



CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



What Was Christmas-Past Like at Fort Monroe?

At Fort Monroe and other posts, December 25th was just another duty day until it became a U.S. Army holiday during the Civil War. Before that, Christmas was mainly observed by the fort's two churches and possibly by the Hygeia Hotel with some decorations.



Most of Fort Monroe's holiday traditions began in the 20th century, for instance the lighting of the post Christmas tree. The earliest reference for that event is a Daily Press article from Dec. 25, 1919, about the lighting on Christmas Eve of "the Jeff Davis tree" on the parade ground, witnessed by Santa Claus and a large crowd singing carols accompanied by the post band. Later, gifts were dispersed to 700 enlisted men and 70 children. There is also mention of a large electric star on the roof of the Army YMCA building. At some point this event was moved to Cannon Park, where it took place much earlier in December, and Santa arrived on a fire truck.

According to a Coast Artillery Journal item from the late 1930s, on Christmas morning members of the band went around Fort Monroe playing music appropriate for the occasion. More recently, band musicians performed in various offices days before the actual holiday.

One venerable Army tradition was the post commander's New Year's Day reception, as mentioned somewhat uncharitably by officer's wife Irma Ireland in her 1906 diary. This has gone by the boards so that everybody can stay at home and watch the seemingly endless parade of bowl games. On that note, here's hoping that your holiday will be merry and bright !



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

With your help we have sponsorships for over 160 wreaths this year at Arlington Cemetery. All of our wreaths were placed on the graves of veterans on December 13th .

November 15, 2024



CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



Come Join Us For A Free Members Event

**Battlefield Tour Of The Lower Peninsula Saturday,
March 22, 2025**

Many people are aware of the Peninsula Campaign of 1862 and of the fierce battles fought outside of Richmond during the “Seven Days.” This campaign had a great effect on the conduct of the war. It saved Richmond from capture by the Army of the Potomac, and it brought Robert E. Lee to the forefront of the generals of the Confederacy when he assumed command of what would become the Army of Northern Virginia.

However, there were several events on the Lower Peninsula, between Fort Monroe and Williamsburg, which set the stage for the engagements that would take place outside of Richmond. What happened in our local area is often forgotten. But in recent years neighboring municipalities have made access easier to sites that in the past were overgrown, difficult to find and overlooked. Now it is possible to make a comprehensive tour of some of these sites and gain an understanding of what happened here and its relevance to the fighting outside of Richmond.

The tour will be led by Dennis Mroczkowski, who had served as the director of the Casemate Museum for twenty years. He is a retired US Marine Corps colonel, and he has led many staff rides and tours of battlefields across Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

The tour will take about three and a half to four hours, and will be limited to 20 persons. Transportation will be by private automobile. The areas to be visited are accessible by easy walking and provide a good perspective of the topography that was critical to the engagements on the Lower Peninsula. The tour will begin at Fort Monroe, and end at some of the sites of important engagements at Williamsburg.

Please make reservations for the tour by November 30th by contacting Dennis Mroczkowski at m4ski@comcast.net. We will take more reservations in early 2025 if space permits.



These books are available at the Casemate Museum Gift Shop which is open 10:00-4:00 Friday through Sunday

HAPPY THANKSGIVING EVERYONE!





CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



What's In A Name?

These street signs are only one of many examples of the Army's reuse of old materials for new purposes. On the other side of the sign for New Garden Street, the phrase "AT YOUR SERVICE" is printed in red, and the text on the back of the Griffith Street sign appears to be the tops of letters reading "PROJECT TITLE." Because of the similar lettering, it is possible that the street signs were both cut from the same original piece of metal?



According to a 1964 memorandum, the origins of the name for both New Garden and Griffith Streets are unknown, however it is noted that both were named by Army Ground Forces after World War II. Chester Bradley, the first curator of the Casemate Museum, noted in 1974 that after World War II, "some streets were named for distinguished World War II officers." While Griffith is ostensibly a surname, New Garden seems more like a description of an outdoor space. But, is it possible the space between the two words was added later? The 1964 memo lists the road as "Newgarden." With some research we were able to determine that Major General Paul Newgarden famously served as the first commander of the 10th Armored Division during World War II—only one of his many accomplishments across his career in the U. S. Army. He died in a plane crash in 1944 after agreeing to reroute the flight to allow a junior officer to visit with his family; he was posthumously awarded the Legion of Merit. Paul Newgarden is a likely candidate for the inspiration for the short road between Patch and Bunker Roads. While a street sign may seem like a mundane object in a museum's collection, it can reveal fascinating stories.

