

CASTLE PINCKNEY

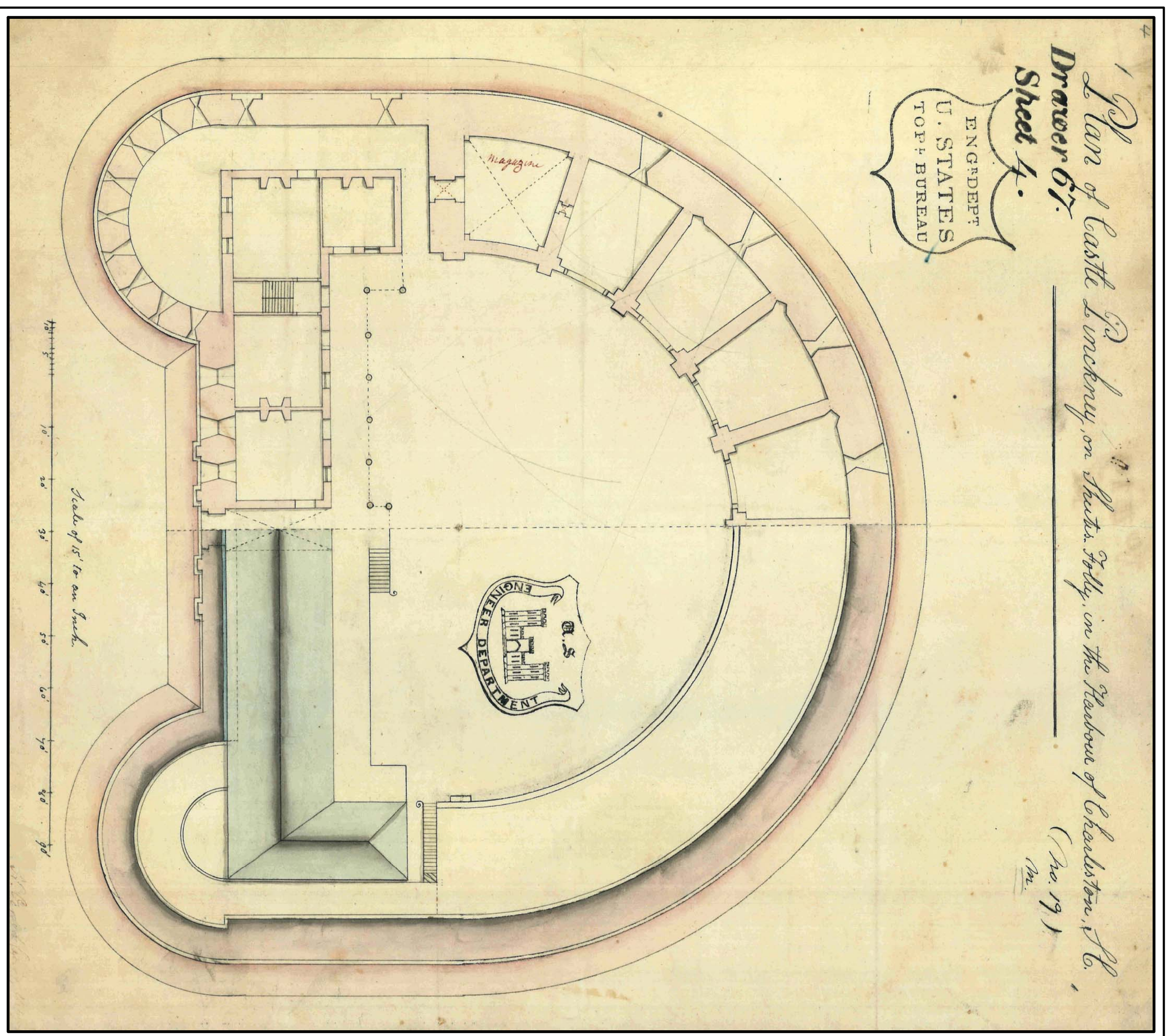
The first fortification on Shute's Folly Island, located approximately one mile east of the Charleston waterfront in the mouth of the Cooper River, was constructed in 1797. The fort was named in honor of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney (1746-1825), a prominent South Carolina planter who had served as an officer in the Revolutionary War and who was a signer of the Constitution. Built of log and earth construction, Fort Pinckney was destroyed in an 1804 hurricane.

