. Brown about 600 yds. Below this. There is but one house within the works. Trees & bushes are growing all around & the parapets are now much dilapidated. It is much more extensive that [sic] I supposed." These references compliment Colonel Mansfield's January 1861 inspection of the fort.

> My inspection commenced on the 2s & was completed on the 3rd inst., and I have now the honor to report to the General-in-Chief as follows: Fort Brown, so called, is about 600 yards to the northward of Fort Brown of the Mexican War, and is close adjoining the town of Brownsville (…)
>
> The old fort is grown over with bushes & trees, & the outline of its grandeur recalls to mind its

[245] Maj. Richard Delafield, Corps of Engineers, "Survey of part of the ground occupied by the United States near Fort Brown and adjoining Brownsville," Sep 1853, NARA, Record Group 77, Series "Miscellaneous Forts File: Plans of Military Posts in the United States, 1840-1920."

[246] Heintzelman's journal is presented in Jerry Thompson, ed., *Fifty Miles and A Fight: Major Samuel Peter Heintzelman's Journal of Texas and the Cortina War* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1998).

> instructive value. It is a lovely place where the past can be rehearsed by those living who too part int the exciting scenes of the war, and the patriot can silently mourn for those brave & honored officers, & soldiers, who have done their duty for their country, & are now no more (…)
>
> Thus it appears its military position is good to control the country in this quarter & where the population is such as the frontier of Texas has, being mostly of Mexican origin & unreliable, as the Cortinez [sic] raid has of late proven, it should not again be entirely abandoned (…)
>
> It has been urged against this post, that it is unhealthy and this is undoubtedly true. It, however, may be greatly alleviated in this particular by proper measures. A great step has already been taken by Bvt. Maj. H. J. Hunt of the 2d Art. By digging a trench, & filling a large lagoon laying between it, & the fort, during a pocket in the river, & allowing the water to be changed by a corresponding outlet further down the stream. The trenches were then closed, and it is protected, there will be no yellow fever here the coming season. At the time Bvt. Lt. Col. Taylor & 39 men of "L" Co., 1st Art., died. He attempted when this lagoon was very low, to remove the dead fish, & c., then in a state of decomposition, and it is not surprising there should be so much yellow fever (…)
>
> Common lime should be used freely, & particular attention paid to trimming trees in the vicinity, to admit a free circulation of air. The buildings too stand about 3 feet above the ground & some of them are not well ventilated underneath, & there are old wooden cisterns in a bad condition, & requiring repairs & cleaning (…)
>
> While on this subject, I must remark, the buildings all require repair & refitting, as they stand on wooden blocks generally, & are rotting fast, and the corrals for the animals want much due to them.[247]

Mansfield's report continued:

> In addition, at any such raid in future as that of Cortinez, the battery is worthless & cumbersome in the field along the Rio Grande on account of the chaparral. Further, the frontier is not the proper place for drills of this character that teach a neighboring people like the Mexicans, the full value of such an arm on the field. I reported against this position in 1856 as a suitable place for a field battery & I see no reason to report otherwise now, and trust it will be removed as soon as practicable & before the sickly season. I have further to remark on this subject that the drills with horses have been suspended for want of full forage (…)
>
> The company was quartered in a frame building, one story & shingled, one chimney & 2 fire places, neat, bunks made by the men & double tiers, but very inferior & not suitable. Others should be supplied. The mess room was a similar building & one fire place. The kitchen was built by the enlisted men & at their own expense with a good range. The company property & office in the garret even the mess room (…)
>
> This company was quartered like the other in a separate building, with bunks made by the men & with a separate messroom & kitchen constructed at the expense of the enlisted men & by them. Four laundresses quartered in temporary huts.[248]

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[247] Thompson, *Texas & New Mexico On the Eve of the Civil War: The Mansfield & Johnston Inspections, 1859-1861*, 157-158.
[248] Ibid., 158-161.

Additional description references the well-appointed hospital, post baker, assistant quartermaster office and store house, and saddler's shop.

Soon after, Colonel John S. "Rip" Ford, Commander of the Confederate Department of the Rio Grande, seized Fort Brown on March 20, 1861 with the surrender of General David Emanuel Twiggs. Brigadier General Hamilton P. Bee headquartered at Fort Brown in the summer of 1863, although a large contingency of his men became ill and others deserted.[249] Bee's Confederate soldiers destroyed extant buildings prior to Union soldiers entering on November 6, 1863.[250] Union forces under General Francis J. Herron maintained a minimal force at Fort Brown in May 1864, removing largely to Brazos Island by July.[251]

The rebuilding of Fort Brown began again along the river and the lake. In the wake of the Battle of Palmito Ranch, as early as May 30, 1865 detachments of veterans of the 25th Corps of US Colored Troops (USCT), the 62nd, 116th, and 117th Infantries--as many as 16,000 troops by June 1865--guarded the Rio Grande Valley through July 1867.[252] Following damages sustained in the October 1867 hurricane, historians Thompson and Jones described that "by February 1869, 115 laborers, 15 carpenters, and 16 masons were at work constructing new quarters at the post. With its fragrant and gentle winter climate, Fort Brown would remain a favorite duty post for the army in Texas."[253] A US Army map from 1869 shows headquarters along the lake, quartermaster's store houses, carpenter's shop, and bakery along the river and a blacksmith shop bordering the lake in the area just north of the old Fort Brown.[254]

An 1877 map of the Post of Fort Brown illustrates progress in development of the fort. The original earthen 1846 Fort Brown was mapped and presumably still standing. Just to its north were carpentry, paint, and blacksmith shops. To the north of those were the quartermaster's buildings. Further to the north and arranged perpendicularly and extending to the northeast were officers' quarters, placed in a row, then above them infantry parade grounds and barracks. Further to the northeast was the hospital and opposite it, the guard house. Beyond the hospital to the east was the cavalry area with officers' quarters, barracks, and stables. At the far eastern end of the reservation were artillery officers' quarters, barracks, and stables. A road passed from one end of the reservation to the other, east to west. A substantial amount of open space remained in the reservation in 1877, according to the map.[255] Buildings that have survived to the present were in place, notably the hospital and cavalry barracks. There were likely other buildings that were not depicted on the map, such as the medical laboratory.

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[249] Thompson and Jones, 56.

[250] Thompson and Jones, 59-60: "Before departing Brownsville, Bee ordered Fort Brown fired. As many as two hundred bales of cotton that could not be ferried or floated across the river also were burned. Unfortunately, the flames spread from the fort to the town, eventually burning an entire block of buildings along Levee Street in front of the ferry. Frightened townspeople were more intent on stopping the spread of the inferno than in assisting the Confederates' escape. Considerable plundering by townsmen and soldiers alike was also evident. To add to the chaos, eight thousand pounds of power at Fort Brown exploded, breaking windows and terrorizing the citizens. At the fort a large quantity of commissary stores and quartermaster goods also were destroyed in the blaze. In the mayhem, more than four hundred Unionists lined the south bank of the river to hiss and curse at the panic-stricken Confederates."

[251] Thompson, *Tejano Tiger,* 185-187.

[252] "U.S. Colored Troops, "Rio Grande Valley Civil War Trail," RGV-Civil War Program, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, accessed 19 Aug 2022. See also Thompson, *Tejano Tiger* 205, 212: reference to the Fourth US Cavalry along with the 38th, 111th, and 114th USCT and one company of First US Artillery stationed at Fort Brown in 1866. In October 1866, the 117th USCT transferred from Ringgold Barracks to Fort Brown to muster out.

[253] Thompson and Jones, 99.

[254] "Plan of the Mil'y. Reservation at Brownsville Texas," copy dated 30 Jan 1869.

[255] "Map of the Post of Fort Brown, Brownsville Texas," Mar 1869, updated Feb 1877.

By the late nineteenth century, and complete by World War I, the north reservation was fully built out with officers' housing in individual buildings at the west end along with parade grounds, the Hospital near the center and enlisted barracks lining the north border of the reservation. Cavalry stables and artillery occupied the east end. A roadway passed through the center of the compound, end to end. Row upon row of stables occupied the north side of the reservation.

