

Accession # 1956.001



Louisiana National Guard Archives, Jackson Barracks
New Orleans, Louisiana, April, 2016

Accession Number: 1956.001

Collection: Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District *List of Drawings on Fortifications, 1822-1933 & Map File Record Card* Collections

Location: Jackson Barracks Museum

Extent: Approximately 844 sheets in 35 folders plus two drawers of unidentified material.

Arranged and described by: Florence Prater, Archival Assistant and Beverly Boyko, Archives and Collections Manager

Access Restrictions: There are no access restrictions to this collection.

Acquisition: This collection has been in the possession of the Jackson Barracks since 1956, transferred directly from the Corps of Engineers.

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Preferred Citation: [item], Corps of Engineer Map Collection 1956.001, Louisiana National Guard Archives, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Scope and Content Note

1822-1933

This collection, produced by the US Army Corps of Engineers, contains cloth tracings, blueprints, and paper drawings of forts, surveys, maps, diagrams, and sketches. Moreover, this collection comprises sketches of bridges, batteries, pintle platforms, and barbette carriages, as well as surveys and maps of forts. This collection's items derive from a variety of forts in Louisiana, for example: Fort St. Philip, Fort Jackson, Fort Livingston, Fort Fisher, Fort LaFayette, Fort Hamilton, Fort Monroe, Fort Macomb, Fort Tompkins, and Fort Pike. In addition, some of the pieces derive from northeastern forts: Fort Sandy Hook, Fort Delaware, Fort at Port Hudson, Fort Wadsworth. A number of these pieces were approved by or contained a note from Lieutenant Beauregard, Captain Palfrey, and Captain Barnard.

The maps and drawings are housed in labeled polyester sleeves, some are folded to fit into the sleeves. They are grouped into acid-free folders per original "folder" organization by U. S. Corps of Engineers according to engineering features and the fort location. Sleeves, folders and labels are likely post 2005 re-housing project conducted by Louisiana Guard archive staff or Louisiana Binding Service. Two drawers of sleeves with partial or no labeling remain unidentified. Many of the maps/drawings have a strong smell from exposure to the floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Historical Note

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' history can be traced back to 1775, when Continental Congress organized an army with a chief engineer. Following the end of the Revolutionary War, the Corps of Engineers fizzled out only to be reestablished in the 1803, when politicians decided the government should contribute to military construction and civil projects. During the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Corps began constructing and repairing fortifications, starting in Norfolk and then progressing to New Orleans. During the Civil War, the Corps build railroad bridges, forts and batteries, and conducted siege warfare.

Currently, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers uses environmental sustainability as a guiding principle to serve more than 130 countries. Specifically in New Orleans, the Corps works to protect the area from storm damage and restoring Louisiana's coast. In addition, they work towards navigation improvement as well as flood control.

Provenance and Acquisition:

Only two documents referring to the transfer of this collection have been identified, any others may have been lost in the Hurricane Katrina flooding of 2005. One is a memo from the War Dept. Chief of Engineers to the New Orleans District Engineer transferring "confidential blueprints pertaining to the series of fortification plats issued by this office" Although undated, a pencil annotation of 1/3/18 suggests the transfer of (also pencil notation) "Coast Defenses of New Orleans: Mississippi River, Fort St. Philip, Fort St. Philip D-1, and Fort Jackson". The second document is dated 8 May 1956 from LTC Karl Smith, to W.B. Dodd at the New Orleans Corps of Engineers accepting the transfer of the collection to the AGO Archives (Adjutant General Office) and agreeing to the restriction that "The records will be maintained properly and will be made available to others interested in them for review, copying or reproduction, and the records will not be transferred or disposed of without the consent of the New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, New Orleans, La." Pencil annotation on this document indicates the maps were physically transferred on 5 June, 1956.

A descriptive note on a museum and library information sheet, thought to have been written by Francis E. Thomas, curator for Louisiana National Guard Museum from 1981-1994 states: "On June 5, 1956, 1150 pieces of cloth tracing, blue prints, Photostats and paper drawings of forts, fortifications, and ordnance equipment, surveys, maps, diagrams, and sketches were transferred to the library from the Corps of Engineers. This collection is retained and shelved according to its original arrangement".

Also identified as associated with the collection are two inventory list probably created by the Corps of Engineers and transferred along with the maps. Entitled *Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, List of Drawings on Fortifications, 1822-1933* and *Map File Record Card*, each list contains descriptive information about individual pieces in the collection, such as the title, the date, the size, and the material. For this project, the information on these inventories was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet and compared to the extant collection.

The collection was housed in various Jackson Barrack's buildings containing the library activity until 2005 when flooding after Hurricane Katrina destroyed much of the post. The collection

was frozen for a number of months, cleaned by Louisiana Binding Service and transferred to a temporary library at Camp Beauregard. In 2012, it was returned to the new Jackson Barracks Museum.

Processing

This project began by sorting through every piece of the collection the Louisiana National Guard Museum possesses, and checking the piece with the records from the Corps of Engineers, to ensure the collection was still in its original organization and see what pieces were missing. Afterward, information about every piece of the collection was entered into a spreadsheet from the Corps of Engineer hard copy inventories *List of Drawings on Fortifications, 1822-1933* and *Map File Record Card*. During the physical inventory, editorial corrections and additions were made to the information contained in the Excel spreadsheet or on the item labels as necessary. There are also two drawers of material whose original folder designations have been lost. A future project should compare these to the missing items identified during this inventory and re-integrated them back into the original order.

Related Materials

Other Corps of Engineer materials can be found at: <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/Library.aspx>

References

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers website: <http://www.usace.army.mil/>

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans district website: <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/>

Contents

Maps are inventoried in two Excel spreadsheets per original order:

Fortifications_1822-1933.xls: 434 sheets in 11 folders

- Item Sleeve Label Format: "Folder ____ Sheet # ____"
- Folders 1-11

MapFileRecordCard.xls: 410 sheets in 25 Folders

- Item Sleeve Label Format: "[Folder]____ #)/ [File]____ #"
- Folders 10-35

Contact Jackson Barracks Museum to review the latest edition of the Excel Inventory.

Remaining Processing Work

- Two drawers of maps and drawings that have lost their labels need to be compared with missing (yellow highlighted) items in Excel spreadsheets and re-integrated if possible.
- The COE librarian should be contacted to see if there are an associated collections or microfilm copies in their library and to be made aware that this collection exists. Final spreadsheet inventory should be made available online.
- Some or all of these maps/drawings should be digitized and made available online.