

Freedom at Fort Mose

Read how a free African community shaped Spanish Florida.

SS.4.A.3.5 "Identify the significance of Fort Mose as the first free African community in the United States."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two facts that show why Fort Mose was important. Circle two details that show how its residents protected their freedom.

A Community of Freedom

- ① In 1738, Spanish Governor Manuel de Montiano created Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, usually called Fort Mose. It stood just north of St. Augustine in Spanish Florida. People of African descent who escaped slavery in English colonies could seek freedom there. To live at Fort Mose, they became Catholic and helped defend Spanish Florida.
- ② Fort Mose was more than a place to live. Its residents formed a militia, or defense group, led by Captain Francisco Menéndez, a formerly enslaved man. The militia protected St. Augustine from British attacks. In 1740, British forces attacked the fort. Residents left for safety in St. Augustine, but many returned and rebuilt Fort Mose in 1752.
- ③ Fort Mose is significant because it was the first legally recognized free African community in what is now the United States. It showed that people who had been enslaved could build a community, own homes, worship, work, and defend their freedom. In 1763, Spain gave Florida to Britain. Fort Mose residents left with the Spanish for Cuba, but their story remains important.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What made Fort Mose the first of its kind in what is now the United States?

2 How did Fort Mose residents help protect their freedom? Give two details from the passage.

3 Why was Fort Mose more than only a military fort? Use evidence from the passage.

4 What happened to Fort Mose residents in 1763?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a three-sentence museum label explaining why Fort Mose matters in United States history. Include the year it began and at least two details that show how it was a free community.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two facts that show why Fort Mose was important. Circle two details that show how its residents protected their freedom. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What made Fort Mose the first of its kind in what is now the United States?	It was the first legally recognized free African community in what is now the United States.
2	How did Fort Mose residents help protect their freedom? Give two details from the passage.	They formed a militia that protected St. Augustine, and many returned to rebuild Fort Mose after the 1740 attack.
3	Why was Fort Mose more than only a military fort? Use evidence from the passage.	It was a community where formerly enslaved people could live freely, own homes, worship, work, and defend their freedom.
4	What happened to Fort Mose residents in 1763?	They left Florida with the Spanish for Cuba after Spain gave Florida to Britain.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Fort Mose began in 1738 near St. Augustine, Florida. It was the first legally recognized free African community in what is now the United States. Its residents built homes, worshiped, worked, and defended their freedom in a militia.

Accept equivalent wording that identifies Fort Mose as the first legally recognized free African community and supports that significance with accurate passage details. For the museum label, require three sentences, the year 1738, and at least two accurate community details.