

Fort Adams
On a point of land on Newport Neck
extending northward into Narragansett
Bay between East Passage and Brenton
Cove
Newport
Newport County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-347

HABS
RI,
3-NEWP,
54-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

FORT ADAMS

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RI,
3-NEWP,
54-

Location: On a point of land on Newport Neck extending northward into Narragansett Bay between East Passage and Brenton Cove, Newport, Newport County, Rhode Island.
Geographic Location Code: 38-0150-005
Latitude: 41°28'45"N Longitude: 71°20'19"W

Present Owner: State of Rhode Island.

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Present Use: None.

Statement of Significance: Fort Adams, one of principal coastal defenses along the Atlantic, was built between 1824 and 1857, replacing Revolutionary defenses. Situated on a point at the entrance to Newport harbor, it is the principal installation of a series of fortifications built to control entrance to Narragansett Bay.

The fort consists of an irregular pentagonal masonry main-work with sides up to 900 feet long. Two- and three-tiered casements high, it has granite walls and brick vaulting. On a point with water on three sides, the fort has extensive landward works, and a large granite redoubt beyond the outworks. The complex includes interesting additions and alterations in the area of the main-work, and handsome late-nineteenth century residential buildings beyond the outworks.

The present Fort Adams never saw military action, but the Naval Academy was moved there during the Civil War, and the summer White House was located there during the Eisenhower Administration. The Army transferred the fort to the Navy in 1953, and the area of the main-work was transferred to the State of Rhode Island in 1964 to be developed for historical and recreational purposes.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: 1824-1857 (main-works).

2. Original and subsequent owners: Built by the U. S. Army; transferred to the U. S. Navy 30 June 1953; acquired by the State of Rhode Island 25 May 1964.
3. Architect: Lt. Col. Joseph G. Totten.
4. Builders and suppliers: Alexander M. McGregor, Master Mason; Edward Hamett, Master Carpenter; Tal. Simmons, Master Blacksmith.
5. Alterations and additions: Brick barrack added to south wall c. 1906. The remainder of brick barrack added according to plans prepared in 1908 in the office of the local constructing quartermaster.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Structure:

The following are paraphrases and quotations from documents and other sources pertaining to the fort arranged in chronological order.

1638 - First dwelling in the area:

The original proprietor, William Brenton, moved to Newport and took possession of the "neck". He brought with him from England a commission from Charles I, dated 1633, and termed a grant, which allowed him to take so many acres to a mile of all the lands he should survey in the New England Colonies. On Redoubt Hill, he made a clearing in the dense forest, and built a brick dwelling, 150 feet square. ("Defenses of Narragansett," p. 494.)

1675-1676 - Description of existing defenses:

Inland stockades and earthworks were constructed, but no sea-coast fortifications were erected. ("Defenses of Narragansett," p. 467.)

Circa 1700 - Report of the Lords of Trade:

As early as 1700, a fort was located on Goat Island, built pursuant to a recommendation made about that time in a report of the Lords of Trade to His Britannic Majesty. "Rhode Island being the most important place on the southwest side of Cape Cod, is so situated as to be a very convenient harbor for shipping and security to that part of the country in case it were put in a state of defense." (Revolutionary defences in Rhode Island, p. 79.)

1740 - Watch ordered for Newport Neck:

The General Assembly ordered a watch house built at Castle Hill and a ward house built on Brenton Point (the term Brenton Point was used to indicate two different locations on Newport Neck, one at Brenton Reef and the other at the present location of Fort Adams. The official Gazetteer of R. I. indicates Brenton Point as the southwest tip of Aquidneck, Newport County, extending toward Brenton Reef.) This was used principally as a barrack and storehouse in later years. There were, to all accounts, no cannon sited on Brenton Point at that time. (History of Fort Adams, p. 1.)

1740 - William Brenton bought four cannon from England:

"William Brenton was known to have sent to England for four brass cannon at his own expense, long before, but there is no foundation for the story that he placed them on Brenton Point. He probably put them on his ships. The point was considered to be more of a lookout than a location for a fort, for in 1740 a watch tower was placed there in anticipation of trouble with Spain." (Story of Fort Adams, p. 1.)

1748 - Assembly report on all cannon in the Colony:

When the Assembly ordered a report on all the cannon available in the Colony, no guns were mentioned as being located on Brenton Point (location of point is uncertain). (History of Fort Adams, p. 2.)

1775 - Rose lands at Brenton Point:

The City of Newport was defenseless as all the cannon had been removed to Providence. Captain Wallace of H. M. Sloop Rose landed at Brenton Point (location of point is uncertain) and his foraging parties swept the southern part of Aquidneck Island. (History of Fort Adams, p. 2.)

