

**Archaeological Reconnaissance of Civil
War Resources on Rose Dhu Island,
Chatham County, Georgia**

*LAMAR Institute Publication Series,
Number 154*

*The LAMAR Institute, Inc.
Savannah, Georgia*

2010

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Introduction

Rose Dhu Island is an interior coastal island in the Ogeechee River delta in Chatham County, Georgia. The island, which has the street address of 1912 Rose Dhu Island, is presently owned by the Girl Scouts of America. The tract is located southwest of Savannah, Georgia on the Little Ogeechee River.

Archaeological reconnaissance on portions of the island was conducted in early 2010 by a research team with the Chatham County Resources Protection Commission's Technical Advisory Committee. That committee is tasked with providing expert information on historical and natural properties under consideration for acquisition or easements by the commission. This property was visited to determine the extent and condition of Civil War and other cultural resources on the property. The property, which contains more than 1,224 acres, likely contains many other archaeological sites, including aboriginal and historic. This report is not intended as a comprehensive inventory of what the tract has to offer about the past, but it provides limited information on five historic resources and the information should enable the commission to make informed decisions in their heritage preservation efforts.



Figure 1. Project Location (MapperAcme.com 2010).

Research Methods

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Primary accounts are an important source of information about the historic resources on Rose Dhu Island. The archaeologists reviewed memoirs of historical persons associated with Rose Dhu Island, including: Cottles (1910), Dixon (Durham 2000), Habersham (King 1858), and Sherman (1900; Boynton 1875). The review also included an electronic search by keywords of the Official records of the Confederate and Union Armies (Cornell 2010a-j; Cowles 1893) and Official records of the Confederate and Union Navies (United States. Navy Department 1903). The research of primary records also identified a few later military records pertaining to Rose Dhu Island (Call 1910; Miller 1911; Stone & Webster 1919).

Historic maps, charts and aerial photographs are an invaluable information source for historical archaeology. Archaeologists searched for graphical archives that would assist in the identification of cultural resources on Rose Dhu Island. Cartographic resources that were examined include the following: Engineering Department, City of Savannah (1988), Latimer and Bucher (1911), Library of Congress (2010a-b), McKinnon 1900, 1820, Poe (ca. 1864, 1881, 1983), Platen (1875), Suter (1865), Waring and Waring (1970a-b, 1974),

Archaeologists reviewed numerous secondary accounts and synthetic histories of the study area. These included general Civil War histories and compendiums, including: Dyer (1979), Evans (1899) and Strickler (1899), as well as Savannah-specific Civil War histories, including: Burke (1974a-b), Hardee (1934), Harden (1969), Glatthaar (1985), and Smith (1997). Studies on early forts in the Savannah area, Georgia and the southeast coast provide additional insight into the fortifications on Rose Dhu Island. Fortification inventories and analysis by Byous (2010), Elliott (2010), Lewis (1970), and Lamas (n.d.) were reviewed.

FIELD METHODS

Field methods for the project were straightforward. They included surface inspection in a general walkover of selected portions of Rose Dhu Island where earthworks had been reported. Selected digital photographs were taken of several resources. GPS waypoints were recorded with a Garmin handheld GPS receiver. Approximately 3 hours were spent in the field for the reconnaissance.

LABORATORY ANALYSIS AND CURATION

Since no artifacts were collected from Rose Dhu Island no laboratory analysis was required. Field notes from the project are curated with the LAMAR Institute, Rincon, Georgia.

Historical Background

Rose Dhu Island is an interior coastal island in western Chatham County, Georgia. Patrick Houston (1698-1762) was a former owner of the Rose Dhu plantation. Houston was a prominent resident of the Vernonburg township. Battery Rose Dew was an important Confederate coastal defense built on Rose Dhu Island by 1862. The batteries at Rose Dhu guarded access to interior portions of the Little Ogeechee River watershed.

The battery is recorded as archaeological site 9CH706 and is located on property owned by the Girl Scouts of America (Cornell 2010e:856; Davis et al. 1983:70(2); GASF 2010). Preliminary archaeological survey of the earthworks on Rose Dhu Island was undertaken by Steve Hale and students from Georgia Southern University, although no report on that work is available and the extent of their investigations is unclear (Steve Hale personal communication, 2002).

Rose Dhu Island has a long history as a sea island plantation (Burke 1974a-b). A biographical summary of Edward Houston noted (Ellis 1911:142): “Edward Houston, son of John and Eliza (Williamson) Houston, was born in Savannah, Ga., about 1810, and died at ‘Rose Dhu’ the family estate near Savannah, Ga.” (Ellis 1911:142). Rose Dhu plantation was acquired by George Kollock in 1838 and he owned it until 1848 when he sold it and his Coffee Bluff plantation to purchase the South End plantation on Ossabaw Island. Kollock’s plantation records for Rosedew plantation have survived. A summary of these records, which cover the period from 1840-1849, states,

There are lists of slave births, deaths, and sick days, articles received and delivered at the plantation, allowance lists, and lists of daily work. Slave lists also show whether an individual was classed as a full hand or a half hand according to age or physical ability. Other lists show the beginning and completion dates for planting various crops. Volumes 4 and 5 include rules that regulated life on the plantation. In 1840-1841, for example, a slave could not receive more than ten lashes in the absence of the master. Slaves had to be at work by sunrise and were allowed an hour for lunch in the winter and two hours in the summer. In 1842-1843 a slave could receive 20 lashes in the absence of the master. Entries for daily work in these volumes are very brief. Each task is listed with the number of slaves assigned to perform it. References to a runaway slave appear in entries between January 29 and March 2, 1840 (Stamp 2010).