[Read about how you can sponsor a wreath this Christmas on a veterans grave at Arlington Cemetery on the following page.](#)

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

The Casemate Museum Foundation (CMF) is partnering again this year with Wreaths Across America (WAA) [A Non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization] to remember the fallen and honor those who served by placing wreaths at grave sites in State and National Veterans' Cemeteries. We will receive \$5.00 from WAA for every wreath attributed to the CMF. Multiple options to participate are available, with the most basic being a single wreath for \$17.00 placed on a grave in Arlington National Cemetery. The cutoff date to ensure wreaths reach Arlington National Cemetery is December 3rd. Please visit www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/VA0198P or scan the QR code below to sponsor a wreath and see all the options available. Thank you for your continued support of the CMF!



Join Us in Our Mission
Remember ★ Honor ★ Teach

★ **December 14, 2024** ★

National Wreaths Across America Day



**Help Casemate Museum Foundation
honor local heroes!**

Sponsor a wreath today to be placed on a
veteran's grave this December at Arlington
National Cemetery.

Scan the QR code to make a donation online or
visit www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/VA0198P



#LiveWithPurpose

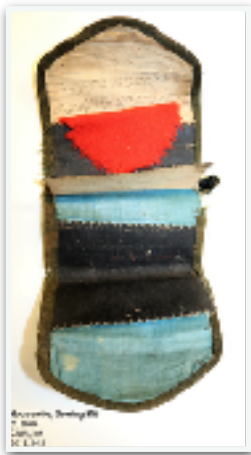


CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



Did Anyone Take A “Housewife” to War?

A “housewife” was a small portable sewing kit used by soldiers in the field to repair uniforms because sewing, a task for which women were largely responsible, had to be taken on by men. Sewing kits proved to be useful tools for soldiers while on campaign across many conflicts. This kit belonged to George W. Carr who came to Fort Monroe in 1864.



“Housewife” kits were usually made by a woman in a man’s family and given to the man upon his departure for the battlefield. We do not know who made this kit for William Carr, complete with written quotes from the Bible to comfort and encourage him. Carr’s mother Harriet or one of his three older sisters Mary, Rhoda, and Julia, may have constructed the kit. The year before leaving for Fort Monroe, Carr married Lucretia Thompson-- called “Lu” in his letters home—and it may have been she who gifted Carr with the “housewife”. In a letter to his brother Wallace, George writes that “There seem[s] to be much that is wearing both on our clothes and lives.” Perhaps in making repairs to his clothes, George Carr thought of his mother, sister, or wife, and was comforted.

• GHOST WALKS AT FORT MONROE

• Friday October 18th through Sunday October 21st

- Plan to come to a 1-hour ghost themed walking tour through Fort Monroe.
- Begins at the Visitor and Education Center at 6pm.
- Tickets available on Eventbrite, \$25 per ticket.



This Book is available in our gift shop



CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



School Days At Fort Monroe

September traditionally marks the beginning of a new term at public and private schools, colleges and universities across the nation. For many years this was also true at Fort Monroe, where specialized training became one of the installation's primary missions.



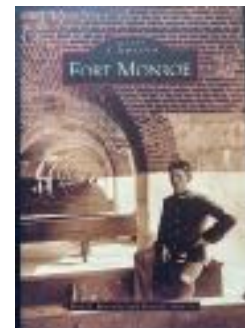
In April 1824, the fort received official authorization for a school to provide instruction for artillery officers. In fact this was the Army's first service school, and Bvt. Col. Abraham Eustis was appointed as its first commandant. The Artillery School closed abruptly in 1834 due to a turf battle between Fort Monroe's artillery officers and engineer officers. Apparently, it did not reopen until 1858, with additional courses for noncommissioned officers. However, in 1860 it closed again for eight years because of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

The Artillery School operated without interruption from 1868 into the early 20th century, but in 1907 the Artillery Corps was divided into two branches, Field Artillery and Coast Artillery. Fort Monroe became the home of the Coast Artillery School, with a new campus of stately red brick buildings that still stand near the south end of Ingalls Road. During World War I the Army Chaplain School was also located at Fort Monroe.