The buildings were wood or brick, and there were also tent emplacements. Two aerial bird's eye photographs, likely taken circa 1916-18, show the development at the fort in the early twentieth century. One view looks westward from the vicinity of the commissary and shows the fort as well as large frame buildings to its east. Panning westward, the view captures the hospital with its annexes, linen storage building and dead house (not yet connected), the medical lab, and two rows of officers' quarters. Some quarters were one story with hipped roofs and wrap-around porches, while others were one-and-a-half stories with gabled roofs and front porches. North of the road through the reservation were rows of barracks and toward the east end of the view rows of arc-shaped wood stables. Another photo view pans to the east from the hospital past the commissary to the cavalry barracks with rows of stables and large wood utility buildings between. To the extreme eastern end of the view is the artillery section with its complex of buildings.[256] The September 4-5, 1933 Cuba-Brownsville hurricane caused significant damage, primarily to wood buildings at the fort complex, including the Commandant's Quarters. Since the fort was still in operation, those buildings were repaired or reconstructed. The layout of the fort appears to be similar to the early twentieth century appearance in a 1944 Corps of Engineers map of the reservation, dating from shortly before it closed.[257]

When the NHL nomination was prepared in 1986, more of the fort was standing than survives today. Six one-story, hip-roofed Infantry Officers' Quarters, since removed, were extant along Gorgas and Taylor avenues along the northern border of the lagoon. Built in 1886, these one-and-a-half-story, frame buildings on brick pier foundations had been stuccoed and remodeled in 1934 following the hurricane. They featured wrap-around L-plan porches, six-over-six double-hung sash windows with wood screens, and asphalt-shingle hipped roofs.

Contributing/Non-contributing Status of Resources:

All buildings and sites described above contribute to the Fort Brown NHL. These include eight buildings (Cavalry Barracks, Commandant's Quarters, Medical Laboratory, Hospital, Linen Storage/Morgue, Commissary, Commissary Annex, and Chapel/Officers' Guest House) and one overarching archeological site, the entirety of Section A. The Section A site further comprises a cultural landscape that includes land and viewsheds surrounding the Fort Brown earthworks. Within the archeological site are two major contributing features, Fort Brown and Ringgold's Battery (Two Mortar Battery). The same soldiers who constructed the 1846 earthen fortification built the battery to provide artillery cover for those constructing the fortification. If remnants of the Mexican fortifications and the possible Civil War fortification are confirmed as such, they would be considered contributing features to the overall historic landscape and thus not counted individually. These buildings and sites are the last remaining vestiges of the once sprawling Fort Brown. Texas Southmost College has rehabilitated and adaptively reused the surviving fort buildings that are on its campus. Although two have been moved, the buildings are concentrated together. Most retain their original locations and are

[256] Aerial photographs, Brownsville Historical Association from the Chamber of Commerce Collection.

[257] Map of Fort Brown by the US Army Corps of Engineers, ca. 1940s, courtesy of Pelayo Quintana Jr. Collection, Brownsville Community Collection, The University of Texas at Brownsville Library.

currently in a setting that is stabilized and retains the buildings' contextual relationships to one another. Together, the component buildings and sites form a cohesive entity that represents the nationally significant and active period of Fort Brown's history. The two moved buildings retain their historic associations and setting, as well as architectural integrity of materials, workmanship, and design. Small-scale features include historic markers and the upright cannon, placed by General James Parker in 1914 to mark the spot where Brown was initially buried.

There are three non-contributing buildings and three non-contributing structures in the district, all located in Section A. These include the levees, dry pond (previously a water hazard for the golf course), and paved walkways as well as the former golf course club house and two golf cart sheds. There are also several non-contributing small buildings (shelters and rest room facilities for the course). Section B comprises a single large archeological site with no noncontributing resources. In Section C there is a large parking lot south of the Hospital and various non-historic paved pathways and features in the plaza to the north.

In terms of contributing resources, the discontiguous district includes:

Section A:
Cultural landscape (site) comprising Fort Brown fortifications, Major Ringgold's Battery, archeological site 41CF96, possible Mexican earthworks, and possible Civil War-era breastworks.

Section B:
Cavalry Barracks

Section C:
Seven contributing buildings:
--Commandant's Quarters
--Medical Laboratory
--Hospital
--Linen Storage/Morgue
--Commissary
--Commissary Annex
--Chapel/Officers' Guest House

Statement of Integrity

This discontiguous historic district includes most of the remaining buildings and sites associated with Fort Brown. There may be other stray remnants of the fort along Neale Drive and Ringgold Road, and possibly elsewhere on the Texas Southmost College campus. However, the Fort Brown NHL district includes a concentrated collection of nationally significant resources that retain high integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association reflecting the nationally significant themes of the property.

Portions of the remaining earthworks of the 1846 Fort Brown are clearly visible above ground. The earthworks were impacted by levee construction in the 1930s and 1940s and the 2012 and 2013 reconstruction, which cut through some of the fort's walls. Moreover, the activities of the golf course caused possible damage to resources by the impact of golf balls from the driving range and grading and leveling work. Lastly, construction of the Army Reserve facility at the north edge damaged portions of the fort where a parking lot was excavated. Yet the fort retains a substantial amount of its structure, both above and below ground. In 2011 and 2012,

geophysical archeological investigations (which included ground-penetrating radar, magnetometer, and electric resistivity) indicated a high amount of archeological integrity of the fort south of the current levee system. Only in use for a few years, during the Mexican War, and again during the Civil War and then abandoned, the fort remarkably retains integrity despite the passage of time, floods, and the mutable path of the Rio Grande. A series of historic maps and photographs record the evolution of the site and augment the record of the physical remains. Enough of the fort is still present, along with its larger environment within the peninsula, a cultural landscape, that the National Historic Landmark retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association relative to the time of the siege in May of 1846.[258] For instance, the cultural landscape retains character-defining features such as the view to the church in Matamoros despite the river's natural movement south across the site. The general spatial configuration remains present even if impacted by levees built for flood control.

Numerous subsurface geophysical anomalies were identified by De Vore and Garza (2014) across the peninsula, but their potential to address questions of national significance is less certain. Their non-intrusive survey has yet to be ground-truthed and so the remnants of the unidentified earthworks throughout Section A are not recommended for Criterion 6 at the time of nomination. While some of the geophysical data matches the structural components mapped by Mansfield in 1846, there is not enough information at this time to confirm the nature of these features.

The other components of the Fort Brown NHL district are buildings on the later fort site, now the campus of Texas Southmost College. Dating from 1868 through 1905, these buildings represent the full development of Fort Brown in the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century. While some elements of the fort's built environment do not survive, what remains are the major buildings of the complex: the frame Commandant's Quarters and the brick Hospital, Medical Laboratory, Linen Storage/Morgue, Commissary, Commissary Annex, Chapel, and Cavalry Barracks. The Commandant's Quarters was moved to its present location from a position further to the west. The Chapel has been twice relocated. The moved buildings have been rehabilitated to their historic appearance, and their relocation prevented demolition or disassociation with the other remaining buildings of the fort. Thus, although moved, they meet NHL Exception 2, retaining integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association with the period of significance.

Other remaining buildings are in their original locations and retain the balance of their historic character-defining features. The college has rehabilitated buildings for administrative use with sensitivity and recognizes their historic significance. The Cavalry Barracks described in Section B is separate from the rest of the buildings in Section C because of intervening modern construction. However, the remaining Fort Brown buildings are clearly recognizable as a historic collection distinctive in their appearance. Materials and design exhibit their relationship to one another and their identity as a significant part of the post-Civil War Fort Brown installation. These remaining buildings of the second Fort Brown, in their campus setting retain a high degree of integrity.

The seven aspects of integrity relate to historic appearance dating to a property's period of significance. Location refers to a property existing in the same place as it did during the period of significance. In general, the remaining buildings of Fort Brown retain their original locations, with the exception of the Commandant's Quarters and Chapel, which remain near their original locations. Setting refers to the physical environment, which current use as a campus preserves in its institutional layout. Design refers to form, plan, and style, which

[258] For a useful point of comparison regarding the historic landscape, see "Fort Brown, Texas: Report of Assistant Surgeon William J. Wilson, United States Army, dated July 19, 1870," 206-213.

here remain largely intact. Materials refers to surface and structural materials. Feeling refers to the extent to which the historic property evokes a sense of past time and place. Association" means the linkage between the historic property and a past time and place.

This discontiguous historic district includes most of the remaining buildings and sites associated with Fort Brown. There may be other stray remnants of the fort along Neale Drive and Ringgold Road, and possibly elsewhere on the Texas Southmost College campus. However, the Fort Brown NHL district includes a concentrated collection of nationally significant resources that retain high integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association.