20 December 1775:

General Washington sent General Lee to Newport to study the situation and to lay out proper defenses.

1775-1776 - Result of General Lee's visit:

Breastworks were constructed as a result, but the only cannon seems to have been located on Castle Hill at the entrance of the Middle Passage, although it seems certain that breastworks were built of rock, earth, and logs at the present site of Fort Adams. (History of Fort Adams, p. 2.)

6 April 1776 - Battery at Brenton Point:

On this day in April, a British sloop-of-war entered Newport Harbor for safety after three hours of action. That night, a battery was constructed on Brenton Point and attacked the sloop in the morning. The attack forced the frigate to retreat farther up the bay, putting out to sea the next day. (History of Newport County, p. 340.) With the revolution approaching, the citizens of Newport strengthened Fort George (on Goat Island, renaming it Fort Liberty) and began to fortify Brenton Point (location of point is uncertain).

29 April 1776 - Defense at Brenton Point:

"It was therefore unanimously voted at a town meeting to enter at once into the defense of the town; ... and three days later a large body of the inhabitants repaired to Brenton's Point, the present location of Fort Adams." (Revolutionary Defenses in Rhode Island, p. 81.)

1776 - Cannon captured for use in defense of Newport:

Brenton Point was used as a site for fortifications in 1776 (location of point is uncertain). Congress collected a fleet of eight ships and put them under the command of Commodore Hopkins of Rhode Island. As ammunition was needed, he captured two forts on the Bahamas and returned with over a hundred cannon and other military stores to Newport. As Commodore Hopkins entered Newport Harbor, the British recognized him and sailed out to meet him. The citizens threw up a dirt and log battery on Brenton Point and armed it. With the help of the other shore batteries and ships, they prevented the English ships-of-war from re-entering the harbor and drove all the others out. (Story of Fort Adams ...) Commodore Hopkins' cannon were brought into the Newport harbor. "Congress sent on the Requisite Papers for letters of Marque, and appointed Daniel Tillinghast prize agent for this colony. The cannon taken at Nassau were distributed by order of Congress, to various places." Thirteen of them were mounted upon a new fort at the point in Newport (location of point is uncertain). The fort on Goat Island was reconstructed and another work erected on Brenton Point (location of point is uncertain). These defended the harbor. (History of the State of Rhode Island, p. 372.)

Late 1776 - British forced to use West Passage:

From the previous action of the battery at Brenton Point, the British were forced to make use of the West Passage, west of Conanicut Island in their operations designed to capture Newport and Rhode Island. As it happened, the guns were not there anyway, having been carried away for the Continental Army in New Jersey; this action being taken after the General Assembly had given up hope of defending Newport. (Newport "Island," 20 April 1958.)

8 August 1778 - British against the French in Newport:

Fleet Green describes the movement, "Two o'clock this morning the fleet appears under sail. Three o'clock they stood in for the harbor. Half past three the battery on Brenton Point [location of point is uncertain] begins to fire the ships return the fire and pass the battery under a heavy cannonading." Used by the British against the French, the action drove the French out on the 10th, under fire, from Goat Island and Brenton Point. (History of Newport, p. 377.)

October 1779 - Destruction of Brenton Point by British:

When the British left occupied Rhode Island, all surplus stores were burnt and the defense of the town rendered as harmless. The Brenton Point Battery was destroyed, including the Ward house of 1740 and General Lee's Breastworks of 1775 which had been rendered formidable by Colonel Richmond's battery of April 1776 and since that time extended and defended by both sides. (History of Fort Adams: newspaper clipping c. 1950, series of 15 articles on fort.) (Providence Gazette of 30 October 1779 gives an account of the destruction.)

1780 - General de Rochambeau arrives in Newport:

The French arrived with a fleet of 44 ships under the Admiral de Tourney and an army of 5000 under le Comte de Rochambeau. General de Rochambeau had the war much on his mind. He did not rest from the business of rebuilding and strengthening all the forts of the Bay. He built a strong battery on Brenton Point (location of point is uncertain) and a new fort on Halidon Hill over Brenton Cove, which he named Fort Chastellux. (Story of Fort Adams.)

The French placed greatest emphasis on Goat Island. (History of Fort Adams, p. 3.)

25 August 1781 - Additional batteries mounted:

With the "departure of the French Fleet to join Count de Grasse and Chesapeake, obliged the Assembly to provide further for the defense of the State. The Militia in service were relieved by another levy, and additional batteries were mounted at Easton's and Brenton's points" (location of points uncertain). (History of the State of Rhode Island, p. 472.)

