

THE OLD STONE FORT SITE
A History of the Early Descriptions and Maps and Their
Relevance to Modern Research

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ABSTRACT

This paper appraises the extant historical documents and maps relevant to an understanding of the Woodland cultural tradition hilltop enclosure called the Old Stone Fort (40CF1). Maps, documents, and previous research are examined in which insights may be found into the features of the site. In particular, an opening in the back wall and a long ditch parallel to this back wall are examined as possible prehistoric features deserving further research and possible excavation. New maps and documents, apparently the earliest in each category, are introduced to the literature concerning the Old Stone Fort.

Introduction

The descriptions of the "wonders" found on the land as America's population migrated westward have always been a mixed blessing. Some things were recorded that would have been forever lost, while other writings have tainted the public's understanding of the sites down to the present day. The "Moundbuilder Race" mythology which grew to explain the mounds, walls, and effigies as of anything but Native American origin is still with us and supplies the format for a battle still fought daily at America's archaeological parks.

The vast array of prehistoric constructions surviving on the landscape created an information overload for the antiquarians of the time. The information was too extensive and complex to be properly assessed with the tools at hand. What, today, seems a deceptively simple matter of separating walled Mississippian towns from walled, but relatively uninhabited, Woodland enclosures was inconceivable in the 1800's.

The writers who discussed the Old Stone Fort site show signs of the obstacles discussed above. In spite of their lack of archaeological knowledge and the prejudices of their time some interesting details were saved and even some interesting ideas for the period in question put forward.

This article will examine the early accounts of the enclosure which came to be called the Old Stone Fort and attempt to extract the best information from these accounts. The areas of concentration will be where more recently recovered information apparently corroborates certain details from longer known descriptions. The recent recovery of Mitchell's (1810) description of the Old Stone Fort and the author's recent examination of the previously obscure P. E. Cox (1928) field notes, Rafinesque manuscript map (1821) and the recently discovered Donnison (William Donnison or Donneson, Esq.) map (1819?, 1843) have provided the impetus for this

article. All early accounts and maps will be examined in light of the new data now available. Details of the Old Stone Fort's design and construction will be discussed first, followed by a shorter assessment of concepts suggested by the early accounts.

The Old Stone Fort site (40CF1) is located in Coffee County at the dissected outer edge of the Highland Rim Plateau of Tennessee. It is situated between the two forks of the Duck River with the cliffs and waterfalls of the two rivers to either side. The Big Duck or Barren Fork and the Little Duck or Bark Camp Fork drop off the Highland Rim at this point. The junction of the two rivers is immediately downstream from the Old Stone Fort and is within three miles upstream of the pool of the Normandy Reservoir. The Old Stone Fort is a hilltop enclosure with long mounds or walls demarcating an area of approximately 50 acres on a promontory between the rivers (Figure 1).

The Early Maps and Descriptions

The Old Stone Fort site is fortunate to have such extensive remains intact without the reconstruction that has occurred at some related sites. The site is also fortunate to have a whole array of fascinating early descriptions and maps. The four earliest maps are all related and give the "fort" a triangular outline. They all seem to be based on the Donnison (1819) description of the site. This makes it that much more significant to now be able to make available the map which most completely and, apparently, authentically portrayed Donnison's ideas and misconceptions.

The Donnison map was found by the author in a magazine article (Donnison 1843?) containing a hand written date (Figure 2). The article was printed in Volume XVII, Numbers 1-2 of the *Coffee County Historical Quarterly* in 1986 but, according to editor Betty Bridgewater who had located the article, the map was "all but completely illegible" and not included with the article containing Donnison's description. The significance of the small reproduction was not apparent until enhancement work was undertaken on the original. This map fits well in the "family" of early, triangular outline maps of the Old Stone Fort. It gives every indication of having once accompanied Donnison's (1819) description of the site or at least matches the description in detail. The 1848 Squire and Davis map (1848) (Figure 3) is apparently based on the Donnison map or on a now missing Rafinesque manuscript map (1821) (Figure 4) which must have been an almost exact duplicate of the Donnison map if it was not, in fact, the same map. Squire and Davis comment that:

Two plans of this work exist among the MSS. of Rafinesque, which differ slightly from each other. One of them coincides, however, in all important particulars with a plan published some years ago in the "Western Messenger", and has therefore been adopted as probably essentially correct. The description in the "Messenger," which seems to have been written by an intelligent observer, is also adopted (Squire and Davis 1848: 31).



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Figure 1. This oblique view sketch illustrates the position of the back wall opening and the ditch external to the back wall (foreground in illustration) as well as the overall siting of the Old Stone Fort.

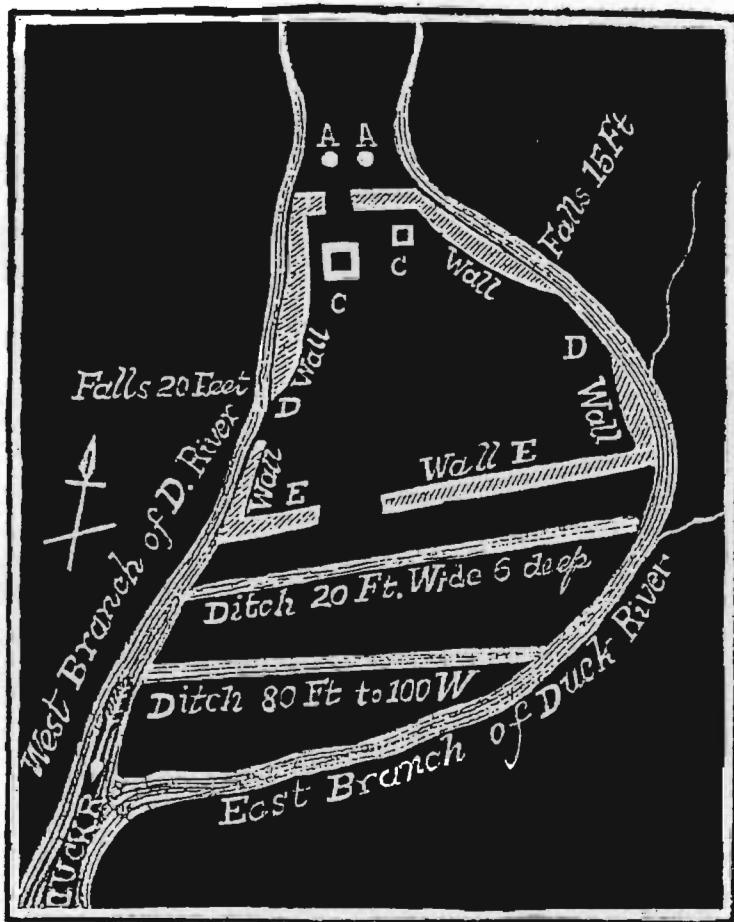


Figure 2. Donn(i)son Map. This map may be the earliest of the Old Stone Fort site. It, or a map almost identical to it, served as a basis for the Squire and Davis map if not all of the "family" of early, triangular maps of the site. All of the maps place East at the top (Tennessee State Library and Archives).

The source now extant consists of copies of pages 29 to 32 of *The Family Magazine* (1843?) which reproduces the descriptive portion of the *Western Messenger* article and of the *Columbian Centinel* article (Donnison 1819). As stated above, Squire and Davis based their famous map of the Old Stone Fort on the "second Rafinesque" or Donnison map and it seems that the remaining two early maps of the site are similarly based on one another. The A. L. Klinkowstrom map, published in Stockholm in 1824 (Klinkowstrom 1824) seems to replicate the intent and details of the map still contained in the Rafinesque manuscript (1821).

Donnison's map is suspected by the author to be the earliest mapping because it:

1. is included in an 1843 article where the description is, substantially, a reprinting of Donnison's 1819 description. The 1819 article refers to his diagram as well as his description.
2. seems to have served as the basis for the 1848 map by Squire and Davis.
3. influenced or was possibly identical with the second Rafinesque manuscript map.
4. fits point for point with Donnison's 1819 article description.

Many of the mistakes on early maps come from mistakes in the Donnison description (1819) or from mis-interpretations of the Donnison description. The early piece by Donnison does, however, have some interesting details which have not been taken into full account in modern assessments of the site. Two additional descriptions and other maps can now be compared with the Donnison description which were not previously available.