In June 1946 the Coast Artillery School was relocated to Fort Winfield Scott, California. Fort Monroe would later serve as headquarters for the Training and Doctrine Command and the ROTC Cadet Command, but its time as a branch school for officers and enlisted personnel had ended.

Coast Artillery Corps Facts

- By 1945 the Coast Artillery Corps had largely been transformed into an anti-aircraft defense branch.
- The Coast Artillery Corps was officially inactivated on January 1, 1950.
- The 4th Battalion, 51st Artillery (Antiaircraft) was the last artillery unit to serve at Fort Monroe ending July, 1960.



**This book is available
in our gift shop**



CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH



Casemate with Fallout
Shelter Sign

The casemates inside the walls of Fort Monroe have served dozens of purposes: from firing positions for large cannons, to living quarters, and administrative offices. During the Cold War, many of the casemates at Fort Monroe were designated as fallout shelters in case of nuclear attack. This sanitation kit (found in Casemate 23 in 2010) would be stored inside the casemate until if and when needed. Packed with supplies such as toilet paper and gloves, each kit could support 50 people for 2 weeks. The can served two purposes: as a storage container and, when unpacked, it could be used as a make-shift commode (with the accompanying seat).



Make-Shift Commode and Seat

FORT TALKERS PROGRAM: COASTAL DEFENSES & EXPLORING THE ENDICOTT BATTERIES

THURSDAY, SEPT 12, 2024

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Visitor and Education Center

Free, No Registration Required



Fort Monroe had the most advanced defense systems from the beginning of the Third System in the 1800s, to the Endicott Period of the early 1900s.

Join for a talk and tour by Terry McGovern, author of *American Coastal Defenses 1885-1950*, and the former Chairman of the Coast Defense Study Group to learn about the design and use of the Endicott batteries and take a close-up tour of the works.

**Terry McGovern's book
American Coastal Defenses,
1885-1950 is available in our
Gift Shop**

**Open Wed- Sun
10:00-4:30**



CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



What is So Special About Carroll Hall?



A multicolored plan of Fort Monroe marked “Drawer 57, Sheet 34” depicts six buildings within the original fort: Quarters No. 1 near the East Gate; Quarters Nos. 17 and 18 facing Casemate 20; a hospital near the Main Sallyport; a long barracks building facing the Parade Ground; and a structure below the northwest bastion identified as “Officer Quarters” that we know as Carroll Hall. Exactly when and why it was given that name remains a mystery, since no other Fort Monroe building from the 1820s received such an honor.

However, this residence for officers and their families was destined for even greater distinction. In October 1865 state prisoner Jefferson Davis was transferred from his casemate cell to a set of apartments on the second floor of Carroll Hall. Later, his wife Varina and youngest child Varina Anne (known as Winnie) were allowed to join him there. According to some sources, Winnie was able to play with other children on post and attend their birthday parties and other special events, even though their parents must have known that her father was probably the most unpopular man in the United States.

On September 15, 1886, Winnie, now an attractive 22-year-old woman, recently dubbed “the Daughter of the Confederacy,” arrived at Old Point Comfort to visit the two sites where Jefferson Davis had been imprisoned. A brief paragraph in *The Home Bulletin* (published weekly by the National Soldiers Home in Hampton) noted the occasion, identifying her as “Miss Davis of Beauvoir, Miss.”

Carroll Hall continued to serve as officer quarters until 1900, when the historic structure was demolished and replaced by Building No. 9, which eventually became the headquarters for successive Army bands stationed at Fort Monroe.



This is a selection of some crafts made by Pamunkey Indian tribal citizens which are available in our gift shop. The Pamunkey tribe was among the first people to live in the Old Point Comfort area.

**VISIT OUR GIFT
SHOP**

**OPEN WED-SUN
IN AUGUST
10:00-4:30**



CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



AND THE BAND PLAYED ON



Military bands have provided music for ceremonies and concerts at Fort Monroe almost since the post was activated in 1823. The official correspondence of post commander and Artillery School commandant Col. Abraham Eustis from that period includes several urgent requests for musicians. Unfortunately, we know very little about the daily activities of those men, and the earliest photograph that we have is of the 3rd Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery Band, which provided music at Fort Monroe from June 1863 to October 1865.

