

## Safety First!

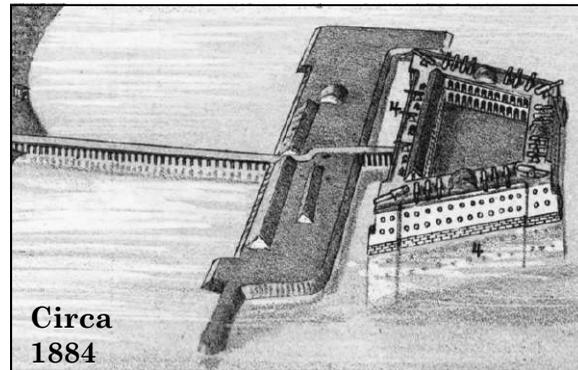
Fort Taylor is a historic structure which was built for war, not for safety.

### Exercise caution:

- ◆ **Stairs are steep and narrow**
- ◆ **Walkways are uneven**
- ◆ **Beware of trip hazards**

### For your protection, please:

- ◆ **No running or horseplay**
- ◆ **Stay on established walkways**
- ◆ **Stay off walls and brickwork**
- ◆ **Do not go into barricaded areas**



This fort is a landmark, honoring the men and women who worked and died here. As a sign of respect, please do not shout or make other loud noises.

**Thank you  
for your cooperation.**



## Two Decades of Construction

In 1845, construction began on the three-tiered masonry fort which was built on a shoal 1,200 feet out from the shore of Key West and connected to the island by causeway. The fort is comprised of four buildings - one serving as living and dining quarters, the other three for armaments. Forty cisterns are located underneath the fort which stored fresh water supplies. By 1860, the fort was able to hold troops and cannon. Due to lack of materials, disease and hurricanes, it took 21 years to fully complete the construction of Fort Taylor.

## The Civil War

As Florida prepared to leave the Union in 1861, U.S. Army Artillery Captain John Brannan and his men marched into the fort and claimed it for the Union. Federalist troops retained control of the fort throughout the war and it became the base of operations for the Union Navy's East Gulf Coast Blockade Squadron, a group that prevented supply ships from reaching Confederate ports. Close to 300 vessels were captured and detained by the squadron, but because of the fort's formidable defenses it never saw hostile action.

## Major Modifications

In order for the old fortress to remain useful, changes needed to be made to accommodate improved coastal artillery weapons, so soldiers and engineers occupied Fort Taylor while the fort was "modernized" during the Spanish-American War. In 1898, the top two tiers of the fort were removed and two new batteries - Osceola and Adair - were built. The Army used Civil War-era cannon that remained at the fort as in-fill to help support the newer battery walls. This project was completed by 1905.

## The World Wars & Beyond

During World War I, Fort Taylor was part of the new Coastal Artillery Corps. Long-range cannon and rapid-fire cannon were emplaced on the batteries to protect Key West Harbor. These were removed and two anti-aircraft guns were emplaced for World War II, when the fort served as a military training site. In October 1962, it saw brief use during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Though it served as a military installation for over 100 years, Fort Taylor retired from service without ever having been under attack.

## Landlocked!

The fort became fully landlocked in 1965 with fill deposited from several dredgings of the Key West Channel.

## Cannon in the Casemates

### 8-inch Columbiad

Technically a seacoast howitzer, this large caliber, smoothbore, muzzle-loading artillery fired heavy spherical shells using a heavy powder charge.

- Length: 119 inches
- Weight: 9,200 pounds

### 10-inch Rodman Gun

This hollow-cast, smoothbore gun was designed to fire spherical shot and shell and intended to be mounted in seacoast fortifications.

