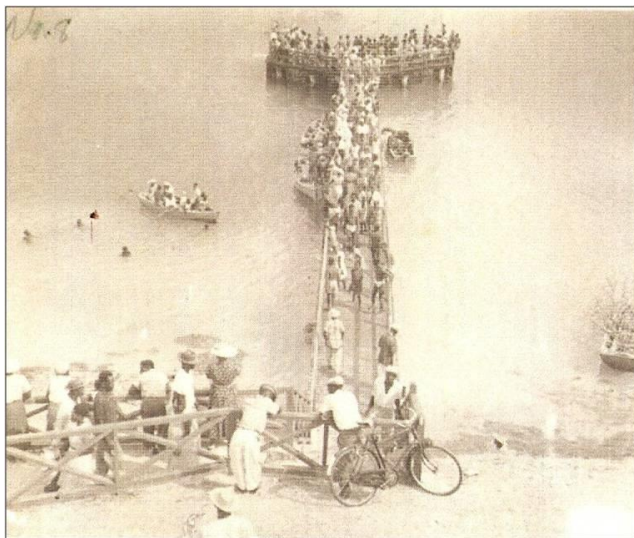


Fort James in the 1920s

Fort James was a popular bathing spot in the early 20th century. There were changing rooms, a tearoom, and a bar. The Fort could be reached by boat from St. John's.



The land pier at Fort James on the first Labour Day celebration.

MUSEUM OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
Historical & Archaeological Society

UNLOCK
the Museum

UNLOCK
Fort James

with Dr Christopher Waters
Archaeologist and Expert in Antiguan Fortifications

The Unlock the Museum series begins at Fort James and will take you on a journey deep into our past to share the hidden gems about our people.

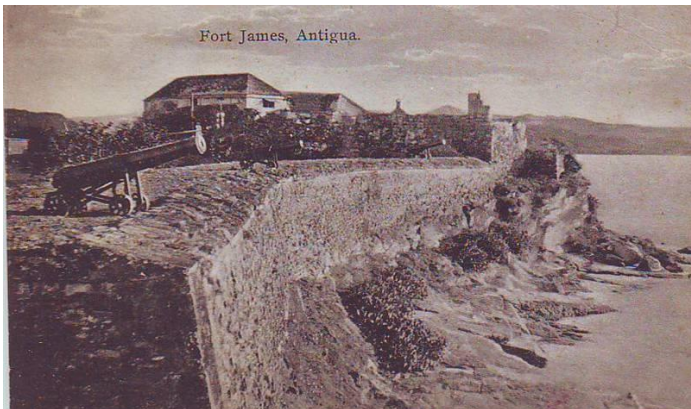
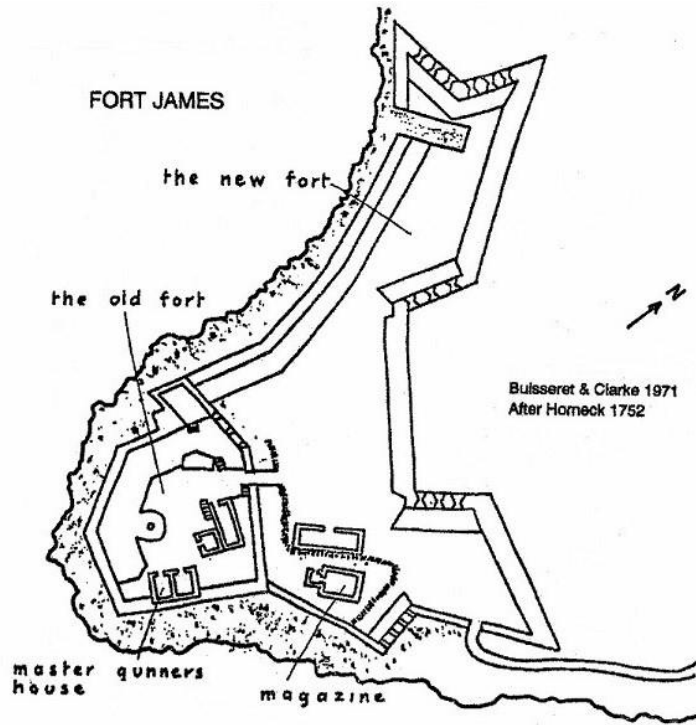
Inside we share a few facts about the renowned Fort James.

YOU HAVE THE KEYS. NOW UNLOCK!

MORE INFO
268 462 1469
museum@candw.ag

Important dates in the history of Fort James

- In 1680, Colonel James Vaughn gave land to the King for the purpose of building a fort to protect St. John's Harbour. At first this was simple earthworks, a common type of fortification at the time.
- In January 1704, the Colonial Government voted the funds to build Fort James, since by this point St. John's was more important than Falmouth. The temporary earthworks were converted to a formal fortification, forming what is today the inner citadel.
- By 1739, the Colonial Government realized the Fort was not large enough to repel a direct attack and funds were voted to add another seawall and outworks, as well as the high enclosing wall.
- The layout of the fortification remained the same from the 1740s onward, the constellation of the buildings inside the fort changed as needed. The various structures in the inner citadel date from different periods of expansion throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries.
- Starting in the 1740s, the fort served as the primary government gunpowder magazine. It was intended to house the militia's field artillery until the colonial government realized that the gate was too narrow to allow the gun carriages in and out.
- In the late 1700s, the Fort had a complement of up to 12 matrosses as well as a Captain gunner, along with families and enslaved servants. The hired gunners and matrosses were recruited from the poor white population of the island.
- A temporary chapel was added, thanks to the efforts of the Rev. J. Horsford, a Wesleyan missionary and son of a former Governor of the fort.
- In the late 19th and early 20th century, the Fort James house was used as a vacation spot for Antigua families.



From Desmond Nicholson, *Forts of Antigua & Barbuda*, and Christopher K. Waters, "Putting Forts in Their Place: The Politics of Defense in Antigua, 1670-1785," Ph.D. Diss., 2018