1798 - Condition of fortified places in Narragansett Bay:

Another war in Europe and there are problems in keeping our neutrality; measures were proposed to put our defense in order again. Major Louis Tousard, who had come to Newport with General de Rochambeau was put in charge of the defenses of Narragansett Bay. The works repaired, rebuilt, enlarged, and constructed included the following: (1798-1800)

Brenton Point - "an enclosed indented work of masonry" for twelve guns, with a brick magazine, and soldiers' quarters for one company. (constructed)

Dumplings (Martello Tower, Conanicut Island) - an elliptical stone tower to mount eight heavy guns on the sea-side, half in casements and half in barbette. (constructed)

Fort Liberty (Goat Island) - a small enclosed irregular work of masonry and earth mounting twelve guns, besides flank batteries mounting eighteen guns, with a brick magazine, and soldiers' barracks and officers' quarters for one company. (rebuilt)

Fort Chastellux (Brenton Cove) - unknown if battery was rebuilt.

North Point (Washington and Battery Streets, Newport) - an elliptical, stone-scarped battery for twelve of thirteen guns. (constructed)

Fort Hamilton (Martello Tower, Rose Island) - tower plus regular masonry work, with four bastions (two circular and two polygonal) designed for sixty guns, with bomb-proof barracks within for three hundred men. (constructed) ("Defenses of Narragansett," pp. 483-84.)

4 July 1799 - Christening Fort Adams:

Christening the fort; Major Tousard obtained permission from the Secretary of War to name the new fort, Fort Adams, after our second President. (Newport Mercury, 9 July 1799.)

War of 1812:

When the war started, Fort Adams was in run-down condition. After some delay, the State provided two companies of artillery and two companies of infantry to man the seventeen guns. With only seventeen guns at Fort Adams and thirty-eight guns at Fort Wolcott on Goat Island, the two forts could hardly withstand a sustained attack.

After the War of 1812:

The war had so clearly demonstrated the almost defenseless condition of our sea-coast, year after, a board of engineers were organized to study the whole program of National Defense, and to devise the necessary fortifications to protect the entire coasts of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. The board was composed of General Simon Bernard, a distinguished French Engineer who had done good service under Napoleon; General Joseph G. Swift, the Chief Engineer of the Army; and Lieutenant-Colonels William McRee and Joseph G. Totten, Corps of Engineers. ("Defenses of Narragansett," p. 487.)

4 March 1817 - Money available for construction of Fort Adams: President Monroe, in his Inaugural Message, called to attention the absolute necessity of fortifying our coasts, and he also urged the formation of an army, not only competent to garrison and to preserve these fortifications, but also to meet the first invasion of a foreign foe. ("Defenses of Narragansett," p. 487.)

Congress was appalled at the sums demanded for defense, but appropriated half a million dollars, of which fifty thousand was allotted to Fort Adams. (History of Fort Adams, p. 4.)

The vast expense was justified by a Congressional Committee on the grounds that, in the event of war and invasion, the recapture of such spots would be much more costly and that strong forts would of themselves deter any idea of invasion.

7 April 1820 - Board of Engineers submitted its project:

The Board of Engineers submitted its project for the defense of Narragansett Bay. Condition and value of each fortified place in 1820:

Fort Adams: It consists of two parts, one appearing to have been added to the other at a later period. "The southern part has development of about 750 feet, measured on its interior crest, and a command of 15 feet over the country, and

45 feet over low water. Its parapet is from 12 to 15 feet thick, its rampart from 23 to 25 feet wide, and its scarp wall less than 10 feet high. This part contains bomb-proof barracks.

"The northern part, measured in the same way, of about 400 feet, command of 42 feet over low water, parapet is from 12 to 18 feet thick, the terreplein of its rampart is on a level with the parade, on which is a wooden storehouse and a hot-shot furnace; has no masonry scarp, is covered with an earthwork 6 feet high.

"The trace of this fort is so irregular, and its angles are so multiplied for no purpose of defense or convenience, that it seems rather the result of chance or caprice than even of the infancy of engineering art." ("Defense of Narragansett," pp. 488-89.)

Recommendations of the Board of Engineers:

Fort Adams: "considered it useless, as it 'could neither resist four days against an attack by land, nor contain the formidable armament' demanded by the position."

Dumplings Tower: "an essential position for defending the central pass into Narragansett Bay, and that the channel is one mile broad at this place, we must perceive that the effect of this tower is almost null for that purpose, and that its cooperation with Fort Adams, to accomplish so important an object, has never been calculated and is totally inefficient."

Fort Wolcott: (Goat Island) 50 guns cross those of Fort Adams and Fort Hamilton, would suffice to cover the harbor of Newport.