The Confederate States of America constructed a substantial artillery battery on Rose Dhu Island in 1862. At that time Rose Dhu plantation was owned by Patrick Houston (King 1858:2). Jones (1874:103) noted that the, “Rose Dew battery was armed with three 10-inch columbiads, one 10-inch mortar, and one 32 and one 18-pounder rifle gun”. In

early 1863 the battery at Rose Dhu was defended by a company (or companies) of soldiers in the 63rd Georgia Volunteer Infantry, commanded by Colonel George A. Gordon (Griffin 2010).

Details of the troops assigned to garrison the Confederate defenses in the outlying areas of Savannah are provided in General Order 45, dated October 20, 1863:

GENERAL ORDERS,

HDQRS. MIL. DIST. OF GEORGIA, Numbers 45.

Savannah, October 20, 1863.

Brigadier General R. E. Colston, Provisional Army, C. S., having been assigned to duty in the District of Georgia, is hereby placed in command of the troops heretofore attached to Taliaferro's brigade, and the lines and batteries manned by them, and will be obeyed and respected accordingly.

Brigadier-General Colston's command will include the First Volunteers, Georgia Regiment, Colonel Olmstead; the Fifty-seventh Regiment Georgia Volunteers, Colonel Barkuloo; the Sixty-third Regiment Georgia Volunteers, Colonel Gordon; the First Florida Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Hopkins; Lieutenant-Colonel Pritchard's command, Major A. L. Hartridge's command, and Captain Hanleiter's command. It will embrace the city lines and the batteries at Fort Bartow, Greenwich, Thunderbolt, Beaulieu, and Rose Dew, and the Isle of Hope.

By command of Brigadier-General Mercer:

W. W. GORDON,

Captain, and Assistant Adjutant-General (Cornell 2010f:434).

Josephine Clay Habersham, a neighboring resident, visited the Rose Dhu Island battery and wrote in her diary,

September 4, 1863. Friday. In the afternoon Anna King, Lilla, and I went in the carriage for her. Mrs. Hartridge and all and I went over to the Battery over a beautiful Causeway and a handsome, I mean strong, bridge. There is a beautiful Battery, so covered with verdure, four rifle guns. We went into the dark, excessively *hot* Magazine (with a lantern) where the 120-pound *shells* ranged on the shelves looked like skulls as if it were a Golgotha. How it must

exhaust the men to be in these bombproofs, of a hot stifling day with all the miserable accompaniments of a bombardment—wounds, death, perhaps *worse*, disaster and defeat (King 1858).

O.J. Cottles, a Confederate soldier, reminisced about his military service to the Confederacy on Rose Dhu Island in the 22nd Battalion, Georgia Heavy Artillery,

After I came home from Virginia, December, 1862, I re-enlisted in Capt. F. T. Cullen's company at Fort Gaines, Clay county, Ga., to serve in Florida under Gen. Howell Cobb. This company, after we got in service in Florida, was recruited to two companies. R. A. Turnipseed was elected captain of the second company, to which I afterwards belonged. After four months' service in Florida we were transferred to Savannah and attached to the 22d Georgia battalion. We saw service at Thunderbolt, Fort Bartow and on the Ogeechee river (Rose Dew Island), twelve miles out from Savannah. We could see Fort McAlister, five miles across the marsh, from Rose Dew, and we plainly witnessed from Rose Dew the capture of Fort McAllister by Sherman's troops. One company of the 22d Georgia battalion was in this fort and, of course, made prisoners—the evacuation of Savannah is a part of history. Our battalion, with the 1st Georgia regulars, served as rear guard at the exit of our little army (Cottles 1910:991-992).

Thomas Jordan, Chief of Staff for the Department of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, C.S.A., wrote to Major General J.F. Gilmer on October 28, 1863, in which he noted, “There are, moreover, three companies (F, H, and I) of the Fifty-fourth Regiment (Way’s) Georgia Volunteers in the District of Georgia, two at Rose Dew and one at Beaulieu, on heavy artillery duty...”(Cornell 2010a [OR, Ser 1, Vol 28pt2]:454).

The Confederacy narrowly averted a mutiny among the troops posted at Rose Dhu Island in early January, 1864. The Confederate’s Journal of Operations in Charleston Harbor, January 1-21 includes information about his incident. The entry for January 14 includes:

Brig. Gen. R. E. Colston reports to-day as follows: On Tuesday, 12th instant, a communication was received from Captain Hanleiter, commanding Beaulieu Battery, to the effect that a non-commissioned officer had informed him of the existence of a plot among the garrison at Rose Dew Island (mouth of the Little Ogeechee River), the purpose of which was to abandon the post at Rose Dew, with arms, ammunition, & c.; to win over the troops at Beaulieu if possible; to advance toward Savannah, taking with them the Terrell Artillery, at White Bluff, whose adhesion was considered certain; also some State troops encamped on the

Skidaway road, and to come to the camp of the Fifty-seventh Georgia, upon whom they seemed to rely as ready to join them. The whole to make their way to the interior of the country, their avowed purpose being to induce by their example as many of the troops as possible to imitate them, and by refusing to bear arms any longer to put an end to the war. The plot was to be executed on last night. General Colston immediately sent Capt. W. T. Taliaferro, his assistant adjutant-general, to Beaulieu and Rose Dew to investigate the matter. In the mean time an order was sent from district headquarters for the arrest of Private Coleman, Company F, Fifty-fourth Georgia, and he was sent on to the barracks at Savannah. From the result of investigations made by Major Hartridge, commanding at Rose Dew, and Captain Taliaferro, it became evident that this plot, which at first appeared so improbable, did really exist. On yesterday General Colston ordered about 300 men from the First Georgia Regiment and the First Florida Battalion, under the command of Colonel Olmstead, First Georgia, to repair to the cause-way connecting Rose Dew Island with the main land and cut off the communication between the two. Captain Guerards battery of artillery was ordered to support him. One hundred and fifty men from the Sixty-third Georgia Regiment, under Major Allen, were ordered to report to Colonel Olmstead. These movements of troops were made ostensibly for the purpose of meeting some demonstrations of the enemy by way of the Ogeechee. No attempt of any kind was made on last night by the garrison at Rose Dew. The arrest of Coleman and the concentration of troops has evidently frustrated the design; but from the report of Sergeant Hinson to Captain Tanner (Jackson Guards, at Rose Dew) the attempt was not given up until late yesterday evening (Cornell 2010b:133-135).

