

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Missouri	
COUNTY	
Iron	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

6.

FORT DAVIDSON

Missouri State Historical Survey (state)

1969

Missouri State Park Board

P.O. Box 176

120 1/2 Jefferson Building

Jefferson City, Missouri 65101 Code: 2 1/2

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Fort Davidson is located in the Clark National Forest at Pilot Knob, Missouri. The fort was originally protected by a nine foot earthen wall, surrounded by a moat. Today, the wall is about five feet high and the moat is overgrown with shrubs and trees.

The fort still retains its original hexagonal outline. The diameter is 200 feet as measured from the inside base of the north wall to the inside base of the south wall. The oval crater within the walls is 50 feet wide and 100 feet long. This depressed area was formed by the explosion of the powder magazine on September 27, 1864.

In 1864, Fort Davidson guarded the northern approach to the Arcadia Valley which was surrounded by mountains 600 feet in height. The fort stood 300 yards from the base of Pilot Knob Mountain and 1,000 yards from the gap between Shepherd's and Pilot Knob Mountains. (Richard S. Brownlee, State of Missouri, Official Manual, 1961-62, p. 17.)

The rifle parapets stood nine feet above the plain and allowed a clear view in each direction. The dry moat surrounding the fort was seven feet deep and ten feet wide. Cannon were mounted on the parapet on wooden battery platforms. (Richard S. Brownlee, State of Missouri, Official Manual, 1961-62, p. 18.)

"The only shell proof structure within the fort was a deep, earth-covered powder magazine." The defeat of Fort Davidson was only a matter of time when proper artillery was mounted against it. Being a circular target, the fort would have to surrender as soon as the enemy mounted their artillery on the mountains and from this vantage point, trained down on its walls. (Richard S. Brownlee, State of Missouri, Official Manual, 1961-62, p. 18.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) September 27, 1864

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Davidson is significant as the scene of the Civil War Battle of Pilot Knob which took place on September 27, 1864. This battle was the turning point of Confederate Major-General Sterling Price's campaign in Missouri. Because of Price's defeat, he was unable to accomplish any significant military objectives in Missouri and was gradually forced into a defensive position by the Union forces.

The fort was constructed in 1863 by General J.W. Davidson, a commander of the Southeast Missouri District. (State Historical Society of Missouri, Historic Sites File: Iron County.) The fort is situated on a level plain near Pilot Knob, Missouri and is encircled by mountains 600' in height. The hexagonal shaped fort had earthen walls 9' high which allowed a clear field of fire in each direction for about 900 yards. It was originally planned as one of three forts, the other two being on the surrounding mountains; but these were never constructed. (Richard S. Brownlee, State of Missouri, Official Manual, 1961-62, pp.17, 18.)

In the fall of 1864, Confederate forces were on the defensive. Chances of Confederate victory appeared slim except in the trans-Mississippi region where relatively few Union troops were garrisoned. (Cyrus Peterson and Joseph Mills Hanson, Pilot Knob, The Thermopylae of the West, 1914, p. 24.) Price's army, composed of three cavalry divisions, numbered approximately 9,000 men. "Most of the troopers were only shirts and pants, stained a grey-yellow with butternut dye, and over half of them were bare-foot. ...They had been hardened in the fierce fires of war and only the courageous and the strongest physically were left." Once the army entered Missouri, the men were to live off the land. (Richard S. Brownlee, State of Missouri, Official Manual, 1961-62, pp. 9, 11, 12, 25.)

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FORT DAVIDSON

Price planned to attack St. Louis, but because he received exaggerated reports of the troop strength there, he decided to move West and take the easier target of Fort Davidson. He knew the fort had a small defending force, and he could cut off reinforcements by destroying the Iron Mountain R & R. Also, an easy victory would provide a needed morale boost for his own troops. (Richard S. Brownlee, State of Missouri, Official Manual, 1961-62, p. 15.)

Union officers, Brigadier General Thomas Ewing and Colonel Thomas C. Fletcher were sent out from St. Louis to the fort to ascertain the troop movements of the Confederates. When the army was discovered, hurried preparations were made by the Union troops who numbered approximately 1,000. (Richard S. Brownlee, State of Missouri, Official Manual, 1961-62, p. 14, 21.)