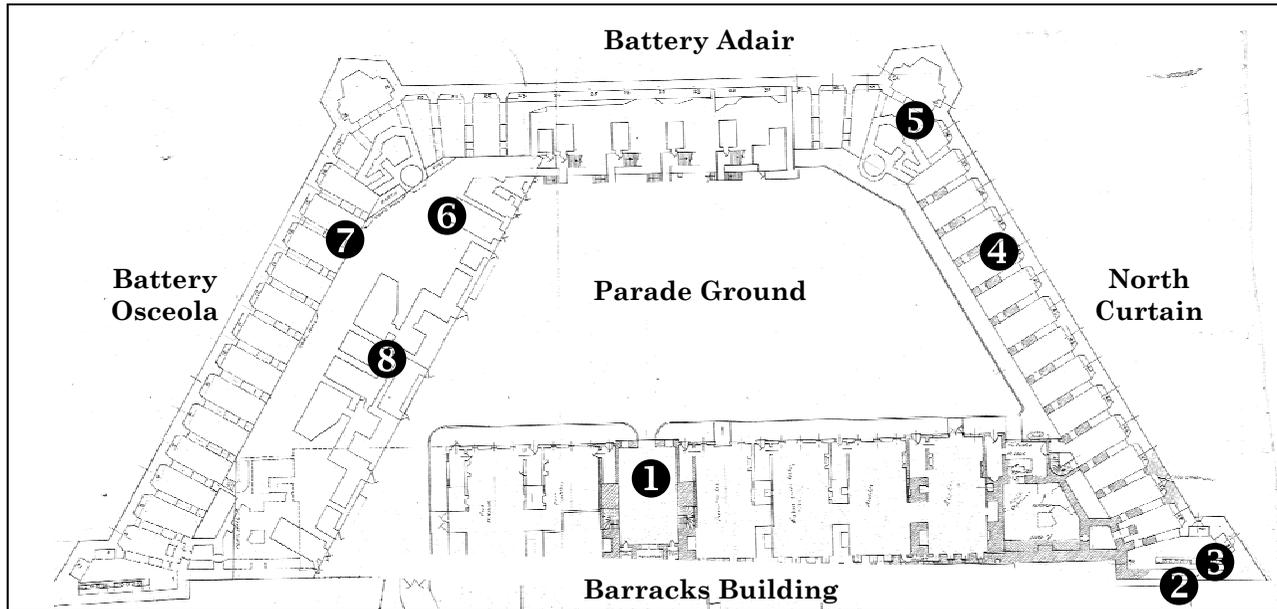
- Length: 136 inches
- Weight: 15,050 pounds

### 10-inch (300-pounder) Army Parrott Rifle

This muzzle-loading, rifled artillery weapon fired a solid, bullet-shaped projectile with 15-groove, right-hand twist rifling.

- Length: 156 inches
- Weight: 26,900 pounds





**Barracks Building**

Contained mess halls, kitchens, wash rooms, infirmary and chapel.

**North Curtain**

Cannons were set up here in rooms called casemates.

**Battery Adair**

Named for Lt. Lewis Adair who died of wounds from combat with Sioux Indians in the Dakota Territory.

**Battery Osceola**

Named for Osceola, a leader of the Seminole Nation.

**Parade Ground**

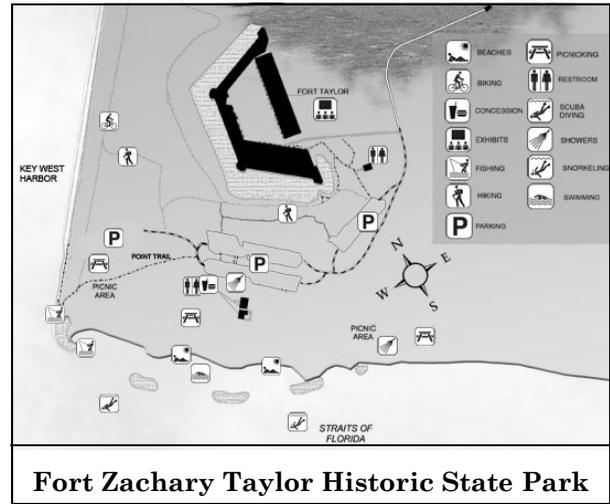
Area used for troops to assemble for inspection or drill.

**Ground Floor**

1. Sally Port (original entrance)
2. Tidal Flush Latrines
3. Bastion
4. Casemates

**Top Floor**

5. WWII Anti-Aircraft Gun Mount
6. WWI/WWII Gun Mount
7. Cannon used as in-fill
8. Dumb-waiter



Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park

**Landmark & State Park**

Fort Zachary Taylor was named a National Historic Landmark in 1973 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1976, the U.S. Department of the Interior deeded Fort Taylor and the surrounding property to the State of Florida. In 1985, it was opened to the public for use as a recreational site, part of the Florida State Park system.

**Fort Zachary Taylor  
Historic State Park**  
601 Howard England Way  
Key West, FL 33040  
(305) 292-6713



FloridaStateParks.org



In response to the War of 1812, the United States began building a series of fortresses to defend the nation's coastlines. In 1845, construction began on a fort to protect Key West Harbor. When finished, it was one of the most important forts in the United States because it defended the waters around Key West, the Straits of Florida and the Gulf of Mexico. The fort, named after President Zachary Taylor, was used in four wars and decommissioned in 1947 following the abolishment of the Coast Artillery Corps.