The construction of Castle Pinckney was begun in 1809 on the site of the earlier fort, and by 1811 it was ready for the installation of armaments. The design of Castle Pinckney is attributed to Jonathan Williams, the first superintendent of the United States Military Academy. Williams had served as secretary to Benjamin Franklin in France, where he studied the latest developments in military architecture. He was undoubtedly influenced by the theories of the Marquis de Montalembert, whose 1791 treatise on fortifications included a chapter on circular forts. Williams subsequently designed several circular forts for New York Harbor (called "castles" because of their evocation of medieval keeps), most notably Castle Clinton (1808), a near twin to Castle Pinckney, although built of stone.

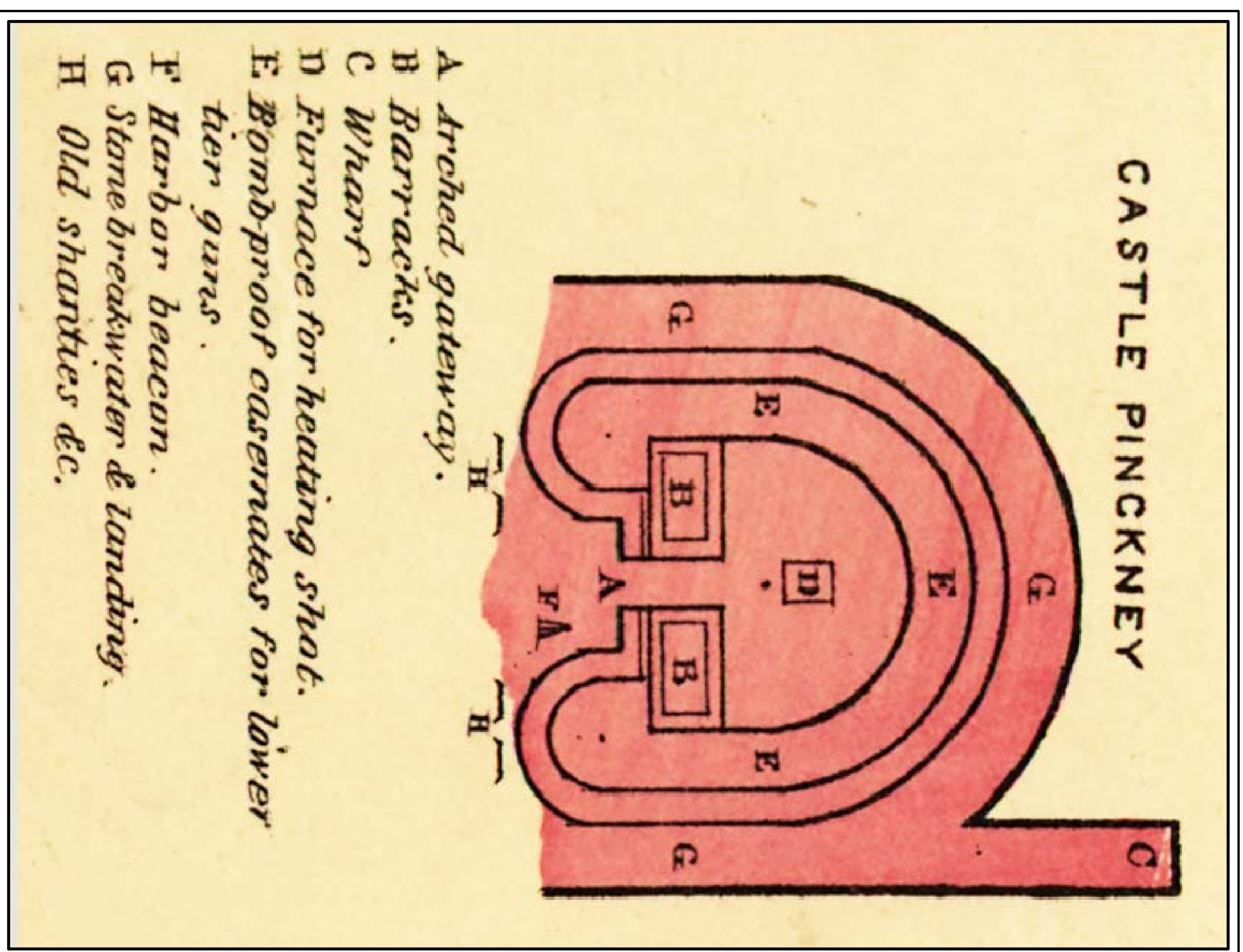
Castle Pinckney was built of brick masonry construction, with its exterior walls approximately 15' in height and approximately 7'-6" thick at the base. In plan, the fort was designed in the general shape of a "half-moon," with a 165' diameter. The sweeping, rounded section of the fort, oriented south toward the mouth of Charleston Harbor, contained eight casemates for cannons. Additional artillery was to be mounted "en barbette" on the terreplein above. The straight section of wall along the north side of the fort was flanked by two shallow, curved bastions, each with two levels of gun embrasures to provide protection for the centrally-located sally port. Barracks and officers' housing were located on the interior, along the north wall.