Coffee County Historical Quarterly editor Betty Bridgewater has recovered a letter from James Mitchell to Thomas G. Bradford dating from 1810. This account was published in *The Democratic Clarion and Tennessee Gazette III* No. 128 in Nashville on 6 July 1810 (Mitchell 1810). This becomes the earliest account of the Old Stone Fort, pre-dating Donnison's by nine years. Features thought of as ancient and unexplained as early as 1810 and once again in 1819 are unlikely to have been of historic origin. The area in question was not open to settlement until 1806.

Mitchell's description of the Old Stone Fort includes the following details:

In the narrow place between the two forks is the great entrance to the old fort - on each side stands two pillars or piles of rock and dirt about twenty feet apart - a small distance from each pillar commences a wall; one extending down the main river, and the other down the creek fork. The wall that runs on the bank of the main fork continues down it for about eighty poles, where it strikes the end of the bluff, which is inaccessible - the bluff or precipice then serves for a wall for some distance. At the lower end of the bluff where the wall commences again it takes a circular course along the top of the hill until it strikes a creek at the lower end of the bluff, where it stops on the top of the precipice.

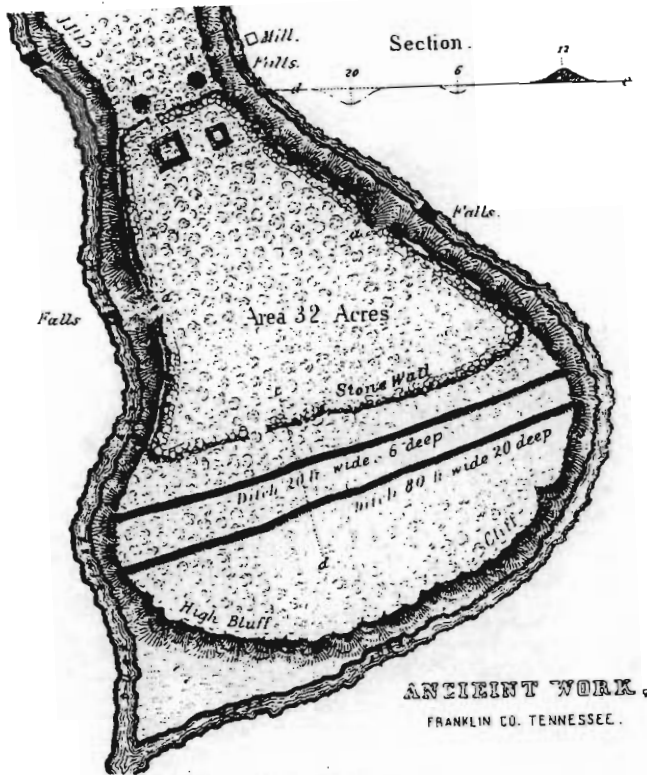


Figure 3. Squire and Davis Map. This 1848 map repeats the mistakes in Donni(e)son's mapping of the site. It shows a lack of elevation change from "d" to "c" through the back wall, ditch and "immense excavation" (abandoned river channel). The ditch should have been placed within the abandoned river channel. As in all but Klinkowstrom's map of the early group, a break is shown in the outer wall in line with the larger of two "stone buildings" which should represent the in-turned portion of the front or main entrance-way (Squire and Davis 1848).

The other wall that runs on the bank of the creek continues down it for perhaps sixty poles to where it strikes the upper end of the bluff, from whence the bluff has served for a wall to the lower end of the fort.

At the entrance of the fort there are two walls, commencing at about 15 feet from the two pillars, which wall runs immediately into the fort for about 12 or 15 poles parallel with each other, and then make a right angle to the left and so terminates (Mitchell 1810).

The last word may be the most significant in the description. It is unfortunate that Mitchell had a problem with syntax at this point. His description of the front or main entrance makes it sound as if both in-turned walls turn to the left if not for the "s" on the word "terminates" which makes the reference singular. Only Cox's description (Cox 1929:2) agrees in both walls turning but Cox did not see the left hand wall. It had been destroyed before 1928. There is no evidence that Cox was familiar with Mitchell's description, but Mitchell is the only source which could be taken as saying both walls turned. Alexander Kocsis (1870?:4-5) describes terminal mounds on both ends of the in-turned walls (making six conical mounds in this area) but makes no mention of the walls both turning to the east in his 1870's manuscript. Joseph Jones (1876: 101) states clearly that he saw two walls where only, "...one of which bends at right angles...". Jones did describe and map that he saw both inturned walls as having, "...enlarged or elevated..." terminals. Mitchell goes on to say:

From the best information that I can obtain, there is contained about thirty five acres inside the walls. At the lower end of the fort there is a hollow or valley passing from the river to the creek, which is between sixty and seventy feet lower than the base of the wall. This valley appears to be very regular about eighty poles long and about twenty wide at the bottom. Close to the foot of the hill on which the wall is built there is still the visible remains of a old canal passing close to the foot of the hill from one fork to the other (Mitchell 1810).

This portion of the description is far superior to the equivalent part in Donnison (1819). Donnison's attempt to describe this same situation led to many of the problems of the Rafinesque family of maps as well as the problems with Haywood's (1823:158) description. The misconception transmitted by Donnison (1819) has the wall, a small ditch and a more "immense" ditch occurring one after the other along a flat surface of ground. Mitchell (1810) on the other hand correctly describes a valley between the plateau on which the "fort" is constructed and the Backbone Ridge.

The valley (Donnison's "immense excavation") is the abandoned course of the Barren or main fork of the river. This fork, now generally called the "Big Duck", broke through the Backbone Ridge, and established a short cut into the downstream, main channel. This probably occurred long before Tennessee had a Native American population.

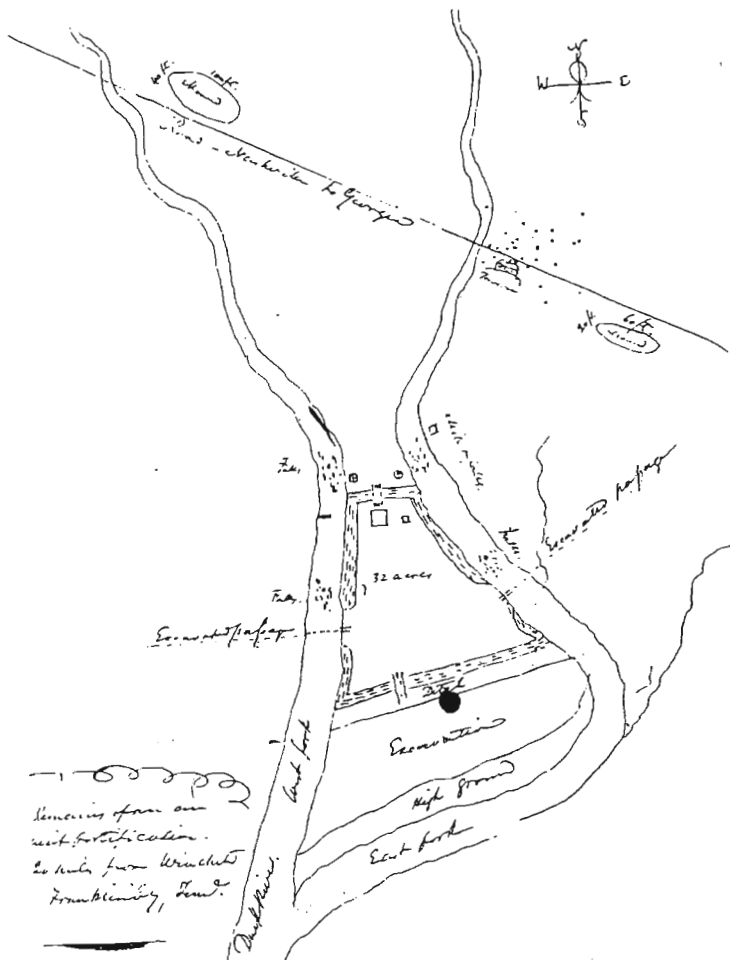


Figure 4. Rafinesque Map. This 1821 map is the alternate possibility (with Donne(i)son) for the site's earliest plan. It shows the "excavated passage" which was interpreted in the 1824 Klinkowstrom map as features resembling train tunnel openings. The "high ground" is also interpreted in a way repeated on the Klinkowstrom map and distinct from the Donni(e)son or Squire and Davis depiction (Courtesy of The Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania).