The journal goes on to explain,

The spirit of the Fifty-seventh Georgia Regiment is bad. The troops say they have never been properly exchanged, and the impression prevails (probably with good reason) that they will not fight if brought before the enemy. They are demoralized by the influence of home, to which they are too near, their friends and relatives persuading them that they have not been properly exchanged and ought to be at home. General Colston says their presence there may have a bad effect upon the other troops, and their spirit and tone may be improved by removal to more distant points. It will be necessary, of course, to send other troops in the place of those

removed. The companies at Rose Dew are: Company F, Capt. J. W. Anderson; Company I, Captain Elkins, Fifty-fourth Georgia Regiment, and Jackson Guards, Captain Tanner, who claims to belong to the Fourth Florida Battalion, but is considered there as commanding an independent company (Cornell 2010b: 135).

The distribution of Confederate heavy artillery for the District of Georgia was listed on May 3, 1864 for Rose Dhu Island, which included: "Rose Dew Battery, No. 1: One 10-inch columbiad, one 18-pounder, rifled. No. 2: One 32-pounder. No. 3: One 10-inch columbiad" (Cornell 2010c [OR, Ser 1, Vol35pt2]:467). From this we learn that Rose Dhu Island contained three separate artillery batteries, one with two heavy guns and the other two with one heavy gun each.

A letter from Confederate Major General L. McLaws to Major Stringfellow, Assistant Adjutant-General contained a statement of the effective force at the different posts in the District of Georgia on August 18, 1864, which included, "Rose Dew: Two companies Cobb Guards (135 effective total) have charge of three heavy batteries, and pickets the coast, &c" (Cornell 2010c [OR, Ser 1, Vol35pt2]:611).

General William T. Sherman's March to the Sea Campaign ended at Savannah. On December 17, Sherman wrote to Confederate General William J. Hardee, who commanded all of the Confederate forces in the Savannah theatre, demanding his surrender:

JNO. A. RAWLINS, *Brigadier-General and Chief of Staff.*
HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSISSIPPI,

In the Field, near Savannah, Ga., December 17, 186[sic, 4]. General
WILLIAM J. HARDEE,

Commanding Confederate Forces in Savannah: GENERAL: You have doubtless observed from your station at Rosedew that sea-going vessels now come through Ossabaw Sound and up Ogeechee to the rear of my army, giving me abundant supplies of all kinds, and more especially heavy ordnance necessary to the reduction of Savannah. I have already received guns that can cast heavy and destructive shot as far as the heart of your city; also, I have for some days held and controlled every avenue by which the people and garrison of Savannah can be supplied; and I am therefore justified in demanding the surrender of 'the city of Savannah and its dependent forts, and shall await a reasonable time your answer before opening with heavy ordnance. Should yon entertain the proposition I am prepared to grant liberal terms to the inhabitants and garrison; but should I be forced to resort to assault, and the slower and surer process of starvation, I shall then feel justified in resorting to the harshest measures, and shall make little effort to

restrain my army—burning to avenge a great national wrong they attach to Savannah and other large cities which have been so prominent in dragging our country into civil war. I inclose you a copy of General Hood's demand for the surrender of the town of Resaca, to be used by you for what it is worth. I have the honor to be, your obedient servant,

W. T. SHERMAN, Major-General. (Cowles 1893:737)

General Hardee wrote from his headquarters at Rose Dhu this reply to General Sherman:

Hdqrs. Dept. Of S. Carolina, GEORGIA, And Florida,

Savannah, Ga., December 17, 1861 [sic, 4],. Maj. Gen. W. T. Sherman,

Commanding Federal Forces, near Savannah, Ga.: General: I have to acknowledge receipt of a communication from you of this date, in which you demand 'the surrender of Savannah and its dependent forts,' on the ground that you have 'received guns that can cast heavy and destructive shot into the heart of the city,' and for the further reason that you 'have for some days held and controlled every avenue by which the people and garrison can be supplied.' You add that should you be 'forced to resort to assault, or to the slower and surer process of starvation, you will then feel justified in resorting to the harshest measures, and will make little effort to restrain your army,' &c. The position of your forces, a half a mile beyond the outer line for the land defenses of Savannah, is, at the nearest point, at least-four miles from the heart of the city. That and the interior line are both intact. Your statement that you 'have for some days held and controlled every avenue by which the people and garrison can be supplied' is incorrect. I am in free and constant communication with my department. Your demand for the surrender of Savannah and its dependent forts is refused. With respect to the threats conveyed in the closing paragraphs of your letter, of what may be expected in case your demand is not complied with, I have to say that I have hitherto conducted the military operations intrusted to my direction in strict accordance with the rules of civilized warfare, and I should deeply regret the adoption of any course by you that *may* force me to deviate from them in future.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. J. HARDEE, Lieutenant-General (Cowles 1893:737-738).

