

*Ouachita County
Camden
Fort Lookout - Red River Campaign*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: Fort Lookout - Red River Campaign

other name/site number: Redoubt A/OU0032

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2. Location

=====

street & number: 120 Van Buren NW

not for publication: _____

city/town: Camden

vicinity: _____

state: AR county: Ouachita

code: AR

zip code: 71701

=====

3. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: site

Number of Resources within Property:

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| _____ | <u>1</u> | buildings |
| _____ | _____ | sites |
| <u>1</u> | _____ | structures |
| _____ | _____ | objects |
| <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Red River Campaign NHL

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Cathryn A. Byrd
Signature of certifying official

3-29-93
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
5. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ entered in the National Register
_____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the
National Register

____ See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the

National Register

____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic: Landscape
Landscape
Defense

Sub: Forest
Unoccupied land
Fortification

Current : Landscape

Sub: Forest

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

N/A

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation N/A roof N/A
walls N/A other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: N/A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Historic Context Theme VI.
Civil War
Subtheme C.: War in the West

Period(s) of Significance: Jan. 1864 Dec. 1864

Significant Dates: 4-15-1864; 4-26-1864

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: 7

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---------------|----------------|---|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| A | <u>15</u> | <u>515340</u> | <u>3717740</u> | B | <u>15</u> | <u>515490</u> | <u>3717620</u> |
| C | <u>15</u> | <u>515320</u> | <u>3717500</u> | D | <u>15</u> | <u>515280</u> | <u>3717550</u> |

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: X See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

Based on the Official Records and staff research, this boundary includes all of the property historically associated with Redoubt A, Fort Lookout.

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Don Baker, Planning Officer

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: March 29, 1993

Street & Number: 323 Center, 1600 Tower Bldg. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201

SUMMARY

Fort Lookout, also known as Redoubt A, is the northernmost of the defensive earthworks erected along the periphery of Camden. The redoubt sits atop an approximately 50 foot high bluff overlooking a bend in the Ouachita River to the north. Fort Lookout itself was rectangular in shape and held six or more pieces of field artillery. Extending immediately west of the redoubt, commanding two fords below the bluff as well as the approach of Gravel Pit road from the northwest, was an L-shaped earthwork capable of mounting six or more guns.

Although a portion of the midsection of Fort Lookout was razed in the late Twentieth Century for the construction of a house, the remainder of the redoubt and its supporting trenches and earthworks are remarkably intact.

ELABORATION

Fort Lookout, also known as Redoubt A, has excellent integrity of setting, feeling, association and location, and represents an excellently preserved example of urban Civil War defensive earthworks. The only major intrusion on this, the northernmost portion of Camden's Civil War defenses, are a modern home on a portion of the redoubt's midsection. Another modern home lies on Van Buren Road beyond the southern terminus of the extant trenches that extend south and west from Fort Lookout, and a gravel plant is located at the base of the bluff 50 feet below the earthworks; neither of these later developments significantly detracts from the integrity of the resource. The Gravel Pit and Van Buren roads were both extant in 1864.

Although the hills and ridges surrounding Camden to the west and south were largely denuded of trees under the Confederate and Union occupations of 1864, Redoubt A is currently heavily wooded, protecting the site from erosion. Redoubt A has not been significantly damaged or altered through timbering or urban development, and has thus maintained a high degree of integrity as an urban defensive earthwork.

From January through March, 1864, hundreds of Confederate soldiers and slaves under the command of Brigadier General Alexander T. Hawthorn were employed clearing fields of fire and erecting defensive earthworks around the periphery of Camden in anticipation of an expected Federal attack from Little Rock. Although he had no previous experience in military engineering, Hawthorn had been a lawyer in Camden prior to the war and may have been entrusted with such a project because of his familiarity with the city and its

surrounding areas. When completed, the Camden fortifications consisted primarily of five unconnected redoubts protecting the western and southern approaches to the town. Often referred to incorrectly as "forts," these redoubts consisted of relatively small closed or semi-enclosed strongpoints located along the main lines of the town's defenses designed to withstand attacks from three and perhaps even all four sides.