Fort Green: (North Point) when completed, "this battery is sufficient for its purpose."

Fort Hamilton: "that the sketch of this fort offers none of the requisites for occupying this position in a manner suitable to the principal object which it should have in view. The towers are of no use, and seem only placed there to spoil the general trace and disposition of the works." ("Defenses of Narragansett," pp. 489-91.)

7 April 1820 - Description of the new Fort Adams:

"It consists of a pentagonal masonry main-work, bastioned on the three sea fronts, and casemented throughout for gunrooms and habitation for the garrison. The principal channel front has three tiers of fire, the others two, the upper batteries of the whole in barbette. Covering the two land fronts is a crown-work separated from the main-work

by a deep, dry ditch. Exterior to all, except the main sea front, is a covered way with the usual places of arms, traversed, etc. Upon a commanding hill in the vicinity is a formidable casemented masonry redoubt, connected with the fort by an earthen caponniere, so arranged as to form a strong barbette battery towards the ship channel. These various defenses cover twenty acres, and were designed to mount nearly five hundred pieces of artillery of various calibers." ("Defenses of Narragansett," p. 494.)

- 10 August 1824 - Lieutenant Talcott sent to Fort Adams:
An Army engineer by the name of Lieutenant Andrew Talcott was sent to Newport. He was assigned to make all the preliminary arrangements for the new works that were to be built on Brenton Point.
- 22 February 1825 - Lt. Colonel Totten relieves Talcott:
Lt. Colonel Joseph G. Totten of the Corps of Engineers, Engineer in Charge of Construction, arrived in Newport. He immediately took over where Lieutenant Talcott had quit. Talcott had done much of the introductory work, such as making sketches and plans of the new fort and the terrain. The actual plans of the new fort were drawn by Colonel Totten. (Notes on the History of Fort Adams, p. 5.)
- 11 May 1825 - First stone laid:
The official beginning of the fort.... (Notes on the History of Fort Adams, p. 4.)
- 28 May 1825:
"We learn, that in addition to the present number of laborers engaged on the fortification, 40 or 50 more will, on application, find constant employment." (Newport Mercury, 28 May 1825.)
- 1825 - Stone dock constructed:
The building of the stone dock began to facilitate the unloading of the great granite blocks brought from Maine by schooners. (History of Fort Adams, p. 4.)
- 1825-1826 - Removal of 1799 fort:
Much of the time for about a year, was spent tearing down the old foundations of the fort built in 1799. (Notes on the History of Fort Adams, p. 4.)

- 24 May 1828 - Personnel responsible for construction:
Inside a stone laid on this date was the following information:
Joseph G. Totten: Major of Engineers, Brevet Lieutenant Colonel of the Army, Superintendent agent of fortifications;
Andrew Talcott: First Lieutenant of Engineers;
Henry Brewster: First Lieutenant of Engineers;
Edward H. Courtney: Second Lieutenant of Engineers;
Alexander D. Bache: Second Lieutenant of Engineers;
Thompson S. Brown: Bt. Lieutenant of Engineers;
Alexander M. McGregor: Master Mason;
Edward Hamett: Master Carpenter;
Tal. Simmons: Master Blacksmith. (Newport Herald, 30 March 1905.)
- Summer of 1837:
Lt. S.G.T. Beauregard, just graduated at West Point and later to become a Confederate General, an assistant engineering officer for construction of Fort Adams. (Richardson Scrapbook, N. 970, p. 3.)
- 7 December 1838 - Lt. Colonel promoted:
Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Totten personally directed the construction of Fort Adams until his promotion to Chief Engineer of the Army. ("Defenses of Narragansett," p. 495.)
- 1857 - Construction of Fort Adams completed. (History of Fort Adams, p. 4.)
The north dock was built. (History of Fort Adams, p. 5.)
- 1859 - Fort Adams effected by Floyd's policy:
The fort was practically abandoned as part of Secretary Floyd's retrenchment policy. (Notes on the History of Fort Adams, p. 5.)
- 1862 - Naval Academy moved to Newport:
Cadets of the lower classes of the Naval Academy who were driven from their quarters by the threatened secession of Maryland, arrived in Newport Harbor. The lower half of that class then went to Fort Adams, where they remained mounting guns and putting the place in a position of defense until they were called to duty. (History of Fort Adams, p. 5.)

