

106 SUCCESS STORY

Uncovering Hidden Stories in a Confederate Prison

Florence National Cemetery, South Carolina



“Through the project, the VA met its Section 106 responsibilities, and the information learned through the data recovery has contributed to a greater understanding of the Florence Stockade. It has also contributed to the broader effort to recognize, interpret, preserve, and protect the site and encourage visitation.”

— ELIZABETH M. JOHNSON
Deputy South Carolina State
Historic Preservation Officer



THE STORY

In September 1864, the Confederate Army built the Confederate States Military Prison or Florence Stockade to hold more than 12,000 captured United States military prisoners of war (POWs). Five months later, concerned that General William T. Sherman's advancing Army would free the POWs, the Confederates moved them and abandoned the camp. After the Civil War ended in 1865, a large burial site located on a nearby plantation, just outside the Stockade's boundaries, became the Florence National Cemetery. At its creation, the cemetery consisted of 16 trenches in which the approximately 2,300 POWs who had perished in the camp's brief span were interred. Florena Budwin, the first known female service member to be interred in a national cemetery, rests in a mass trench in Section D. Budwin had disguised herself as a man and joined the Union troops in order to accompany her husband. Captured in Charleston, South Carolina, she was brought to the Florence Stockade. When she fell ill, her identity was discovered and, once she recovered, Budwin served as a nurse at the Stockade until her death in January 1865. The earthworks of the Florence Stockade were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

THE PROJECT

By the early 2000s, the Florence National Cemetery was full. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration proposed a 10-acre expansion of the cemetery. As planned, the expansion was not expected to impact the site of the historic Stockade and seemed to pose no adverse effects to the historic property. However, the precise location of the Stockade was vague and had not been clearly identified.

THE 106 PROCESS

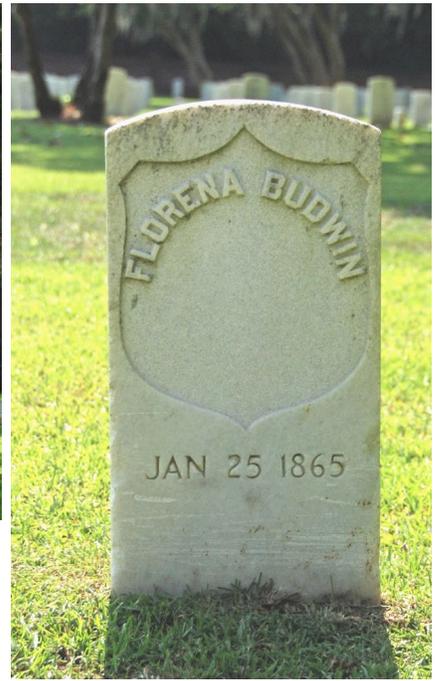
Immediately after ground clearing began in 2005, the Friends of the Florence Stockade contacted the VA and the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) with concerns about potential disturbance of the Stockade site. The VA was in charge of

Photos: Above, the land for Florence National Cemetery was appropriated, and later purchased, from the estate of a local resident about a quarter-mile from the POW camp; Right, Florence National Cemetery observes Memorial Day, 2013; 161 Unknown U.S. Soldiers are interred in Florence National Cemetery. (photos courtesy Department of Veterans Affairs)

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Photos: Above, in 1998, the cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Places; Right, the cemetery is also the final resting place for Florena Budwin, the bride of a captain from Pennsylvania who disguised herself as a man and donned a uniform, hoping to find her husband. (photos courtesy Department of Veterans Affairs)



conducting Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act which requires federal agencies to identify historic properties and assess the effects of the projects they carry out, fund, or permit on such properties. Federal agencies are required to consult with parties that have an interest in the fate of the property when adverse effects are likely to ensue.

Responding to the concerns, the VA and SHPO organized archaeological data recovery to identify the exact location of the Stockade and any resources or human remains yet unknown. Among the findings were 372 previously unrecorded features, such as fencing boundaries, poles, and some burials, which brought the known total of features and artifacts to 6,056. Based on this discovery, VA and the SHPO entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to document the site, address further excavation plans, and interpret the site for the public. The required archaeological documentation of the Stockade and surrounding area provided a rare opportunity to examine a relatively undisturbed Confederate POW camp, which led to developing a “Teaching with Historic Places” lesson plan with the National Park Service, and the Stockade Trail and Memorial Park that includes a walking tour with historical displays. The MOA also required all human remains to be reinterred within the expansion site or another appropriate location.

Consulting Parties:

- Department of Veterans Affairs: National Cemetery Administration
- South Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer
- Friends of Florence Stockade

THE SUCCESS

Working with the community to preserve the story and remaining elements of this unique southern internment camp contributed to greater understanding of a Civil War-era POW camp and provided one of the first professional studies of daily camp life. The information collected resulted in the online lesson plan “Comfortable Camps? Archeology of the Confederate Guard Camp at the Florence Stockade,” www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/142Florence/142FlorenceStockade.htm demonstrating the importance of archaeological investigations as an educational tool. In addition, the investigations at the Stockade led to the identification and reburial of Union soldiers found in the trench graves, important not only for the deceased but also for the living relatives.

For more about Section 106 and the ACHP go to www.achp.gov

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