Each of the Camden redoubts, originally labeled Redoubts A, B, C, D, and E, was a massive earthen structure encircled or fronted by a deep ditch. Perhaps indicative of Hawthorn's lack of military or engineering expertise, the Camden defenses initially lacked the network of trenches and sprawling forts that were generally to be found protecting important cities. Redoubts B, C, and D have been largely lost due to Camden's postbellum development, and today only Redoubts A and E retain any semblance of their original integrity.

Redoubt A, also known as Fort Lookout, was the northernmost of the Camden defenses. Erected atop a high bluff overlooking a bend in the Ouachita River, Redoubt A was rectangular in shape and was capable of holding six or more pieces of field artillery. Immediately west of the redoubt extended an L-shaped redoubt mounting another battery of six or more guns, overlooking two fords below the bluff as well as the approach of Gravel Pit Road from the northwest. Ironically, when Steele occupied Camden on April 15, 1864, the town's earthworks were unmanned. Although initial Federal reports described the city as "strongly fortified" and that "all approaches to the place [are] capable of being well defended," later assessments of the efficacy of the town's defenses were less generous. As Steele's engineers inspected and mapped the Confederate fortifications, a number of weaknesses became apparent. Although the five redoubts were easily defended individually and well placed to make use of the high ground surrounding the city, the Federals determined that the defenses were simply too small, too few in number, and too far apart to effectively defend Camden in the event of a Confederate attack. Steele's engineers concluded that the absence of a cohesive network of infantry trenches encircling the town and connecting the redoubts limited the effectiveness of the defenses and deprived Camden's defenders of the protection normally enjoyed by a fortified garrison. Finally, despite earlier Federal reports that "an immense amount of [Confederate] labor has been expended in...cutting away the forests," on further analysis Federal engineers noted that, in places, attacking troops could approach dangerously close to the redoubts without leaving the "fresh green forests" surrounding the town.

Following the successive Union defeats at Poison Spring and Marks' Mills, on April 23 Steele ordered his engineers to correct the deficiencies that had been identified in the Camden fortifications. Over the following three days, thousands of Federal soldiers were

employed along the northwestern portion of the Camden perimeter digging trenches in relays around the clock along the military crest of the long, rolling ridge. Parties were sent out beyond the perimeter to fell trees and expand fields of fire below the ridge. Special attention was accorded the sector between Redoubts A and B, an area which even the Confederates had regarded as a weak point in the Camden defenses. Steele's decision on April 26 to abandon Camden and return to Little Rock rendered this frenetic burst of activity pointless. Steele was disappointed at having to abandon Camden without forcing the Confederates to test the town's stiffened defenses. "If we had been supplied at Camden," the general later wrote, "I could have held the place against Kirby Smith's entire force..."

Following their re-occupation of Camden, the Confederates spent the following months of 1864 attempting to complete the improvements to the town's defenses begun under the Federals. In October, 1864, four idle infantry divisions were employed in erecting earthworks along the previously unprotected banks of the Ouachita. When completed at the end of 1864, the five original redoubts were connected by a largely continuous trench across the southern and western perimeters of the city, anchored on the Ouachita River at both ends. Redoubts A and E are the only surviving elements of this network that have survived.

Overall, Fort Lookout/Redoubt A has excellent integrity. Logistically, the ridge remains on the northern outskirts of the city of Camden overlooking the Ouachita River, just as it did in 1864. The land is heavily forested, protecting the trenches and earthworks that follow the ridge line for over approximately 1,500 yards. Nevertheless, the trenches and earthworks are clearly visible, as is the strategic nature of the ridge line. The Redoubt A battlements have maintained a sufficient degree of integrity that a soldier stationed in Camden in 1864 would have no difficulty recognizing the battlements today.