- 1862 - Report on the defenses of Narragansett Bay to the U. S. Congress:
"Of the existing forts, viz: Fort Adams, Dumpling tower, fort on Rose Island, Fort Wolcott, and Fort Rose, the later two are the only ones retained in the projected system of defense. Fort Adams, besides being entirely unsuited to the important position it occupies, is in ruins and the Dumpling tower, and fort on Rose Island, also very inconsiderable works, were never more than partially completed.
"The project of defense proposed by the Board contemplates for the Middle Channel a strong fort with outworks on Brenton Point, another on the Dumplings, a smaller fort on Rose Island, and the preservation of Fort Wolcott and Fort Green. The Eastern Passage is already shut by the permanent bridge at Howland Ferry. As to the Western Passage, three modes present themselves." Reducing the depth of water by an artificial ledge was picked as being least expensive and most certain. (Permanent Fortification...., p. 37.)
- 14 October 1862 - Permanent garrison at Fort Adams. (History of Fort Adams, p. 5.)
- 1895 - There are now torpedo casements at Fort Adams. (Fort Adams Scrapbook.)
- 19 February 1896 - Coast defense battery installed:
"The work of excavating for the coast defense battery at Fort Adams is progressing rapidly. A huge hole has been dug outside the fort, near the southern boundary of the preservation on the harbor side and entirely hidden from the entrance to the Bay. The excavation when completed will be twenty feet deep, composing four compartments of pits. Between each will be heavy masonry and earth walls, containing a network of underground passages leading from the various pits to the magazines and to some part of the fort construction. Each of the pits will contain four rifled mortars." (location of battery uncertain) (Fort Adams Scrapbook.)
- 19 February 1896 - Work expected by War Department in Bay:
"It is expected that large sums of money will be spent by the War Dept. in the vicinity within the next few years on this work, as it has long since been decided that Narragansett Bay is an important feature in the general defense of the Atlantic Coast." (Fort Adams Scrapbook.)

- 1896 - Headquarters of Harbor Defenses of Bay, Fort Adams.
(History of Fort Adams, p. 7.)
- 13 November 1897 - Twelve 10-inch mortars installed at fort:
Twelve 10-inch mortars should be installed by summer of 1898; work being carried on under the direction of Major D. W. Lockwood, U. S. Corps of Engineers, and his assistant Lieut. C. H. McKinney of the same service. (Fort Adams Scrapbook.)
- 1898-1901 - Batteries installed:
Batteries Reilly, Greene, and Talbot built in 1898-1901 mounting sixteen 12-inch guns. (History of Fort Adams, p. 9.)
- 19 March 1898 - Communication established between Fort Adams and Dutch Island:
"A telephone communication between Fort Adams and Dutch Island being arranged, the apparatus for this having been received at the fort.... A large supply of powder is expected at Fort Adams at any moment." (Dutch Island defended the East Passage.) (Fort Adams Scrapbook.)
- 14 May 1898 - Both entrances to the Bay are now mined, ingress and egress: 4am to 8pm.
- 25 August 1898 - Major Lockwood received orders from the War Department to remove the mines from the main channel between Newport and Fort Adams. (Fort Adams Scrapbook.)
- Circa 1900 - Fifteen guns from Fort Adams sold for scrap:
"Fifteen smooth bore guns were removed and sold to O'Connor Bros. They were said to be each weighing 25 tons." Small guns were also removed, having been replaced several years before by guns "hidden from view save for the moment before they are fired." (Fort Adams Scrapbook.)
- 30 March 1905 - Corner stone uncovered:
"While blasting away some of the old casements at Fort Adams recently to make way for the new defenses there, a portion of the corner stone was blown out." (Newport Herald, 30 March 1905.)
- 26 May 1906 - New barracks, south wall of quadrangle. (Photograph in Newport Journal, 26 May 1906.)

Circa 1908 - Proposed removal of some landward outworks:
"Sea wall to be built on east side and face cover in front of ramparts removed. Lieutenant J. J. Thomas, constructing quartermaster at Fort Adams is advertising for proposals - the face cover which is to be removed is a high bank of earth extending along the entire east side of the Ramparts and was built as an additional protection to the fort. It is no longer considered of value for the service for which it was built; and as the land it occupies is more valuable for other purposes, it can be removed without serious detriment to the fortification." (Fort Adams Scrapbook.)

19 December 1908 - Another barrack added to south wall:
"Three companies originally accommodated on the southern wall, and there have just been completed two more sets of barracks, leaving room along that side of the enclosure for but one more. It is considered an excellent plan to concentrate the barracks, close to an excellent parade ground, but it would not be desirable to have them close to these works, for various reasons which the service thoroughly appreciates.
"Addition for the band and one coast artillery company... has been accomplished by extending the general form of the previous construction to the westward, so that the new work now joins the quarters of the post exchange." Occupying 642 running feet of the south wall (the length of the existing brick barracks), the work just completed has cost the government \$79,000. "As in the old barracks, the old casement and magazines in the walls have been used for location by the dining halls, kitchens, storerooms, and lavatories; sleeping and lounging quarters above have been connected by interior stairways (out of the weather) not like the other barracks; lavatories, bathtubs, shower baths and also a number of tubs to wash clothes as they like, own heating plant in each set of quarters, band/practice room, \$20,000 music library. Plans not prepared in Washington as they are not stereotype, prepared in the office of the local constructing quartermaster." (Fort Adams Scrapbook.)