History of Archeological Investigations at Fort Brown

The first professional archeological investigation within the grounds of the former Fort Brown military installation occurred in 1988 when Texas Southmost College sought to construct underground utilities on campus. Texas A&M University Archeological Research Laboratory conducted the investigation, which focused on post-1880 Fort Brown structures and included subsurface survey, testing, mitigation, and monitoring activities.[259]

In 1991 the General Service Administration hired consultants to conduct archeological, architectural, and historical investigations for Building 2 (41CF129), located in the northwest corner of Fort Brown. They recovered early 19th-century and prehistoric artifacts.[260] Also in 1991 in the northwest corner of Fort Brown, staff from the NPS Southeast Archeological Center conducted excavations in the vicinity of the Civic Center parking lot and along the west side of the Fort Brown Resaca.[261] Douglas Potter identified significant historic deposits along the west margin of the Civic Center block along Porter Avenue. Historic deposits were also identified in the backhoe trench on the west side of the Fort Brown Resaca. Potter recommended that additional archeological investigations be conducted east of his test excavations next to the Civic Center parking lot to determine the depth and extent of the archeological deposits. In 1992, NPS Midwest Archeological Center staff carried out archeological investigations in the proposed construction zone for the US Customs truck dock.[262] This project revealed the presence of an extensive and deeply stratified series of mid- to late nineteenth-century deposits at the Old Fort Brown site along the western edge of the Civic Center block.[263]

During the latter part of the 1990s, Texas A&M University archeologists continued working at Fort Brown for the recently established University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College. In 1995 they monitored a

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[259] Carlson, S.B., J. Saunders, F. Winchell, and B. Aiken, *Archeological Investigations at Fort Brown (41CF96) Cameron County, Texas*, Report submitted to Texas Southmost College. Archeological Research Laboratory, Texas A&M University, Reports of Investigations No. 11 (Austin: 1990), on file with the Texas Historical Commission.

[260] Randall W. Moir, Charles M. Freuden, Frank Winchell, and Robert Steinbomer, *Archeological, Historical, and Architectural Investigations of Building 2, 41CF129, Fort Brown, Brownsville, Texas: A Case Study in Multidisciplinary Historic Research of a National Register Historic Property* [manuscript] (2004), on file with the General Services Administration, Fort Worth, Texas.

[261] Douglas T. Potter, *Archeological Investigations conducted for the General Service Administration at the Gateway Border Station Expansion Project, Phase II, Brownsville, Texas*, Report prepared for the General Services Administration by the USDOI, National Park Service, Southeast Archeological Center (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, Interagency Archeological Services Division, Florida, 1992).

[262] William J. Hunt, Jr., *Archeological Test Excavations at Old Fort Brown, Brownsville, Texas*, Report prepared for the General Services Administration by the US DOI, National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center (Lincoln, NE: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Archeological Services Division, 1992).

[263] Ibid., 18-20.

pier placement at the proposed location of the Thermal Energy Plant, which included backhoe trenches and excavations in the proposed associated parking lot. The following year they monitored proposed construction site of the Science and Engineering Technology building. These investigations indicated that the two areas had been subjected to repeated construction impacts during the Fort Brown period from 1846 to 1944, the warehouse period from 1948 to 1994, or the university period between 1994 and 1996 and the proposed construction projects would have little impact on significant archeological resources.[264]

In 1998 their investigations were associated with the proposed construction of the Life and Health Science building and the Technical Training center. A pedestrian survey identified six artifact concentrations associated with the Fort Brown along the terrace edge of the South Resaca. Four of the refuse dumps contained deposits that dated to the mid-19th century. Project archeologists recommended establishing a five-meter, non-construction buffer area next to the South Resaca edge where the dumps were located.[265]

In 1997 a study of the Mexican War battlefields and related campsites in Texas was completed through a grant from the NPS American Battlefield Protective Program in order to document the current conditions and integrity of the sites, develop recommendations for preservation efforts, and recommend future archeological investigations at the battlefields and related sites.[266] Perttula et al. summarized the 1846 resources at Fort Brown:

> At Fort Brown, documentation efforts consisted of finding the approximate location of the American and Mexican fortifications and batteries. Detailed fortification plans prepared in April 1846 by Captain Joseph Mansfield of the Corps of Engineers were compared with the remnants of several Fort Brown bastions, as well as direction and distance measurements, to ascertain the approximate locations of the U.S. and Mexican fortifications shown on Mansfield's map. Surface evidence of Fort Brown consists of low (4-5 feet in height) earthworks at bastions 3 (at the southwest corner of the earthworks) and 4, with a wall connecting bastions 3 and 4, and a portion of the wall connecting bastions 2 and 3 (the remainder of this wall was probably destroyed by the 1930s east-west levee that crosses the fort).[267]
>
> These survey efforts indicated that, with the shifting of the channel of the Rio Grande sometime subsequent to the battle, several of the Mexican fortification (including the Mexican battery and parapets b and c depicted on Mansfield's map) may now lie in the United States, although their preservation condition would be dependent upon the rapidity of changes and cutoffs in stream channel courses compared to possible lateral migration of the river channel…While extensive landscaping efforts at the golf course during the 1960s obliterated surface expression of these fortifications (even though they apparently exposed cannon balls and other military artifacts on the golf course, according to local residents of Brownsville), there is every reason to suspect that significant buried remains of these fortifications (and their associated archeological residue) are present within the limits of the gold course.

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[264] Mark J. Hartmann, David D. Kuehn, and Jeffery L. Johnson, *Archeological Investigations at Fort Brown (41CF96), Cameron County, Texas*, Reports of Investigations No. 1. (College Station, TX: Center for Ecological Archeology, Texas A&M University, 1999).

[265] Ibid., 42-44.

[266] Timothy K. Perttula, Daniel J. Prikryl, Sergio A. Iruegas, and Bo Nelson, *Archeological Investigations of Mexican-American War Battlefields in Texas and Sites Related to General Zachary Taylor's Northern Campaign of 1846* [manuscript] (1997), on file with Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site, Brownsville, Texas.

[267] Ibid., 24-26.

In 2004 retired-NPS archeologist Robert Nickel and Catherine Nickel conducted a feasibility test using ground-penetrating radar (GPR) for Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site at the 1846 Fort Brown earthworks site to determine if the buried remains of the earthen fortification could be detected. The examination of four 15 geophysical grids covering 4000m^2 indicated that the geophysical survey technique revealed geophysical patterns that were associated with subterranean remnants of the fort's earthworks.[268] The survey confirmed that non-invasive geophysical techniques could provide additional information on the buried archeological resources across the site.

In the mid-2000s archeologists from Raba-Kistner Consultants monitored the demolition of university structures and parking lots to make way for construction of La Placita Center for Early Childhood Studies and the Jacob Brown Music Facility.[269] They planned to identify and document unrecorded prehistoric or historic resources within the project areas; however, only disturbed fill was encountered under parking lots. Nonetheless the project reports provide additional information on the military and university activities within the military post of Fort Brown.

In May 2011 Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park hosted the NPS Midwest Archeological Center's Current Archeological Prospection Advances for Non-destructive Investigations in the 21st Century training workshop under the direction of Steven De Vore. The training workshop used the site of the 1846 Fort Brown earthworks to conduct the field exercises. About 40 archeologists (including retired-NPS battlefield archeologists Douglas Scott and Charles Haecker), geologists, and geophysicists from across the country and as far away as Sweden and Germany participated in the workshop. During the workshop magnetic, GPR, and resistance data were collected in the golf course driving range and the university maintenance parking lot. The results from the magnetic and the GPR survey suggested the presence of intact buried archeological features and artifacts associated with the historic Fort Brown. Resistance data provided the best indicators of the preservation and intact nature of buried features associated with the fort. The geophysical survey identified a bastion and ditch surrounding the parapet wall. The workshop of experienced battlefield researchers identified what appears to be a mid-19th-century military feature across the levee to the northwest of the Fort Brown earthworks. An exact time period for this feature has not been identified. Overall, the geophysical data provided substantial evidence of significant intact archeological deposits and features associated with the 1846 earthen fort and siege.[270]

In September 2011, HDR EOC partnered with Ohio Valley Archaeology, Inc., to conduct additional geophysical testing at Fort Brown expanding on the areas surveyed by the NPS earlier that year. GPR and electrical resistivity surveys were carried out to see if other fort-related features could be detected just north and south of the levee. The non-destructive testing confirmed that even portions of the earthworks located south of the levee that had been flattened and are no longer visible on the surface, can still be detected hinting at the

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[268] Robert K. and Catherine A. Nickel, *Feasibility Test of Ground-Penetrating Radar at the First Fort Brown* [manuscript] (2004), on file, Brownsville Community Foundation, Brownsville, Texas.

[269] Pollyanna A. Held, *Archeological Monitoring at Proposed Site of the La Placita Center for Early Childhood Studies, University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas* (San Antonio: Raba-Kistner Consultants, Inc., 2009), and *Archeological Monitoring at the Proposed Jacob Brown Music Facility Site, University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas, Final Report* (San Antonio: Raba-Kistner Consultants, Inc., 2009).