The Occupation of Camden

SUMMARY

The Camden redoubts, Fort Lookout and Fort Southerland, in Ouachita County, Arkansas, are important elements of the Red River Campaign National Historic Landmark nomination under NHL Criteria 1. Although minor in terms of the Civil War as a whole, the true significance of the federal occupation of Camden is evident when placed in its larger historic context as a component of the Red River Campaign of 1864. The Red River Campaign was an important campaign during the Spring of 1864 in which Union forces in Little Rock under the command of Maj. Gen. Frederick Steele were to move toward Shreveport, Louisiana, where they would join forces with an amphibious force under the command of Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks and Rear Adm. David Porter. The Red River Campaign had its impetus in the desires of New Englanders to invade and occupy Texas in order to establish a free-soil cotton growing colony to supply northeastern textile manufacturers with raw materials. The possibility of French intervention in Mexico also concerned the Lincoln Administration, which felt that a stronger Union presence on the Rio Grande might discourage Napoleon III's dreams of empire in the Western Hemisphere. The Union defeat at Marks' Mills illustrated the Union folly of launching a campaign into southern Arkansas without adequate supplies, and forced Steele to abandon Camden, and with it the Red River Campaign itself, and to retreat to Little Rock. The Red River Campaign's failure to achieve any of its objectives in Arkansas, Louisiana, or Texas, provided a much-needed morale boost to the Confederate military leadership in the Trans-Mississippi West, which subsequently authorized the disastrous Price's Raid into Missouri that Fall.

The Battle of Prairie DeAnn effectively halted the Federal army's advance on the Confederate state capitol of Washington and the Red River beyond, and General Steele opted instead to capture the strategic but undefended city of Camden. The Confederates had constructed an elaborate system of redoubts surrounding the Ouachita River port to the west and south, and soon after the Union occupation, Steele ordered his engineers to improve on these defenses. Unfortunately, Steele's supply difficulties continued while in Camden, and would lead eventually to the Union disasters at Poison Spring and Marks' Mills. These defeats would further demoralize the Federal army in Camden and force Steele to reconsider the wisdom of pushing on into Louisiana to meet General Nathaniel Banks on the Red River. In light of the Federals' intractable supply difficulties, Steele chose instead to abandon Camden and retreat toward Little Rock, effectively giving up on the ambitious Red River Campaign.

ELABORATION

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The march on Shreveport aborted, Steele's army continued its march toward Camden over treacherous roads to await the arrival of desperately needed supplies from Little Rock and Pine Bluff. "Our supplies were nearly exhausted, and so was the country," Steele later wrote Chief-of-Staff Henry W. Halleck: "We were obliged to forage from 5 to 15 miles on either side of the road to keep our stock alive." On half-rations for almost three weeks, Steele's soldiers ignored their commander's strict orders against unauthorized foraging.¹

As the Federals approached Camden, Steele received reports on the afternoon of the 14th that the Confederates were planning to ambush the Union train before it reached the city. General Rice, with his infantry brigade in the van of the Union column, was ordered to press on toward Camden as rapidly as possible. That evening, after a grueling forced march, Rice joined General Carr's cavalry at White Oak Creek, eighteen miles west of Camden. The march resumed at dawn the following day. The Union column had not travelled far on the morning of the 15th before it encountered Marmaduke's cavalry division, which had left Washington the morning of the 13th, made a sixty-mile detour around the southern flank of the Camden-bound Union army, and entered the Camden-Washington road fourteen miles west of Camden. After such a grueling pace, the Confederates were ill-prepared to effectively resist the advancing Federals. After a two-hour skirmish, Marmaduke was forced to pull back. He then rushed a detachment to Camden to destroy as much public property as possible lest it fall into enemy hands, then withdrew his

command to a position about eight miles southwest of the city. Price joined Marmaduke shortly thereafter and established headquarters for his 6,000 effectives 16 miles west of Camden at Woodlawn, distributing his forces so as to cover all the western and southern approaches to Camden. As the sun set on the evening of the 15th, Rice's infantry brigade marched into and occupied Camden, twenty-three days after leaving Little Rock. This accomplishment was to represent the zenith of the federal campaign.²

