

Fort Moultrie

SOUTH CAROLINA

ADMINISTRATION

Fort Moultrie is administered as part of Fort Sumter National Monument by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 428, Sullivan's Island, SC 29482, is in immediate charge.

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U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Fort Moultrie has had a long history. Three generations before the Civil War—in another revolution—at the first of three forts built on this site, Col. William Moultrie and about 400 South Carolinians beat off a squadron of 9 British warships on June 28, 1776. The Battle of Sullivan's Island, or Fort Moultrie as it came to be called, was one of the most decisive engagements of the American Revolution. It kept the south free of British control for the next 3 years and allowed Southern men and supplies to strengthen the patriot cause in the North.

The present Fort Moultrie was built between 1807 and 1811. Its low 15-foot-high walls, covering 1½ acres, were built of sand faced with brick inside and out. Full armament was about 40 guns. Three brick barracks built within the courtyard housed up to 500 men, and a powder magazine held up to 500 barrels of gunpowder. A furnace used to heat solid shot to red glow was also built in the courtyard. The barracks and furnace were destroyed in the Civil War, but the fort's original walls and powder magazine stand intact.

In the mid-1830's, while the U.S. Government was trying to relocate the Seminole Indians to open Florida to settlement, Osceola, a self-made leader of the Seminoles who opposed emigration to the west, fought a 2-year guerrilla war against settlers and the U.S. Army. Finally captured, he and 200 other Indians were confined at Fort Moultrie to isolate them from Seminoles still fighting the war. Osceola died in Moultrie from malarial complications after only 1 month of confinement. Before

his death, however, he had become a celebrity to Charlestonians and was granted considerable freedom within the fort.

New improvements in naval and coastal artillery occurred after the Civil War, among them the development of breech-loading, rapid-fire guns. Battery Jasper was built in 1896 to hold these powerful new weapons. The huge concrete structure would also provide protection against increasingly powerful naval armament. Although never tested in battle, such coastal batteries played a substantial role in safeguarding the United States from enemy attacks.

After World War II, when new weapons had completely transformed tactical and strategical concepts, forts like Moultrie became obsolete; and in

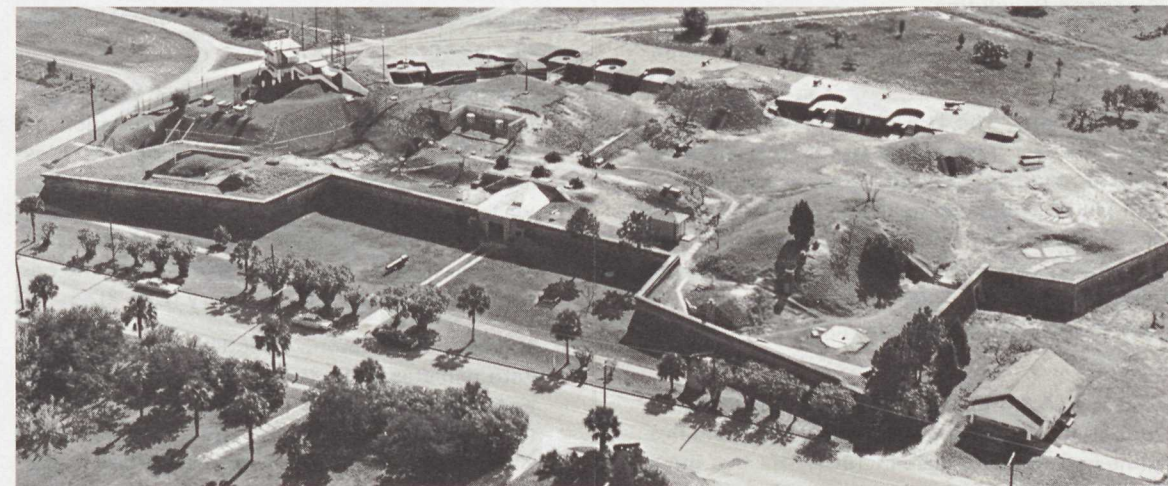
1947, after 171 years of service, it was officially deactivated. In January 1961, the National Park Service took over its administration.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Fort Moultrie is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in winter and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in summer. It is closed Christmas Day.