The other, until now, obscure source on the Old Stone Fort is from 1928. While not an early enough description to have found the site undisturbed, it is valuable for another reason. This account is based on the archaeological project conducted by P. E. Cox (Cox 1928). While Cox's report as read before the Tennessee Academy of Science in 1929 (Cox 1929) has long been readily available, his field notes have not been used as widely. P. E. Cox died shortly after his brief report to the Academy. His notes contain valuable references not in the preliminary report.

The Ditch

The feature, "...close to the foot of the hill on which the wall is built" (Mitchell 1810) was seen by Mitchell as a "canal" from river to river. Donnison calls it the "ditch" next to the wall. While Mitchell corrects the profile of these features, both agree on the existence of a feature external to the wall. This ditch is still very apparent, running the entire length of the existing back wall (Figure 7). Recent surveys (Pearsall 1993) show the ditch to drop 14 feet from the "Big" Duck to "Little" Duck side. It is unlikely that it ever carried water since the high end of the ditch is 20 to 30 feet above the water on the "Big" Duck side. Only Alexander Kocsis' (1870?: 31-32) description of an "ancient stone dam" on the "Little" Duck would allow water to be backed up into the supposed canal. This dam is a very speculative feature which Kocsis could not locate when he returned 20 years later in the 1870's. It may have been a fish weir. Kocsis attempted to calculate the date of the "canal" construction by a complex method of estimating the rate of bedrock erosion in the Bark Camp Fork and the length of time it would take for the river to cut below the entrance to the "canal". The estimate was 3600 years. The actual use or date of the ditch, however, is still in question.

While the name "canal" is probably not accurate, the existence of the ditch before 1810 is valuable evidence. Neither Mitchell (1810) who was intimately familiar with the area (previously called Mitchellsville) nor Donnison nine years later (1819) were familiar with any historic disruption of the area or any non-prehistoric origin for the ditch. It would be unwise to assume historic period origins for the ditch in this circumstance. Dr. Ferdinand Stith (1820), a founding member of the Medical Society of Tennessee, also describes a "canal" at the foot of the high land on the west end of the "fort" in his 1820 address to the Tennessee Antiquarian Society (Bridgewater 1986: 11). Rafinesque (1821) shows the ditch in the proper location, but Squier and Davis (1848) show the incorrect profile according to Donnison's (1819) description. T.C. Yoakim's (1845) map of 1845 (Figure 9) seems to show the ditch as do Kocsis' maps of 1850-1870 (Figures 14-16).

The ditch seems to be an integral part of the Old Stone Fort. Perhaps it supplied building material from the abandoned river bed once the construction got too far from the existing river bed rock source. Ditches at other, comparable sites seem to have a more intimate association with the meaning of the site, however. If the ditch at the "north" end once stretched from river to river before the final form of the main gateway complex then perhaps the ditch on the west end predates the wall also. Archaeological testing seems to be called for in determining the origin of this feature.

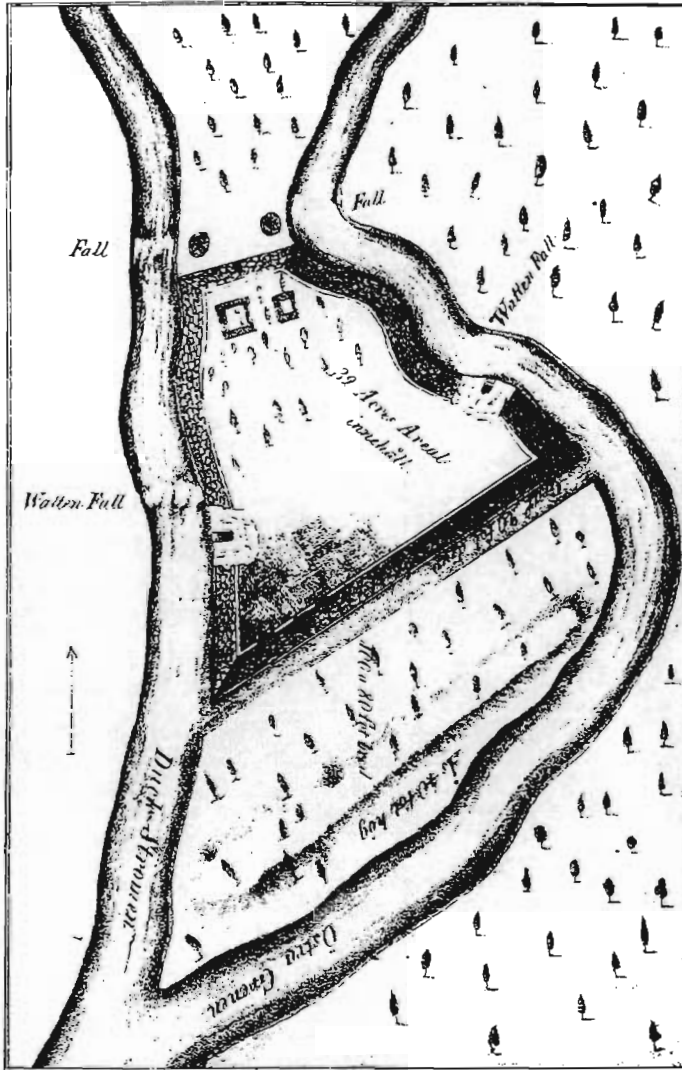


Figure 5. Klinkowstrom Map. This map, published in *Travels* by A.L. Klinkowstrom (1824), is alone among the four early, triangular maps in showing no outer wall openings. All others show both the main and back wall gateways or entrances.

The Wall Opening

Another feature described by Donnison (1819) shows up not only in the early maps but also in the field notes of P.E. Cox (1928) (Figure 8). Donnison states that:

...the south curtain wall is continuous from river to river - In this wall is also a gateway (Donnison 1819).

The *Family Magazine* article (Donne < i > son 1843?) states that the wall extending from river to river:

...has...a gateway nearly opposite to that in the northern wall (Donne < i > son 1843?).

The maps of Rafinesque (1821) and Squire and Davis (1848) show this gateway complex in the 2,000 foot "rear" wall as does the newly available map attributed to Donnison (Donne < i > son 1819? 1843). If the Donnison map goes with his 1819 description, it provides another exceptionally early documentation of the feature.

The only one of the four earliest maps to not show the break in the back wall is the Klinkowstrom or Swedish map (1824). It may be significant that this same map is also the only one to not show the break in the front wall. This break should show up in line with the main entrance complex or gateway. The Donnison, Rafinesque, and Squire and Davis maps all show the break in the back wall in the same way as they depict the break for the front or main entrance. Later maps may have omitted the back opening due to the mappers decreasing opportunity to have seen the site in an undisturbed state. It had become less clear what was original to the construction and what was not.

Wall notches are common in other hilltop enclosures and promontory cut-offs of the period. We should not be surprised to find the feature at the Old Stone Fort; however, there is a problem of historic period wall disturbances. The Manchester to Shelbyville coach road penetrated the wall in two places and stone was apparently "borrowed" from the walls in other places for additional road work and bridge abutment construction.

As in the case of the ditch below the back wall, the 1819 reference by Donnison (both in map and text form) is extremely early for an historic purpose for a feature to have been lost. One opening in the back wall seems to have always been present. The Rafinesque map and the Squier and Davis map both may have owed something to Donnison, but the field notes of P.E. Cox add something to Donnison and seem to corroborate his description. The notes have been much less commonly used than Cox's short preliminary report (1929) submitted before his death.

