

# The Forts of Nashville

1 February 2023



# The War Continues

By October, the initial stockade of Fort Negley is complete while the rest of the fort including the stone scarps is still being built at a cost of \$90,000

Other considerations consider to shape the situation:

- Operations
- Defense from Attack/Raids
- Logistics, Logistics, Logistics
- Labor
- Problem of occupation



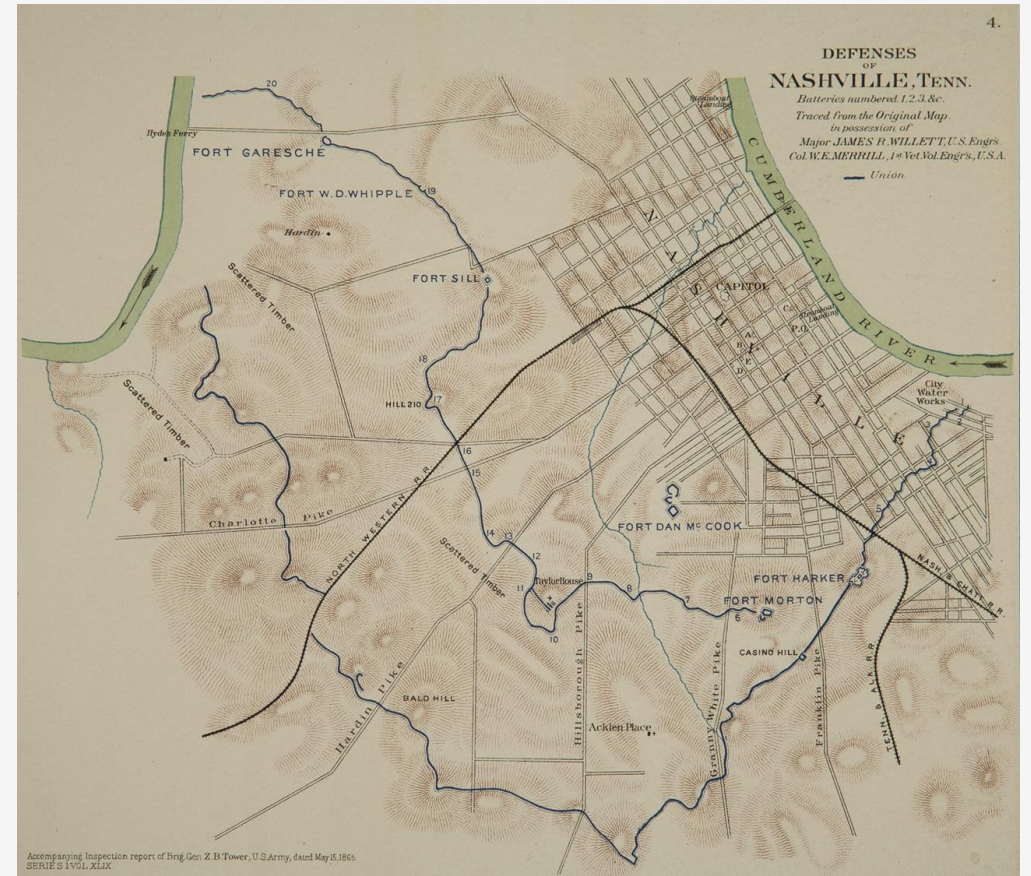
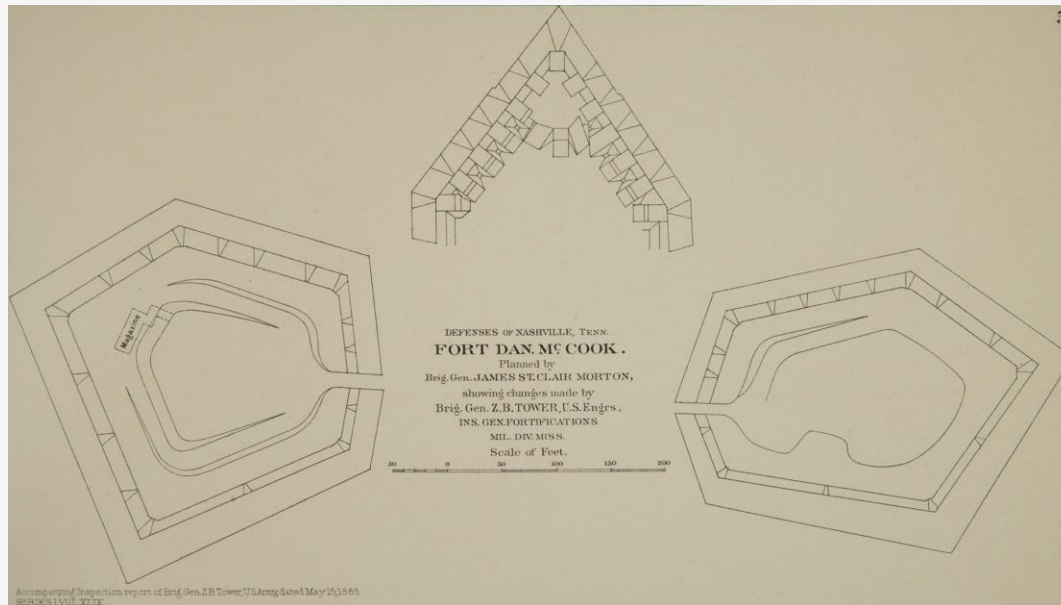
# New Boss, New Plans

