



FORT WOOD



1775 Colonel Richard Gridley is appointed by General George Washington on June 16 as the first Chief Engineer. His first task is to build fortifications at Bunker Hill.

1802 Congress authorizes formation of a permanent Corps of Engineers, with an engineer school to be established at West Point, N.Y. Major Jonathan Williams, the existing inspector of fortifications, is appointed Chief Engineer and the academy's first superintendent.

1803 Ice piers are completed at New Castle, Del.

1803 FORT MIFFLIN is completed just south of Philadelphia as a masonry fort. Combining both star and bastion designs, it mounts 29 guns and a detached eight-gun water battery. Total cost of construction was \$64,361.

1811 FORT WOOD is completed off the southwest end of Manhattan, later to become the base for the Statue of Liberty.

1824 The General Survey Act authorizes the President to order surveys of routes for roads and canals "of national importance, in a commercial or military point of view, or necessary for the transportation of public mail." Responsibility for these surveys is assigned to the Corps of Engineers.



FORT MIFFLIN

1829 Construction begins on the Delaware Breakwater and Ice Breaker.

1829 The original Chesapeake & Delaware Canal is opened to traffic.

1841 Severe January flooding on the Delaware, Lehigh and Schuylkill Rivers "brought ice, rain and snow surging destructively down the valleys."

1859 The second BARNEGAT LIGHT is commissioned January 1, its predecessor having fallen into the sea due to erosion. Then the second tallest lighthouse in the United States at 165 feet, the new structure continued in service along the Jersey shore until 1944. Its designer was Lieutenant George G. Meade, who as a general went on to defeat Robert E. Lee in the Battle of Gettysburg.

1861-1865 FORT DELAWARE is reconstructed in time to serve as one of the largest and most infamous Union prisoner of war camps in the Civil War. "The Andersonville of the North" held at its peak 12,595 Confederate prisoners of war. By war's end, disease and deprivation had claimed 2,700 Confederate lives.

Corps and District Beginnings

1775

1876

DISTRICT COMMANDERS



1866-1871
Lt. Col. C. S. Stewart



1871-1877
Lt. Col. J. N. Kurtz

1824 Authorization to improve navigation on the Ohio and Mississippi (and later the Missouri) Rivers by removing sandbars, snags and other obstacles is given to the Corps of Engineers—uniquely qualified both as the only formally trained body of engineers in the young republic and as a branch of the Army.

1825 The original FORT DELAWARE is completed. The structure soon deteriorates due to inadequate foundations, its walls suffering "great and unequal subsidence."



BARNEGAT LIGHTHOUSE

1865 Direct federal participation in disaster relief begins as the federal government helps freed slaves survive flooding along the Mississippi.



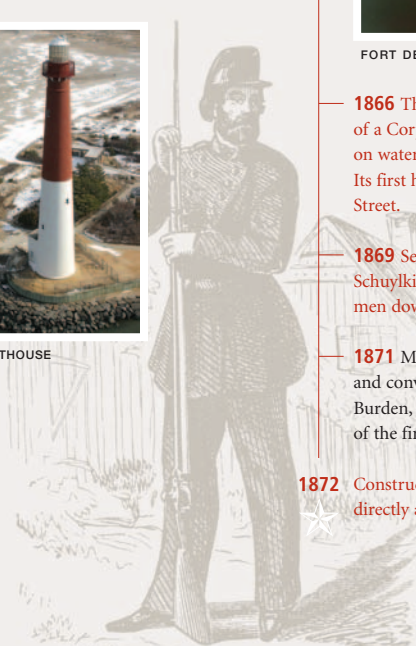
FORT DELAWARE

1866 The Philadelphia District is established as part of a Corps of Engineers that is reorganized based on watershed systems and water resources planning. Its first headquarters are located at 209 South 6th Street.

1869 Severe October flooding on the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers "swept houses and barns and even men down the furious element."

1871 Major Quincy A. Gillmore charts a steamer and converts it for suction dredging as the Henry Burden, the Corps' first hydraulic dredge and one of the first in the country.

1872 Construction begins on Fort Mott, in New Jersey, directly across from FORT DELAWARE.



American History
Corps History
District History