



Foundation Document Overview

Fort Frederica National Monument

Georgia



Contact Information

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Purpose



FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT preserves and protects the historical, archeological, and scenic resources of colonial Fort Frederica to commemorate and interpret its role in American history for the education and inspiration of this and future generations.



Significance

Significance statements express why Fort Frederica National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Frederica was the southernmost English settlement in the British colonies of North America, establishing British control over “debatable lands” also claimed by Spain. Fort Frederica National Monument commemorates the town of Frederica and the British victory over the Spanish on Saint Simons Island that effectively ended the Spanish claim to Georgia and the Carolinas, shaping the nation’s history and boundaries as we know it today.
- Fort Frederica was an active, colonial, military town and home to a wide variety of residents who were selected for a number of reasons, including their trade skills and crafts needed to support the establishment of a British presence that solidified control of the region.
- General James Edward Oglethorpe, founder and first leader of the British colony of Georgia, secured its success through both political campaigns in Britain and military strategy in Georgia. Oglethorpe led in the organization, design, and construction of Fort Frederica where he established his only permanent residence in the New World.
- Fort Frederica National Monument contains a remarkable breadth of intact archeological resources that represent a “time capsule” of 18th century colonial life on the Georgia frontier. The site itself is important in the development of historical archeology, both as a science and as an educational medium.
- Located on the banks of the Frederica River, Fort Frederica National Monument protects roughly 250 acres of coastal barrier island including expansive salt marshes and mature maritime forest that serve as both a visual and tangible link to the physical environment that existed during the height of Fort Frederica’s prominence on the colonial frontier.

Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Archeological Resources**
- **Historic Structures (King's Magazine and Barracks ruins)**
- **Museum Collections**
- **Frederica River and Salt Marsh**
- **Views and Vistas**

Fort Frederica National Monument contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Monuments (Abbott Monument and Colonial Dames Monument at Bloody Marsh)**
- **Appropriate Recreational Opportunities**



Interpretive Themes



Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Results of the Battles of Gully Hole Creek and Bloody Marsh destroyed the dreams of the Spanish for an empire and cemented British control of the southern colonies.
- The colonial town of Frederica is a classic example of the symbiotic relationship between a military base and a supporting residential community.
- Civilian life in the colonial town of Frederica was a study in adaptability and flexibility in the face of hardships and social variance.
- Archeological investigations and research at Fort Frederica continue to reveal a multitude of personal stories and historic revelations about life on Saint Simons Island.
- The early history of the colony and the town of Frederica reflects Oglethorpe's effort to bring about a successful implementation of the colony's charter from King George.
- During the 18th century, General James Oglethorpe encountered a fertile and varied ecosystem on Saint Simons Island, Georgia. Although much has changed during the intervening centuries, there are still places where such beauty and diversity endure. Efforts are underway to conserve and restore aspects of Saint Simons Island's ecology, which influenced the history and lives of the people on the island.

Description

Established as a unit of the National Park Service in 1936, Fort Frederica National Monument preserves, protects, and interprets the remains and archeological record of Fort Frederica, a British colonial settlement. Located along the Georgia coast on the island of Saint Simons, Fort Frederica is 12 miles northeast of the city of Brunswick. The national monument consists of two separate sites, the primary site of Fort Frederica on the banks of the Frederica River and the smaller Battle of Bloody Marsh site roughly 6 miles from the main unit. Together, these two sites include approximately 282 acres that comprise the national monument.

Designed by General James Edward Oglethorpe in 1736 and named for Frederick Louis, the Prince of Wales, Fort Frederica was developed as a military outpost consisting of both a fort and a town that supported military operations. Fort Frederica was strategically placed on the island of Saint Simons at a bend in the Frederica River. In choosing this location, Oglethorpe's intention was to lay claim to this region for the British crown and protect the southern boundary of the new British colony of Georgia from the Spanish in Florida. During the 1740s, Fort Frederica reached its peak as the small town took shape supporting more than 800 residents who brought their various trades, skills, and crafts to the colony.

Oglethorpe's strategic foresight in establishing Fort Frederica paid off when the War of Jenkins' Ear began in 1739. As this war between the European powers of Britain and Spain took shape in the colonies of the New World, Spanish forces from Florida advanced north and landed on Saint Simons Island. In response, Oglethorpe's British forces attacked a Spanish reconnaissance party resulting in the Battle of "Bloody Marsh." Despite the name, casualties were light and the Spanish continued their campaign on Saint Simons Island, but quick maneuvering by Oglethorpe at Gully Hole Creek convinced the Spanish to retreat from Georgia. This victory not only affirmed Georgia as a British colony, but also signaled the beginning of Fort Frederica's decline. When peace was declared in 1748, Fort Frederica's garrison (the original 42nd Regiment of Foot) was disbanded, and the town was eventually abandoned and fell into ruin.

Because the fort and town were abandoned and remained relatively undisturbed since the colonial period, Fort Frederica National Monument protects an archeological record that is mostly intact and retains a high level of integrity. Early work in the field of historical archeology conducted at Fort Frederica illustrated the scholarly use and importance of archeological investigations in exploring historic sites. Archeological research has unearthed numerous artifacts and exposed existing building foundations in an effort to enhance understanding and interpretation of Fort Frederica and the lives of its inhabitants.

The Fort Frederica National Monument Visitor Center provides an orientation film about the history of Fort Frederica as well as exhibits about the lives of the people who called Saint Simons Island home. Following this orientation, visitors are encouraged to take a self-guided tour through what remains of Fort Frederica. Here they can learn more about the site through wayside displays and walk in the footsteps of Georgia's colonial past.