When the Army of the Ohio returned to Nashville in November 1862, with Buell replaced by General Rosecrans, Captain Morton had revised his defense plans for the city.

He added two works, Fort Morton and Fort Houston:

- Fort Morton was named in honor of the engineer Captain Morton, and
- Fort Houston was named in honor of the Nashvillian, Union sympathizer Russell Houston, who gave his house and site for the new fort.

Morton designed these two works upon the designs of the "double bastions of Choumara".



# Reality intercedes

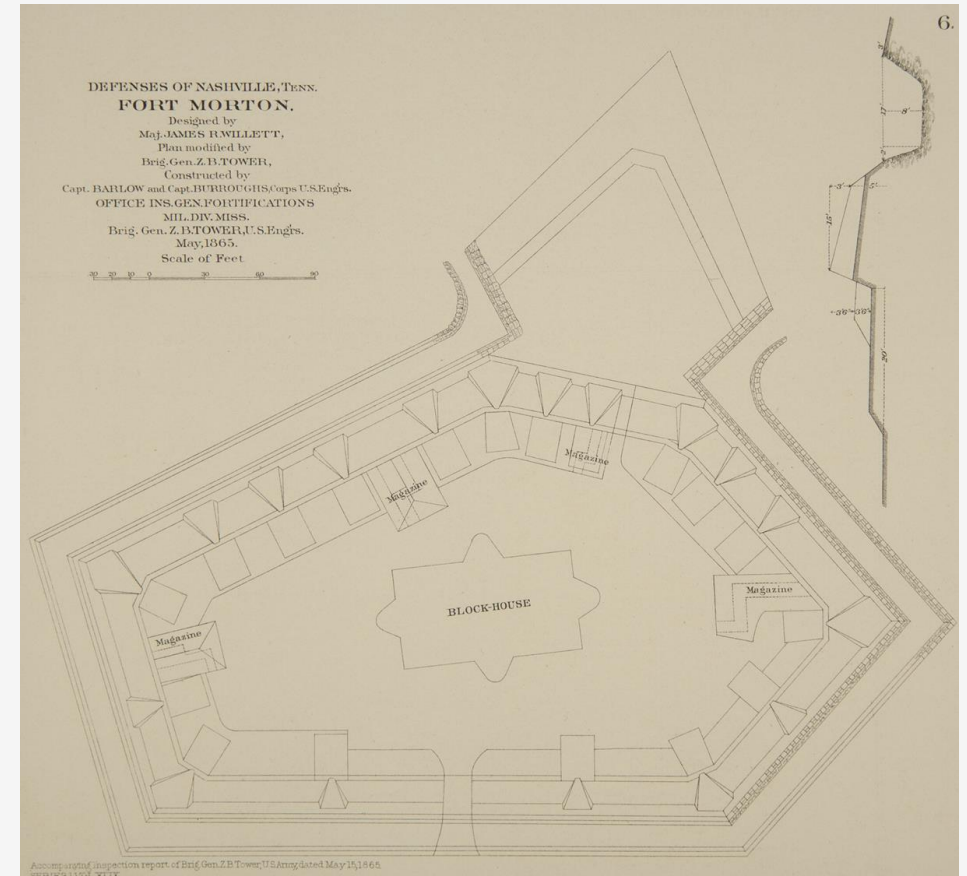
An additional engineer, CPT Burroughs is assigned to Nashville in April 1863, and Colonel Merrill provides some direction as well. Morton continues until Summer 1863 and then is assigned to command elsewhere

