

How Fort Sumner Started

Fort Sumner History

In July of 1861 at the start of the Civil War a defensive network of Forts protected Washington. In 1863, President Lincoln named Fort Sumner was named after Major General Edwin Sumner, a famous cavalry officer of the Union Army. Through the war Fort Sumner never fired a shot, it was the scene of daily drills and routine camp life.

However, after the First Maine Heavy Artillery spent a year at Fort Sumner they left for Petersburg and within seven minutes the highest percentage of men were lost of any Union regiment.

At the end of the war the land was returned to its former owner.

Fort Sumner was part of an original grant containing 3000 acres in 1815 conveying to Charles Beall and Thomas Fletchall. In 1817 Thomas Brooke acquired 400 acres and Lawrence Lodge 200 acres. In 1888 Lawrence Lodge sold 50 acres to brothers George and Frank Bock who operated a successful farm on the tract for over 70 years. Mr . Frank Bock, the father of a Mrs. Charles Messerli, and grandfather of Mrs. Hugh Johnston, both Fort Sumner residents.

On May 11, 1956, in the Washington Post, an article entitled " Fort Sumner Falls to the Bulldozer" gave notice to the great work of mule teams and engineers and the first houses being built on Sangamore Road and Westpath Way. Streets were paved and houses were erected by as many as fifteen different builders.

A peaceful community has arisen where a vast and formidable fort once stood.