

# 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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**National Park Service**  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

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 posts 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 counterattack enemy forces. The original rooms were built after the war.
- 2. Service Magazine.** Army engineers learned from Civil War bombardments, and in the 1870's built permanent underground service magazines and passageways throughout the fort. Service magazines were placed near the gun positions for rapid transport of ammunition.
- 3. Battery Lord.** Three-inch, rapid-fire guns were used to protect the minefield guarding Charleston harbor. Of all the rapid-fire batteries, only Battery Lord was retained as a part of the World War II defense project for the Charleston area. The guns were mounted in 1903 and were the last artillery installed at Fort Moultrie.
- 4. Battery McCorkle.** This three-gun battery and the two guns of Battery Lord fired 3-inch, 15-pound shells for a range of 5 miles. Battery McCorkle was ready for use in 1901.

- 5. Battery Bingham.** This two-gun battery was built in 1899 and was the first of the three rapid-fire batteries. The guns were of British manufacture and were larger than those used in McCorkle and Lord. They fired 45-pound shells.
- 6. Principal Magazine.** These two rooms were built in 1873 and served as the main storage magazine. The decaying wooden floors were replaced with concrete when construction of the rapid-fire batteries began during the Spanish-American War. Other alterations were made throughout the fort during the same period.
- 7. Northeast Bastion.** Post-Civil War armament at Fort Moultrie consisted mainly of large caliber guns such as 15-inch Rodmans and 200-pounder Parrott rifles. The nearby powder magazine served this position (Gun 1) and a similar mount at the entrance to this magazine's gallery (Gun 2).
- 8. 1809 Powder Magazine.** When Union rifled cannon proved to be far more destructive than the old smoothbore guns, the Confederates covered the fort's 1809 powder magazine and

the exposed walls with sand, which absorbed the explosive rifled shells. In contrast the brick walls of Fort Sumter could not be covered and Union rifle shells reduced that fort to rubble.

This entrance leads to a post-Civil War concrete magazine. This later construction is connected to the 1809 powder magazine by a doorway. The 1809 magazine is the oldest structure in the fort. When you arrive at the old magazine, note the ventilating passageway.

- 9. Postern Gate.** During the Civil War, Confederates placed a mortar battery on the west flank of the fort. The battery fired 10-inch shells from behind huge protective earthworks. Soldiers manning the position used this gate going to and from the fort.
- 10. Bronze Field Cannon.** This type of gun was the most commonly used field piece during the Civil War. Effective at short range with canister shot, these 12-pounder, smoothbore Napoleons could spray the inside of open forts with numerous balls. Used by a fort's defenders, they could break up an attack before the enemy could reach the walls.

- 11. Orientation Circle.**