Captain Burroughs had spent fifteen thousand dollars following Morton's designs on Fort Morton when Colonel Merrill, realized that the stonework would never have been finished, and abandoned the elaborate plans

He redesigned the fort as an en barbette polygonal redoubt with an interior blockhouse. Burroughs then spent an additional forty thousand dollars following Merrill's revised plans.

Brigadier General Tower arrived in the fall of 1864 to take charge of the Nashville fortifications. Fort Morton was not half completed at this time, and Tower decided to modify the work. He increased the number of guns in the fort and included embrasures. He added two magazines that would also serve as traverses and reduced the size of the blockhouse from 120 feet to 80 feet in length. The work was never completed, but he was able torevet the scarps with stone.

His expenditures were about thirty thousand dollars, totaling almost ninety thousand dollars for the unfinished fort



# Fort Houston

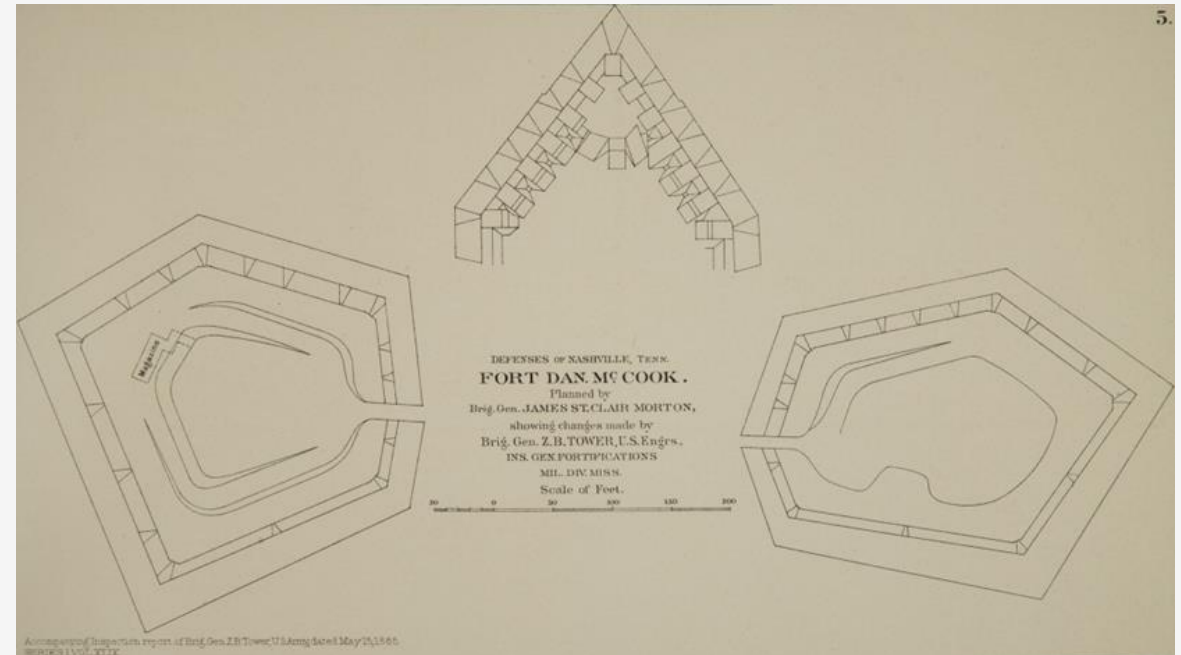
Fort Houston (renamed Fort DanMcCook following the battle of Nashville in honor of Gen. Daniel McCook, who was killed at Kennesaw Mountain) generally followed Morton's designs.