Cox excavated a trench through the back wall on September 17-18, 1928. Upon completion of the work Cox states that:

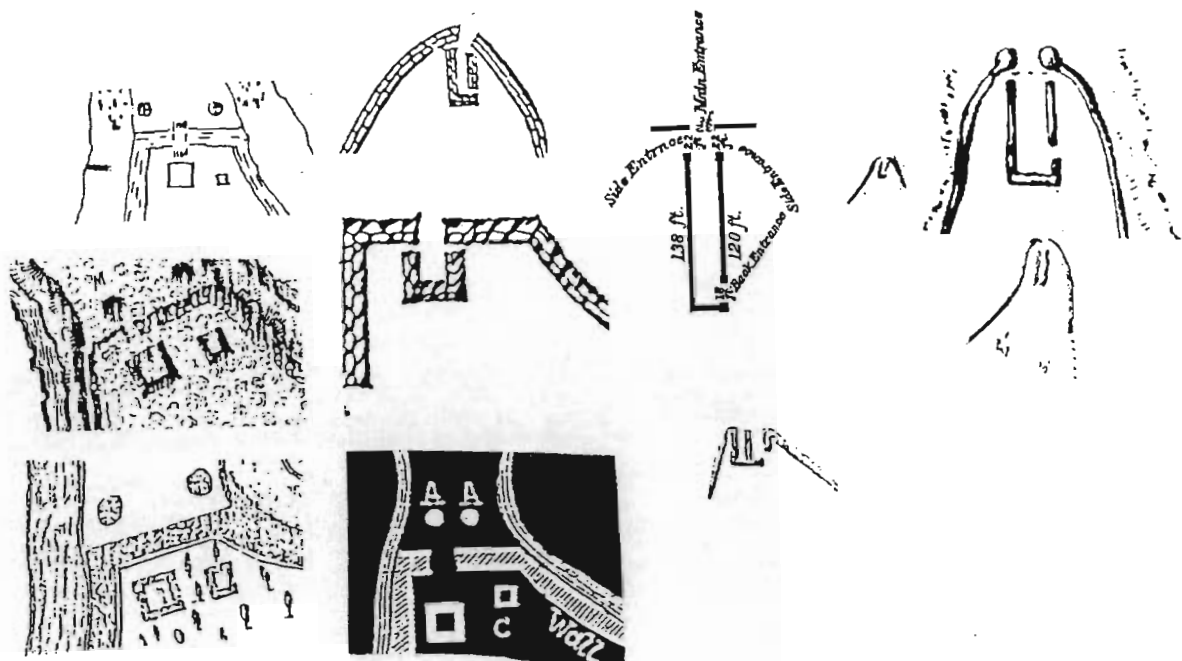


Figure 6.

Main Entrance Complex Views. These main or front entrance views are taken from the maps shown elsewhere in this article and are repeated here for ease of comparison.

This proves to be an entrance to the fort; it is located 525' E. of the cut in the S. wall made by the road measuring on top of the fort. The entrance is 20' wide and is 2' 8" lower than the average height of the fort (Cox 1928: 15-16).

The University of Tennessee's trench 4 (Faulkner 1968) is located just to the north of the P.E. Cox trench. The entrance identified by Cox is at the apex of the outward projection of the back wall. There appears to be little doubt that the gateway shown by Rafinesque and described and mapped by Donnison is the one excavated by Cox. Cox also notes that a mound is set inside this gap (1928: 16).

Other details of the entrance are described by Cox. He points out that the base of the wall is 22' wide at the entrance and that the wall is 6' 8" high at this point (Cox 1928: 15-16). The wall is still at 6' inside height adjacent to the opening. This is the highest surviving, inside height of the wall at any point. It is common at related sites for walls to reach the highest elevation or to swell at the point of a planned gap. According to Essenpreis and Mosely's report on Fort Ancient:

The distinguishing feature of gateways is that each side of the passage is demarcated by a mound or by an unusually high section of embankment (Essenpreis and Mosely 1984: 24).

Walls at the Old Stone Fort's main gateway complex end in terminal mounds which flank the opening while the walls reach their highest elevation on either side of the rear wall opening.

Essenpreis has said that gateway floors, "...tend to be slightly elevated above adjacent interior surfaces" at Fort Ancient (Essenpreis and Mosely 1984: 15).

As noted above, Cox found the floor of the entrance gap to be 4' above ground surface but 2' 8" lower than the average height of the wall. Cox opened a trench at the west side of the entrance and found:

...in center of fort (wall) ...rectangular limestone and shale construction - Stones set on edge - (and an) entrance wall of shale and limestone on W. side constructed large stone apparently to hold wall of fort about it (Cox 1928: 16).

One can compare the feature described above to Essenpreis' excavation of gateway 44 at Fort Ancient:

Eventually an area approximately 8.6 feet by 7.7 feet was cleared, revealing a collapsed stone feature(s) which may have, in part, represented a short retaining wall intended to prevent the embankment from collapsing or eroding into the gateway (Essenpreis 1985: 2).

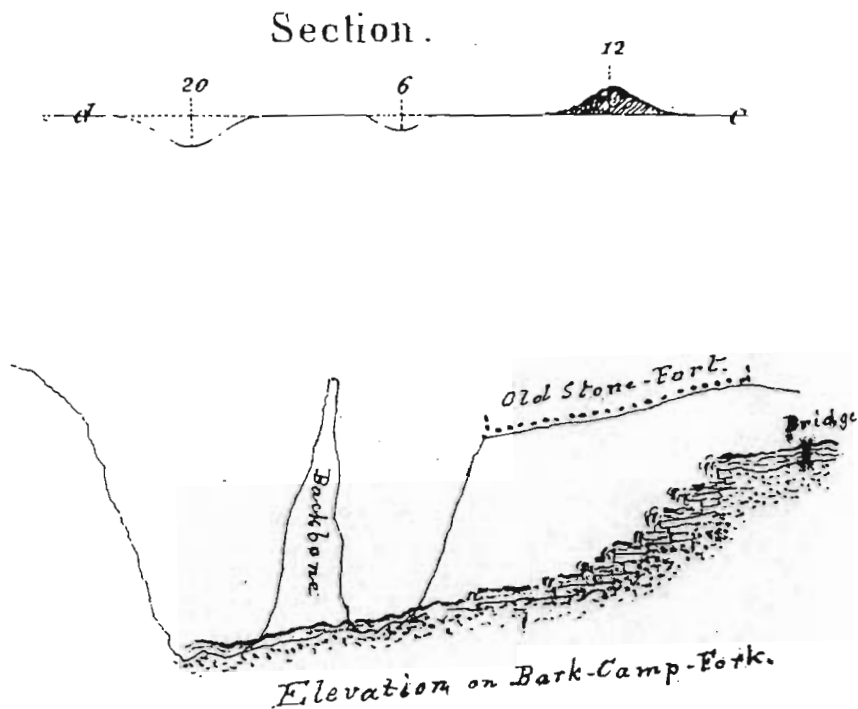


Figure 7. Profiles. These two profiles of the back wall area are taken from the Squire and Davis and Kocsis (No. 2) maps. The flat profile of Squire and Davis' view should have shown the wall at the top of an embankment with the smaller ditch at the foot of the embankment in the abandoned river valley shown in the Kocsis' profile.

Essenpries goes on to compare this feature to a similar one in gateway 20 (1985).

The back wall gateway complex seems to include a mound setting inside the wall and in line with the gap. Mounds aligned with wall gaps are not uncommon in related sites. According to Cox, "23' from center of entrance (is a) mound 100' circumference 3' high" (Cox 1928: 16). This mound is still obvious as is a trench from its edge to the center. A similar mound is located some 2000' east of the main gateway complex. This second mound has been tested by the State Division of Archaeology and does appear to be of prehistoric origin (Broster 1991).

The combination of very early observation of the gateway and its excavation by P.E. Cox warrant the feature's inclusion as probable components of the prehistoric construction. It certainly deserves further study as do features with which it may be associated. Is there a causeway across the ditch below the gateway complex? Is there any sign of a prepared "way", "ramp" or "paved path" between the gateway and the possible causeway?

A portion of the ditch approximately 20' wide has been either filled in or left undisturbed when the ditch was dug. This "causeway" is below the suspected gateway, but somewhat to its left looking downhill or out of the enclosure. This could be a distinctive prehistoric feature or a relatively recent fill in for convenience in farm implement traffic. If prehistoric, is this "causeway" contemporary with the excavation of the ditch or a later addition?