Major Alfred L. Hartridge commanded the Confederate troops at Rose Dhu in November and December, 1864 (Jones 1874:45, 53). In 1867 Hartridge recollected in a letter to Charles C. Jones, Jr., describing this service:

The day after the fall of Fort McAllister Genl. Hardee ordered me to take command of the line of the Little Ogeechee, extending from the Rosedew Batteries to the Atlantic and Gulf rail road bridge over the Little Ogeechee. The troops under my command were the garrison at Rosedew (two companies of Cobb Guards), three companies of the 1st Georgia Regulars, under Capt. Twiggs, three sections of "Wheeler's horse artillery, and a company of Wheeler's cavalry. The batteries at Rosedew consisted of three 10 inch Columbiads, one rifled 18 pounder, one smooth bore 32 pounder, and one 10 inch mortar.

I placed Capt. Twiggs, with the regulars and a section of horse artillery, at Coffee bluff, so that they could defend the bluff and, in case of necessity, act as a reserve to the batteries at Rosedew, or the points above the bluff. I placed another section of artillery at Johnson's landing, and the third at the rail road bridge, using the cavalry as pickets along the line.

No decided demonstration was made on this line. On the 17th, a faint attack was made on the bridge. On the morning of the 19th, the enemy attacked Beaulieu battery, just opposite, with one gun boat and a mortar boat. To divert their attention I opened on them with my mortar, they returning shot for shot, but I cannot say much damage was done on either side. That night I received information that Savannah was to be evacuated on the night following, (20th December), and, my orders were to move into the city by 8 o'clock P. M., of the 20th.

On the afternoon of the evacuation I destroyed all my powder by throwing it into the river, cut up and damaged, as far as I could, my gun carriages, spiked the guns, and did everything I could to destroy the batteries, etc., without making any noise or resorting to fire. At 5 o'clock P. M., I withdrew from the line as ordered, and arrived in Savannah between 8 and 9 o'clock (Jones 1874:53).

Colonel Charles C. Jones, Jr. noted that the Rose Dew Post was issued rations for 350 soldiers from the Confederate Commissary in Savannah on December 16, 1864 (Jones 1874:89).

From these various primary sources we may reconstruct a tentative list of the Confederate military units posted at Rose Dhu Island during its occupation. These include:

- Three companies of 1st Georgia (Regular) Infantry, Colonel Richard A. Wayne
- Two companies of Cobb's Guards (135 effective troops), Major Alfred L. Hartridge
- Jackson Guards (Irish Company), 2nd Infantry Regiment, Georgia State Troops
- Tanner's Company, 4th Florida
- Three sections of Wheeler's Horse Artillery
- One company of Wheeler's Cavalry
- Companies F and I, 54th Georgia Infantry
- 22nd Battalion, Georgia Heavy Artillery, Major Thomas D. Bertody

Admiral Dahlgren sent a letter to Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles on November 21, 1864, which included these comments about the strengths and vulnerabilities of the Confederate battery at Rose Dhu Island, "Rosedew is inferior to either [Fort McAllister or Beaulieu], but is reported less accessible to vessels of any draft. These works are chiefly of importance because they guard the approach from the south to Savannah" (United States. Navy Department 1901:56).

Strickler (1899:51) noted that Rosedew Fort was bombarded by U.S. naval artillery from December 14-21, 1864. The Rose Dhu Island batteries were bombarded by a U.S. warship(s)- most likely these were gunmen on the U.S.S. *Sonoma*. The U.S.S. *Sonoma* was one vessel in Admiral Dahlgren's South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and he noted its position near Rose Dhu Island during the period of bombardment in his diary (United States. Navy Department 1903). The U.S.S. *Sonoma* was a side-wheeler steam and sail powered gunboat (Figure 2). Naval records note that it was a 1105-ton "double-ender" side wheel steam gunboat, built at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, Kittery, Maine. The ship was, "Commissioned in July 1862, she was initially employed in the West Indies and western Atlantic areas, searching for Confederate commerce raiders and blockade runners...Overhauled in June-September 1863, *Sonoma* next joined the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron...Following the Confederate surrender, the gunboat was sent to New York, where she decommissioned in June 1865. USS *Sonoma* was sold in October 1867" (U.S. Naval Historical Center 2010). The U.S.S. *Sonoma*, commanded by Commander Thomas H. Stevens, Jr., USN, had these specifications:

- Length: 233 ft 9 in (71.25 m)
- Beam: 34 ft 10 in (10.62 m)
- Draft: 12 ft 3 in (3.73 m)
- Displacement: 955 long tons (970 t)
- Armament: one 100-pounder Parrott rifle, one 11 in (280 mm) Dahlgren smoothbore, six 24-pounder howitzers and two 12-pounder rifles (Mooney 1976).

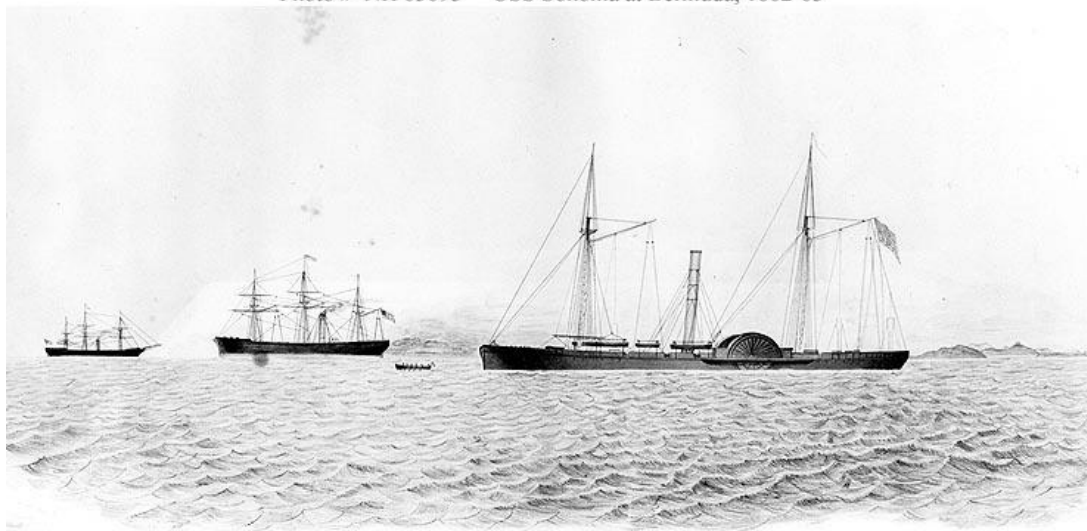


Figure 2. Photograph of U.S.S. Sonoma (in foreground), circa 1862-63 (U.S. Naval Historical Center 2010).