CPT Burroughs spent about forty thousand dollars on the work, but when Tower took command of the Nashville defenses, he found the fort was far from being completed and spent another thirty thousand dollars to make it defensible.

He reduced the size of the northern polygon and deleted the independent scarp walls, bombproof storehouses, and a large traverse.

Tower added gabion embrasures for forty-five guns, although the fort was never completed

Costs for forts Morton, Houston and Negley were escalated because the hills were solid limestone which required blasting operations to form the terrepleins and magazines. Furthermore, the works were not simple in design and demanded extensive labor, highly technical supervision, and months of construction time to make the permanent siegeworks defensible.



# Fort Negley

The of both Fort Houston and Fort Morton had been reduced, making Fort Negley the largest work in the Nashville defenses.

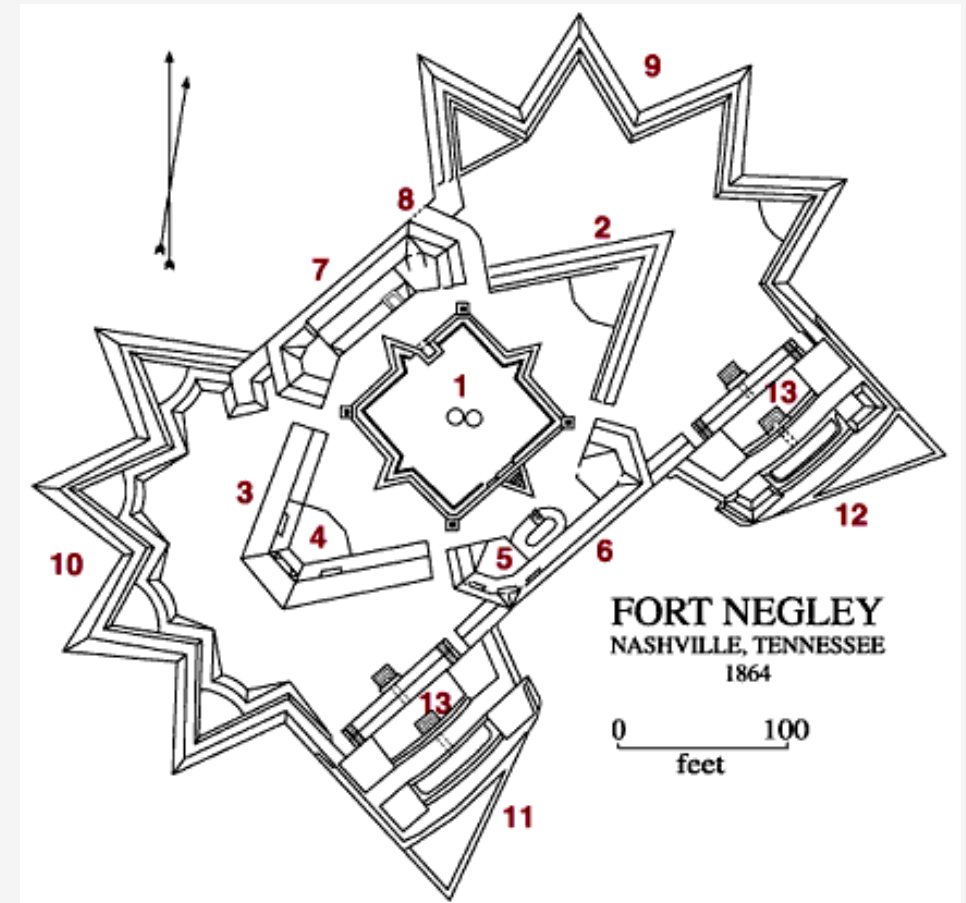
Fort Negley had two irregular bastions on the south side and was flanked on the east and west with redan projections all of which formed the outer works. Each bastion on the south had four loopholed bombproofs forming two tiers of infantry and artillery fire and was connected from the rear by tunnels through the limestone parapets.

