

## Join the Friends of Fort Duffield

Friends of Fort Duffield is a volunteer support group dedicated to the preservation, interpretation and maintenance of Civil War Fort Duffield under the supervision of the Fort Duffield Heritage Committee, City of West Point, Kentucky.

Members assist with fund raising, educational programs, special events, tours, maintenance and the very future of Fort Duffield.

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

Friends of Fort Duffield membership is effective January 1 of year joined.  
Support is renewable January 1 each year.

- \$10.00 - Individual
- \$15.00 - Family
- \$20.00 - Organization
- \$25.00 - Business

Please indicate areas of interest:

- Special Events
- Living History
- Educational Programs
- Fund Raising
- Maintenance and Restoration

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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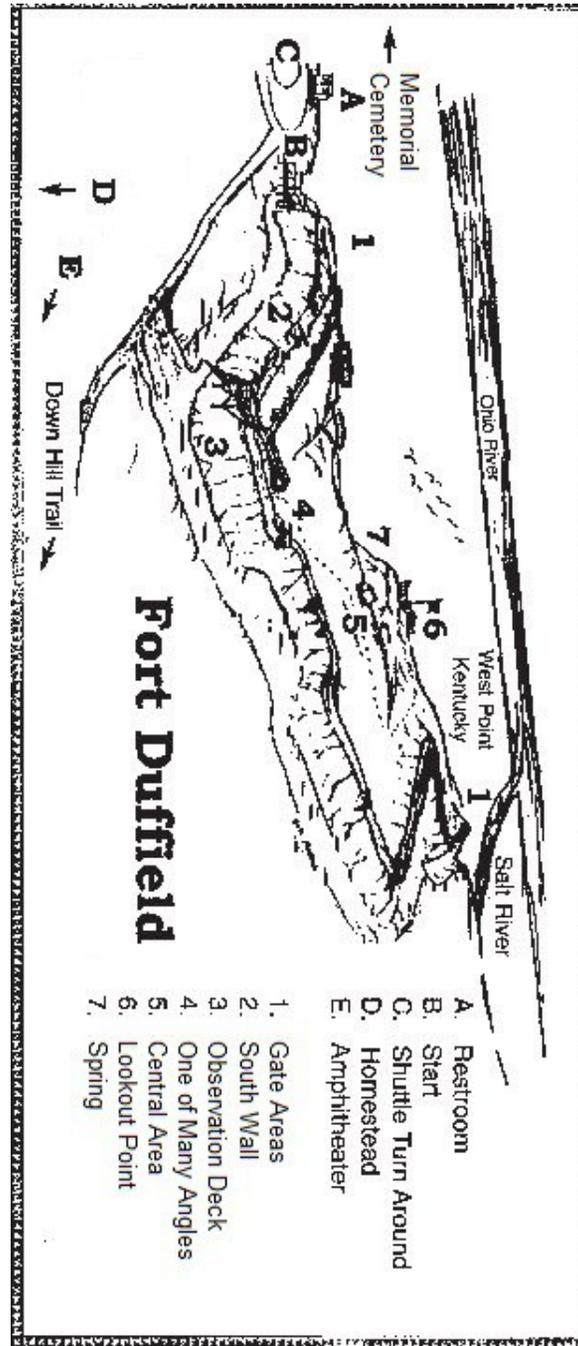
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*Make check payable to and mail to:*

Friends of Fort Duffield  
16706 Abbott's Beach Rd  
West Point KY 40177

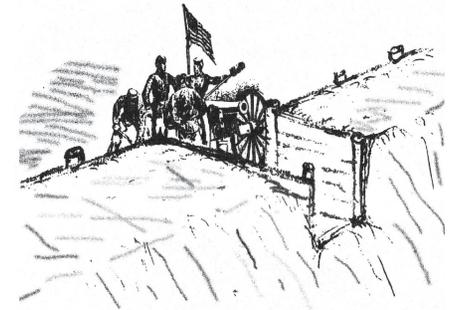
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Property of the City of West Point, Kentucky  
502-922-4260 <http://westpoint.ky.gov>

## Walking Tour U. S. Civil War Fort Duffield West Point, Kentucky



General William Tecumseh Sherman ordered the construction of a fort at this site to protect his supply base in West Point and the City of Louisville via the Louisville-Nashville Turnpike and Ohio River.

Work began on the fort on November 3, 1861 and took about one and a half months to complete. This impregnable fortress was never challenged. However, its strategic position no doubt played an important role in the Civil War in Kentucky.