At about the same time that this bombardment began, the Confederates were evacuating the post at Rose Dhu Island. On December 19, 1864, Lieutenant General Hardee ordered for the evacuation of the Confederate post at Rose Dhu, stating, “The troops at Rosedew, Beaulieu, etc., will leave their positions at dark, and, marching to Savannah, will cross at Screven’s ferry” (Jones 1874:148). Jones (1874:152) wrote about the Confederate’s destruction of the Rose Dhu batteries on December 20, 1864:

Having executed the orders for the destruction of the carriages and ammunition and for spiking the guns, the garrisons of the Isle of Hope, Beaulieu, and Rosedew batteries repaired to Savannah and crossed the pontoon bridges on the night of the 20th. The troops from the Isle of Hope being dismounted cavalry, reported for duty to General Wheeler on the Carolina shore, while the artillerymen from Beaulieu and Rosedew marched forward to Hardeeville.

That the guns in these fixed batteries were as completely disabled as the nature of the case permitted, and their ammunition and equipments destroyed, appears by the following report of Colonel Anderson.

‘Charleston, Dec. 31, 1864. Lt. Coln. T. B. Boy, A. A. G. Colonel: In reply to your communication of the 30th inst. I have the honor to state, that all the guns at the heavy batteries under my command in the District of Georgia, with the exception of one 32-pounder, on Hutchinson’s island (unfit for service) were thoroughly spiked, the carriages cut and otherwise rendered useless, the truck and

maneuvering wheels thrown into the river, and the eccentric axles deranged. All the ammunition, averaging one hundred and odd rounds per gun, including friction primers, fuzes and projectiles, as far as practicable, were also thrown into the river or moats. Handspikes, rammers, sponges, and other ordnance stores were broken up and destroyed.

I am Colonel,

Very respectfully,

Your obdt. servt.,

EDWD. 'C. ANDERSON, Coin. Comdg.' (Jones 1874:152).

Within days after the Confederates abandoned the Rose Dhu batteries, the 63rd Illinois Infantry regiment was assigned guard duty there, as well as at former Confederate positions at Forts Wimberly and Beaulieu. The 63rd Infantry remained at this post until January 19, 1865, when they accompanied Major General Sherman on his march through the Carolinas (Reese 1901:313-314). The 63rd Infantry originally consisted of 988 men but had dwindled to 272 men by the time they were mustered out of the United States service in July, 1865. At the time of their guard duty at Rose Dhu Island, the 63rd Illinois Infantry regiment consisted of more than 300 men. If the regiment was equally divided between the three posts, then about 100 men were stationed at Rose Dhu Island during the period from late December, 1864-January 19, 1865.

A Lindenkohl's map of the Savannah area shows two batteries on Rose Dhu Island. It also shows another feature, which may represent a plantation home. The portion of this map detailing Rose Dhu (Rose Dew) Island is reproduced in Figure 3 (Lindenkohl 186-).

Orlando Poe commanded a number of U.S. Army engineers and draftsmen, who mapped Savannah and its surroundings in late December, 1864 and January, 1865. The composite results were published in the Atlas (Poe 1881, Plate LXX in Davis et al. 1983). A portion of Poe's map, detailing the area of Rose Dhu Island, is presented in Figure 4.

Brevet Major Charles R. Suter drafted a manuscript map in 1865, entitled, "Map of Rebel & Union intrenchments of Savannah" This map was to accompany the annual report of the U.S. Engineers for 1865. This small map shows terrain and farms around the city (Suter 1865). Unfortunately, Suter's coverage did not extend out as far as Rose Dhu Island.

The present research has identified no detailed maps of the Rose Dhu battery or other Confederate defenses. Detailed plans of the Confederate defenses at Causton's Bluff (Fort Bartow), Thunderbolt, Turner Rocks, and Whitmarsh Island, which have survived, provide a general idea of how the Rose Dhu battery may have appeared. Until a detailed

topographic map of the ruins of the Rose Dhu Island defenses is made, however, we are left with speculation.