The citadel of Fort Negley was a twelve-foot-high, square stockade with loopholes and four small redan projections. The stockade was surrounded by a mainwork or interior work encompassing two large redans on the east and west fronts. The western redan and the southwest salient of the mainwork parapet each had a casemate for artillery, bombproofed with earth and plated with railroad iron. The scarps and interior slopes of the fort consisted of dry laid stone covered with earth.

The only modifications made by General Tower on Fort Negley were the construction of two embrasures on two redans of the western side.

By this time, more than \$100,000 had been spent on the construction of Fort Negley.

- From April 1863 to October 1864, ten thousand dollars had been invested in the stone structure in an effort to maintain its defenses.



# The Line Continues

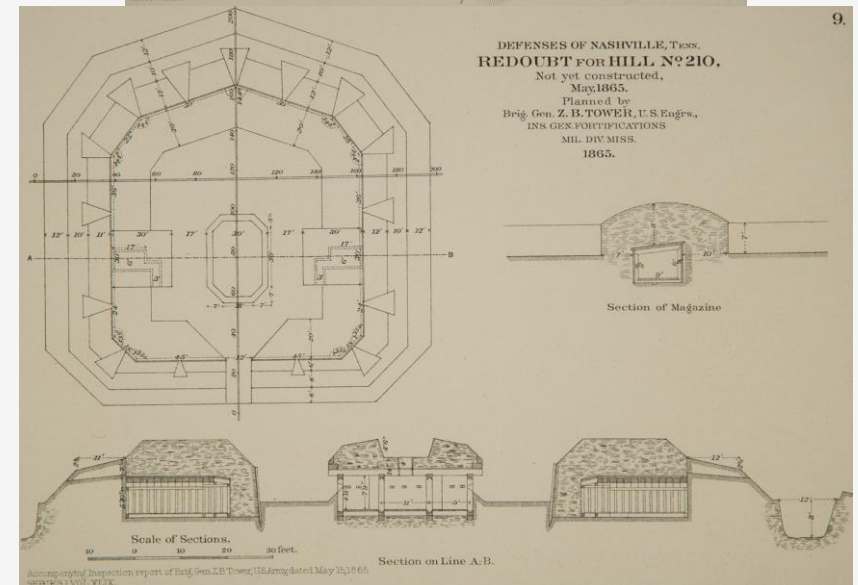
After Tower had taken command of the defenses in Nashville, he began plans to complete the line of fortifications that Morton was unable to finish.

Tower chose to defend the major hills running on a line northwest from Fort Morton to the Cumberland River,

This line would provide protection to the northern sections of the city where hospitals, depots, and shops were located. The first work on the interior line was Hill 210, north of Charlotte Pike.

Planned in October, the work was partially constructed for the battle of Nashville, with a front containing two bastions.

Tower's final plans for this fort, though never commenced, were to build a redoubt with embrasures, a blockhouse, and two magazines that would serve as traverses.