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# Welcome to Fort Duffield

*As you follow the numbers on the map, please read the corresponding text to give you a better understanding of the history behind the fort and the City of West Point.*

1. A large timbered gate was located both here and at the other end of this 1000 ft. long earthen fort. Both gate areas hugged the cliff so as to allow maximum protection for the defenders. The fort was so secure that when the request was made for locks for the gates, the quartermaster sent two toy locks as a joke. Captain Charles Victor DeLand, Commander of Co. C, 9th Michigan Infantry, stated in a letter home that they felt *"as secure as a nest of young eagles in our new fort."*
2. The most common cannon used at the fort was the 6 pound smooth bore. At least one cannon would have to be positioned behind each of the ten angles of the fort walls for all around covering fire in the direction of many back roads to the south of the fort. At first, the 9th Michigan Infantry manned their own cannons, but by March of 1862, Captain Charles H. Lamphere's Battery G, 1<sup>st</sup> Michigan Light Artillery, along with Battery F, had arrived to garrison the fort.
3. From this observation point, one can see how impregnable the fort must have been. The forest has reclaimed the area but at that time there was at least a one mile clearing in every direction. With such a commanding view and garrisoned with a thousand men, it is no wonder that this massive fortification was never attacked. Take notice of the walls in both directions. According to a letter by Capt. Charles V DeLand, the distance from the top of the wall to the bottom of the ditch was 17 ft. The top of the wall was 9 ft. wide. Time has eroded the walls to today's present height and thickness.
4. Civil War fortifications were precisely designed. Every angle, mound of earth, and slope you see at Fort Duffield had a specific purpose. The ten

angles of the fort were designed to allow infantry and artillery to sweep every inch of ground in front of the fort. There were no *"dead spaces"* where an attacking foe could take refuge. As Captain DeLand wrote, *"every gun in the fort will sweep the turnpikes and rivers with shot and shell for three miles."*

5. The central area of the fort, which contains the bulk of the ruins, was the command center of the fort. From the elevated vantage point at this location, a commander would have a full view of the interior of the fort and surrounding outpost on the adjoining hills.

The men were ordered to *"hut themselves by their own labor"* The depressions before you were leveled out of the side of the hill to provide a base for simple log cabins with stone fireplaces. Several rows of these depressions can still be seen on this slope.

By Dec. 23, 1861, Col. William W. Duffield, Commander of the 9<sup>th</sup> Michigan, wrote to General Robertson, *"I have placed the entire command (a thousand men) in log huts."*

The reproduction log cabins represent the construction style of the Civil War period.

6. From this lookout, the troop that garrisoned Fort Duffield could see all the military activities that were taking place in the town of West Point below. Early in the war West Point was the main supply base for General William Tecumseh Sherman's army which was about 40 miles south astride the Louisville-Nashville Turnpike. West Point was a bee-hive of activities. By November of 1861, seven regiments of infantry and a Calvary regiment occupied the town and furnished support to the troops in the fort. A correspondent for a Detroit newspaper described the scene in the village as one of complete turmoil, with hundreds upon hundreds of wagons being loaded with supplies from the steamboats, for transfer to the Union Army to the south.

Three houses in West Point were commandeered for military hospitals where several hundred men

were treated, and where many of them died. Twenty-nine of the soldiers were buried on the adjacent hill southwest of the fort.

On the high hill on the Indiana side of the river, another small fort was built and occupied by Indiana troops and artillery. As you look at West Point below, Salt River joins the Ohio River directly in front of you. A pontoon bridge across the Salt River was built by the 9th Michigan. At one time gunboats patrolled the Ohio River with guns aimed at the turnpike.

7. This spring was dug and blown out of the hillside by the soldiers of Fort Duffield. Note the drill hole markings in the stone. A hand cut channel in the stone brings the overflow water from one basin to the next.

The spring provided fresh drinking water year round and would have been invaluable to the men of the fort especially if it had been brought under siege.

Captain DeLand of the 9<sup>th</sup> Michigan wrote on December 5th, 1861, *"Our new camp upon the mountain is a paradise to what we have enjoyed for the past four weeks, and pure air and water are showing their invigorating effects upon the men daily, almost hourly."*

However, this spring was inadequate for the routine camp life of a thousand man regiment and their compliment of horses, mules, and other livestock. The men of the fort made daily trips to the Salt and Ohio Rivers to fill their needs for additional water.

**The water from the spring is  
untested by today's standards.  
PLEASE DO NOT DRINK!**

(Rev. 9-2-15)