Fort Ancient had stone covered or "paved" ways extending down slope from notches in the wall (Essenpries and Mosely 1984: 25). A trail of sorts has either developed over the years from the gateway to the causeway or perhaps this route is the remains of a "ramp" connecting the two. If evidence can be found of stones placed as a "pavement", down slope of the wall notch, then the notch, the "ramp" and possibly even the causeway may prove to be of prehistoric origin. The location of the wall opening at the farthest projection of the hill matches the location of gateways at Fort Ancient.

The above listed evidence creates four points of comparison between the back wall gap at the Old Stone Fort and gateways at Fort Ancient:

1. The walls reach their highest point to either side of the openings.
2. Wall exists in the openings though at a reduced height.
3. The openings occur at a projection of a hilltop, opening onto a spur.
4. Evidence of a retaining wall is found at the edges of the openings.

When an observer stands with the river junction at his back and looks eastward and up at the back wall, the wall creates an artificial horizon with only the "back gateway" notch interrupting this horizon. The effect is striking enough to make one wonder if the wall were built to create a place for the notch in the "horizon".

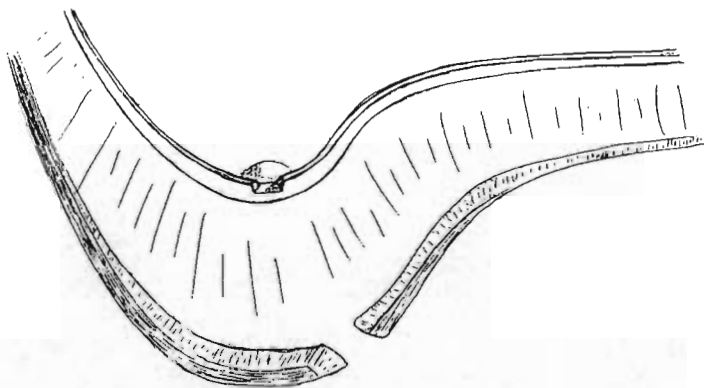


Figure 8. Back Gateway. This sketch view illustrates the hypothetical back gateway complex and the ditch at the foot of the embankment below the wall.

Antiquarian Notions Concerning The Old Stone Fort

Antiquarian descriptions of the Old Stone Fort and related sites have been quite suspect for good reason - most were written at a time when Native Americans were being systematically removed from eastern lands. While many people were fascinated by the "wonders" represented by the many mounds and walls, some had trouble seeing these sites as related to Native American cultures they knew at the time. The effect of 200 years of contact with Spaniards and other Europeans was too easily forgotten. The concept of the depth of prehistory and of thousands of years of cultural evolution were not understood. It was much preferred to see other origins for the "wonders". The Indians could not be removed from the land so easily if they had used it, farmed it and built "wonders" on it. The preferred image was to see the Native Americans as the savages who had destroyed an advanced race. Even better would be an ancient European origin for the "wonders". Through this rationalization the Native American's heritage was systematically denied. The Old Stone Fort site with its "stone fortress" image seems to be the strongest draw for romantic explanations among Native American mound sites.

In spite of obvious lack of archaeological knowledge at the time of the antiquarians' writings and in spite of the prejudices of their time under which some of them suffered, some interesting ideas were put forward. The early descriptions of the Old Stone Fort contained interesting concepts for the era in addition to the valuable details previously discussed.

Troost (1820) first put qualifications on the imagined defensive nature of the walls when he said that the work showed, "...skill in defense but not against firearms." Mitchell (1810) stated, prior to any other known description, that the so called Old Stone Fort was, "...not built for refuge." Alexander Kocsis, a Hungarian immigrant who drew three maps of the site between 1850 and 1870 (Figures 14-16) and wrote a manuscript called "Old Stone Fort" (1870?), is among the first of the antiquarians to come down firmly on the side of Native American origin and to state that the use was ceremonial. The 1843 *Family Magazine* (Donne <i>son 1843?) article on the Old Stone Fort indirectly comments on the sites' lack of use as a habitation area when it states that:

It has always appeared to me somewhat singular, that so few specimens of domestick (sic) art have been discovered in the neighborhood of the mounds...the few which have been found serve to excite rather than to gratify curiosity (Donne <i>son 1843?).

Mitchell (1810) projected a very early date for the sites' construction - coming much closer to the truth in 1810 than John Trotwood Moore, the State's archivist who worked with P.E. Cox, did in 1928. Moore saw the "fort" as of relatively recent origin and still suspected Spanish explorers as the constructors in 1928 (Moore 1928). Mitchell noted that not only a full climax forest existed over the site but also the remains of another forest which had the look of being laid flat in one great occurrence. Mitchell suggested that a hurricane had passed through, destroying one forest after the wall was constructed and that yet another mature forest had grown up to replace it. He assumed an age of over 1000 years for the site based on the maturing of more than one forest.

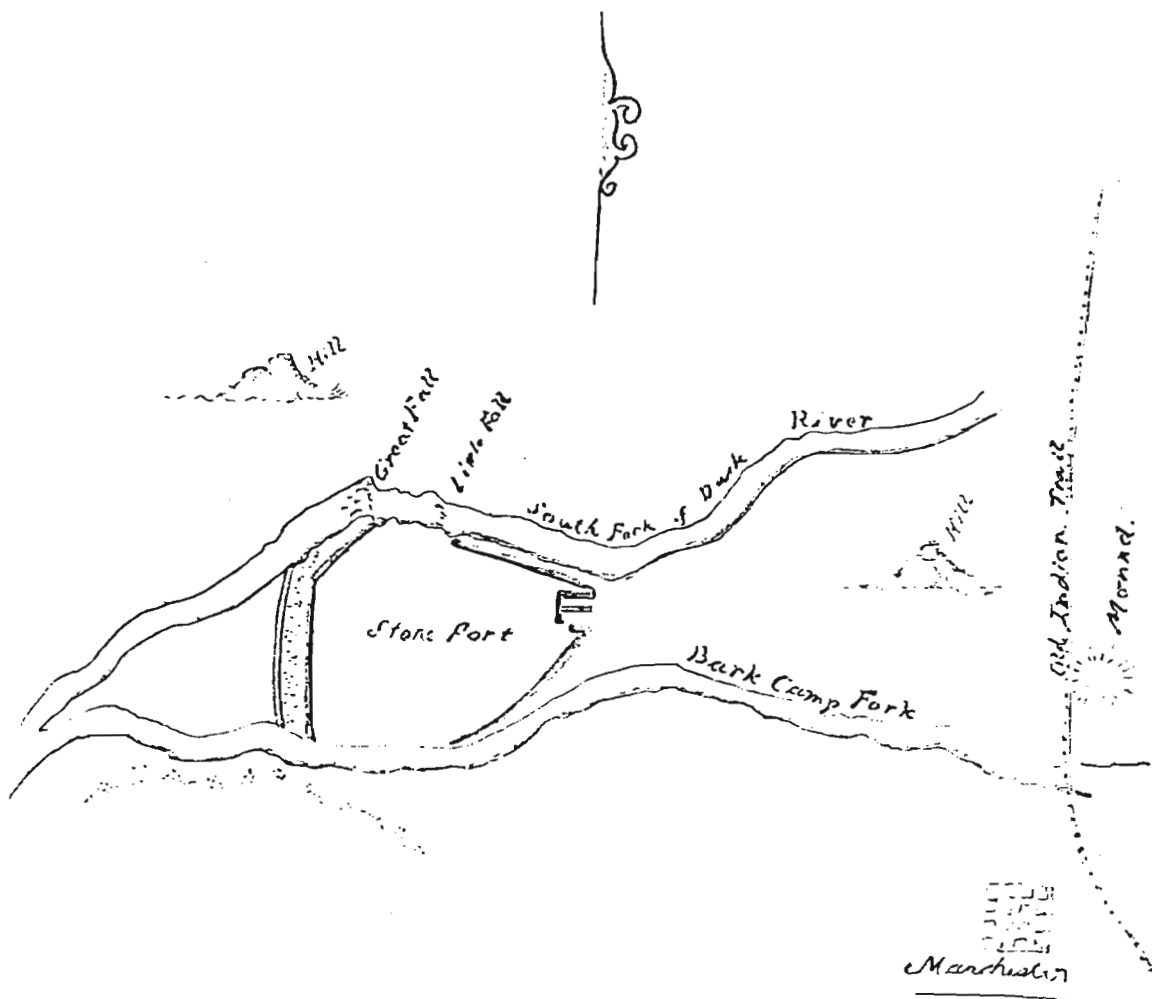


Figure 9. Yoakim Map. T.C. Yoakim's map of 1845 seems to show the ditch at the foot of the hill exterior to the back wall. The main or East facing gateway is shown but in confusing detail unlike any other depiction (Tennessee Library and Archives).