During the 1870s and beyond, a “bathing pavilion” erected by the second Hygeia Hotel may have also served as a concert venue for the post band. When

the hotel was demolished in 1902, this pavilion survived and became the site of Fort Monroe band concerts until the structure was destroyed by a deadly hurricane on August 22/23, 1933.

A new bandstand reportedly designed by Major Harrington Cochran, the post adjutant, was built on land formerly occupied by the Hygeia Hotel and now known as Continental Park. The 2nd Coast Artillery Regiment Band gave the inaugural concert at the new gazebo on April 8, 1934, continuing a tradition of outdoor performances open to the public.

Although the Army departed this historic post in 2011, the Fort Monroe Authority has been able to maintain the summer concert schedule at Continental Park. Unfortunately, the first concert of the 2024 season was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions, but these free events will continue with local military and civilian bands each Thursday night at 7 PM.

UPCOMING MUSIC UNDER THE STARS PERFORMANCES AT CONTINENTAL PARK

18 July at 7:00 PM: The 208th Army Jazz Ensemble

25 July at 7:00 PM: The TRADOC Rock Band

**VISIT OUR GIFT
SHOP**

**OPEN WED-SUN
IN JULY
10:00-4:30**



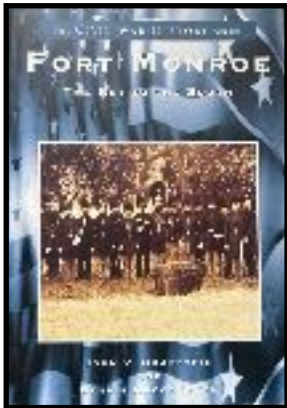
CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



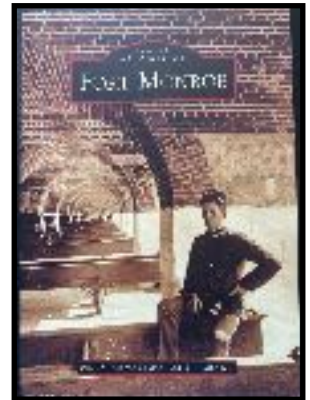
THE HISTORY OF A HISTORY BOOK

By David J. Johnson

In 1999 the now-voluminous “Images of America” series from Arcadia History Press published *Fort Monroe: The Key to the South* by Casemate Museum director Dennis Mroczkowski and local historian John Quarstein. It covered the history of Fort Monroe before and during the Civil War. When Paul Morando succeeded Dennis as director, he decided that a follow-up book was needed to carry the Fort Monroe chronicle forward from the 1870s to the present era.



The “Image of America” publishers in Charleston, South Carolina, accepted Paul's proposal and set a deadline for him to submit the final texts and photographs. I had become very familiar with the museum's photo collection, so I was brought in as co-author. Because Paul and I were federal employees, we could not receive royalties, so we assigned those payments to the Casemate Museum



Foundation which continue to this day.

A division of labor was essential: Paul wrote the text for each chapter, while I selected the photos subject to his approval, and wrote the captions. Most of those images came from our own archives, but the Hampton History Museum, the Hampton University Library, and the Mariners' Museum generously provided additional material. Choosing an appropriate cover shot wasn't easy, but Paul and I finally agreed on the artfully framed photo of a young artilleryman seated on a gun carriage in the old Water Battery.

When *Fort Monroe* was published in 2009, both authors were pleased with the result, and I was happy that many of my favorite photos could now be shared with the public. Copies of both of these books are available at the Casemate Museum gift shop. Casemate Museum Foundation members receive a 10 percent discount on all books and other merchandise in the gift shop.

VISIT OUR GIFT SHOP
OPEN WED-SUN 11:00AM-4:30PM



CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



Did Anyone Drown In The Moat ?



1st Lt. Moses Ross

Unlike his namesake, 1st Lt. Moses Ross did not have a favorable encounter with a body of water. In fact, he has the sad distinction of being the only Army officer known to drown in Fort Monroe's moat. Ironically, he was serving on temporary duty at the fort with his unit, the 79th Company, Coast Artillery Corps, stationed at Fort Adams, Rhode Island. They arrived on May 1, 1905, to take part in the annual Army-Navy war games.

Ross and his men probably set up camp in the area beyond the mortar batteries. He was already familiar with the post, having attended the Artillery School in 1904 and graduating with top honors. On May 6, he borrowed a bicycle from an old friend, Lt. James Totten, and rode to the Officers' Club, located in a set of casemate rooms under the Flagstaff Bastion. He had just written to his sister Mirah, describing the club as "...the most picturesque place I have ever been in."