[270] Steven L. De Vore and Rolando L. Garza, *The Beginnings of the Mexican War in 1846: Geophysical Investigations of the Fort Brown Site, Cameron County, Texas*, Midwest Archeological Center Technical Report No. 4, (Lincoln, NE: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 2014).

subsurface integrity of the fort's footprint and surrounding ditch. Fort Brown's now-buried ditches located south of the levee are archeologically significant because they likely contain artifacts in a stratified context that could be associated with the 1846 construction and use of the fort before, during, and after the battle. Results from the survey north of the levee corroborated findings from 2004. While there may be some subsurface remnants of the earthworks north of the levee, ground-disturbing activities have greatly impacted this portion of the original fort.[271]

Building off the 2011 efforts, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (previously University of Texas Pan American) used GPR to locate the battery south of the fort in 2013 and 2014. A subsurface feature averaging 30 by 15 meters was identified and interpreted as the Two Mortars Battery. No excavation or resistivity survey has been carried out to confirm, but the preliminary evidence is compelling.[272]

[271] Jarrod Burks, *Geophysical Survey at Fort Brown, Brownsville, Texas: Searching for the Subsurface Remains of the Fort*, Prepared for HDR Environmental, Operations, and Construction, (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Valley Archaeology, Inc., 2012). See also Suzanne Stone, *Final Fort Brown Earthworks: Baseline Report*, Prepared for United States Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District, Office of Border Patrol, US Customs and Border Protection, US Department of Homeland Security, (Englewood, CO: HDR Environmental, Operations, and Construction, 2012).

[272] An unfinished report by Roland Silva dating to 2015 is on file with the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

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Map of Fort Brown by the US Army Corps of Engineers, ca. 1940s. Courtesy of Pelayo Quintana Jr. Collection, Brownsville Community Collection, The University of Texas at Brownsville Library.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

_X Previously listed in the National Register (fill in 1 through 6 below)
__ Not previously listed in the National Register (fill in **only** 4, 5, and 6 below)

1. NRIS: 66000811
2. Date of listing: 15 Oct 1966
3. Level of significance: National
4. Applicable National Register Criteria: A_X_ B__ C__ D__
5. Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A__ B_X_ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__
6. Areas of Significance: Military

__ Previously Determined Eligible for the National Register: Date of determination:
_X Designated a National Historic Landmark: Date of designation: 19 Dec 1960
_X Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: HABS No. TX-3278, 3279, 3370, 3378, 3379
_ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: HAER No.
__ Recorded by Historic American Landscapes Survey: HALS No.

Location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office: Texas Historical Commission, Austin, TX
Other State Agency:
Federal Agency: National Park Service; Library of Congress; National Archives and Records Administration
Local Government:
University:
Other (Specify Repository):

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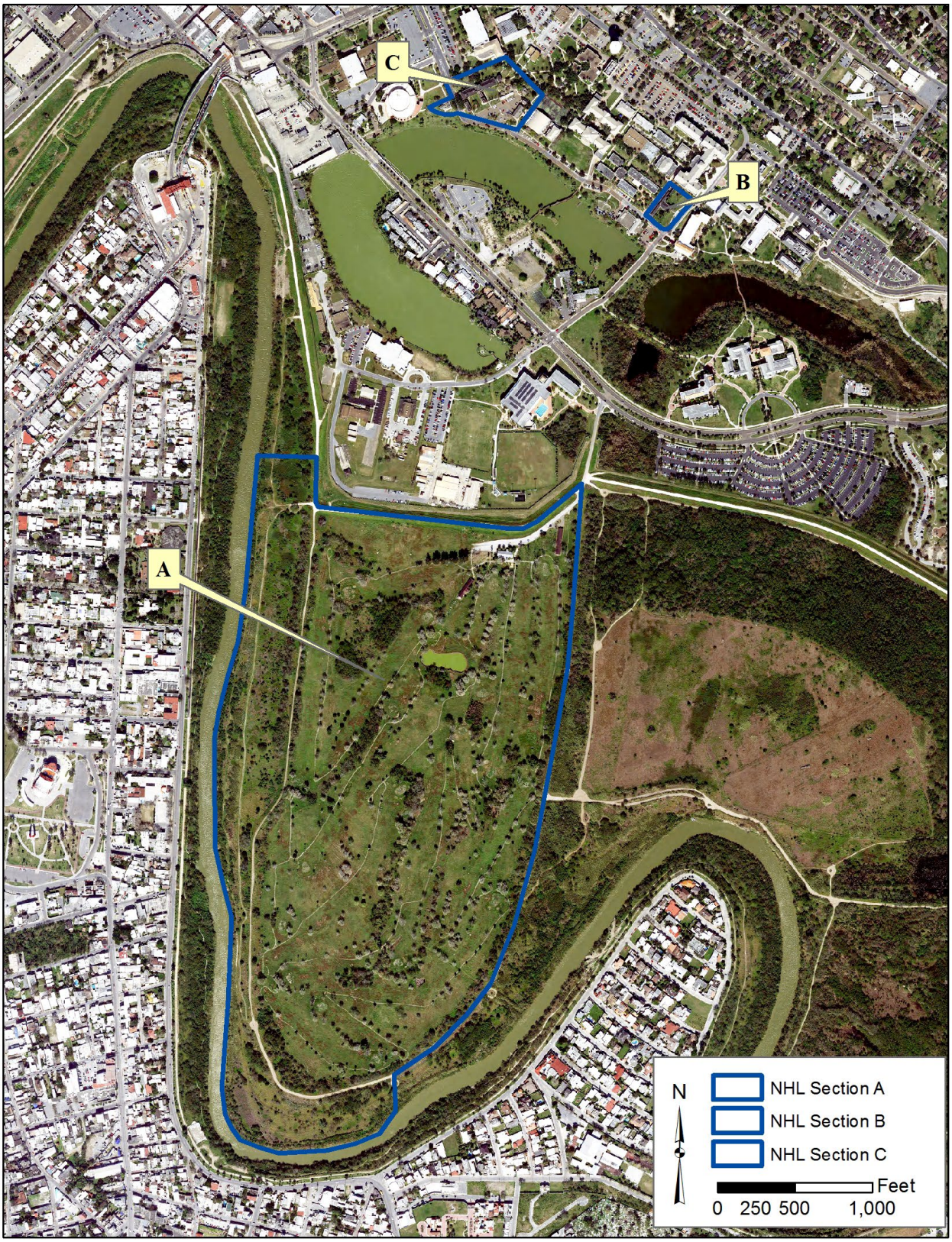
Map Log

Map 1. Fort Brown National Historic Landmark boundaries for Sections A, B, and C.

Map 2. Fort Brown National Historic Landmark boundary for Section A.

Map 3. Fort Brown National Historic Landmark boundary for Section B.

Map 4. Fort Brown National Historic Landmark boundary for Section C.



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Map 2: Fort Brown National Historic Landmark boundary for Section A.

Map 3: Fort Brown National Historic Landmark boundary for Section B.

Map 4: Fort Brown National Historic Landmark boundary for Section C.

Figures Log

Figure 2. Captain J. K. F. Mansfield, Plan, "Fort Brown, Opposite Matamoros, Texas," 1846. Source: National Archives and Records Administration [NARA].

Figure 3: 1846 Mansfield map of Fort Brown and vicinity.

Figure 4: 1846 Mansfield map overlay, georeferenced with 2007 aerial view. Source: Van Wagenen, 66.

Figure 5: Lieutenant William H. C. Whiting, Army Corps of Engineers, Sketch of a portion of the Military Reserve near Fort Brown with a plan for its defense, 14 Feb 1849. Annotated Engineer Department, 9 Aug 1853. Source: National Archives and Records Administration.

Figure 6: Major Richard Delafield, US Army Corps of Engineers, assisted by Sergeants Foster-Williams and Johnson, Corporal Hinde, and Artificers Bartholemew, Rice, Corcoran, and Vanderslice of the Sappers and Miners, Cantonment near Fort Brown (…) Sep 1853. Copy furnished to General Wright, 21 Jul 1865. Source: NARA.

Figure 7: Deputy Inspector Lieutenant Freeman, Fort Brown sketch, 1853. Source: M. L. Crimmins, ed., "W.G. Freeman's Report on the Eighth Military District (continued)," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 52 (Jul 1948-Apr 1949).