As Steele occupied Camden on April 15, Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith received word in Louisiana that the Yanks had ceased their southward advance at Prairie De Ann, and were now moving east toward Camden. Smith sensed that the Federals were in retreat, but he could not discount the possibility that Steele meant to link up with Gen. Banks, who had been defeated at Pleasant Hill on April 9 and was currently stalled at Grand Ecore on the southern leg of the Red River Campaign that was to have converged at Shreveport preparatory to an advance into Texas. Sensing that the Union campaign was a failure, Smith now hoped that he could keep Steele ignorant of Banks' difficulties on the lower Red River, disrupt Union supply lines, force the enemy's retreat, attack and ultimately destroy the starving adversaries, then recapture Little Rock and northwest Arkansas, possibly even carrying the war back into Missouri. Intending to lead the pursuit of the Federals himself, Smith set out for Camden with his three infantry divisions and established his headquarters at Calhoun (Columbia County), which was connected by telegraph with Shreveport.³

In the early 1860s, Camden was an enterprising commercial center and river port on the west bank of the Ouachita with a population of about 2,000, known for its "many fine houses and beautiful gardens. The fall of Little Rock in the fall of 1863 and the subsequent relocation of Confederate troops to southwest Arkansas had transformed the quiet community into a "military camp." In late 1863, Lieutenant General Theophilus Holmes of the District of Arkansas ordered Brigadier General Alexander T. Hawthorn, a Camden native, to clear fields of fire and erect a series of defensive earthworks along the southern and western approaches to Camden. Hundreds of Confederate soldiers and local slaves worked labored on the project from January to March, 1864. By the early spring and the beginning of the Red River Campaign, Camden's defenses consisted primarily of five redoubts, massive earthen strongpoints enclosed or at least fronted by deep ditches at various points around the city's perimeter.⁴

In occupying Camden, Steele initially reported that the town was encircled by "nine forts on eminences," and that "an immense amount of labor has been expended in fortifying Camden and cutting away the forests." The Camden earthworks varied in size and shape and were irregularly placed along the town's periphery. The northernmost redoubt, Fort Lookout or Redoubt A, was placed atop a high bluff overlooking a bend in the Ouachita River. Fort Lookout was rectangular

in shape and could hold six or more pieces of field artillery. An L-shaped earthwork, also capable of mounting a battery of six or more guns, extended immediately west of Fort Lookout. These northernmost defenses overlooked two fords over the river below, as well as the Gravel Pit Road approach to the city. From the Fort Lookout bluff site, a ridge extended due southward across the western approaches to the city.⁵

Approximately one hundred yards south of the junction of the Gravel Pit and Maul roads was Redoubt B, a v-shaped earthwork oriented toward the northwest and commanding the approach of the two roads with its complement of four to six guns. Redoubt C, a square earthwork facing west with approximately six field pieces, was half a mile further south on a knoll at the southern terminus of the ridge. Also known as Fort Simmons by the Confederates, this redoubt commanded the approaches of the main Washington Road (now Washington Avenue). Redoubts A and C, regarded by the Federals as "the two principal redoubts of the series of works erected around that place," commanded what were considered the most likely enemy approaches to Camden from the north and west.

The most irregular of the five earthworks, the capital "B"-shaped Redoubt D was located a thousand yards farther south atop a high hill overlooking the lower Washington Road and the Wire Road approaches from the southwest. Over a mile away on a steep hill to the southeast stood Redoubt E, an small oval-shaped battlement with three artillery pieces that protected Camden against the unlikely possibility of an enemy crossing of the Ouachita River below the town. Also known as Fort Southerland, Redoubt E overlooked the Bradley Ferry Road, which connected Camden with Warren and Monticello.⁶

Although Camden had enjoyed a reputation among the federals as a formidable and well-defended stronghold prior to its occupation, as Steele's engineers inspected and mapped the Confederate fortifications they found a number of alarming deficiencies in the city's defenses. The five redoubts, although well-positioned on high ground, were too small, too few in number, and too widely spaced to defend Camden against a concerted assault. Furthermore, the almost complete absence of infantry trenches between the redoubts left most of the city's defenders extremely vulnerable to enemy fire. Finally, despite Steele's initial reports that the hillsides had been denuded of trees, Federal engineers discovered that, in places, attacking troops could approach dangerously close to the redoubts under cover of the "fresh green forests" surrounding the town. Despite these concerns however, Steele focused his army's attentions on the procurement of food and forage.⁷