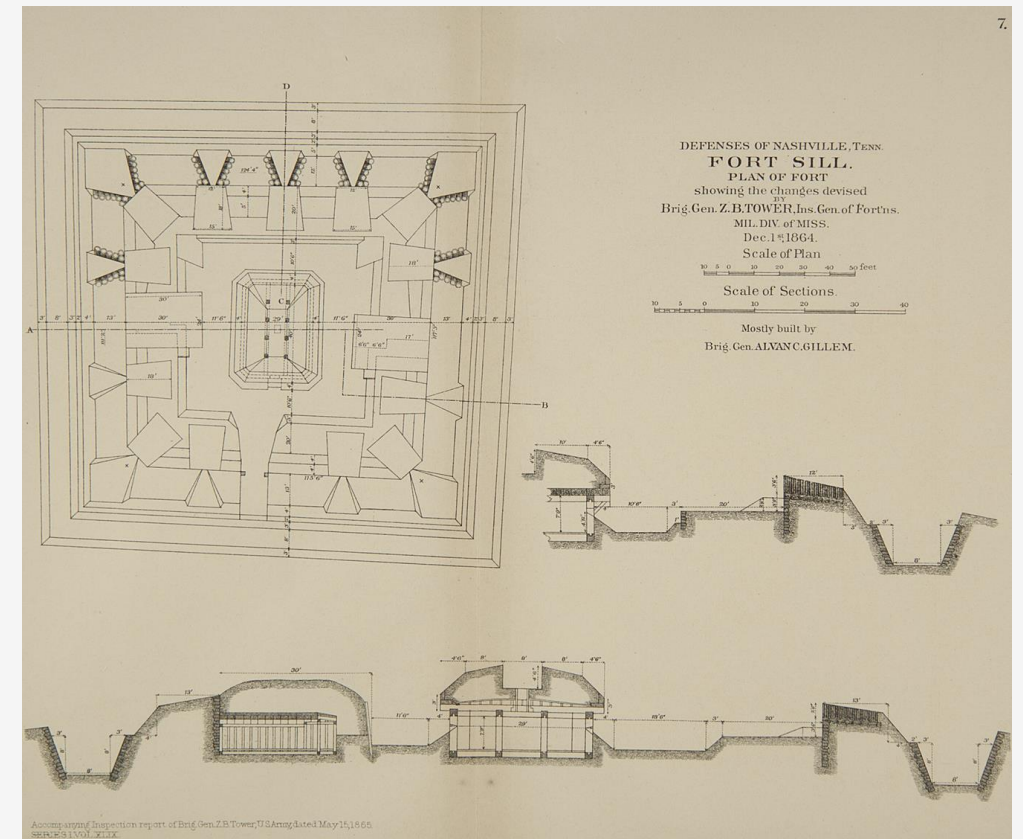


# Fort Gillem/Sill

Northeast of Hill 210 stood the next redoubt, Fort Gillem, later called Fort Sill, built by BG Alvan Cullem Gillem.

The 125-foot-square work had narrow ditches with six-foot-high stone scarps, and General Tower added 13 gabion embrasures, a blockhouse, and 2 magazines.

The terreplein, as well as the magazine, drains, and the blockhouse, had to be excavated by blasting.