Around 2 AM, Moses Ross left the club on his borrowed bike and was never seen alive again. Several hours later his body was recovered from the moat, along a cement path near the Water Battery. All accounts of the incident state that the bicycle chain snapped, propelling the rider into the moat. However, some speculate that Ross hit his head on the cement and then rolled into the water, while others suggest that he hit his head on one of the stone pieces lining the bank before entering the water. Curiously, some news articles state that the bicycle was found lying on the path, and others report that it was in the water.

As all mystery fans know, an autopsy finding no water in Ross's lungs would have meant that he was dead before entering the moat, but no such operation was performed. After a memorial service on May 8 in the Chapel of the Centurion, the remains of Moses Robert Ross were shipped by rail to his family home in Addison, Pennsylvania. He would have been 27 years old on June 3 and had been expecting a promotion, but Fate has its own timetable.

A Successful Evening with Gloria Coker

On May 9th, about 40 people gathered to hear Gloria Coker's fascinating story of her life and work as a sketch artist for the Daily Press. She talked about the inspiration for her new exhibit at the Casemate Museum: *Painting History: Letters Home from Fort Monroe*. Seven new members joined the Casemate Museum Foundation that evening. Come by the Casemate Museum to see Gloria Coker's moving paintings of Civil War soldiers and then stop by the Gift Shop!





CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



The Old Point Comfort Lighthouse



In 1800 Congress appropriated \$5000 for the construction of a lighthouse at Old Point Comfort. A builder named Elzy Burroughs was awarded the contract and completed the job in 1802 or 1803. The claustrophobic interior has circular stone steps leading up to a short metal ladder with access to the tower. Originally, the light beam was provided by 11 oil lanterns with reflectors, but this crude system was replaced in 1891 by a Fresnel lens.

For many years lighthouse keepers were subject to political patronage, but it is still remarkable that the local list includes a woman, Amelia Dewees, whose service (1857-61) parallels the term of Democratic president James Buchanan. Later in the century two African-American men, William Roscoe Davis (1870-78) and John B. Jones (1878-1908) received appointments. Both men were active in Republican politics and both achieved outstanding records as keepers.

During the War of 1812 British troops temporarily occupied Old Point Comfort and used the lighthouse as an observation post, from which they could see smoke from the burning of Hampton.

A fog bell stood near the lighthouse from 1855 to 1869 and is depicted in some period illustrations. A permanent keeper's house was built around 1891 to replace a cottage dating from 1823. The lighthouse was manned by Coast Guard personnel from the 1950s to 1973, when the entire operation was fully automated. At that time the keeper's dwelling became Army property for use by the command sergeant major. Since September 2011 it has been a private residence.

Through changing presidential administrations, wars, severe storms and other events, the Old Point Comfort lighthouse has continued to provide a beacon guiding water traffic safely through Hampton Roads, as well as an inspiration for artists, poets, and lovers.

***This miniature wooden lighthouse made by a local artist
is available for purchase in the
Casemate Museum Foundation Gift Shop.***



VISIT OUR GIFT SHOP OPEN WED-SUN IN APRIL 10:00AM-4:30PM



CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



Artifact of the Month



The US Army Quartermaster Corps handles a myriad of logistics functions. As one of the oldest branches, its mission has changed based on the needs of the Army. Known as the Quartermaster Department prior to 1912, they purchased equipment and clothing, and contracted for various services, to include providing government quarters and offices with needed furniture. This chair is one such example! The bottom of the seat is stamped “Fort Monroe VA U.S.Q.M.D” [United States Quartermaster Department] and includes the manufacturer “N.M. Sargent’s Sons” (a furniture maker in Boonville, NY) with the year 1893.

Museum Highlights

The Gloria Coker Art of Fort Monroe Exhibit will open on May 9th at 6 PM. It will include six original works that capture life in the Casemate during the Civil War times. The Exhibit will run through the end of September.