The battle began at 2:00 on the afternoon of September 27, 1864. The Confederates planned an immediate frontal assault. Price refused to delay an additional 24 hours until artillery could be set up on the mountains during the night. This proved to be a grave error because the fort would have been forced to surrender with Confederate artillery overlooking its walls. As it happened, the Union artillery and riflemen commanded the plain and the Confederates were easy targets. Price's army advanced to within thirty yards of the fort before the charge faltered and fell back. As the army retreated, the Union riflemen inflicted their greatest damage by shooting the fleeing men in the back. "In twenty minutes Sterling Price had over a thousand officers and men killed and wounded." (Richard S. Brownlee, State of Missouri, Official Manual, 1961-62, pp. 23, 27.)

Ewing lost 75 men and determined to evacuate the fort that night because he knew the Confederates would have artillery on the mountains before morning. At midnight, Ewing and his men muffled the wagon wheels and horses' hooves with burlap sacks, left the fort and passed safely through the Confederate lines heading north on the Potosi Road. (Richard S. Brownlee, State of Missouri, Official Manual, 1961-62, pp. 29, 30.)

This defeat was a great blow to the Confederate cause. The battle delayed Price and provided the time for St. Louis and Jefferson City to be reinforced. This foiled Price's plans for a quick victory in Missouri.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Brownlee, Richard S. "The Battle of Pilot Knob," State of Missouri, Official Manual, Warren E. Hearnnes, Secretary of State, State Capitol, Jefferson City, Missouri, 1961-62.
2. Hanson, Joseph Mills and Cyrus Peterson. Pilot Knob, The Thermopylae of the West. New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1914.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "	37°	37'	45"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "	90°	38'	24"	
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than ten

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

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

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Charla A. Piggott, Research Historian

ORGANIZATION State Historical Survey and Planning Office DATE December 17, 1969
Missouri State Park Board

STREET AND NUMBER: P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building

CITY OR TOWN: Jefferson City STATE Missouri CODE 24
65101

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Joseph Jaeger, Jr.</u></p> <p>Title <u>Director, Missouri State Park Board, and Missouri State Liaison Officer</u></p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ <i>Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>
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FORT DAVIDSON

3. State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri,
Historic Sites File. Ref. Iron County.



Oak Mountain

ST. FRANCIS CO.
IRON CO.

Pilot Knob
(B.M. 955)

Anderson Mountain

Shepherd Mountain

IRONTON
(B.M. 921)

Arcadia
(B.M. 924)

Grassy Mountain

Ketcherside Mtn

U.S.G.S. 15' Quadrangle
"Ironton" (1945)
Scale 1:25,000

Fort Davidson
Lat 37°37'45" Long 90°38'24"

(Des Arc)

INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY WASHINGTON

Form 10-301
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	
Missouri	
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FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON:		Fort Davidson	
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: On Highway 21, south of junction with route V at Pilot Knob, Missouri			
CITY OR TOWN: Center Section 30 - Township 33N - Range 3E			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Missouri 63663	24	Iron	093
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE: U.S.G.S. 15' quadrangle Ironton			
SCALE: 1:62,500			
DATE: 1945			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Missouri	
COUNTY Iron	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Fort Davidson
 AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: On Highway 21, south of junction with Route V
 at Pilot Knob, Missouri

CITY OR TOWN:
 Center Section 30 - Township 33N - Range 3E

STATE: Missouri	CODE 63663	COUNTY: Iron	CODE 093
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3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: State Historical Society of Missouri
 DATE OF PHOTO: June 26, 1890
 NEGATIVE FILED AT: State Historical Society of Missouri
 Corner, Hitt and Lowry Streets, Columbia, Missouri 65201

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Lithograph of battle scene. From A Summer in the Arcadia Valley, June 26, 1890, p. 1.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Missouri 63663	24	Iron	093
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Ronald Walker, State Historical Survey, Missouri State Park Board			
DATE OF PHOTO: August 26, 1969			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176 1201 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. View to the north, general view of the fort interior.			

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1969

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PHOTO CREDIT: Ronald Walker, State Historical Survey, Missouri State Park Board			
DATE OF PHOTO: August 26, 1969			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176 1204 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. View to the south of the moat around west wall of fort from the northwest entrance.			

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DATE OF PHOTO: August 26, 1969			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176 1201 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. View to the southwest, inside view of the north wall of the fort. Note yardstick for height.			

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Center Section 30 - Township 33N - Range 3E

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Missouri 63663	24	Iron	093

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Ronald Walker, State Historical Survey, Missouri State Park Board

DATE OF PHOTO: August 26, 1969

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176
1201 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

View to the southwest of crater left by explosion
of powder magazine.

