

INTRODUCTION

Fort Mott State Park is located on the Delaware River in Pennsville, Salem County, New Jersey. Originally, an Endicott-era fortification built as part of the federal government's late 19th century plan to defend the Delaware River, today Fort Mott State Park offers a unique blend of historical, cultural and recreational activities for visitors. The welcome center and museum contains exhibits that define Fort Mott's place in state and national history.

HISTORY

The land where Fort Mott State Park now stands was purchased in the 1830s by the United States government as the future site of a fortification. Originally called "The Battery at Finns Point", the proposed fortification was one of a three fort plan to protect growing industries and shipping along the Delaware River. Construction began in 1872 but was halted in 1876 due to lack of funding; only two gun emplacements and several magazines were completed.

With progress in military technology made during and after the American Civil War, the United States' defenses were dangerously inadequate. In 1885, President Grover Cleveland, at the request of Congress, appointed the Endicott board, named after its chairman Secretary of War William Endicott, to study the existing coastal defenses and develop a coastal defense plan for the United States. This plan determined where defenses should be built or improved, the order in which the work would proceed, and the quantity and type of guns that would be placed at each fort. The main defensive concept for the Delaware River was the dispersion of armaments into three separate fortifications: a new fortification in New Jersey, a new fortification in Delaware and upgrades to the existing fortification on Pea Patch Island located between New Jersey and Delaware in the Delaware River.



In New Jersey, the original plan for the battery at Finns Point was abandoned and construction of new fortifications began in 1896. This fortification was officially renamed Fort Mott on December 16, 1897 to honor Major General Gershom Mott. Born in Lambertton, NJ, General Mott was a decorated veteran of the Mexican-American War and American Civil War.

At Fort Mott, large caliber weapons, three 10-inch and three 12-inch guns were installed on disappearing carriages. The gun emplacements were located behind a 750-foot-long and 35-foot-thick concrete and earthen embankment, which was sloped to form the "parapet" wall. These guns had an effective range of seven to eight miles and shot projectiles that weighed 600 and 1,000 pounds, respectively. Beneath the six gun platforms were powder and shell magazines, ammunition hoists, a telecommunications system and an electric generating station. Two batteries, each with 5-inch rapid fire guns, and one battery with two 3-inch rapid fire guns were also part of the defenses designed to counter fast moving smaller warships which might evade the large caliber guns. These smaller guns also protected the fort from potential land attack. When completed, Fort Mott contained cutting-edge military technology.

Behind the 10-inch and 12-inch gun emplacements were the parados and the moat. Paradoss is a French term for an earthen mound located behind a fortification. The paradoss was constructed using the fill from the moat. These aspects of Fort Mott's design provided the rear defenses for the fort.

In 1902 and 1903, two steel fire control towers were built to improve aiming of the guns. Observers stationed in the towers, in conjunction with plotting room personnel, directed the gunfire of the 12-inch and 10-inch guns.



Fort Mott was a self-contained military community. The post had over 30 buildings, including two large barracks, non-commissioned and officer's housing, a hospital, a post exchange, a library, a guard house, a stable, a YMCA and a school for the soldiers' children. The Delaware River served as the main transportation infrastructure for Fort Mott; munitions, supplies and construction materials arrived at the fort by barge.

Troops were regularly stationed at Fort Mott from 1897 to 1922. With the construction of Fort Saulsbury near Milford, Delaware the technology at Fort Mott was deemed obsolete. From 1922 to 1943, the federal government only maintained a care-taking detachment at the fort. Towards the end of that period, Fort Mott's guns were dismantled and moved to other locations or cut up for scrap. Fort Mott was declared "surplus property" in 1943 and in 1947, the State of New Jersey purchased Fort Mott, as a historic site, from the federal government. On June 24, 1951, it opened to the public as Fort Mott State Park.