The stunning reversals at Poison Spring and Marks' Mills forced Steele to reexamine Camden's defenses and to reassess the wisdom of remaining in the occupied city. Federal campsites

surrounding the city were abandoned and relocated within the defensive perimeter, and infantry and artillery were redeployed in and around the redoubts to prepare for a Confederate assault. Outnumbered and isolated, Steele attempted to correct the deficiencies in the Camden fortifications that his engineers had identified. On April 24, thousands of Federal soldiers were put to work digging defensive earthworks between the redoubts. Trenches were traced along the crest of the ridge overlooking the Ouachita by laying boards end to end. On the northwestern perimeter (near Fort Lookout), the entire Third Brigade, Third Division, equipped were employed erecting earthworks using picks and shovels requisitioned from the local Camden populace. The various regiments worked in shifts around the clock and through the night, while parties of troops cautiously ventured out beyond the perimeter to fell trees and expand the fields of fire below the ridge. Special attention was accorded the so-called "weak area" between redoubts A and B.⁸ After the city had returned to Confederate control, a Texas soldier commented on the improvements that the Federals had made to Camden's defenses:

The fortifications at Camden, constructed by General Holmes, and improved by the enemy, were not inferior to any in the Trans-Mississippi Department, and, from the appearance of the place, we should have had some difficulty in taking it, if the enemy had not left.⁹

As Federal efforts to bolster Camden's defenses continued, Steele made the decision to evacuate the occupied city and return with his army to Little Rock. Steele was disappointed that he had been forced to abandon his prize without forcing the rebels to test its improved defenses. "If we had been supplied at Camden," he later wrote, "I could have held the place against Kirby Smith's entire force." Following the city's return to Confederate control, the defenses were further bolstered. In October, the men of four idle infantry divisions were put to work shoring up the fortifications and erecting earthworks along the Ouachita water-front. By the end of 1864, the Camden fortifications were complete, with the five original redoubts connected by a more or less continuous trench anchored at the river on both ends.¹⁰

NOTES

1. Johnson, 179.
2. Johnson, 179-180.
3. Johnson, 182-183.
4. William L. Shea, "The Camden Fortifications," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. XLI, No. 4 (Winter 1982), 319.
5. Shea, 320-322.
6. Shea, 320-321.
7. Shea, 323.
8. Shea, 323-325.
9. Shea, 325.
10. Shea, 325.

- Atkinson, J. H. "The Action at Prairie De Ann." Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Volume XIX, Number 1 (Spring 1960): 40-50.
- Bearrs, Edwin C. Steele's Retreat from Camden and the Battle of Jenkin's Ferry. Little Rock, Arkansas: Pioneer Press, 1966.
- Carle, Glenn L. "The First Kansas Colored." American Heritage, Volume XLIII, Number 1 (February/March 1992): 79-91.
- Johnson, Ludwell. The Red River Campaign: Politics and Cotton in the Civil War. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins Press, 1958.
- McPherson, James. Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Richards, Ira Don. "The Battle of Jenkin's Ferry." Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Volume XX, Number 1 (Spring 1961): 3-16.
- _____, "The Engagement at Marks' Mills." Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Volume XIX, Number 1 (Spring 1960): 51-60.
- _____, "The Battle of Poison Spring." Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Volume XVIII, Number 4 (Winter 1959): 338-349.
- Shea, William L., "The Camden Fortifications." Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Volume XLI, Number 4 (Winter 1982): 318-326.
- The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 4 series, 70 volumes. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.

Beginning at a point on the northwestern terminus of Gravel Pit Road in the City of Camden [Camden Quadrangle, UTM point A]; proceed northeast approximately 800 feet to a point on the western side of the northern terminus of Monroe Road [Camden Quadrangle, UTM point B]; proceed southwest approximately 1,000 feet to a point [Camden Quadrangle, UTM point C]; proceed northwest approximately two hundred feet to a point [Camden Quadrangle, UTM point D]; proceed north approximately 800 feet to the point of origin. This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with Fort Lookout, also known as Redoubt A.