Although built to accommodate as many as 200 men, Castle Pinckney was rarely occupied by more than 20 soldiers during the first few decades of the nineteenth century. Over the succeeding years a number of subsidiary structures, including a small hospital, a carpenter's shop, and a smithy, were constructed to the north of the fort. In the early 1830s, the yard on the north side of the fort was enclosed by a wooden stockade. By then, however, construction had begun on the larger and more substantial Fort Sumter, at a more strategic location near the mouth of the harbor, implying Castle Pinckney's eventual obsolescence.

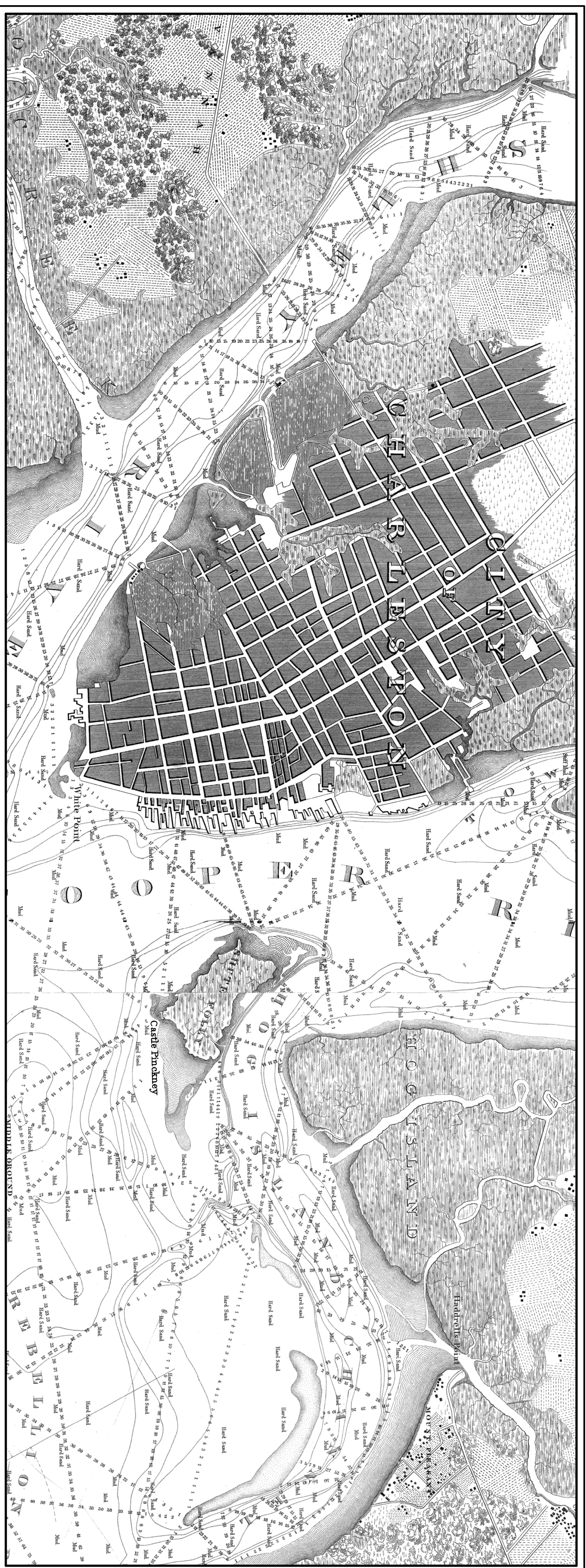
On 27 December 1860, in one of the first hostile actions of the incipient Civil War, Castle Pinckney was seized and occupied by South Carolina secessionists, who easily overwhelmed its small federal garrison. The fort was placed under the control of the South Carolina militia. Following the First Battle