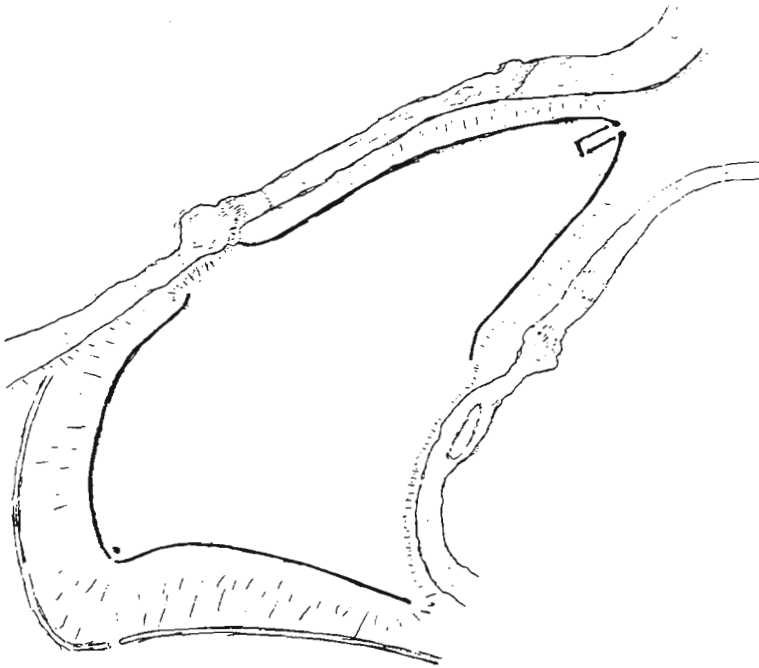


Figure 10. The Old Stone Fort. This approximation of the original appearance of the site illustrates the relative positions of the main or front entrance (top right) and the break in the back wall (left). The ditch external to the back wall is also shown in the extreme lower left. The north orientation is approximate, and the map is not to scale.

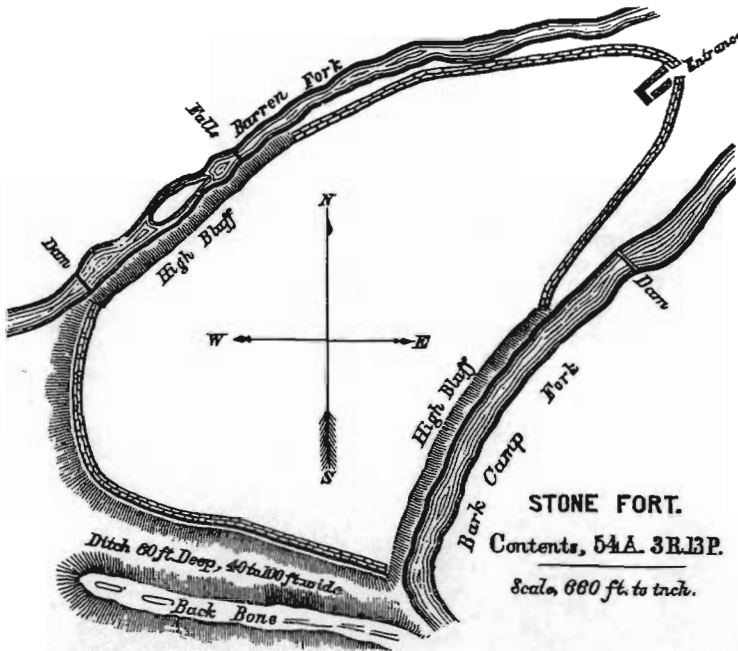


Figure 11. Jones Map. Joseph Jones' map of 1876 came from a resurveying by W.A. Thoma of Manchester. It is the most accurate of all pre-1966 maps in its' overall shape although it lacks detail (Jones 1876).

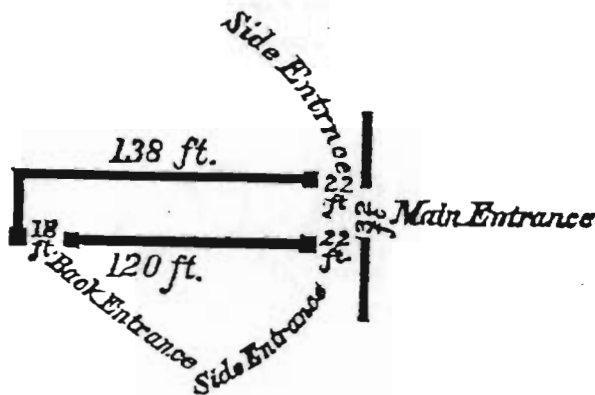


Figure 12. Jones/Thoma Entrance Plan. This plan, included in Jones' publication, was surveyed by Thoma. It is accurate but excludes the conical mounds terminal to the outer walls (Jones 1876).

Mitchell's date estimate of over 1000 years comes amazingly close to the last radio-carbon 14 date for the site of 430 AD. No one after him came this close until after the scientific dating. Alexander Kocsis' (1870? 32) dating of 3600 BP was the next most interesting estimate, missing the earliest radio-carbon 14 date by approximately 1600 years, but at least projecting a more ancient origin than those who chose to visualize Norsemen, Phoenicians, Portuguese, Spanish or Welsh at the site.

The manuscript of Hungarian immigrant Alexander Kocsis (1870?) has not been readily available to researchers - having been issued only in a locally published facsimile edition. It is lengthy, containing simple illustrations of sites other than the Old Stone Fort, in his attempt to forward his theory about a "Black Turtle Race" of prehistoric peoples. The description of the Old Stone Fort contained in the manuscript is valuable and like others discussed above was not available when the report was written on the archaeological work conducted at the Old Stone Fort. This 1870's description which looks back on his 1850's visit states that:

The writer first visited the locality in 1853 and found it as follows. The entrance was on the level of the isthmus, between two dome-like mounds of about 12 ft high and 30 ft. in base-diameter. From out of these mounds, walls 4-6 ft high and 25 ft. wide at the base were curving toward the two streams and running along the banks, except where the precipitous character of them made approach impracticable, around the whole promontory. The rear embankments were comparatively higher, fully 10 ft, and more massive, fully 50 ft. wide at base. In some places, where the banks were less precipitous, the walls from the silicious rock- base to the top measured 15-20 ft. in height, but examination disclosed the fact that the work originally was built on the edge of the banks, but subsequently by the agency of the weather and perhaps climbing wild beasts, it tumbled down toward the river, because the height (sic) of such spots was less from the inner surface-ground, than the general elevation of the walls, when on account of the accessibility of the points it ought to have been more and because the base width in similar cases was narrower.

The entrance or gate 25 ft. wide was faced by the mouth of a horse-shoe like-inclosure 150 ft. long and 30 ft. wide inside. This work has four dome-like mounds, viz. two opposite to those at the entrance and two in the rear. Walls connected these mounds, except at the mouth and an outlet of 10 ft, toward the rear on the Eastern side. These mounds were over 14 ft. high and 50 ft. broad in base-diameter and the walls with like base width had 10 ft. elevation. The crumbling was mostly on the outside, so that within one could see that originally it was a parallelogram. The structure was not too large to be roofed over - was it? Who knows?

The space, about 10 ft. intervening between the gate and mouth of above parallelogram, was occupied by a ditch running beyond the mounds of the latter hence over 150 ft. long and 3-4 ft. deep.

