

## **Significant events**

### **Under Nayak Rulers**

History has it that the Madurai Nayak king Muthu Krishnappa Naicker started building the Rock Fort in 1605, and completed in 1655 during the reign of Thirumalai Nayak. A temple (Abiramiamman) was later built on the tip of the rock. Rani Mangammal, during her regime, carved out 600 steps in the rock fort to reach a hill temple. During the Muslim invasions the Idol was re-located to the present Abiramiamman temple in Dindigul Bazaar.

### **Under Mysore Rulers**

Hyder Ali, after taking over the Mysore throne in 1755 made several additions and repairs; fort played an important role in their campaigns.

### ***Construction details***

The height of the Rock Fort is 900 feet and the circumference of the rock is around 2.75 km. Cannon and Gunfire artillery made its entry during the 17th century; hence the Fort has double walls to withstand heavy artillery.

Cannons were installed at vantage points around the fort (still there) with an arms and ammunition godown built with modern safety measures. The double-walled room was fully protected against external threat and well ventilated. A thin brick wall in one corner of the godown helped guards escape in case of emergency. The sloping ceiling of the godown prevented seepage of rainwater. It has 48 rooms used as cells to lodge war prisoners and slaves, a spacious kitchen, a horse stable and a meeting hall of the army commanders of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan.

The fort also has its own rainwater reservoirs constructed by taking advantage of the steep gradient. The construction highlights the ingenuity of Indian kings in their military architecture.

### ***Roles in War***

A closer look at the strong walls of this legendary fort that took 54 years to build and was strategically important in several military operations right from the Nayak dynasty till Tipu Sultan. The fort is known to have played a prominent role during the battles between Madurai Nayaks and Mysore, Marathas armies later between Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan and British armies.

Hyder Ali's family lived here in 1755 along with his wife and then 5 year old son Sultan. From 1784 to 1790, the fort was under the rule of Tipu Sultan. His chief Commandant, Syed Ibrahim, under whose care the fort was entrusted, constructed several additional rooms, fortified the walls and repaired many parts. Hyder Ali had also constructed a mosque beneath the fort for his soldiers. After Tipu Sultan was defeated in the II Mysore War in 1790, the British took control of the fort