2 October 1911 - Public notice in newspaper:
"Big guns" then to be fired from Fort Adams, 26 September and 2 October 1911. (Fort Adams Scrapbook.)

World War I:

Training center and men sent overseas from Newport Harbor; mines and nets string across channels. (History of Fort Adams, p. 8.)

1917 - Some of her (Fort Adams') most modern guns were carefully dismantled and shipped "over there" to bark defiance rather than defense. (History of Fort Adams, p. 8.)

1926 - Improvements at Fort Adams:

Fort Adams received some new plumbers, electricians, heating engineers, and painters. A 9-hole golf course was constructed on the parade grounds, trees planted, and wires buried underground. (Fort Adams Scrapbook.)

World War II:

New temporary buildings were constructed and training was hastily begun as thousands of men poured through Newport; anti-aircraft batteries were built, controlled minefields were laid, the old Service Club was rebuilt and the Chapel came into being; WACS took over administrative duties of the fort, housing replaced the old golf course (parade grounds originally) which was terraced for comfortable access (Brenton Village). Fort Adams was the headquarters of the Harbor Defenses of Narragansett Bay. During the early months of the war, Fort Greene, Fort Burnside, Fort Church, Fort Getty, and Fort Wetherill (the last two being located on Conanicut Island) "manned coastal guns, among the biggest and most modern in the world. The average cost of one of the many casements and guns was \$1,500,000." (History of Fort Adams, p. 12.)

30 June 1950 - Permanent garrison ended at Fort Adams.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Lithographs

(Newport, R.I.: Redwood Library)

"Fort Adams," C. A. Thiebaut, Del., J. Brien, Photo-Lith, New York.

"The U. S. Frigate Constitution," S. Giough and J. P. Newell, at anchor off Fort Adams, Newport, Rhode Island.

"Newport, R. I.," from sketches by Theo. R. Davis and
photographs by J. A. Williams.

"Fort Adams," on stone by John Collins, T. Sinclair's
Lith, Philadelphia.

Old views (photographs)

(Newport, R. I.: Redwood Library)

2 - interior view of Fort Adams and interior view of
Fort Adams with General Robert Anderson and officers
of the garrison. September 1863, by J. A. Williams.

(Providence, R. I.: Rhode Island Historical Society)

1 - internal photograph of main entrance, Journal photo,
n.d. Newport and "The Island" file scrapbooks.

1 - colored postcard, "Aerial view of Fort Adams, Newport,
R. I." postmark 1937.

(Newport, R. I.: Newport Historical Society)

1 - stereoscopic of interior of Fort Adams, photo:
J. A. Williams

1 - small, NE exterior c. 1900

1 - interior at barracks, pre-1907

1 - postcard "taken from Jamestown"

1 - photo of casement with guns, photo: Joseph Mayer

1 - interior of Fort Adams quadrangle, photo: Joseph Mayer

1 - terreplein with large gun, photo: G. Maycy

1 - photo of "sunset gun"

1 - color postcard of exterior of Fort Adams

1 - color postcard "view along the shore drive" toward
Fort Adams

1 - aerial photo taken after 1947

1 - panoramic shot of quadrangle of Fort Adams, photo: Dodge

Glass negatives:

FA#64; #20,040	Basketball court, west side of quad- rangle (downstairs)
FA#36; #20,040	Coast artillery officer sitting in his exchange office, 1906
FA#37; #20,047	Civilian exchange officer standing near his office, 1906
FA#37A; #20,048	Manager, a clerk, and soldier, 1906
FA#38; #20,049	Soldiers purchasing needs from PX clerk, 1906
FA#38A; #20,050	Group of soldiers purchasing sodas and candy from PX clerk
FA#39; #20,051	Soldiers sitting in the Post Exchange Reading Room

FA#40; #20,052 Exterior of Post Exchange, north end
of quadrangle
FA#43; #20,055 Kitchen in one of the batteries' mess hall
FA#47; #20,056 Firing crew waiting for shot to go off
10" mortar
FA#48; #20,060 East side of quadrangle, enlisted men's
quarters
FA#57-58;
#20,69-70 Battery Greene
#20,102 North dock c. 1908

Maps

(Providence, Rhode Island: Rhode Island Historical Society)

1 - linen map. "U. S. Coast Survey, part of the Coast of Rhode Island." (Newport County Map Files) Survey by B. W. M. Boyce, 1844. Traced by H. A. McCormick 13 March 1856. Scale: six inches equals one statute mile.

