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A 10 lb. Parrott shell sees the light of day after 150 years underground, thanks to Don Bailey.
Photo by Don Bailey

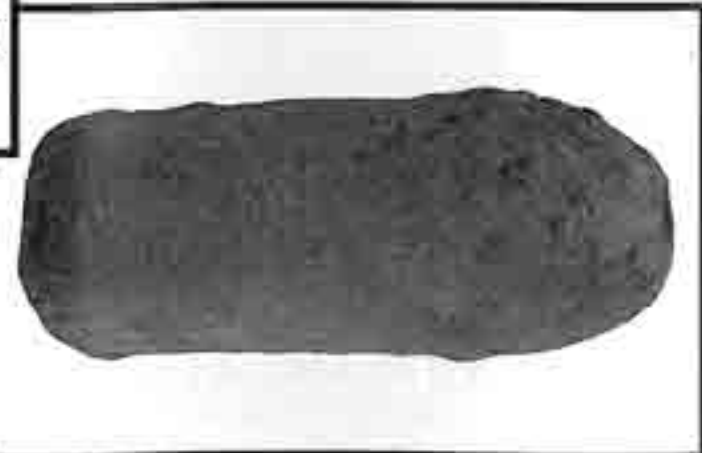
Fired from one of the Union gunboats, this 80 lb. artillery shell has been fused with a standard Borman time fuse (shown in the inset photo). Donnie Denton made the find. *Photos by Craig Nesmith*



Jim Hammonds holds a freshly dug 4.5" Dyer shell. These were among the scarce projectiles found at the hunt site, which consisted of 4000 acres surrounding the fort. The inset shows the same shell after being properly cleaned.
Inset Photo by Jim Hammonds



Those who recover artillery projectiles often have to work hard for them, and this hunt was no exception. Witness this 12 lb. shell almost three feet deep in the ground, dug by Paul Sampson.
Photo by Rick Phillips



This 100 lb. Parrott shell was typical of the big projectiles fired at the fort by the Union gun boats on the James River. This one was recovered by Preston Strickland. These heavy shells assured that the Confederate occupation of the fort would only be temporary.
Photo by Butch Holcombe

By the time the weekend was over, a virtual timeline of relics had been found spanning all of the fort's military occupations, from the late 1700's up until the close of the War Between the States. The search here also confirmed several key locations, including an early 1800's hospital site, three distinct New York cavalry camps, and the path of the Confederate cavalry charge which took place after the fort's take-over by the Union Army.

After the Civil War, the fort had served its purpose of protecting the James River, and fell into disrepair, never to be occupied again. It's worth noting that almost all of the items dug during the three day hunt were of 1865 vintage or before, giving an unspoiled look into the past that's rarely seen.



Measuring almost a foot long, this side knife sports a solid brass handle made in the shape of a woman. The inset photo shows the detail of the circled area. Donnie Denton detected the item, which probably belonged to an officer.
Photos by Craig Nesmith



This Model 1850 sword pommel was recovered by Ralph Crowther. As is usually the case, the rest of the sword was nowhere to be found.
Photo by Butch Holcombe



Spanish coins were not uncommon at the fort, but these two were among the best. Mike Harvey recovered these beauties, a two reale and an eight reale. *Photo by Mike Harvey*



There is speculation that this Spanish cobb, recovered by Paul Sampson, was once a heart shaped "love token." It appears that the upper left of the heart's "lobe" has been broken off, and a new hole punched in the coin for wear.
Photo by Butch Holcombe



Steve Sosebee recovered this 1806 English Cart-wheel Penny, possibly taken from a British soldier as a souvenir during the War of 1812.
Photo by Steve Sosebee