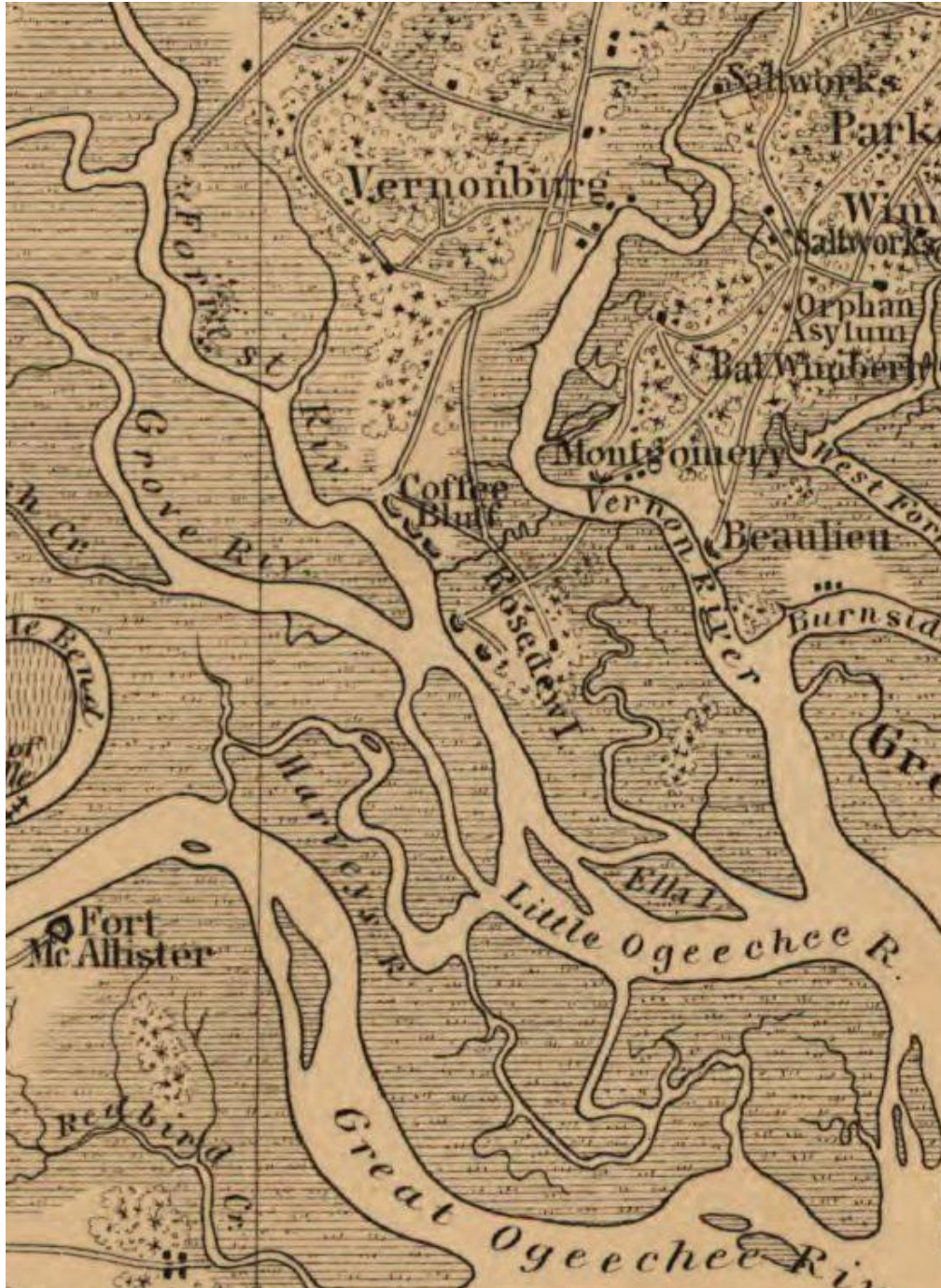


Figure 3. Portion of Map of the environs of Savannah, Georgia (Lindenkohl 186-).

After January, 1865, the military history of Rose Dhu Island is not evident. The primary coastal defense in the Spanish American War was located at Fort Screven, which was positioned on the north end of Tybee Island. Other points along the Georgia coast, possibly including Rose Dhu Island, were manned by observers with the U.S. signal corps.



Figure 4. Portion of Poe's Map from the Atlas, Showing (in Red) Confederate Defenses at Rosedew Island (Poe 1881, Plate LXX in Davis et al. 1983).

A Georgia militia target range was established on Rose Dhu Island by the U.S. Army in 1909, as noted, "This range is located on the Ogeechee River, in Chatham County, near Savannah; and comprises an area of about 112 acres. The title is as follows: "Deed from Raiford Falligant and Robert J. Travis, as executors and trustees, etc., Rosa O. Falligant, and Louis A. Falligant, dated July 6, 1909, conveying 112 acres, part of the "Rose Dew Plantation." Recorded in' Deed Book 10 C, folio 337, of the Deed Records of Chatham County" (Call 1910:84). A 1910 plat of Rose Dew Plantation is on file in the Municipal

Research Library, Office of the City Manager, City of Savannah, Georgia (Engineering Department, City of Savannah 1988).

In 1911, just prior to World War I, Rose Dhu Island was used as a training camp by the Georgia National Guard. “A permanent camp for the Georgia National Guard has been established at Rose Dhu, near Savannah. Well paved shell roads have been built through and about the 112-acre site. The various organizations began going into camp on July 1, and will continue until August 9. There is a good range at Rose Dhu, and rifle practice was part of the daily routine scheduled by the Adjutant General” (Miller 1911:217). This source further stated,

Captain J. J. Willingham, of the Jackson Rifles, Second Infantry, National Guard of Georgia, and two of his men were slightly injured at the new rifle range at Rose Dhu while tending target July 10. It was in the 200 yard pit. A bullet struck the steel-faced backstop and splashed back. Captain Willingham was cut in the shoulder, a jagged piece of jacket from the missile plowing a furrow in his shoulder. The backstop was promptly repaired, and is now in perfect shape (Miller 1911:217).

Rose Dhu continued to serve the Georgia National Guard for small weapons training as late as 1919, as noted, “The Home Guards had an outing on Thanksgiving Day at the Rose Dhu Rifle Range, at which Sergeant Carol Figg, of our billing department, won second prize in his company” (Stone & Webster 1919:486). A 1922 plat of Rosedew Plantation depicts an area of “the Government Rifle Range” (Engineering Department, City of Savannah 1988).

