



FORT DUPONT COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SHAPED BY HISTORY & ANCHORED IN NATURE FEBRUARY 2022

THE NEW OLD BATTERY

Until recently, Battery Elder was all but hidden by overgrowth, as was the stunning water view behind it. But no more. The brush has been cleared, new railings have been installed and Battery Elder once again safely provides a bird's eye view of the river. The guns were delivered in December and we are in the process of sourcing two mounts for them.

Named after Civil War soldier, Maj. Samuel Elder of the 2nd U.S. Artillery, it was originally armed with two 3" rapid-fire guns on M1903 barbette mounts from Watertown. No shell or powder hoists were provided for this two-story battery, so ammunition was hand carried from the magazine level to the gun loading level. The battery cost \$18,383.36 to build and was completed in 1904.

The last concrete gun battery staffed here in Fort DuPont kept its guns in place until 1942 when they were moved to Liston Range Lighthouse just South of the Reedy Island battery.

The picture at right (from a different fort) shows a mounted three inch gun like those that will be installed on Battery Elder.



"Constructed of concrete and built in a trapezoidal shape, Battery Elder stands on the eastern edge of the fort. This installation contained two brown, five-inch, rapid-fire guns. Like the mortar and rifle batteries, the river-facing edge consists of an earthen parapet, with depressed emplacements on either side of a concrete transverse. Powder magazines, flanking the central access of the structure, and a communications/fire control room, make up the core of the Battery. Centrally-located stairs provide access to a raised walkway that leads to the gun emplacements."



INSIDE

DID YOU KNOW?
WHAT'S IN A NAME?

PRECIOUS POLLINATORS
LOTS TO LEARN

NPS NEWS
NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN

SUPER- RECYCLING
DREDGING THE CANAL
...MORE

DID YOU KNOW?

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

RUSSELL P. SMITH,
RETIRED NATIONAL
PARK SERVICE
MANAGER

To Delawareans, the DuPont name, is ubiquitous. Even with the merging of the DuPont Corporation with Dow and the emerging of three separate companies, one of those companies still retains the name DuPont.

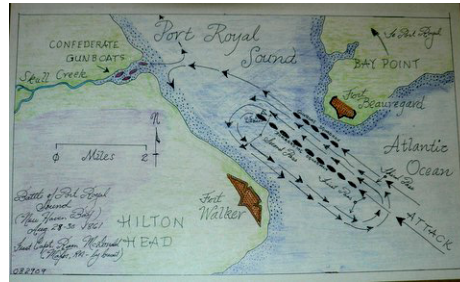
In addition, there are many DuPont names that earned their way onto the landscape, rather than being placed there as corporate labels. These include the names of the cousins who founded the modern Dupont Corporation: T. Coleman, Pierre S., and Alfred I.

Even before the corporate cousins came along, there was another DuPont who had earned a place on our landscape and that was Civil War hero, Admiral Samuel Francis DuPont, the namesake of Fort DuPont.

Samuel was the nephew of Eleuthere Irenee du Pont, the founder of the DuPont gunpowder company. Unfortunately, Samuel's father was not as lucky in business as his brother and couldn't afford to pay for Samuel's education. Nevertheless, family connections secured a midshipman's commission for Samuel at the age of 13 in the U.S. Navy.

Samuel did well in the Navy. During the Mexican War, he captured San Diego and was put in charge of the California blockade. After the war, he continued to move up through the

ranks and at the outbreak of the Civil War was assigned to a committee planning naval strategy.



That strategy included cutting off the Confederacy from foreign commerce. As commander of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, DuPont was to play a major role in that effort.

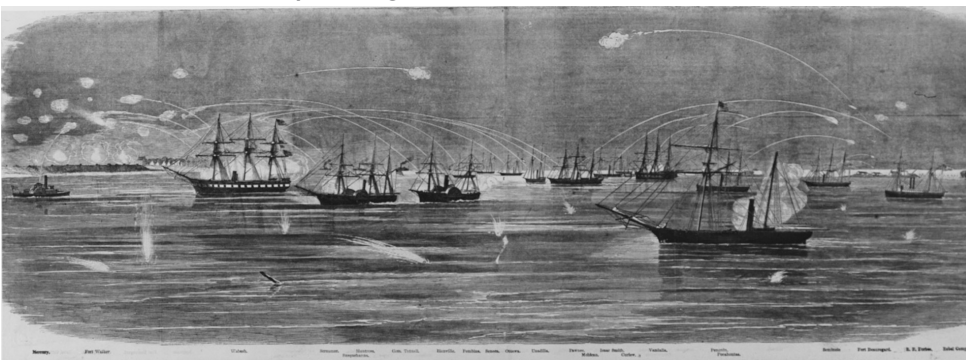
1861 was a gloomy year for the Union, until, in November, DuPont engineered a brilliant victory in the capture of the critical port of Port Royal, South Carolina. DuPont became a national hero and in 1862 was named a Rear Admiral..