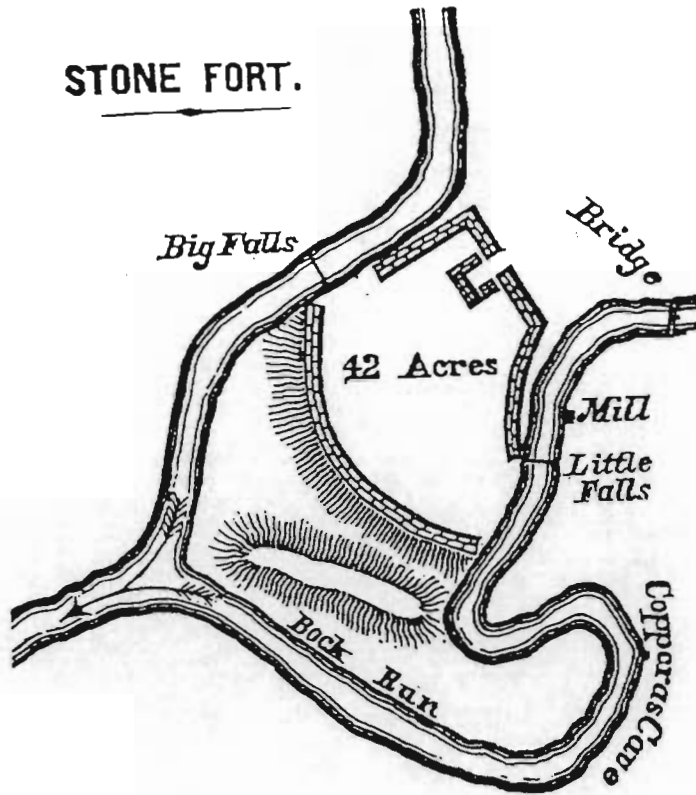


Figure 13. Nance Map. This plan of the site by E.W. (or C.W.) Nance may have been removed from a land plat in the Coffee County courthouse by Joseph Jones or his map's surveyor, W.A. Thoma. It seems to match an existing hole in the plat (Jones 1876).

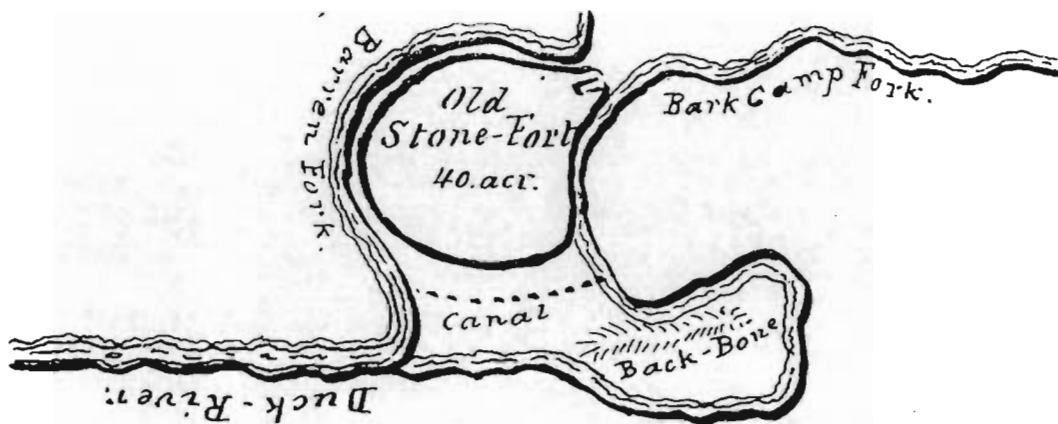


Figure 14. Kocsis Map No. 1. This most simple of Kocsis' maps may have originated with his 1850's visit rather than his 1870's visits after the Civil War activities and much other mill activity at the site (Kocsis 1870?).

Below the last and highest Falls of the Barren Fork there is a narrow cleft in the precipitous rockbank by means of which one may descend to small drip-spring under a shelving rock. And beyond this spot where the perpendicular rockwall of the bank is over 80 ft. high, there was about 3/4 - 1 acre of naked ground, all covered with small stones, that once underwent intense fire. At the farthest of South-Eastern corner of this barren lot there were some piles of rocks, which seemed the ruins of chimneys, but too close for that, besides the stones were too small for building purposes and showed no signs of fire. They probably were surplus material left over from the embankment or designed to be used on the above burnt district.

Along the inside of the rearwall of the fort there was a depression not exactly a ditch but rather scraping out, (of) 100 ft. wide and deepest at the foot of the wall.

The whole of the 41 acres inclosed in the Fort appeared to have been picked clean of stones and levelled, but no other marks of disturbance by human hands did the surface bear. All was in primeval forest of heavy timber with scarcely any undergrowth.

At the foot of the promontory and following its curve as well as the arc of the wall on top, there was a canal 10-12 ft. wide and 4-6 ft. deep, connecting the two streams. The Bark-Camp-Fork end of this canal was the inlet because level with the waters of that rivulet, while the other extremity fully 25 ft above the riverbed must have been the outlet. At this point heavy rocklifting was necessary to accomplish the undertaking.

Just below the mouth of the canal and on both banks of Bark-Camp Fork there were the ruins of the abutments of an ancient stone-dam, and the riverbed, but mostly along the left bank were strewn with heavy rocks, once ingredients of that structure.

On revisiting the locality this year it was found that the march of improvement made considerable encroachments on this relic of antiquity. Saw, Paper, powder-mills and necessary buildings for man and beast were there erected, all the heavy timber was cut down, a farm of 15 acres cleared, so that only about one fourth of the enclosure is left in indifferent woodland. To get buildingsites, and effect means of communication, the embankments were cut in two places near the entrance and the rear wall pierced likewise, parts on Barren Fork were entirely demolished and rocks thereof, as well as from the eastern side of the parallelogram were carted off to macadamize the roads. The burnt district and stone-heaps disappeared under a thick brushgrowth of 10-15 ft. high. But Mr. Garrett, who twenty years ago bought several thousand acres of these lands, sold several tracts and among them the Old Stone Fort also, has kept a choice share adjoining and lived there ever since, distinctly remembered and exactly located the burnt area and stone-heaps when questioned concerning them.

The lower part of the peninsula is also cleared and in cultivation. The canal is filled where the road leads through it and more or less reduced in depth by the soil distributed by the plow. Thus Old Stone Fort is shorn of its savage grandeur. Only the Backbone stand in its ancient glory.

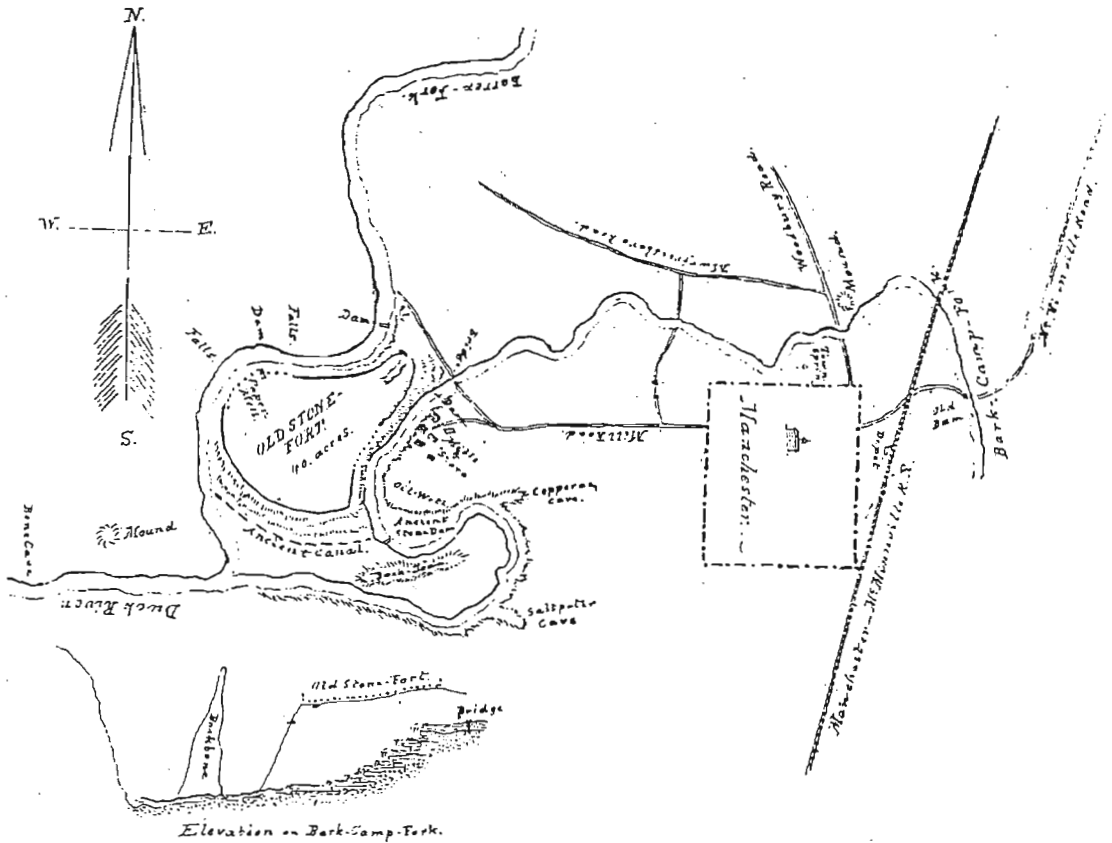


Figure 15. Kocsis Map No. 2. This plan, including the town of Manchester, lacks the detail of his very similar map excluding the town. It does show the "ancient canal" representing the ditch external to the back wall and dug into the floor of the abandoned river channel (Kocsis 1870?).