The Girl Scouts of America were formed in 1912 by Juliette Gordon Low. Ms. Low was a prominent Savannahian and the current Girl Scout Camp on Rose Dhu Island bears her name. Camp Low was established in 1915.

Archaeological exploration of Rose Dhu Island has been very limited. No systematic archaeological survey has been done for the property. Early studies of the property remain poorly documented. At present only one archaeological site, 9CH706 (Rose Dhu Battery), is officially recorded in the Georgia Archaeological Site File (2010). A review of the site form for 9CH706 shows that it was completed by researchers from Armstrong State College (now Armstrong Atlantic State University). Larry Babits explored this site in the 1970s or early 1980s, although no report of his investigation was located. Similarly, archaeologist Steven Hale, Georgia Southern University, conducted some investigation of the archaeological resources on Rose Dhu Island in the 1990s. No report of his work was located. Relic collector, Thomas S. Dickey, Sr., obtained artillery shells from Rose Dhu Island, which are currently housed at the Atlanta History Center (Melton and Pawl 2010).

The Georgia Battlefields Association included the earthworks on Rose Dhu Island in their recent list of Civil War defenses in the Savannah area. Their entry for Rose Dhu notes it is, “Privately owned, eroding from adjacent river” (Mobley 2008).

Archaeological Reconnaissance

Archaeological reconnaissance of Rose Dhu Island was done on March 19, 2010 by Joanna Bounds, Metropolitan Planning Commission, Daniel T. Elliott, Coastal Georgia Archaeological Society, and Alison McGee, The Nature Conservancy. Five previously undocumented archaeological sites were observed during this brief surface inspection, in addition to the previously recorded earthworks at site 9CH706. The identified resources on the island, which are mapped in Figure 5, included:

1. Rose Dhu Battery (9CH706)
2. a well-preserved Confederate battery on a small hammock off of Rose Dhu Island;
3. a corduroy road leading from Rose Dhu Island to the aforementioned battery;
4. a series of large pits of unknown function;
5. linear entrenchments;
6. and oyster shell scatters.

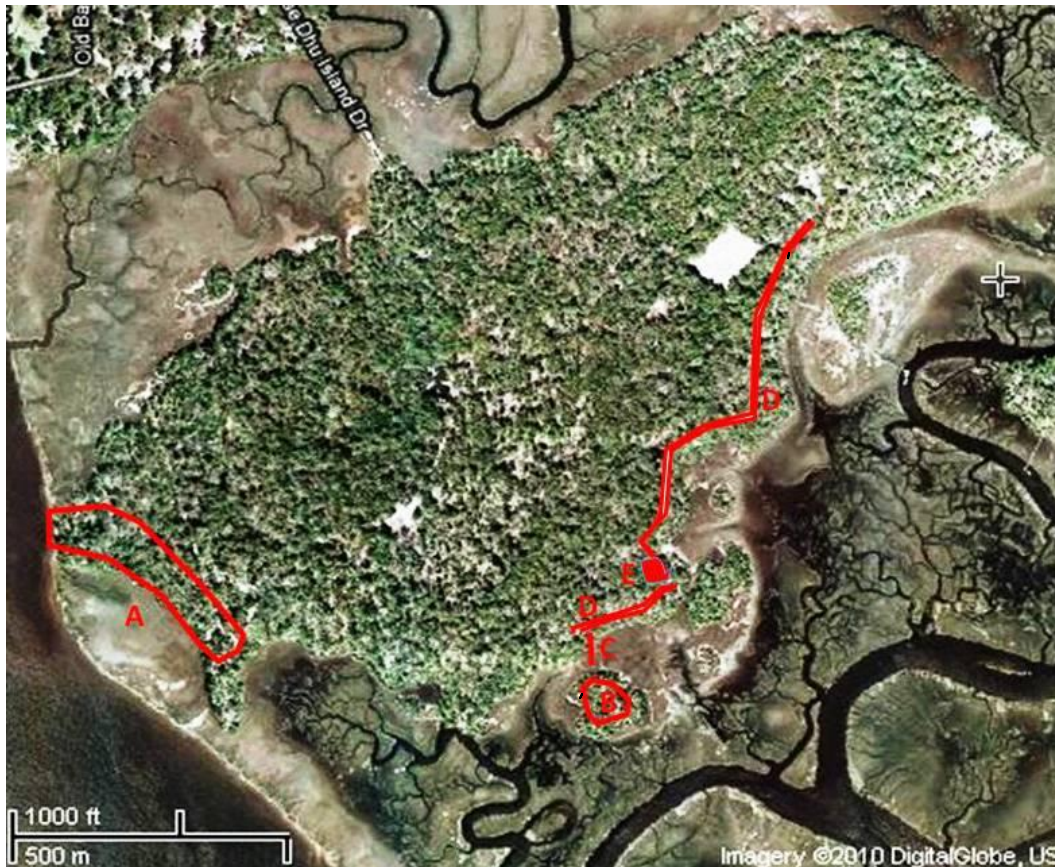


Figure 5. Archaeological Sites, Rose Dhu Island, 2010 (A-Rose Dhu Battery; B-Battery Hammock; C-Corduroy Road; D-Entrenchments; E-Large Pits.

GPS locations were recorded for several sites. Georgia site forms were completed for these sites, based on this preliminary inspection.

Site 1—Rose Dhu Battery (9CH706)

The most obvious archaeological feature on Rose Dhu Island is the large earthen battery that is recorded as Site 9CH706. Figure 6 is a view of the battery from its crest, south of Rooster Point, facing north. One the southeastern end, the battery has been impacted by the construction of a modern dwelling. Severe erosion along the shoreline of the Rose Dhu Battery at the northwestern end (Rooster Point), as shown in Figure 7. Otherwise the battery appears to be remarkably intact. With the exception of the exposed bank fronting the Little Ogeechee River, the site is heavily wooded in maritime forest. No artifacts were observed on the surface. This earthwork, which is continuous, may represent two or more artillery batteries that have merged. Some portion of the landform containing the battery may be natural but this was not determined from the present examination.