FEATURES AND ACTIVITIES



Welcome Center and Museum

The welcome center and museum contains exhibits highlighting Fort Mott's history, a biography of Gershom Mott, rotating displays and a video program. Visitors can also obtain park and regional information and purchase gifts and souvenirs.



Interpretive Program

Historic interpretive programs are available for visitors of all ages. Fort Mott offers visitors regularly scheduled programs. Guided tours and outreach programs can be customized to meet your group's needs. Groups may schedule activities, tours and outreach programs by contacting the park office.



Fort Mott History Trail

Using the interpretive guide available at the park office, walk Fort Mott History Trail to learn about Fort Mott's construction, its importance to the region and 19th century military technology.



Finns Point Trail

This half-mile walking path will take visitors to Finn's Point National Cemetery. The cemetery is the final resting place of 2,436 Confederate prisoners of war and 138 Union guards who died on Pea Patch Island, and has been a burial ground for veterans and their families since the Civil War.



Ferry Service (May to September)

Take a round-trip ferry ride to Fort Delaware on Pea Patch Island and enjoy additional educational and recreational activities. Please call the Fort Mott park office at 856-935-3218 or Fort Delaware office at 302-834-7941 for additional information.



Picnicking

Visitors can enjoy picnicking at Fort Mott with scenic views of the Delaware River. Tables and grills, a playground and several large playfields are available. Two pavilions can be reserved in advance for larger groups.



Access For People With Disabilities

Fort Mott State Park is partially accessible for people with disabilities. Please contact the park office for further information regarding disability access. Text telephone (TTY) users, call the NJ Relay & CapTel Service at 711 or 1-800-852-7897 for English or 1-866-658-7714 for Spanish.



Pets

Pets must always be on a leash no longer than six feet in length and under the control of the owner at all times. Please clean up after your pets.



Keep It Clean and Green

Bring a bag or two and carry your trash out with you. Trash cans are not provided. Don't forget to recycle!

NOT PERMITTED

Swimming, alcoholic beverages, metal detectors, smoking and vaping* are NOT permitted in this park.



*Smoking and vaping permitted only inside your personal vehicle.

To report an emergency or suspicious activity, call 1-877-WARN-DEP (1-877-927-6337) or 911.



FORT MOTT STATE PARK
454 Fort Mott Road
Pennsville, NJ 08070
856-935-3218
fortmott@dep.nj.gov

Directions: Take I-295 or NJ Turnpike to exit 1 at Pennsville, Route 49 East to Fort Mott Road. Turn right onto Fort Mott Road and travel 3 miles. Park is located on right.



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Fort Mott State Park



State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Parks and Forestry
State Park Service



FORT MOTT State Park



Historic Features/Points of Interest

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Battery Gregg | 10. Peace Magazine | 19. Guard House |
| 2. Battery Harker Service Area | 11. Postern Tunnel and Battery Lane | 20. Ordnance Warehouse |
| 3. Battery Harker Gun Platform | 12. Battery Edwards | 21. Post Headquarters |
| 4. The Parapet | 13. Battery Krayenbuhl | 22. Parade Ground |
| 5. Battery Arnold | 14. Telephone Switchboard Room | 23. Finns Point Trail |
| 6. 1870s Gun Emplacements | 15. Generator Room | 24. Post Rifle Range |
| 7. Cable Hut | 16. Latrine | 25. Wharf |
| 8. 1870s Magazines | 17. Moat and Parados | |
| 9. Western Fire Control Tower | 18. Eastern Fire Control Tower | |

- Open Field
- Forest
- Developed Area

- Water
- Wetland

- Finns Point Trail (0.52 mi)
- Parados Trail (0.2 mi)
- Fort Mott History Trail (0.64 mi)
- Paved Path

- Ferry Service (Seasonal)
- Fire Control Tower
- Museum
- Park Entrance

- Park Office
- Parking Lot
- Picnic Area

- Picnic Shelter
- Playground
- Restrooms