Examination elicited the following:

1. The shape of the Fort is a compromise between a pear and an oystershell.
2. The builders used the curve and the rectangle in their work.
3. Slate from the riverbed forms the chief material in the wall.
4. The walls were built like the present dry-stone-walls for farming- purposes, and, in the lapse of ages, moisture and drought, freezing and thawing, and other destructive agencies gradually demolished and then vegetable mold of 10-12 inch in thickness settled over them, wherein trees of three feet in diameter grew and decayed as we see the whole today.
5. The stones used are not bigger than what a 10-14 year old boy could easily handle.
6. No marks of tools are visible on the building material, although in the newly exposed parts the slate-slabs look as fresh as if taken but recently from the riverbed.
7. Only the lower half of the rearwall is of stones the upper part being earth scraped out from within the inside of the inclosure.
8. According to the quantity of lose (sic) stone on both sides of the walls, their original height must have been more than double.
9. The two large hills, one on the Woodbury Road on Wiley Hickerson's farm and the other half way between the junction of the two Forks and the Bone-Cave, on Judge Hickerson's lands, are of drift formation.
10. The men who built the Fort constructed no detached mounds, hence they were not real moundbuilders but invallators, or wall-makers.
11. No kitchen-refuse-heaps, no weapons, tools, utensils in bone, stone, metal or pottery, and no traces whatever of its being once inhabited, were found either in the Fort or vicinity (Kocsis 1870?: 4-8).

Kocsis conclusions speak for themselves rather well. As mentioned above, he may have been the first to see the site as of a ceremonial nature and of prehistoric Native American origin. Kocsis provides the only description (as well as mapping) of the main entrance ditch, ponders the possibility of the main entrance having been roofed, and reports an approximate acre of

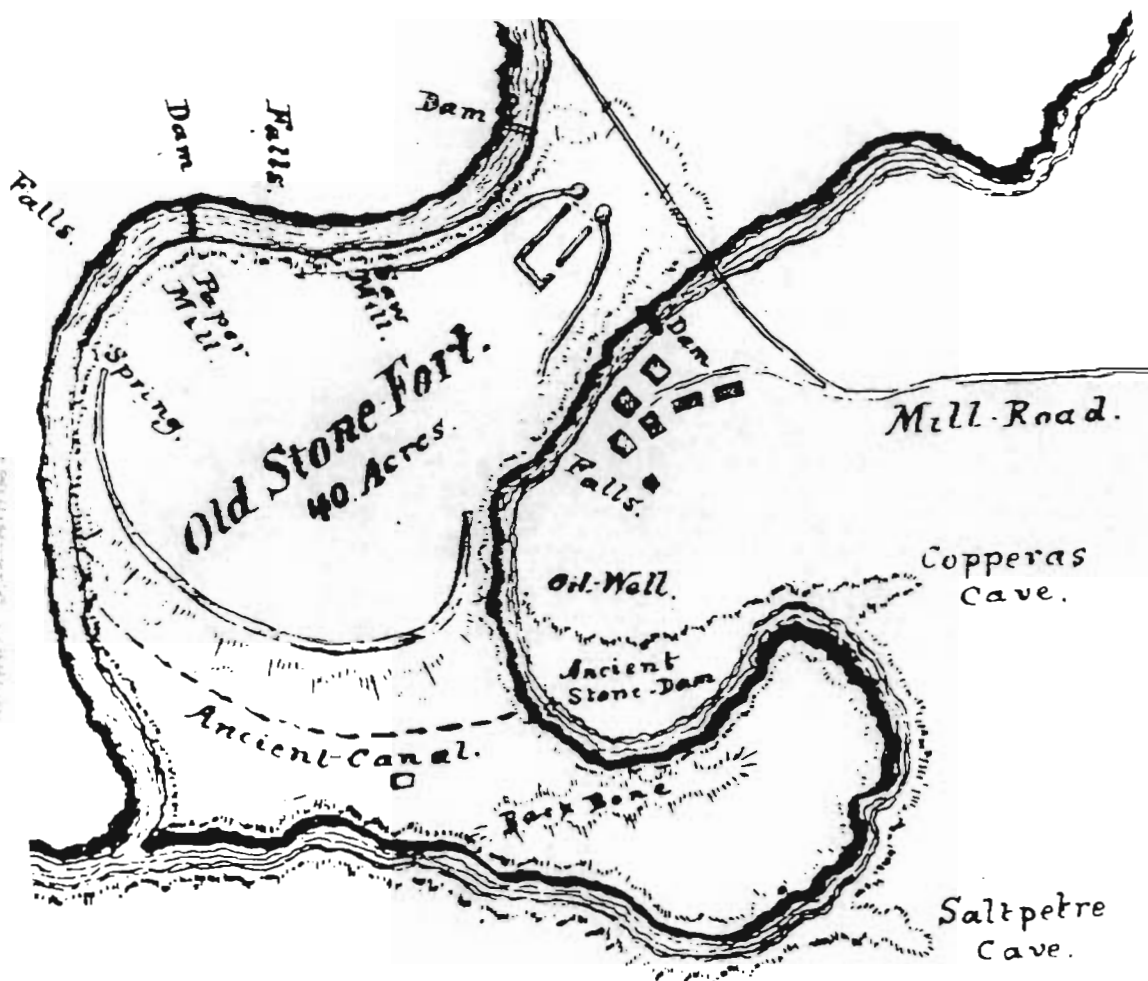


Figure 16. Kocsis Map No. 3. Alexander Kocsis' most detailed map of the site is the only map to show the main entrance ditch (indicated by the dashed line) prior to the University of Tennessee archaeological project of 1966. This ditch is located between the terminal conical mounds of the outer wall and the in-turned walls of the entrance complex (Tennessee Library and Archives).

ground with unusual stone heaps and heat affected features. The reference to "slate" in his number three above should read Chattanooga shale. Kocsis' ability to comment on the amount of loss or damage over a span of years between his 1850's visits and his 1870's visits is unique.

Conclusion

This article has been designed to make the best use possible of the maps and descriptions of the Old Stone Fort site - including a map and description not previously available - and to make these sources readily available to future researchers. Valuable historical evidence is contained in the flawed maps and descriptions. These sources help illustrate that a back gateway complex likely existed and that the ditch parallel to the back wall may also be of prehistoric origin. Both of these features deserve further archaeological investigation. Features such as ditches and wall gaps or notches exist at many hilltop enclosures and promontory cutoffs. Increased knowledge of how such enclosure features compare or contrast in varying circumstances or environments could gradually make the purpose of sites in the Old Stone Fort's category more clearly understood.

The public expects explanations for sites like the Old Stone Fort. When an archaeological park staff talks face to face with 300,000 visitors a year it is impossible to avoid the very difficult issue of how the site was used and why it was built. While the science of archaeology must point out that it will never be equipped to know more than a bare outline of what was in the minds of the builders and users, archaeology must pursue answers to such questions or risk losing its relevance to the general public - and with it the financial support it needs in order to continue serving its critically important function.

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