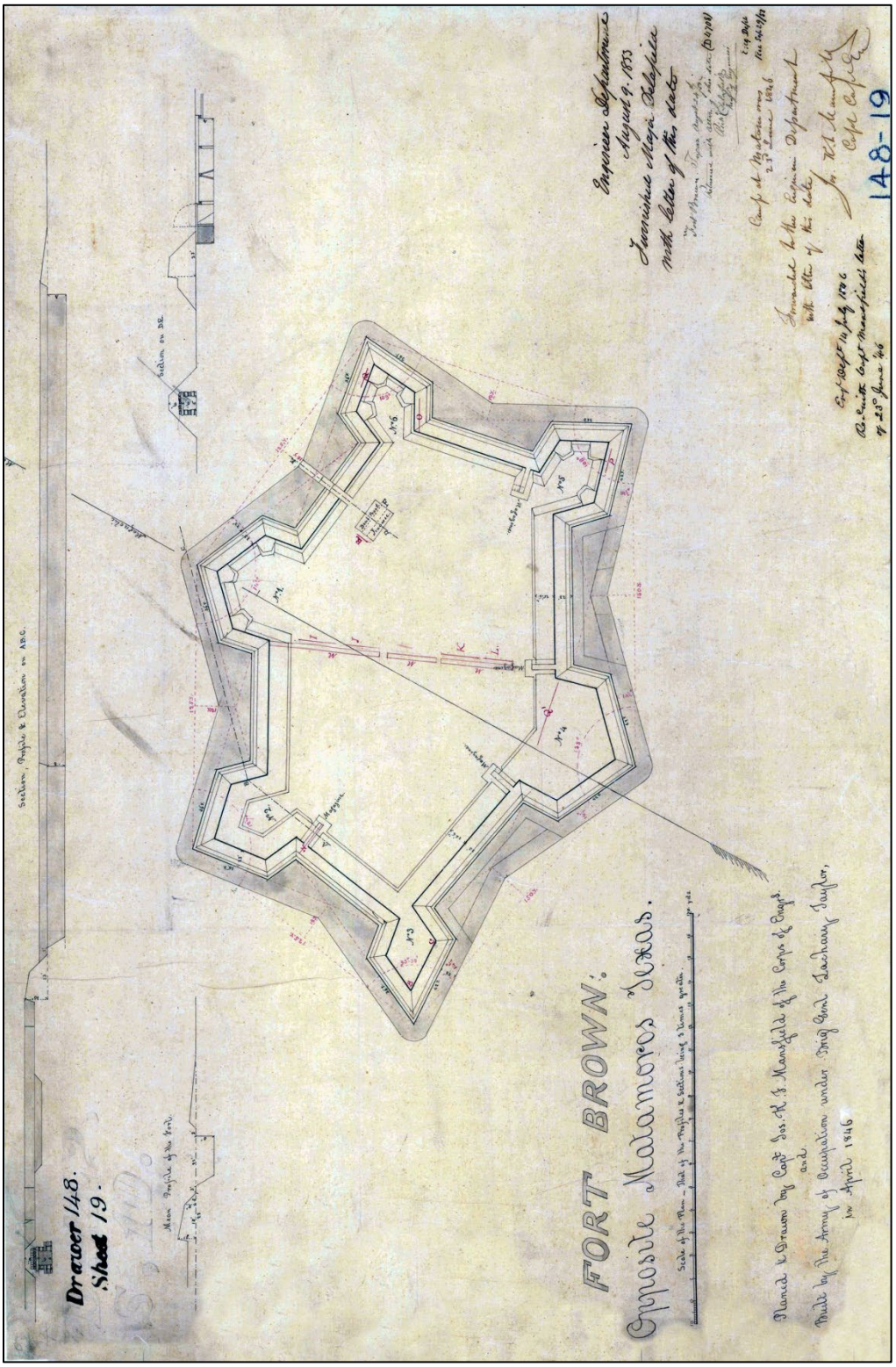
Figure 8. Mansfield, Sketch of Fort Brown, 1856. Source: M. L. Crimmins, ed., "Colonel J. K. F. Mansfield's Report of the Inspection of the Department of Texas in 1856 (continued)," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 42.3 (Jan 1939).

Figure 8. Plan of US Military Reservation at Brownsville Texas, showing Lagoon Island, site of National Cemetery. Prepared in the Office of Capt. Chas. Barnard, A.G.M. Cemeterial Operations, 5th Mity. District. Annotation copy 30 Jan 1869. Source: NARA.

Figure 9: Lewis Muhlenberg Haupt, Map of the post of Fort Brown, Brownsville, Texas, Feb 1877. Source: Library of Congress.

Figure 10: Aerial view of Fort Brown, view southwest, ca. 1916-18. Source: Aerial photographs, Brownsville Historical Association from the Chamber of Commerce Collection.

Figure 11: Aerial view of Fort Brown, view to the south, ca. 1916-18. Source: Aerial photographs, Brownsville Historical Association from the Chamber of Commerce Collection.



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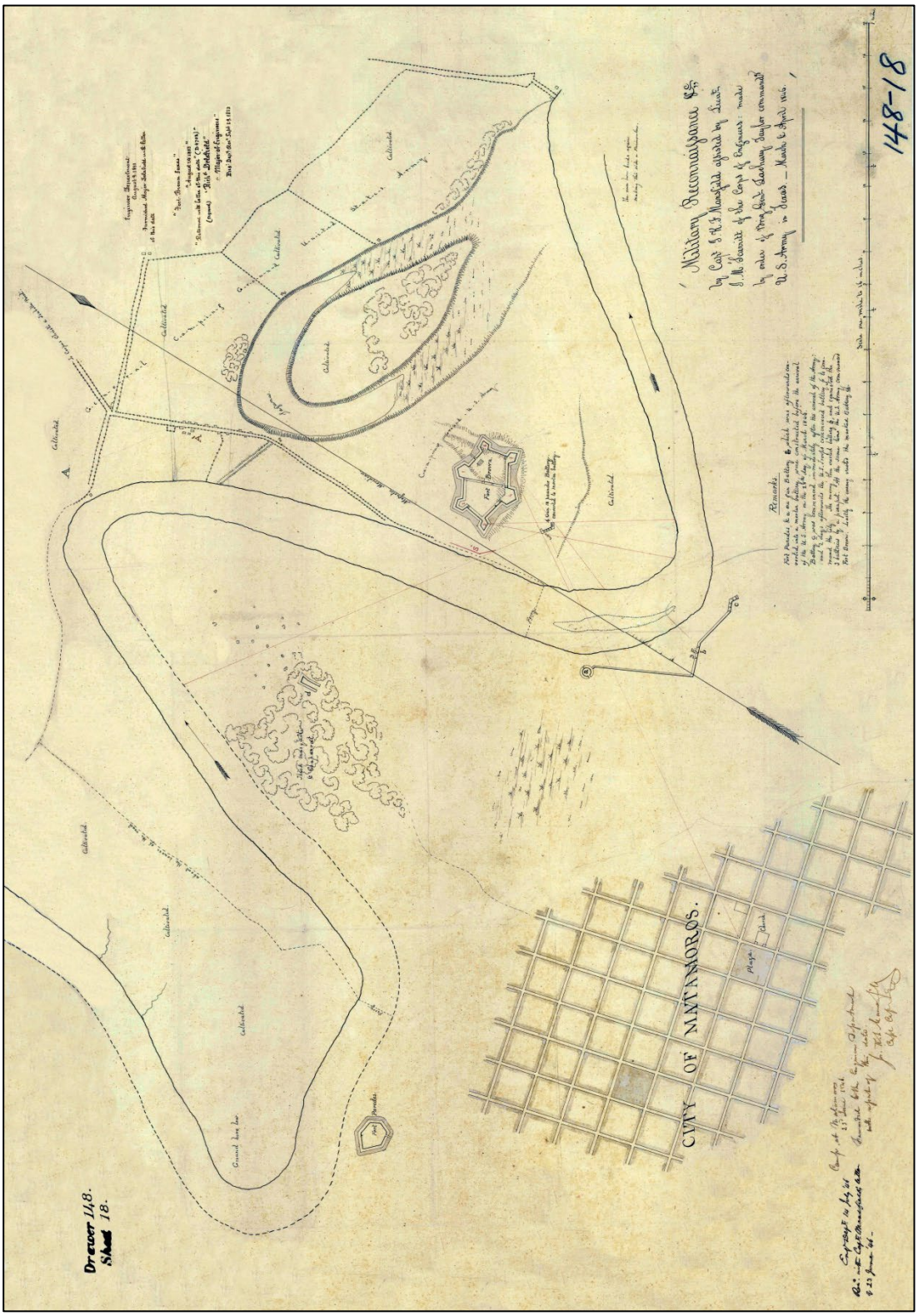

