



General Duncan Lamont Clinch
1787-1849

General Clinch was a hero of the Seminole War and a Congressman from Georgia. Fort Clinch was named for him in honor of his service to his country.

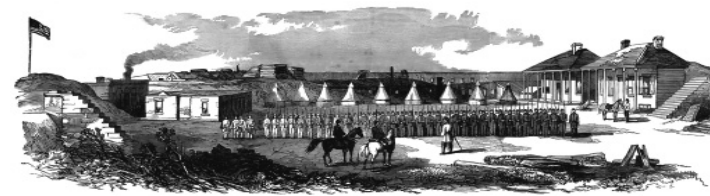


In Defense of the Nation
1794-1868

Three systems of fortifications were designed to protect the coastline of the United States of America during its first century. First System Fortifications consisted of earthworks surrounding wood structures. Second System Fortifications were made of earthworks and stone and brick structures. Third System Fortifications, built of thick masonry walls, provided the ultimate design for fort structures from 1812-1868. Fort Clinch was a Third System Fortification.

Construction on Fort Clinch began in 1847. The fort, shaped like an irregular pentagon, has five tower bastions. It was built of masonry and stone with a two wall system of brick and earth. The fort was designed to garrison 500 soldiers and 78 pieces of artillery.

A civilian workforce, directed by officers of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, was employed to construct the fort. Progress was slow and by 1860 only two-thirds of the walls were completed and not a single cannon had been mounted. The guard rooms, prison, lumber sheds and carpentry shops were completed. The storehouse and kitchens remained unfinished.



Interior of Fort Clinch
Frank Leslie's Journal, 1862

The Civil War
1861-1865

At the beginning of the Civil War, as Florida seceded from the Union, Confederate forces quietly took control of Fort Clinch. Rather than continuing construction on the fort, the Confederate Army established batteries in the town of Fernandina and at strategic locations on Amelia and Cumberland Islands. Federal forces, advancing along several South Carolina and Georgia coastal islands, caused General Robert E. Lee to authorize the withdrawal of Confederate forces from the area in early 1862.

On March 3, 1862, as the Confederate evacuation was nearing completion, Federal warships and troops arrived to reestablish control of Fort Clinch. Company E of the 1st New York Volunteer Engineers worked tirelessly to complete the fort.

Despite continuing efforts, Fort Clinch was never completed. In 1869, it was placed into caretaker status.

Partial list of military units at Fort Clinch and Fernandina during the Civil War

Federal Regiments

1st New York Engineers	33rd US Colored Troops
4th New Hampshire Infantry	(1st South Carolina Infantry)
7th New Hampshire Infantry	3rd US Colored Troops
7th Connecticut Infantry	4th US Colored Troops
9th Maine Infantry	8th US Colored Troops
11th Maine Infantry	21st US Colored Troops
97th Pennsylvania Infantry	34th US Colored Troops
107th Ohio Infantry	7th United States Infantry
157th New York Infantry	

Confederate Regiments

1st Battalion Florida Infantry	Fernandina Volunteers
2nd Florida Infantry	Palatka Guard
3rd Florida Infantry	Jeff Davis Rifles
4th Florida Infantry	Marion Dragoons
24th Mississippi Infantry	Marion Light Artillery



Spanish American War
1869-1898

From 1869 until 1898, the Army maintained Fort Clinch on caretaker status. On February 15, 1898, the sinking of the USS Maine in Havana harbor thrust the United States into war with Spain and brought the fort back to life. Battery "A" of the 6th United States Artillery arrived at Fort Clinch and readied it for war. The soldiers immediately set about building a gun mount for an eight inch breech loading rifle on the fort's northeast parapet. The weapon was mounted six months later. Four 15 inch Rodman Columbiads were also placed into service and a mine field was laid in the sound in front of Fort Clinch. With the ending of hostilities in late 1898, all troops were removed and Fort Clinch was returned to caretaker status.



A Diamond in the Rough
1926-1942

The Federal government sold the fort and surrounding property to private interests in 1926 because it was no longer considered of military value. In 1935, the State of Florida bought the fort and surrounding property in order to preserve it and provide outdoor recreational opportunities. Between 1937 and 1942, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 1420 repaired the fort and constructed the visitor center, roads, camping area bathhouse and picnic area. The work of the CCC here and across the State became the foundation of the Florida State Park system. Fort Clinch is one of Florida's first eight state parks.



The Second World War
1942-1945

The U.S. Armed Forces pressed Fort Clinch into service one last time during World War II. The Coast Guard, in joint operation with the Army and Navy, established and maintained a surveillance and communications system within the fort and on various islands in the area.

In September of 1942, the use of horses for beach patrol was approved. The mounted patrol kept watch for landings of spies and saboteurs along the beaches until 1945 when the fort site was returned to the State of Florida.



A National Treasure
1945-Present

Today, Fort Clinch stands as one of the finest examples of a Third System Fortification in existence and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic interpreters provide authentic insight into the lives of the Army, Navy and Coast Guard personnel who served at Fort Clinch between 1847 and 1945. Fort Clinch is a symbol of how the United States of America provides protection from hostile forces to its citizens.

Safety Guidelines

Fort Clinch was built for war, not for safety. This is a historic site honoring the soldiers who served here. For your safety and the protection of this historic site, please observe these guidelines while visiting the fort:

- ◆ Adults must accompany children.
- ◆ Use established stairs and walkways. Fort stairs are steep and narrow and railings are absent. Walkways are uneven with many trip hazards.
- ◆ Do not climb on walls and brickwork.
- ◆ Do not enter barricaded areas.
- ◆ Do not climb or sit on cannons.
- ◆ Do not walk on vegetated slopes.
- ◆ Do not run, engage in horseplay, shout or make loud noises.
- ◆ Do not smoke, vape or eat in the fort.