In 1863 he reluctantly directed his ironclad fleet to capture Charleston, South Carolina. He didn't believe this assault could succeed, fearing that his fleet might be bottled up inside the heavily defended harbor. In any case, the attack failed, with the loss of five of DuPont's nine ironclads. After he was blamed for the defeat, he resigned to clear his name, but never had the chance to do so.



DuPont died in 1865, but his services did not go unnoticed by the nation. In 1882 Congress named a traffic circle in Washington, D.C. after him and two years later a statue of DuPont was unveiled at that site. The DuPont family had the statue later removed to Rockford Park in Wilmington.

Furthermore, as the coastal fortifications at Delaware City were redeveloped in the 1890's, the Army, following a tradition of naming forts after local heroes, christened it Fort DuPont to honor the admiral.



COMMUNITY GARDEN

There are still some spots left in the Fort DuPont Community Garden, and Spring is just around the corner (despite the recent snowfall!) Ready to try your hand at growing some food or flowers? Email cpini@fortdupont.org.



Looking for "a few good residents!"

The Library is looking for some Fort DuPont residents to round out their Board. They meet by Zoom 7 times a year. Normally, meetings are under 1 hour. Interested? Email Library Treasurer Craig O'Donnell at dadadata@atlanticbb.net

Delaware City Council also has 4 open seats. Interested? Go to Town Hall for specifics. Mayor and Council meet the 3rd Monday of the month.

SUPER- RECYCLING



The Army Corps of Engineers and DNREC is collaborating on dredging the canal at the Delaware City dock. The canal hasn't been dredged in a number of years, and the deepening of it will allow for more efficient boat transportation.

It's not just the boats that benefit, however. The dredged material will be brought to Fort Dupont, dried and then used as material for the elevated bike path.

NEW NPS SUPERINTENDENT

National Park Service (NPS) Regional Director Gay Vietzke announced that Joshua Boles will serve as the new superintendent of First State National Historical Park in Delaware and Pennsylvania. He begins his new assignment February 27.

"Joshua Boles has extensive partnership experience working with a variety of stakeholders", said Regional Director Gay Vietzke. "As a newer unit of the NPS, First State continues to build relationships with partners and communities. Joshua's experience will deepen the park's ability to work with many people connected to the park."

"I am honored and humbled to be selected as the superintendent of First State National Historical Park," said Boles. "I am excited to work with the park's staff, partners, and the local communities to help tell the stories of this wonderful park."

A 15-year veteran of the NPS, Boles currently serves at Big Cypress National Preserve in Ochopee, Florida as chief of interpretation and education. Previously, he served in the same role at New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, Roger Williams National Memorial, and Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. In 2018, he served as acting superintendent at Whitman Mission National Historic Site, where he collaborated with others to rebuild relationships with local Native American Tribes, including The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla and the Nez Perce. He has also served at Rock Creek Park, Wright Brothers National Memorial, and Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, as well as several western NPS sites. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy from San Diego State University. Boles and his wife Lorena look forward to bringing their two children, two dogs, and a well-fed cat to First State, where they plan to explore the local area and find new adventures.



OUR PRECIOUS POLLINATORS

Thanks to all of you who supported our pollinators and their habitat by buying honey. We still have a limited supply left and will have more in the spring. You can pick some up at Delaware City Trading Company on Clinton Street.

Our amazing beekeeper, Thomas Lunt, gave a fascinating presentation here on the life of bees and even brought some beehive habitat show-and-tell.



And speaking of their habitat, we are having a bee box painting session on Saturday, March 5th at 10 am (location TBD). It's a lot of fun, and spruces up the bees' digs. Maybe yours will end up in House Bee-utiful!

Residents:

Do you have questions about Fort Dupont? Email them to Terry Buchanan, our Director of Communications at tbuchanan@fortdupont.org.



Road Construction Update



There's a newer, faster way for you to check on Fort DuPont construction progress. Go to fortdupont.org/news/ and you'll find Construction Updates.



COME EXPLORE

A HISTORIC WATERFRONT COMMUNITY
IN DELAWARE CITY, DE

FORTDUPONT.ORG