1 - sub-plan of Fort Adams and U. S. Government Preservation, Newport, R. I., Richards map, 1907. Scale: 400 feet equals one inch.

Related material:

(Newport, R. I.: Naval War College)
Plans and elevations of Commanding Officer's Quarters at Fort Adams. 1/4 scale. George C. Mason and Son, Architects, Newport, R. I., 1872 and 1873. 10 sheets.

(Newport, R. I.: Newport Historical Society)
Fifield, Shirley C. Story of Fort Adams. Manuscript.

Richardson, George H. Scrapbook, no. 970.

Fort Adams Scrapbook.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Arnold, Samuel Greene. History of the State of R. I. and Providence Plantations. Vol. 2. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1878.

Bacon, Edgar Mayhew. Narragansett Bay: its historic and romantic associations and picturesque setting. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904.

Bayles, Richard M. History of Newport County. New York: L. E. Preston and Co., 1888.

Cullum, Major General George. Historical sketch of the Fortifications of Narragansett Bay. Washington, D.C., 1884.

- Field, Edward. Revolutionary defenses in Rhode Island. Providence: Preston and Rounds, 1896.
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- Sherman, A. C. Newport and the Savings Bank. Newport: 1944.
- Squadron Evolutions. Military and Naval Operations at Newport, R. I. November 1887. North Atlantic Squadron, S. B. Luce, Rear-Admiral. (Library, Naval War College, Newport.)
- U. S. Congress. House. Permanent Fortification and Sea Coast Defenses. 37th Congress 2nd Session. Report #86.

3. Likely sources not yet investigated:

- a. List of National Archives Microfilm Publications, 1968 Records of the Adjutant General's office RG 94 Historical information relating to military posts and other installations c. 1700-1900 m-661 8 rolls.
- b. Congressional Report, 1821.
- c. Memoir on the Defense of Conanicut Island, 1822.
- d. National Archives. Audio-Visual Division, Still Pictures (Mr. Phelps). Two record lots are listed in the Division's index as relating to Fort Adams, Lot 92F consisting of 14 views; Lot 77F (Corps of Engineers fortification maps and plans, c. 1880s) a body of chiefly architectural drawings and diagrams.

- e. National Archives. Cartographic Division, Room G-6 (Mr. Taylor). 80 architectural drawings for the period 1818-1900 in varying sizes (some very large folios; e.g. 40 inches wide).
- f. Newport. Mr. John Dugan, collector, professes to have a photograph collection of Fort Adams numbering in the thousands. Mr. Dugan spent his boyhood at Fort Adams where his father served as an Army sergeant. (According to Anthony S. Nicolosi, Curator, Naval Historical Collection, Naval War College, Newport.)
- g. Louis de Tousard. American Artilleriests Companion or Elements of Artillery. 3 vols. (1809-1813).
- h. Report of the Board of Engineers. American State Papers: Military Affairs.
- i. U. S. Congress. Joseph G. Totten, Reports of the Colonel of Engineers.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

N.B.: The numbers of buildings described below correspond with the building numbers assigned by the Army and adopted by the Navy. They have been retained on the Road and Recreation layout map (attached herewith) prepared by the Department of National Resources.

A. Main-works:

1. Condition of fabric: Masonry generally in stable condition. Doors and windows are missing; wooden partitions, roof, and floors generally dilapidated. The earlier brick barracks (28A, 28B, and part of 28C) received fire damage in 1947.
2. Over-all dimensions: 1200 x 1000 feet.
3. Number of stories: Three tiers and two tiers.
4. Layout: Irregular pentagon.
5. Foundations: Unknown.
6. Wall construction, finish and color: Granite--light warm gray; fieldstone--green; and red brick with colored mortar joints on barracks section.
7. Structural system:
 - a. Exterior: Coursed ashlar granite, cordon divides upper parapet (barbette) from wall.

