



# The Story Of Fort St. Pierre

*The fort was built to facilitate trade between France and Native Americans.*

**H**igh on the bluffs of west-central Mississippi, above the confluence of the Yazoo and Mississippi rivers, sits the ruins of Fort St. Pierre. Established in an area occupied by the Yazoo and Koroa tribes, Fort St. Pierre was the northernmost outpost of French Colonial Louisiana in the Lower Mississippi Valley, and it was intended to be a trading post that would help maintain the loyalty of local Native American tribes and aid France in its bid to control trade along the Mississippi River. It is one of only two sites from this period to be designated a National Historic Landmark in the state of Mississippi.

JESSICA CRAWFORD

Constructed in 1719, the fort was a substantial complex featuring a large palisade and a moat that was built to house 100 marines and 200 French settlers, though far fewer people actually resided there. It was intended to be a trading post with Native Americans, but because of its distance from the



*Raymond Barker and Fred Bruler stand at the site of the fort.*

French capital in New Orleans, it was poorly supplied. Archaeological investigations revealed that the inhabitants of the fort obtained most of their supplies from local Indians.

Fort St. Pierre was destroyed in December 1729 when it was attacked and burned in an uprising by the Koroa and Yazoo Indians. Of the twenty-five people at the fort, only nine women and children survived. The French never returned to the fort and it disappeared under heavy growth until the area was occupied by a Civil War fortification and supply depot between 1862 and 1865. The fort was thought to have been destroyed by construction of a bridge across the Yazoo River in the early 1900s. In the 1970s, after the bridge was removed and the ruins were found to be largely intact, archaeologists with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History

and Harvard University excavated the site from 1974-77.

Raymond Baker, the land owner, recently donated over ten acres containing the remains of the fort. His donation is good news for the Conservancy and for the Friends of Fort St. Pierre, a group that has promoted the site's historical importance. Frederick Briuer, a retired research archaeologist with the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, Mississippi, has been the driving force behind this group, and he recently helped unveil a historic marker at the site.

Future plans for Fort St. Pierre include onsite exhibits, an evaluation of erosion threats, a geophysical survey, and possibly more excavations. The Conservancy is very grateful for Baker's donation and his dedication to the preservation of this monumental site.

—Nikki Mattson



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