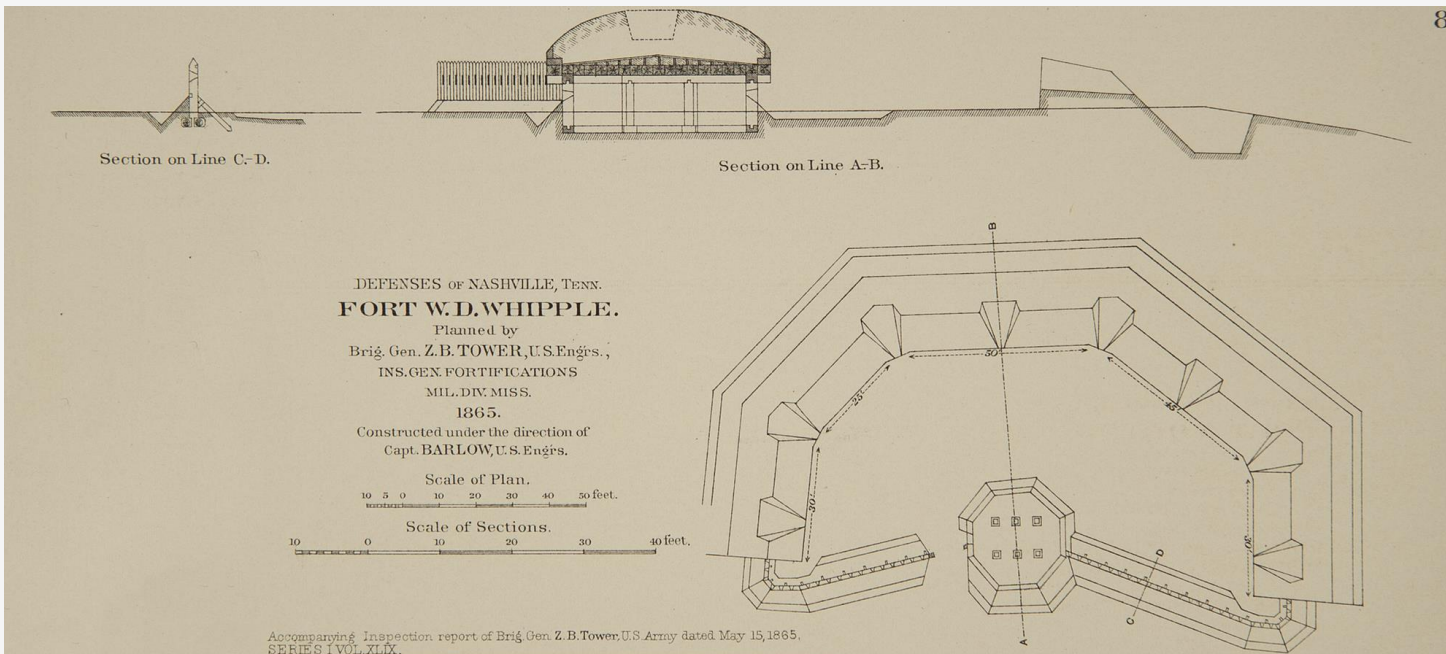


# Fort Whipple

About one-half of a mile northwest of Fort Sill was Fort W. D. Whipple named in honor of Gen. G. H. Thomas' Chief of Staff, Brig. Gen. William Denison Whipple.

Known earlier as Redoubt Donaldson, the small fieldwork, measuring approximately one hundred feet by two hundred feet, was designed by Tower as "a model battery" for infantry entrenchments, with faces forming 144-degree angles and embrasures with splays of 40 degrees.

The gorge was enclosed by an octagonal blockhouse with ten-foot sides and flanked by a stockade.



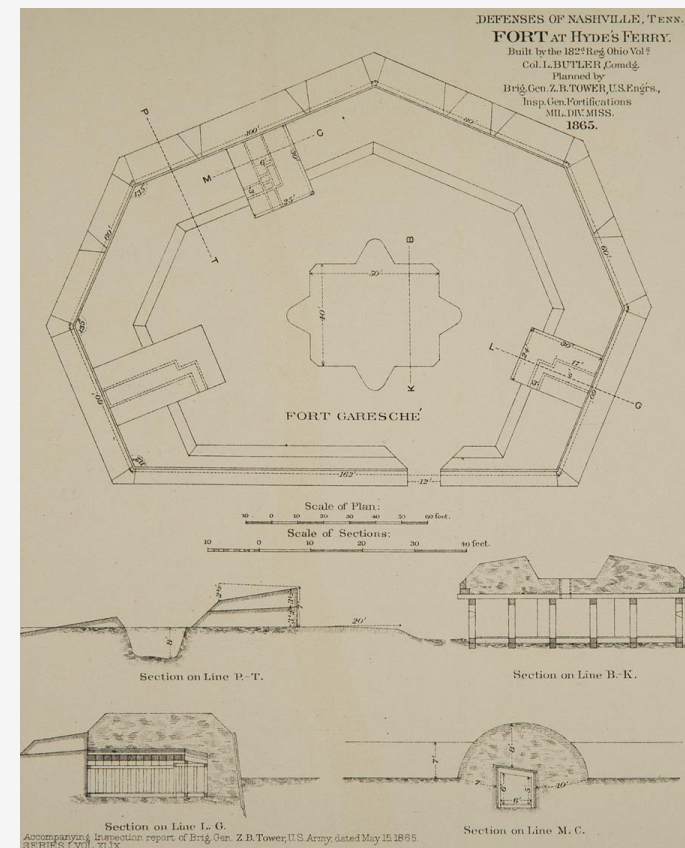
# The Fort at Hyde's Ferry

The last work in the interior line was Fort Garesche named in honor of Col. Julius P. Garesche, killed in battle at Murfreesboro.

Located one-half of a mile northwest of Fort Whipple and three-quarters of a mile east of the Cumberland River, Fort Garesche was partially fortified before the battle to mount a battery.

Afterwards, the work was almost completed by resuming work on the parapet, adding three magazines and fourteen gabion embrasures.

The square blockhouse with redan projections was unfinished, but the earth walls and magazines were sodded.



# Overall Picture