PLAN OF CASTLE PINCKNEY, ON SHUTE'S FOLLY, IN THE HARBOUR OF CHARLESTON, S.C. (CIRCA 1809)
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
(NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION)



DETAIL FROM 'SKETCH OF CHARLESTON HARBOR' (CIRCA 1861)
BY W. A. WILLIAMS, PUBLISHED BY L. PRANG & CO.
(LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)



DETAIL FROM 'CHARLESTON HARBOR AND THE ADJACENT COAST AND COUNTRY, SOUTH CAROLINA' (1823-25)
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
(NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION)

of Mianassas in July 1861, Union prisoners were interned at Castle Pinckney, and housed there until their exchange in October of that year. Over the subsequent course of the Civil War, Castle Pinckney's exterior walls were reinforced with massive earthen berms on both the exterior and the interior, as the fort played an integral role in the Confederate defense of Charleston Harbor.

A light beacon had been installed at Castle Pinckney in 1855 and, following the end of the War, the fort was transferred from the Department of War to the Lighthouse Bureau of the Department of the Treasury in 1878 for use as a supply depot. During the 1880s, a large warehouse was built on the filled-in fort, connected by a railway trestle to the island's wharf, along with a house for the lighthouse keeper and his family. In 1917 Castle Pinckney was deaccessioned by the Lighthouse Board and returned to the Department of War, under the control of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Castle Pinckney was designated a national monument in 1924, and transferred to the control of the National Park Service in 1933. In 1956 the fort's national monument status was revoked by Congress, and the South Carolina State Ports Authority assumed jurisdiction over Shute's Folly Island. Although a number of proposals for the development of the fort and the island were put forward during the succeeding decades, all failed due to lack of funding. In 2011 Castle Pinckney was sold to the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

The documentation of Castle Pinckney was undertaken by the Master of Science in Historic Preservation Program of Clemson University / College of Charleston (CU/CoC), Carter Hudgins, Director; and Ashley Robbins Wilson AIA, Assistant Professor. The project was undertaken in cooperation with the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the Heritage Documentation Programs division of the National Park Service (NPS), Richard O'Connor, Chief. The three-dimensional laser scanning of the site was undertaken by HABS Architects Paul Davidson and Mark Schara AIA. The measured drawings were produced by CU/CoC students Lora Cunningham, Ryan Pierce, and David Werrick. The large format photography was undertaken by HABS Photographer James Rosenthal. Assistance with historical research was provided by HABS Historian Virginia B. Price. Access to the site was made possible by the South Carolina State Ports Authority, Byron Miller, Director of Marketing, Public Relations, and Planning; and Barbara Melvin, Vice-President for Government Relations. Assistance with brush clearing was provided by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Felicia Sanders, Project Biologist. Logistical support and transportation were provided by Fort Sumter National Monument, NPS, Bob Dodson, Superintendent (2010); Timothy Stone, Superintendent (2011); Rick Dorrance, Chief of Resource Management; and David Schroeder, Small Craft Operator.