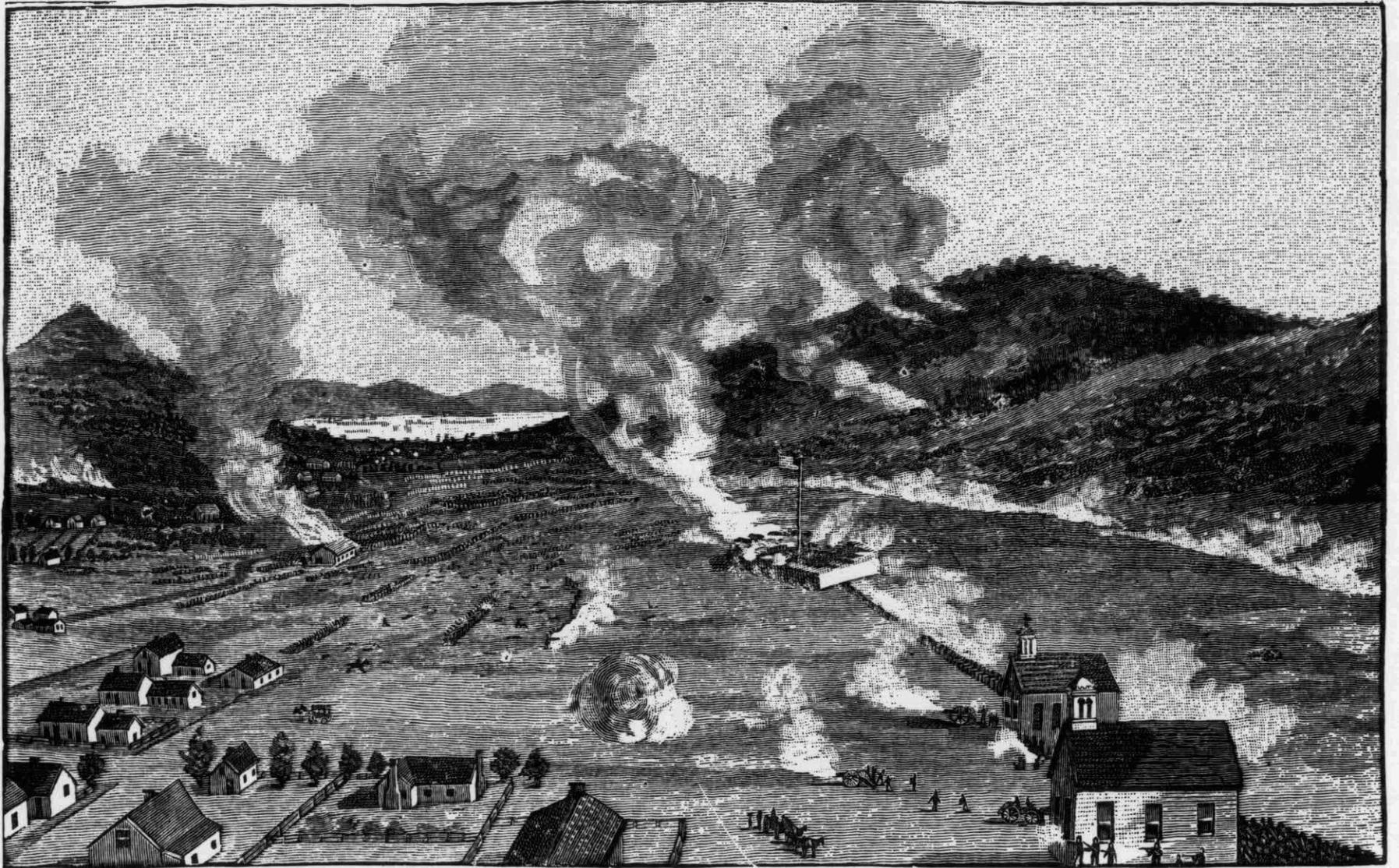
Iron County - Battle of Pilot Knob
September 27, 1864

Name of Site: Fort Davidson
Site Number: _____
Photographer: Hibbsgraph
Date of Photo: June 26, 1890
View of Photo: _____
Neg. Size: _____

①

from: A Summer in the Greasia Valley,
June 26, 1890, page 1.

