

# CENTURIES PAST

# EGMONT KEY



The second son of Earl of Egmont, Sir John Perceval, was a prominent politician and served as First Lord of Admiralty.



Charles III of Spain and his ministers reinforced the power of the crown and rationalized imperial administration.



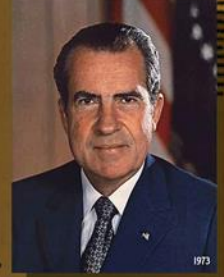
Robert E. Lee was an American career military officer who is best known for having commanded the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia in the American Civil War.



The American humanitarian Clara Barton was the founder of the American Red Cross. Her work made her a symbol of humanitarianism.



Fort Dade soldiers stand with "disappearing" gun at Battery Mcintosh. They called it a disappearing gun because the recoil made the gun drop down or disappear behind the wall for reloading.



President Richard M. Nixon enacted environmental legislation that to date protects water, air, and wilderness.

## 1757

### "Isla de San Blas y Barreda"

Although accounts of Spanish explorations in the Tampa Bay area date back to the sixteenth century, it is not until 1757 that an accurate description of Egmont's surrounding waters, tides, and winds are described in a survey conducted by Don Francisco Maria Celi. Celi named the island "Isla de San Blas y Barreda" after his superior Rear Admiral of the Royal fleet and Commander General of Havana.

## 1765

### "Accounts of Egmont Key"

In 1763 the Spanish traded the colonies of Florida for Havana with the British; soon after, British admiralty surveyor George Gauld began explorations of the area. In 1765 Gauld arrives at the island, naming it "Egmont Island" after John Perceval Earl of Egmont, a recently appointed Lord of Admiralty. Egmont Island is later identified as Egmont Key.

## 1848

### "A New Light Shines"

The construction of a lighthouse on Egmont Key is complete. This would be the only lighthouse between the Florida Panhandle and Key West at the time. This same year a devastating hurricane hits the area causing irreparable damage to the lighthouse. The lighthouse is eventually replaced in 1858.

## 1849

### "Military Opportunity"

Brevet Colonel Robert E. Lee leads an expedition to survey for possible locations of coastal forts. His expedition leads him to Tampa Bay where he recommends that Mullet Key and Egmont Key be reserved for future use by the military.

## 1856-1858

### "Third Seminole War"

Egmont Key is used as a holding area for an estimated 300 captive Seminole Indians. Among the captives is Billy Bowlegs or Holata Micco (O-lac-to-mi-co), one of the principal leaders of the Seminole at the time. In 1858 Billy Bowlegs and his troop surrender to the Army. They later agree to be transported to new Indian Territory in present-day Arkansas and Oklahoma in exchange for compensation. The steamer "Gray Cloud" departs from Egmont Key transporting Seminoles to their new sovereign nation.

## 1858

### "An Opportunity to Shine Brighter"

The year 1858 marks the completion of the second lighthouse of Egmont Key. This structure, 87-ft. tall at sea level, hosts a third order fixed Fresnel lens that is 55 inches in height. Later records show that the Fresnel lens used at Egmont Key was constructed by the Parisian company of L. Sautter.

## 1861-1865

### "The Civil War"

Lighthouse keeper at the time, George V. Richards aids Confederate blockade runners in the seizure of the Fresnel lens and other equipment from the island. Richards flees to Tampa and hides the equipment to prevent the Navy from blockading Tampa Bay. The Union gains control of the island in July of 1861. At this time Egmont Key serves as a base for the East Gulf Blockade Squadron and a refuge to Union supporters.

## 1898

### "Fort Dade"

During the Spanish-American War, Fort Dade is developed on Egmont Key to protect the Bay from foreign invaders. Several gun batteries and structures are built to support military activity on the island. Invasion of the Bay area never occurs and enemy shots are never fired from Fort Dade. The Fort, however, serves as a yellow fever quarantine station for returning troops from Cuba. Post the Spanish-American war, Fort Dade remains active as a military post and training center through WWI.

## 1921

### "Egmont Key after 1921"

Fort Dade is deactivated as little military activity takes place. During WWII Egmont Key is used as a training camp and patrol station. Military activity dwindles down after WWII except for a small U.S. Coast Guard unit that remains to care for the lighthouse and beacon.

## 1974

### "Creation of a Refuge"

Egmont Key becomes a National Wildlife Refuge, under management of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for the protection of the natural and historical significance of the island. Egmont Key is later on cooperatively managed with the Florida Park Service as a National Wildlife Refuge and State Park.

## 1978

### "A Historic Gem"

The Island of Egmont Key is listed in the National Register of Historic Places because of its significance as a site of military activity in the 19th and 20th centuries. To date, remains of Fort Dade and the historic lighthouse can be seen on the island. Egmont Key continues to preserve a part of the natural and historic culture of the Tampa Bay area for present and future generations to enjoy.