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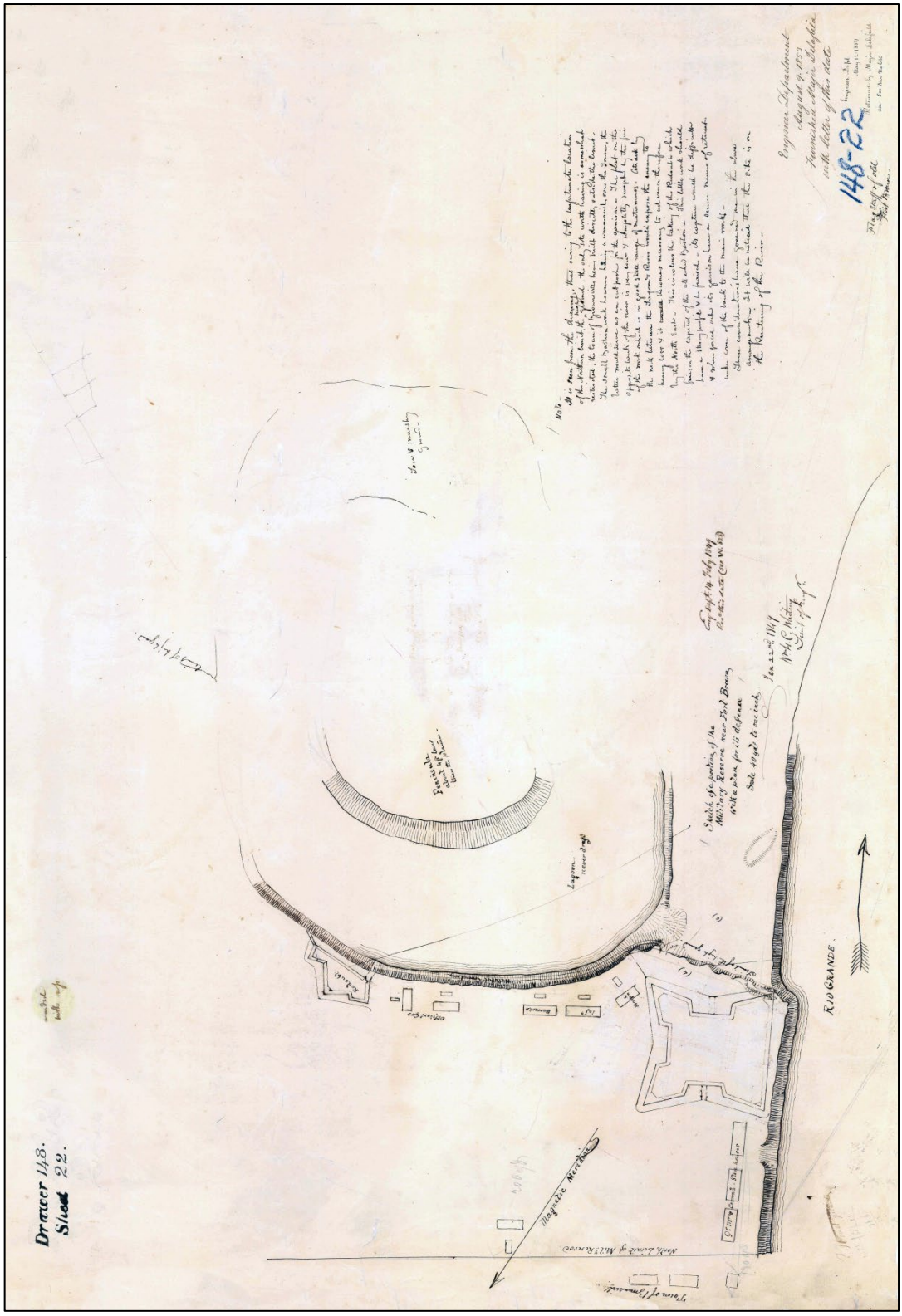

Figure 12: Lieutenant William H. C. Whiting, Army Corps of Engineers, Sketch of a portion of the Military Reserve near Fort Brown with a plan for its defense, 14 Feb 1849. Annotated Engineer Department, 9 Aug 1853. Source: NARA.

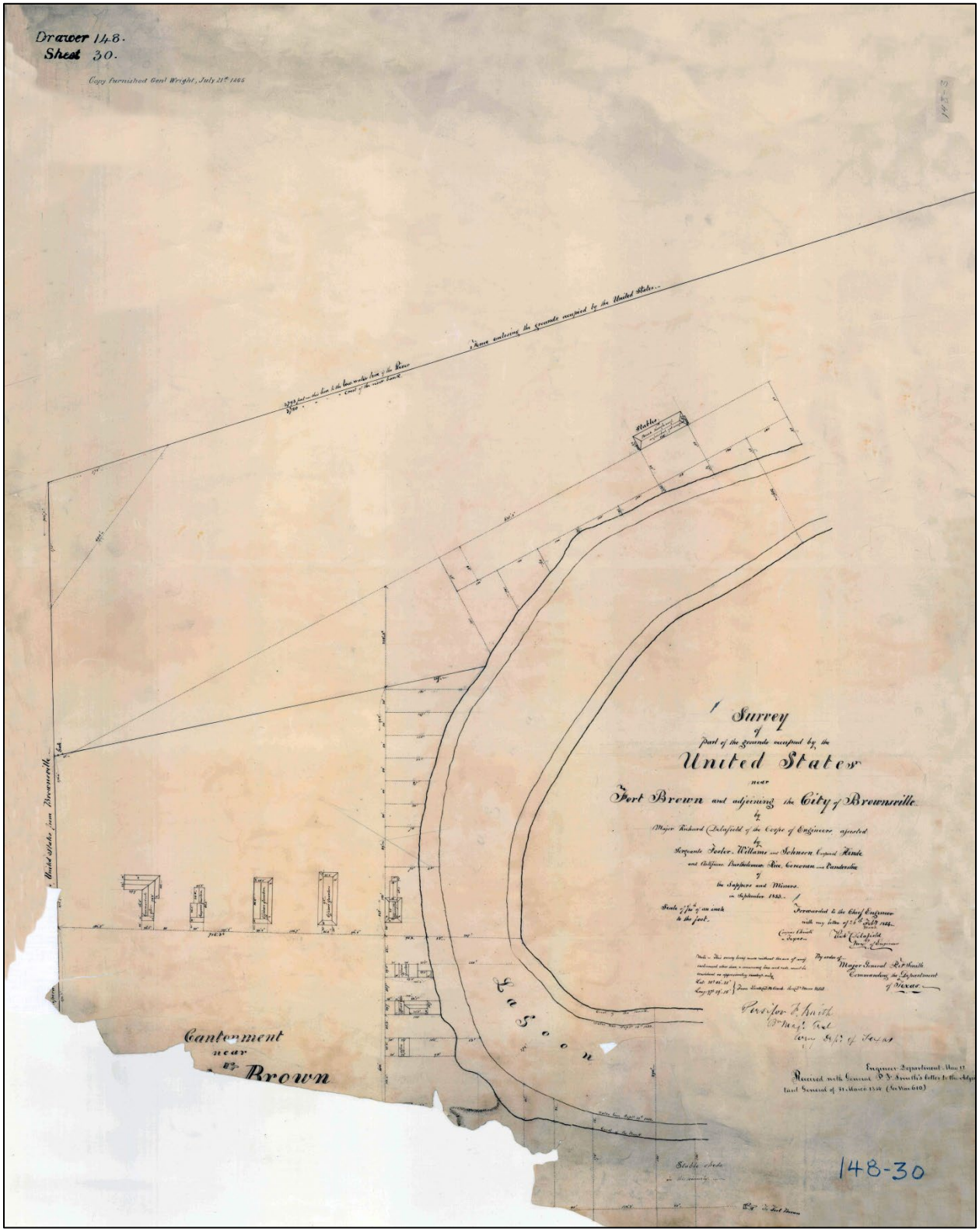

Figure 13: Major Richard Delafield, US Army Corps of Engineers, assisted by Sergeants Foster-Williams and Johnson, Corporal Hinde, and Artificers Bartholemew, Rice, Corcoran, and Vanderslice of the Sappers and Miners, Cantonment near Fort Brown (…) Sep 1853. Copy furnished to General Wright, 21 Jul 1865. Source: NARA.