PERMISSION GRANTED TO REPRODUCE
THIS PHOTOGRAPH. CREDIT: STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI



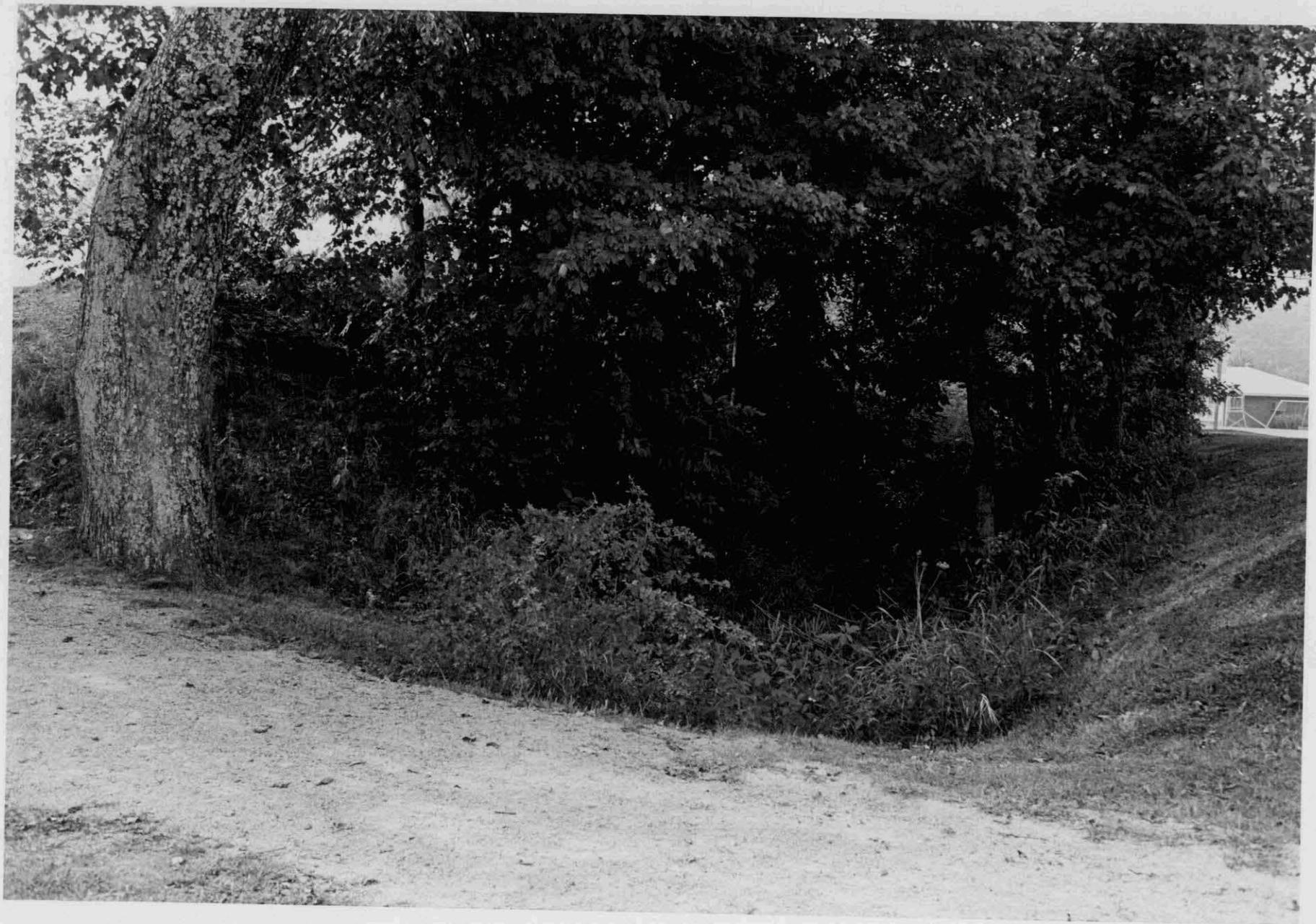
Name of Site: Fort Davidson
Site Number _____
Photographer: Pam Walker
Date of Photo: Aug. 26, 1969
View of Photo: North
Neg. Size 35 mm

(2)



Name of Site: Fort Davidson
Plot Number
Photographer: Ren Walker
Date of Photo: Aug 26, 1969
View of Photo: South
Neg. Size 35 mm

(3)



Name of Site: Fort Davidson

Site Number _____

Photographer: Ben Walker

Date of Photo: Aug. 26, 1969

View of Photo: Southwest

neg. Size 85 mm

(4)



Name of Site: Fort Davidson

Site Number _____

Photographer: Ben Walker

Date of Photo: Aug 26, 1969

View of Photo: Southwest

Neg. Size 35 mm

(5)