Fort Monroe Events

Free National Park Service Tours:

Meet at the Visitor Education Center

- 10 April Wednesday-Gibraltar of the Chesapeake 11:00 AM-12:00 PM
- 20 April Sunday-Tree Tour of Fort Monroe 10:00 AM-11:00 AM

Harvest Market at the Oozlefinch 12:00 PM-3:00 PM on Sundays

81 Patch Road. Runs April 14th through November 17th, except September 22nd

Check out the Fort Monroe Events Calendar: <https://fortmonroe.org/events/>

**VISIT OUR GIFT
SHOP FOR UNIQUE
FORT MONROE
ITEMS AND
SUPPORT OUR
MUSEUM**

**OPEN WED-SUN
IN APRIL
10:00-4:30**



CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



What Is The Oozlefinch?

Mythical Mascot of the Coast Artillery Corps



The Oozlefinch is a fictitious bird which flies backwards to keep the dust out of its eyes. It was born in stories in the bar at the Fort Monroe Officer's Club during the early 1900s.

Captain Tilton's wife came across a small bird-like statue while shopping in Hampton in 1905. She was struck with the prominent eyes of the bird and it reminded her of the fictitious bird stories told by her husband so she purchased it. Captain Tilton then took the bird to the Fort Monroe Club where the Oozlefinch perched behind the bar sleepily for several years

Construction of the Coast Artillery School was begun at Fort Monroe in 1908. The Oozlefinch awoke from his sleep behind the bar being aroused by the noise of the constant shaking of the dice box and insisted on joining the merry festivities. From then on, the Oozlefinch was always present and practically a member of the Coast Artillery.

By the 1920s the legend of the Oozlefinch had been firmly established throughout the Coast Artillery Corps. There was only one Oozlefinch—the one resting in the Fort Monroe Officer's Club. The Oozlefinch spent much of his time in silent contemplation (after all he was a statue). Occasionally during the 1930s and early 1940s he would stir and speak out on the issues of the day which were then recorded in the Coast Artillery Journal.

His image was used for informal insignia, signs, lapel pins and earrings. Some Coast Artillery Antiaircraft units used his image as an insignia during their service overseas during World War II. The Oozlefinch went on to become the patron mascot of Army Missilemen in the 1950s and later of the Air Defense Artillery.

This Vinyl Oozlefinch sticker is available in the Museum Gift Shop.

FUN FACTS

The Foundation has given over \$75,000 in support of the museum over the past ten years to restore Jefferson Davis' Cell Door and help fund various other exhibits.

The Gift Shop has sold over 20,000 post cards over the last ten years.

**VISIT OUR GIFT
SHOP AND
SUPPORT OUR
MUSEUM**

**OPEN FRI-SUN
IN MARCH
10:00-4:30**



CASEMATE MUSEUM FOUNDATION NEWS



Fort Monroe Commemorative Spoon 1893-1923

Artifact of the Month

Tourists have considered Fort Monroe to be a desirable vacation location for almost 200 years! As souvenir spoons became popular in America during the late 19th century, manufacturers like the Shepard Manufacturing Company (who made this Fort Monroe spoon) created designs highlighting cities, historical

sites, and events. The bowl of this spoon features a depiction of “THE MOAT/ FORT MONROE” —if you look closely, the lighthouse is visible in the background to the far left behind the Water Battery. The raised design elements of the handle emphasize the military history of the site—a saber, sponges (tools inserted into the bore of cannons after firing to

ensure that any remaining sparks were extinguished before re-loading), and a wheel (likely that of a gun carriage) appear on the handle below “OLD POINT

COMFORT.” This spoon was made between about 1893 and 1923 and is evidence of one way that folks 100 years ago could purchase a memento representing their visit to the Fort.



Museum Highlights from Dr. Bonnell

Upcoming events at Fort Monroe include the Contraband Commemoration in May, African Landing Day in August, and Veteran’s Day celebration on November 9th. More about these events to follow.

The West Bastion Big Guns project is fully funded and requests are out for bids. The Casemate Museum Foundation fully supports this project and has donated \$10,000 to help fund it. This project involves removing part of the brick wall along the Pedestrian Gate entrance and installing windows which will look into the Cannon Exhibit and the interior of the museum.

Dr. Bonnell is working on several projects including accreditation for the Museum, potentially opening the Old Officer’s Club and making Fort Monroe more pedestrian friendly.

**VISIT OUR GIFT SHOP
AND SUPPORT OUR
MUSEUM**

**OPEN FRI-SUN
IN MARCH
10:00AM-4:30PM**



**UNIQUE FORT
MONROE ITEMS!**