Florida State Parks are in various stages of accessibility and are working to improve access to facilities. Should you need assistance to enable your full participation, please contact the Ranger Station (904) 277- 7274.

**Large
Print**

Alternate format available upon request at the Ranger Station

Fort Events

Saturday 9am - 5pm

Sunday 9am - noon

Federal Garrisons
1st full weekend of month

Confederate Garrisons
March & October

World War II Garrison
Memorial Day weekend

Spanish American War Garrisons
April & September

History of the American Soldier
November

Candlelight Tours
First Saturday evenings, September to May Friday and Saturday evenings, June to August Reservations are required. For more times and information please call the Ranger Station (904) 277-7274
Subject to change.

Events are subject to cancellation or change. For more information and latest updates, please visit:

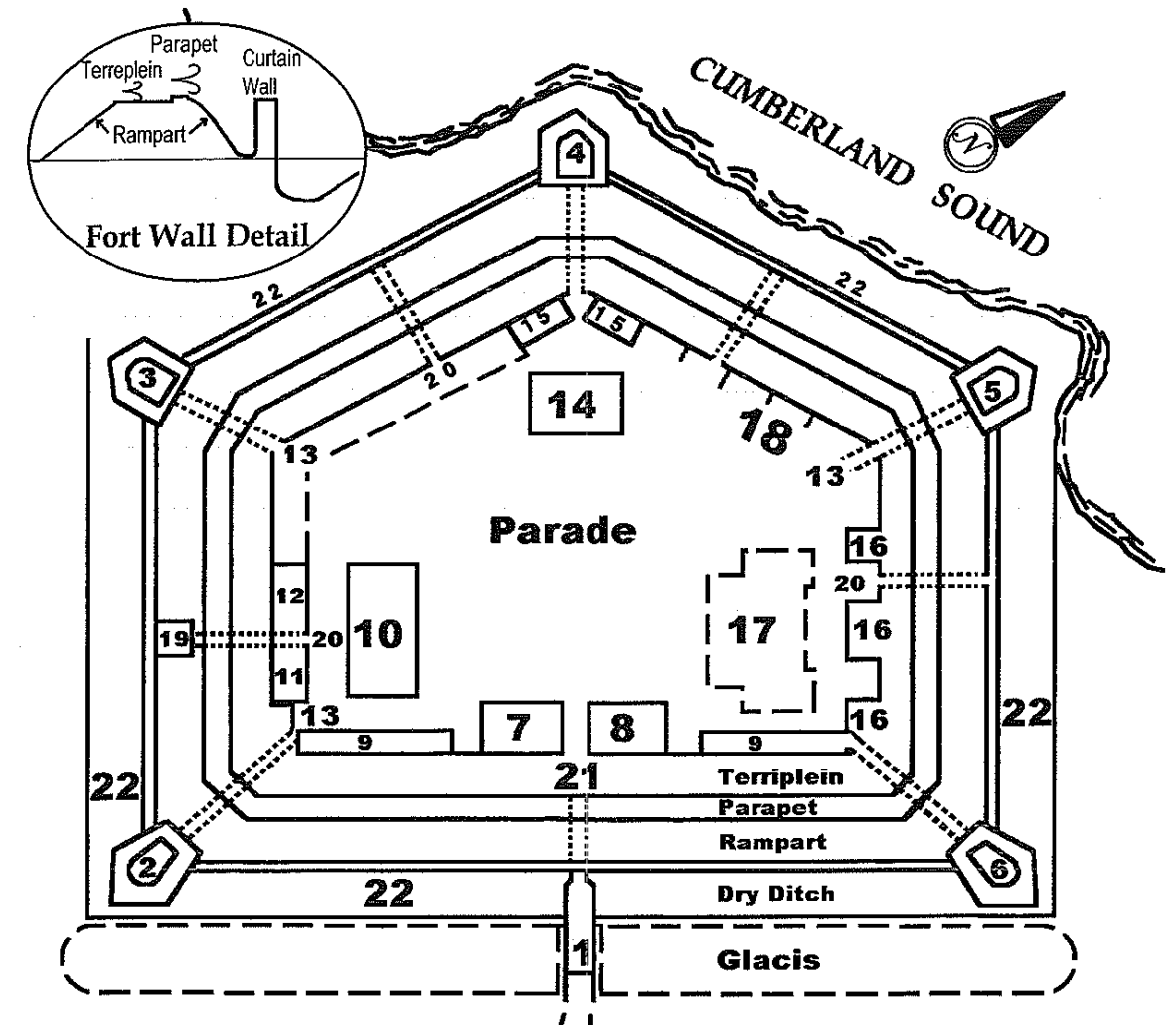
<https://www.floridastateparks.org/park-events/Fort-Clinch>

Soldiers Needed to Garrison Fort Clinch!

To volunteer, report to the soldier in the fort or leave a message at (904) 277-7226.



FORT CLINCH 1847 - 1945



FORT CLINCH DIAGRAM



- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Draw Bridge | 12. Blacksmith Shop |
| 2. South Bastion | 13. Bastion Galleries |
| 3. Southwest Bastion | 14. Storehouse/Dispensary |
| 4. Northwest Bastion | 15. Carpenter Shop/Lumber Shed |
| 5. North Bastion | 16. Kitchens/Laundry |
| 6. East Bastion | 17. Unfinished Officers' Quarters |
| 7. Prison | 18. Unfinished Enlisted Men's Barracks |
| 8. Guard Rooms | 19. Enlisted Men's Latrine |
| 9. Ramps | 20. Curtain Wall Galleries |
| 10. Enlisted Men's Barracks | 21. Sally Port |
| 11. Bakery | 22. Curtain Wall/Scarps |

Please see back page for important safety guidelines and accessibility information.