

Realizing the danger to the little girl, the sculptor quickly interposed his body, so that he received the full force of the falling block, thereby saving the child's life at serious injury to himself. He immediately was rewarded with a full pardon.

As a whole, the fort was a highly ambitious undertaking. Its successful completion reflects great credit on those who pushed it through in the face of violent objections from New Yorkers. There were some who felt that their city should enjoy the glory of having the fort placed on Manhattan Island. Press, pulpit and political forums engaged in acrimonious discussions of the subject. No less than Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, and Washington Irving were embroiled in what rapidly became an important political issue. The final word was said posthumously by Baron von Steuben, who, according to the New York Post of Dec. 22, 1807, had once remarked that if New York were to be defended by a fort, the Narrows was the place for it. Should a hostile fleet be permitted to get safely through that marine bottleneck, the baron reputedly opined, the city would be open to bombardment from which no fort within its boundaries could possibly save it. No one dared question the military wisdom of Washington's great aide, and by 1810 Governors Island presented a fort of first-class military worth.

Not content with adding Fort Columbus to the local defenses, the War Department also authorized the erection of what has become one of Governors Island's most prominent landmarks and one familiar to all who have ever seen New York Harbor. During construction the round stone structure at the extreme northern tip of the island, was called merely, "The Tower." But, since Nov. of 1810, it has been officially known as Castle Williams, in honor of Colonel Jonathan Williams of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who designed it. A nephew of Benjamin Franklin, Williams was the first superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He was also president of the American

Philosophical Society, chief engineer of the Army, and in charge of the defenses of the Port of New York, yet he not only found time to build the fort, which bears his name, but also to erect a complementary structure at the Battery in New York.

This was called Castle Clinton and after its deactivation as an Army post saw varied service as a concert hall where the fabulous Jenny Lind first sang in America, an immigration station, and a municipal aquarium until its recent acquisition by the federal government, for restoration as a national historical monument. Early in July 1812, the War Department wished to compliment Colonel Williams by appointing him to command his namesake fort on the island. The Corps of Artillery almost went into open mutiny at this unheard-of assignment of an engineer officer to an artillery post. Nor was the situation materially helped when, a few days later, a Major Alex Macomb of the Corps of Engineers was appointed colonel of the 3d Artillery Regiment. A fine intramural dispute was averted, only when Colonel Williams, bitter at the possibility of being deprived of the command to which he felt himself entitled by rank and length of service, resigned his commission in the Army on July 31.

Castle Williams was built on a foundation of solid masonry, resting on a ledge of rocks that had long endangered passing shipping. Its walls, rising sheer to a height of 40 feet, form three-fifths of a circle of 210 feet in outer diameter. The walls are made of red sandstone eight feet thick, and are casemated with two tiers of bombproof arches which were designed to contain 100 pieces of heavy ordnance. Along the lower tier were ranged 35-pounders, on the second tier were 20-pounders, and on the terrace over the bombproofing was a barbette battery of 45 Columbiads - giant muzzle-loaders for throwing 50-pound shot and shell at high angles of elevation. Despite the great weight which the galleries had to support, they were cleverly constructed so that if the lower tier were broken through, the wall would still be supported by the upper tier act-

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