

### Known Inhabitants:

Francisco Menéndez; Mingo, wife & daughter (runaways from Samuel de Bordieu); Pedro de Leon (runaway from Captain Caleb Davis of Port Royal); Francisco & Ana Garzía; Francisco Díaz, wife Francisca Xaviera, two children Miguel & Maria; Juan Jacinto Rodríguez & wife Ana María Menéndez.



### Work:

The free black militia worked with the Spanish military and other citizenry to fortify defenses and provide critical intelligence reports on enemy activity. They labored in the coquina quarries, became masons and carpenters, and took up other trades in order to care for their families and their homes.

### Food:

Corn, biscuits and beef were provided from government stores in St. Augustine, by order of Governor Montiano, until the Mosé people could plant crops and harvest them. The salt water creek provided all types of fish and shellfish.

### Death of Fort Mosé:

In 1740, during the War of Jenkin's Ear, British General James Oglethorpe sent soldiers to attack Fort Mosé in efforts to subdue St. Augustine. The ensuing battles destroyed the fortress. The Mosé militia conducted military sorties against the British holding Fort Mosé and the eventual British defeat at "Bloody Mosé", lead to Oglethorpe's retreat from the area. By 1752, a new fort was constructed. Free blacks lived there until 1763 when, along with the Spanish, they were forced to relocate to Cuba. With no one tending to the area, hurricanes, strong winds and the constant up and down movement of the tidal marshes took its toll on that land and slowly brought about the disappearance of what was once Fort Mosé.

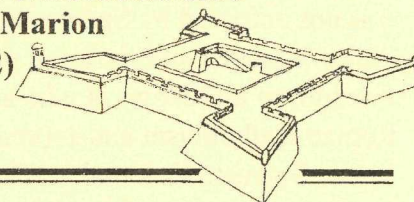


On October 12, 1994, the Secretary of the Interior designated Fort Mosé as a National Historic Landmark. The State of Florida holds title to the 24 acre site and it is a part of the Florida State Park System.

*This brochure produced by the National Park Service, with funding provided by Eastern National (Bookstore) our Cooperative Association.*

# Castillo de San Marcos National Monument

(called Fort Marion  
...1825 - 1942)



## Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosé

**(Fort Mosé - - - - 1738 -1763)**

Africans made considerable contributions to the early development and defense of the Florida territory. No where was this more evident than at Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosé or Fort Mosé. Founded in 1738, it was the first known free black settlement to legally exist in North America.

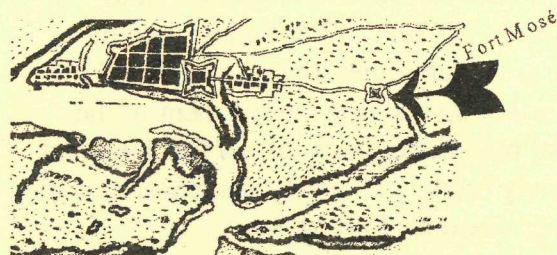
Fort Mosé was a maroon community, which were societies composed of escaped slaves living as free people. Existing in all regions of the New World, maroon communities were an expression of defiance to the oppressive institution of slavery. The rebellious nature of these societies made them illegal. Fort Mosé, however, was created by colonial decree, therefore, legally chartered.

The Spanish fugitive slave policy issued in 1693 was a major reason why Fort Mosé came into being. It granted freedom to those who committed "theft of self", from British plantations. At times this policy was not enforced by Spaniards. In 1733 Philip V issued a declaration granting freedom to all runaways who accepted Roman Catholicism and served four years in the Spanish Colonial Government. In 1738, Governor Manuel de Montiano complemented this action by establishing Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosé. When it was finished the fort was described as a walled fort with indian type thatched huts for shelters. In 1740, during the War of Jenkin's Ear, British General James Oglethorpe sent soldiers to attack Fort Mosé in efforts to subdue St. Augustine. The ensuing battles destroyed the fortress. Governor Montiano evacuated the blacks from Fort Mosé and 43 of those free blacks served in the defense of St. Augustine while English troops occupied what was left of Fort Mosé. The eventual British defeat led to Oglethorpe's retreat. In 1752, the blacks returned to the Fort Mosé townsite, and a new Fort Mosé was built with an earthen-walled rectangle with the major land-side curtain wall extending 165 feet in length. At the corners of the walls were small bastions which mounted 2 each 3-pounder cannon and 6 stone throwers. The earthworks was covered with Spanish bayonet (yucca plants) and

surrounded by a moat 3 feet wide and 2 feet deep. The only entrance to the fort was a gate in the southern wall, and inside, the fort included a lookout tower, several houses, and a well. The blacks rebuilt their town and chapel outside the fort walls and they prospered until the Spanish evacuation to Cuba in 1763.

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### Importance to the Castillo:



Fort Mosé was located two miles due north of the **Castillo de San Marcos**, at the head of Mosé Creek. This tributary gave access to North River which flowed past St. Augustine. Trails to the north and west passed near the fort. With both waterways and trails, this northern outpost was of great benefit and of strategic significance to the Spanish military. The new fort was placed under the direct leadership of former slave Francisco Menéndez. It served as a sanctuary to runaways, as well as a valuable military outpost.

### Life at the fort:

Living within the fortress were about 100 men, women and children who formed social connections within as well as outside the settlement. Many of these were from African tribes such as the Carvalis, Mandinka, Gambas and Guineas. A Spanish officer was assigned to oversee the area, but the former slave Menéndez was the true commander of the Mosé militia for over 40 years. A Franciscan priest was assigned to live with these people in order to instruct them in Catholic doctrine and customs. A church and a house for the priest were built within the walls of the fort and 22 homes were constructed outside its walls. Spanish records reveal 147 marriages took place at the fort. The people of Mosé maintained relationships with the people of St. Augustine and indian tribes of the region and as a result, marriages and fraternal relations developed. In 1759, the only known census of Mosé showed that there were sixty-seven people living within the community. When Spain regained Florida in 1784, they did not attempt to rebuild Fort Mosé but it is possible that some of the free blacks returned with them and lived within the community of St. Augustine.