The fort is on west Middle St. on Sullivan's Island. From U.S. 17B take S.C. 703 to Middle St. Camping and picnicking facilities are on Isle of Palms 4 miles east of Fort Moultrie.

Please protect yourself and help us protect the fort by staying on the stairs, walks, and flat sections. Please do not remove or disturb relics.



A WALKING TOUR OF FORT MOULTRIE

The following guide should be used with the accompanying plan of the fort. Numbers on the signposts correspond to the numbers in the text and on the map.

- 1. Sally port.** This is the fort's main entrance. In flanking guardrooms, soldiers could assemble to protect the doors, or to "sally" out to counter-attack enemy forces. The original rooms were destroyed during the Civil War; these were built after the war.
- 2. Revolutionary War cannon (underground).** British sailors fired small 6-pounder guns like this one against the first Fort Moultrie during the American Revolution.
- 3. Orientation signs (enter roofed Observation Post).**
- 4. Battery Lord.** The U.S. Coast Artillery began using the last guns added to this fort in 1903. The 15-pounder, rapid-fire guns were used to protect the minefield guarding Charleston Harbor. Only Battery Lord of all the rapid-fire batteries was retained as a part of World War II defense project for the Charleston vicinity. Newer and more efficient guns replaced the others.
- 5. Battery McCorkle.** A three-gun battery that mounted earlier-model 15-pounder, rapid-fire guns was ready for use in 1901. The five guns mounted in Batteries Lord and McCorkle all

fired projectiles weighing 15 pounds. A powder charge of 5 pounds was used to propel the shells at a muzzle velocity of 2,600 feet per second for a distance of 5 miles.

- 6. Battery Bingham.** This two-gun battery was built in 1899 to protect an underwater minefield guarding the harbor. The guns, of British manufacture, could be loaded, pointed, and fired rapidly. They used 5½-pound charges to fire 45-pound shells.
- 7. Principal Magazine.** These two rooms served as the main storage magazine after 1873. During the period 1876-97, military funds were cut and the temporary wooden floor rotted away. When the construction of the new rapid-fire batteries began, alterations were made throughout the fort. A concrete floor was added and this magazine was used as the principal magazine again.
- 8. Northeast Bastion.** The post-Civil War armament consisted of large-caliber guns such as 15-inch Rodmans and 200-pounder Parrott rifles mounted behind protective brick walls. These walls served to protect the guncrews from direct fire. The powder magazine served this position (Gun 1) and a similar mount at the entrance to this magazine's gallery (Gun 2).
- 9. Bronze field cannon.** Effective at short range with canister shot, these 12-pounder smoothbore Napoleons could spray the inside of open forts with numerous balls. Used by defenders, they could break up an attack before it got close enough for the enemy to climb the walls.

This type of gun was the most commonly used fieldpiece during the Civil War.

- 10. Protective earth covering.** The South improvised to meet the changing warfare. When Union rifled cannon proved to be far more damaging than the old smoothbore guns, Confederates covered the fort's 1809 powder magazines and the channel faces with sand, which absorbed the explosive rifle shells. In contrast, the brick walls of Fort Sumter could not be covered and Union rifle shells reduced that fort to rubble. The post-Civil War construction included a concrete magazine and more earth covering.
- 11. Postern gate.** During the Civil War, the Confederates added a mortar battery on the west flank of the fort. The mortars fired 10-inch shells and were protected by huge earthworks. The soldiers manning the position used this gate going to and from the fort.
- 12. Post-Civil War construction.** Army engineers learned from the Civil War, and in the 1870's built permanent underground service magazines and passageways throughout the fort. Congress, however, did not give the Army much money, so engineers placed the Civil War smoothbore Rodman and rifled Parrott guns on temporary platforms.

If you are interested in more walking, an old sidewalk outside the east wall of the fort leads to the beach. Along the way you will walk through typical sea-island vegetation that is being allowed to return to its natural state. At the beach, look back at Fort Moultrie and see how low the walls are.