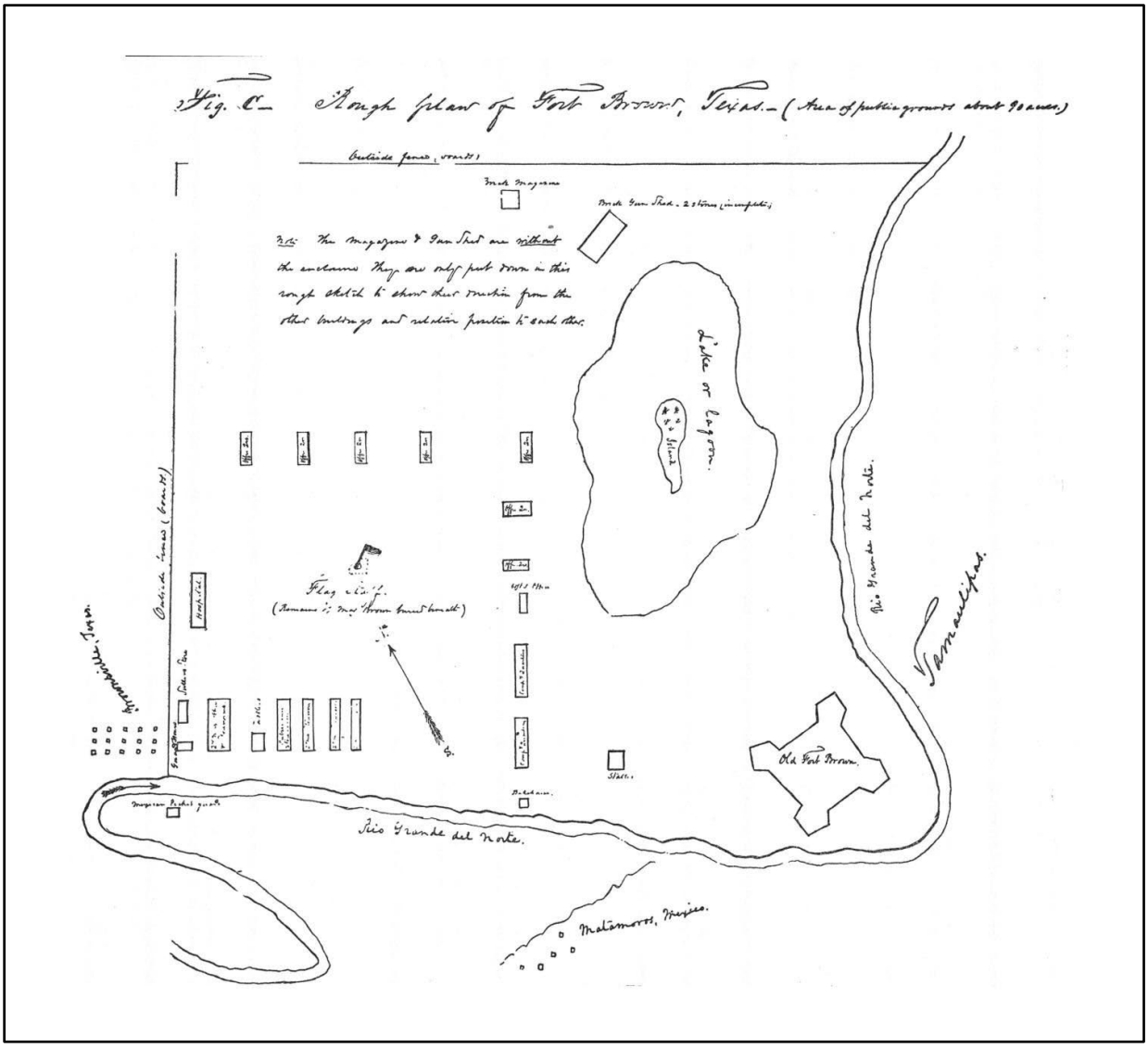

Figure 14: Deputy Inspector Lieutenant Freeman, Fort Brown sketch, 1853. Source: M. L. Crimmins, ed. "W.G. Freeman's Report on the Eighth Military District (continued)," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 52 (Jul 1948-Apr 1949).

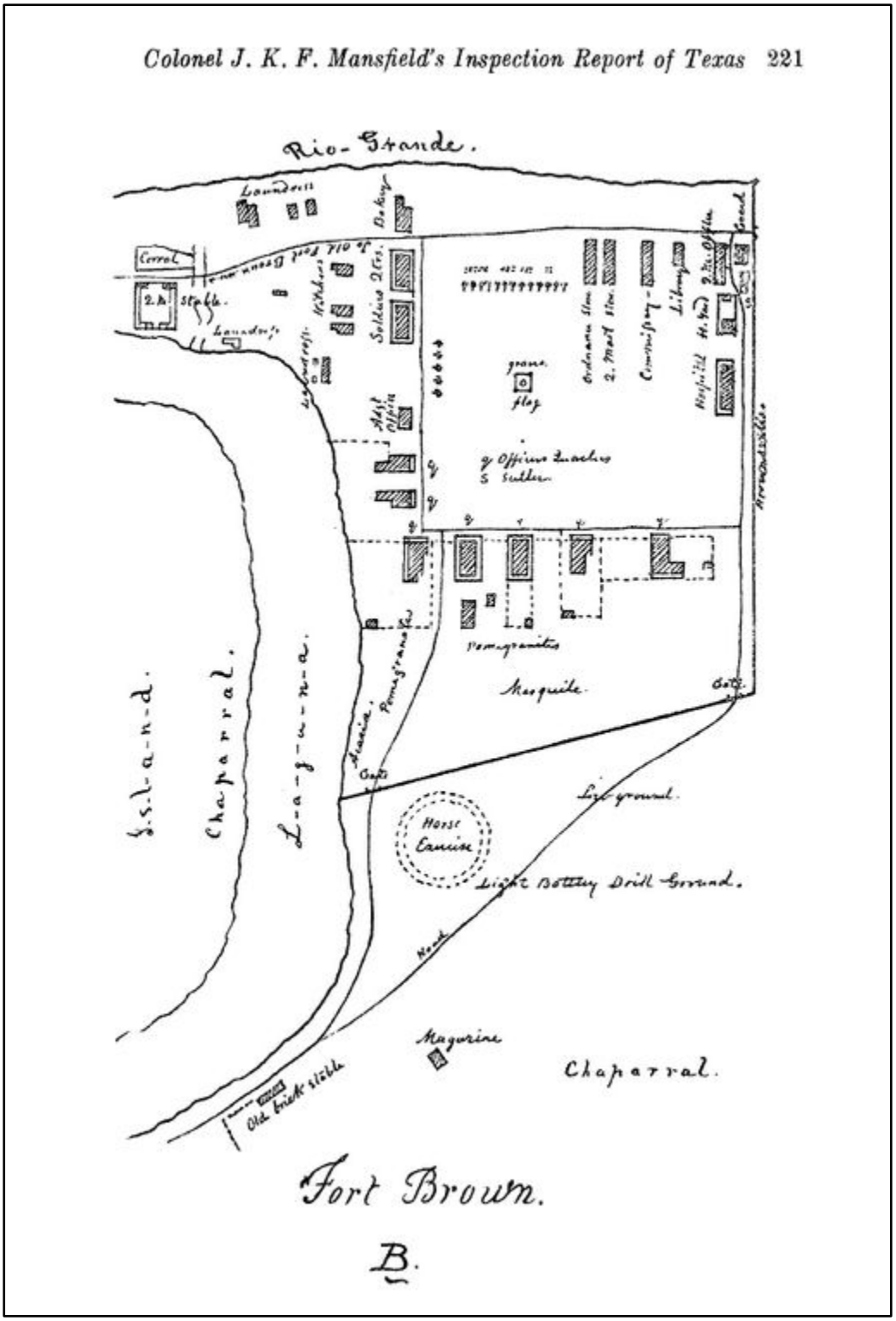

Figure 15: Mansfield, Sketch of Fort Brown, 1856. Source: M. L. Crimmins, ed., "Colonel J. K. F. Mansfield's Report of the Inspection of the Department of Texas in 1856 (continued)," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 42.3 (Jan 1939).