75° 11' 11" NW
184866 CITY

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

92° 52' 30"

33° 37' 30"

3720000m N

312000m E

513

514

515

516

517

518

519

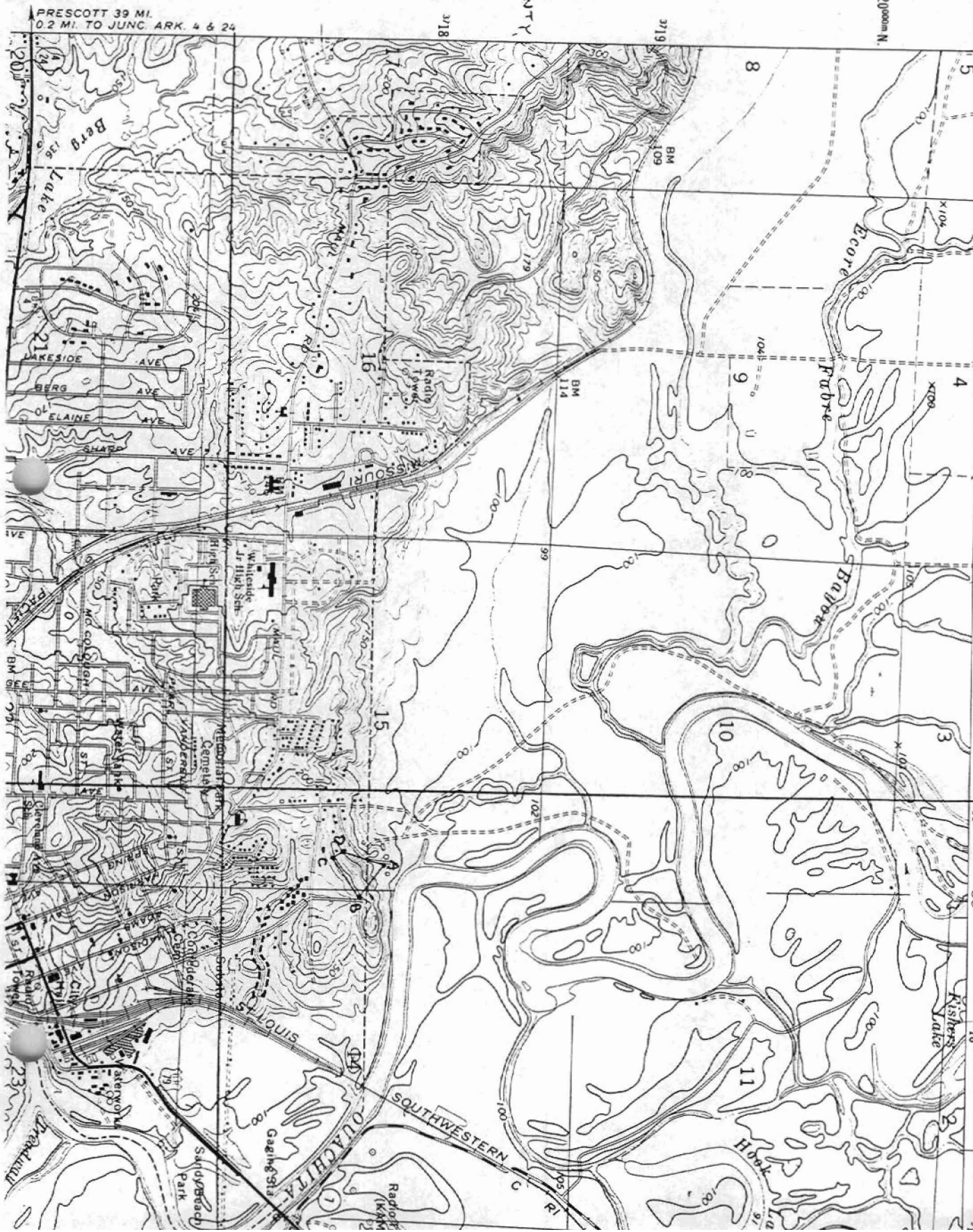
520

521

522

523

524



FORT LOOKOUT,
REBUT A

CAMDEN,
OUACHITA COUNTY,
ARKANSAS

A-15/515340
3717740

R-15/515490
3717620

C-15/515320
3717500

D-15/515280
3717550

PRESCOTT 39 MI.
0.2 MI. TO JUNC. ARK. 4 & 24