Figure 6. Site 9CH706, Rose Dhu Battery, Facing North.



Figure 7. Bank Erosion of Rose Dhu Battery at Rooster Point, 2010.

Site 2—Battery Hammock (Lat. 31.921352, Long. -81.133862)

On a small hammock just off of the shore of Rose Dhu Island stands a solitary earthen enclosure. This landform is known as Battery Hammock, or Fort Hammock, and it is aptly named. The battery is a complete enclosure appears to have been little disturbed since it was constructed.

Site 3—Battery Hammock Corduroy Road (Lat. 31.922164, Long. -81.134145)

One surprising discovery on the approach to the previously described Battery Hammock was a section of corduroy road that linked Rose Dhu Island with the hammock. This was a narrow road comprised of short logs (probably less than 4 meters in length), oriented perpendicular to the road. The road extends for approximately 70 meters on a bearing of 340 degrees. Most of this road was covered with sand and salt marsh but a few sections of the corduroy road were exposed and visible on the surface. Upon close inspection of aerial imagery of this location, traces of the road are apparent and the path of the road may be mapped. This road was almost certainly constructed in the Civil War in order to convey Confederate artillery equipment to the battery on the hammock.

Site 4—Rose Dhu Pits (Lat. 31.923617, Long. -81.132745)

This is an area of Rose Dhu Island that contains two or more large, shallow pits. They measured approximately 4 m in diameter and 75 cm in depth (estimated). The function of these pits was not determined. These may represent bomb craters from the U.S.S. Sonoma's bombardment in December, 1864. As noted, the Sonoma's artillery included: "one 100-pounder Parrott rifle, one 11 in (280 mm) Dahlgren smoothbore, six 24-pounder howitzers and two 12-pounder rifles", so exploded and unexploded ordnance from these guns are anticipated in the archaeological record at Rose Dhu Island (Mooney 1959-1983; United States. Navy Department 1903).

They also may be the result of other activities in the area unrelated to the military events. This vicinity was not fully explored and other cultural features may be present in the vicinity.

Site 5—Rose Dhu Entrenchments (Lat. 31.926209, Long. -81.131502)

On one section of the coastline of Rose Dhu Island, a shallow linear intrenchment is apparent for more than one kilometer. This probably represents a Civil War rifle trench. The trench parallels the shoreline and is located about 18-28 m inland. Generally, the trench is less than 2 m wide and less than 1 m deep. A hiking trail follows along the general course of portions of this trench work and is located between the marsh and the trench. The full extent of this line of entrenchments was not followed in the reconnaissance investigation.

Summary

Rose Dhu Island was a fortified place in the American Civil War and vestiges of the fortifications remain in the archaeological record. The Confederates guarded this inland river position against Union naval attack with four to six pieces of heavy artillery. In May, 1864, the Confederate defenses on Rose Dhu Island consisted of four pieces of heavy artillery, which were two 10-inch columbiads, one rifled 18-pounder, and one 32-pounder (Cornell 2010c [OR, Ser 1, Vol35pt2]:467). Major Hartridge (Jones 1874:53) recalled that in mid-December, 1864, the Confederate heavy artillery on Rose Dhu Island consisted of, “three 10 inch Columbiads, one rifled 18 pounder, one smooth bore 32 pounder, and one 10 inch mortar”. These weapons were distributed in three batteries on Rose Dhu Island. Two of these batteries are identified archaeologically and one is presently recorded as an archaeological site (9CH706). A cursory examination of a second battery was accomplished by this study. The third battery was possibly also located on 9CH706 or it may be an, as yet, unidentified site on the island.

Rose Dhu Island also was a target. It was bombarded by heavy artillery from the U.S.S. Sonoma in December, 1864. The Confederates likely returned fire for a period of time, although by December 20, 1864, the batteries on Rose Dhu Island were evacuated. Major Hartridge described, “Union troops were garrisoned on Rose Dhu Island in late December, 1864 and January, 1865. These troops were withdrawn and accompanied Major General Sherman in his campaign through the Carolinas.

Historical accounts of the Confederate’s destruction of the batteries, which including discarding the ammunition into the water, suggests that submerged archaeological deposits of munitions and artillery accoutrements may exist just offshore from the island. This may include 600 or more unexploded rounds of artillery. If so, those resources would be the management concern of the Department of the Navy and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The hazardous potential for unexploded Confederate and Union artillery rounds exists for Rose Dhu Island, however, and this factor should be considered in any future resource management plan.

Taken as a whole, the Confederate defenses on Rose Dhu Island are remarkably well preserved. Historical interpretation of these resources to the public is passive at present, although the potential exists for telling a range of exciting stories, if the site were developed as an outdoor learning laboratory. The suggested next step is a complete inventory of the cultural resources on the island by a professional archaeology team. That would provide a better understanding of the full range of aboriginal and historic occupation of the island. If this island were to be acquired, or preserved as public greenspace, then the cultural aspects of the island’s history represent key resources that are most worthy of public interpretation. Rose Dhu Island’s Civil War archaeological resources are likely eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, under Criterion D.

Other potential historic resources on Rose Dhu Island, which remain to be located, include the plantation manor home, outbuildings and enslaved persons quarter, and the

circa 1909-1919 firing range. The Girl Scouts of America's Camp Low also may have resources that have archaeological manifestations. Since the founder of the Girl Scouts was a Chatham County resident, this aspect of Rose Dhu Island may be a contributing element to the island's National Register of Historic Places potential at the National level of significance.

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