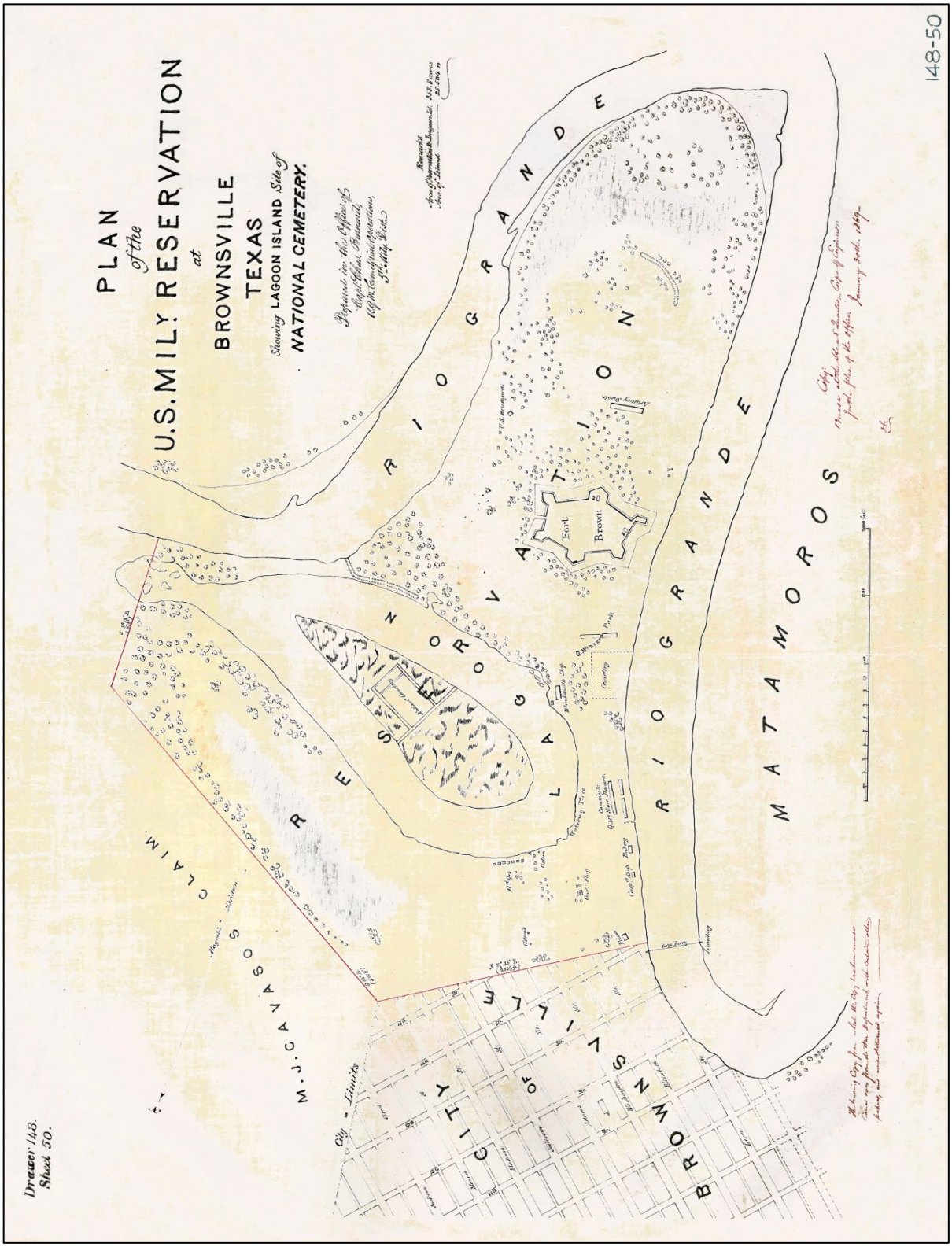

Figure 8: Plan of US Military Reservation at Brownsville Texas, showing Lagoon Island, site of National Cemetery. Prepared in the Office of Capt. Chas. Barnard, A.G.M. Cemeterial Operations, 5th Mity. District. Annotation copy 30 Jan 1869. Source: NARA.

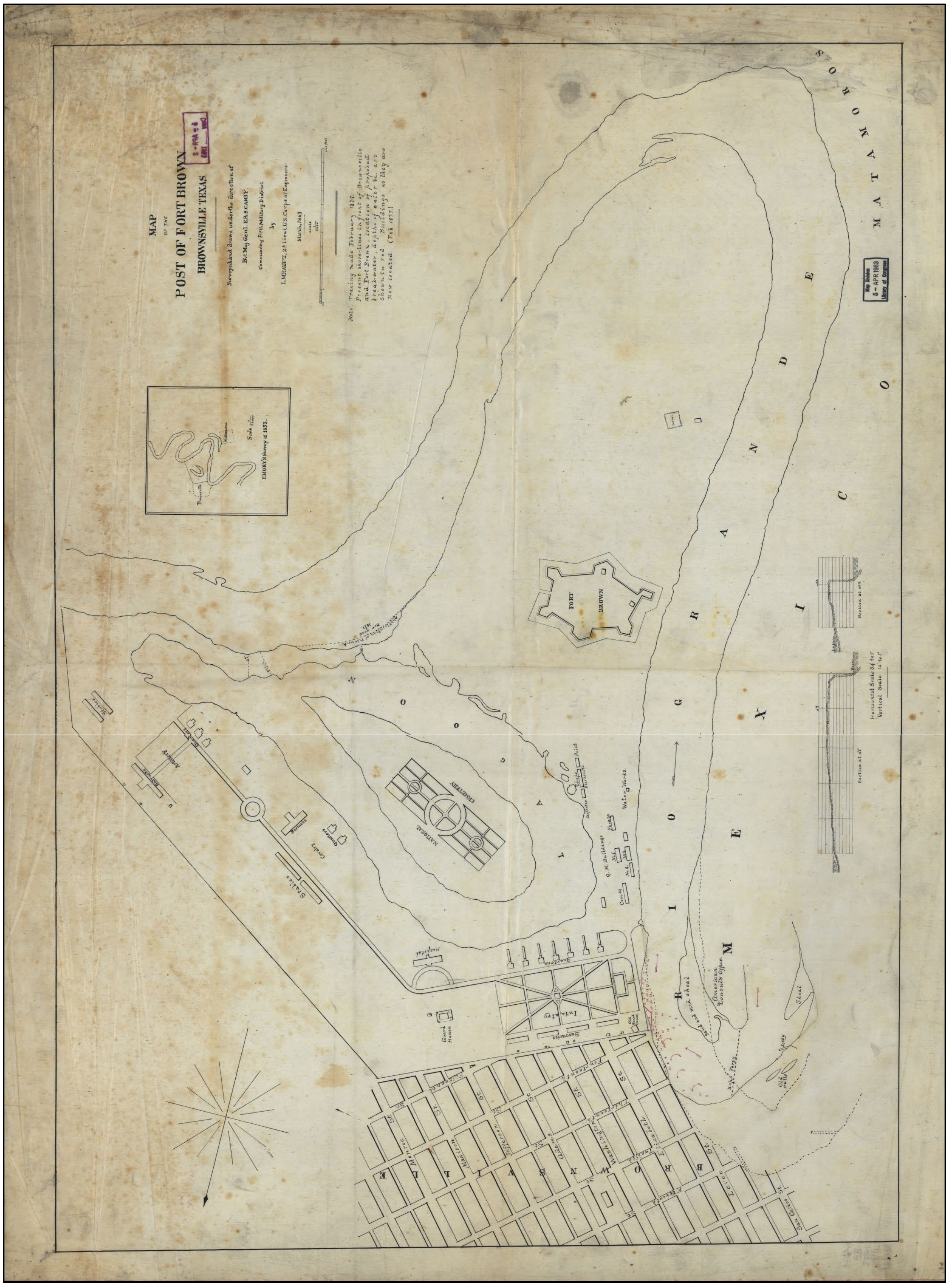

Figure 9: Lewis Muhlenberg Haupt, Map of the post of Fort Brown, Brownsville, Texas, Feb 1877. Source: Library of Congress.

Figure 10: Aerial view of Fort Brown, view southwest, ca. 1916-18. Source: Brownsville Historical Association from the Chamber of Commerce Collection.

Figure 16: Aerial view of Fort Brown, view to the south, ca. 1916-18. Source: Brownsville Historical Association from the Chamber of Commerce Collection.

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Fort Brown
City or Vicinity: Brownsville
County: Cameron
State: Texas
Photographer: Edie Wallace
Date: January 2017
All photos on file with NPS.

Photograph 1: Section A, north boundary, west view.

Photograph 2: Fort Brown earthworks, southwest view.

Photograph 3: Fort Brown earthworks, bastion 3 (noted as bastion 1 in McNeely map), south view.

Photograph 4: Fort Brown earthworks, bastion 3 (noted as bastion 1 in McNeely map), northeast view.

Photograph 5: Monument at site of Captain Jacob Brown's death, southwest view.

Photograph 6: View from west levee of earthworks and bastion, northeast view.

Photograph 7: View of peninsula, site of Ringgold Battery and Mexican earthworks, south view.

Photograph 8: View from peninsula to church in Matamoros, southwest view.

Photograph 9: View of possible Civil War earthworks with Matamoros in background, west view.

Photograph 10: Section B, Cavalry Barracks, from Gorgas Drive, northeast view.

Photograph 11: Cavalry Barracks, northwest view.

Photograph 12: Cavalry Barracks, southwest view.

Photograph 13: Cavalry Barracks, interior.

Photograph 14: Section C, Commandant's Quarters, southwest view.

Photograph 15: Section C, Hospital Building, northeast view.

Photograph 16: Hospital Building, southeast view.

Photograph 17: Hospital Building, interior.

Photograph 18: Section C, Medical Laboratory, northwest view.

Photograph 19: Section C, Morgue/Laundry Storage Building, southeast view.

Photograph 20: Section C, Commissary, north view.

Photograph 21: Commissary, jail interior, northeast view.

Photograph 22: Commissary, attic interior.

Photograph 23: Section C, Bachelors' Non-commissioned Officers' Quarters/Commissary Annex, west view.

Photograph 24: Section C, Chapel/Officers' Guest House, west view.

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