- b. Interior: Masonry and cast iron columns.
 - c. Seaward front of casements: (51 to 61) two casement tiers with brick groin vaults, upper tier -- barbette tier.
 - d. Landward side: One casement tier with groin vaults, upper tier -- barbette tier.
 - e. Remainder of first floor constructed with brick tunnel vaults.
8. Porches, stoops, and bulkheads:
- a. Quarters (40 to about 56): There existed wooden front porches.
 - b. Brick barracks addition: Cast iron balcony.
 - c. Seaside interior (at parade level): Granite walkway carried on granite piers; three bridges lead to parade level over ditch.
9. Chimneys: Numerous brick chimneys.
10. Openings:
- a. Gate between space (52B and 53): Rusticated voussoirs, framed in brick, keyed into stone pattern, part of door hinge in place, brick tunnel vault, stone pavement, rusticated on quadrangle side.
 - b. Gate between space (42 and 43): Rusticated voussoirs, low framed brick opening, keyed into a stone pattern, part of door hinge in place, Totten casement embrasure above, high brick tunnel vault above embrasure with ground level sloping upwards into parade level, rusticated on quadrangle side, stone pavement grooved from heavy use.
 - c. Gate between space (26 and 27) and (28B and 28C): Used as tunnels to landward ramparts, minor rustication, side walls contain rifle slots, stone pavement in center and double stones on side, stone slabs continue into parade level.
 - d. Totten casement embrasures: Low segmented arch heads; brick plastered over and scored in patterns similar to the granite openings, plaster missing on some, vertical iron bars in some embrasures, some embrasures bricked over.

- e. Neo-classical grouping of interior windows and doors at parade level and level below.
 - f. Brick barracks: Strict, regular style of door and window openings, segmented arch openings.
11. Roof:
- a. Brick barracks: Flat roof.
 - b. Remainder: Flat with tar-covered concrete.
12. Floor plans:
- a. Seaside lower tier casement level: Originally brick vaulted casements, later some of the ceilings were removed to create two-story spaces. The embrasures have been bricked over. Windows and doors were used to fill in spaces between structural elements. Grade slopes from parade level to lower tier. Direct access to main level is by spiral staircase at north end of space (61).
 - b. Parade level (main level): (From west corner clockwise) casements converted into offices and shops in the same fashion as the lower tier.
 - (50 to 59) - living quarters converted from casements,
 - (50) - vaulted casements and related spaces,
 - (40 to 49B) - quarters with fine Greek Revival details,
 - (39) - vaulted casements and related spaces,
 - (26 to 28A) - brick vaulted spaces plastered over, the rooms are heavily damaged by vandals.(Article dated 19 December 1908 describes their functions.)
 - c. Barbette level: (From west corner clockwise)
 - (61 to 39) - barbette tier,
 - (26 and 61) - intersection (approximate) - a look-out and sheltered gun emplacement,
 - (54 and 55) intersection - a look-out station; access to parade level is by stairs located at north end of space (61), intersection of (53 and 54), intersection of (50 and 51), at (45), and at (40).
 - (49B to 39) - the banquette, superior slope, and exterior slope;
 - (50 and 39) - mounting pins for guns.
 - (28A to 26) - brick barracks, the older section of the c. 1906 barracks (28A to 28C) was destroyed in the 1947 fire except for the brick wall facing the quadrangle. The remaining brick barracks contain plaster walls and interior iron columns.(Article dated 19 December 1908 describes their functions.)

13. Stairways: Spiral granite stairs from parade level to barbette (53-54), (50-51), (45), and north end of space (61). Space (40) contains a straight stairway from parade level to barbette tier. Stairs at north end of space (61) extend from bottom tier to barbette tier (two stories). Several cast iron stairways in brick barrack section (exterior). Interior staircases exist in the 1908 addition (26-27); an interior staircase was added in space (61) when remodeled.
14. Flooring: Of brick and wood. In casements with brick floors, there are granite arcs for the rear wheel of the cannon; in casements with wooden floors, there are metal curved strips for the rear wheel of the cannon. The remainder of the floors are wooden.
15. Wall and ceiling: The original stone and brick and later addition of plaster to some of the bricked ceilings. Ventilation holes in casement ceiling to remove smoke. Stamped, sheet metal ceiling in older section of barracks.
16. Doorways: Granite doorway and window sills in brick barracks.
17. Special decorative features: Greek Revival details in some of the quarters, and cannon railing at quadrangle side of the main gate.

B. Outbuildings:

1. Landward outwork: "The landward outworks of this kind adjacent to several peninsular forts, was not a universal Third System feature." (Seacoast Fortification, p. 50.)

Coarse gray granite ashlar was used on scarp walls where it must resist direct pounding from enemy fire; the other walls are random ashlar greenstone, usually the counter scarp with granite quoins. The landward side ramparts, especially at (E-7) and (I-8), include the terreplein, banquette, parapet, superior slope, exterior slope, cordon, and scarp. There are rifle slots in the counterscarp. Spaces between the flanks of the landward side bastions contain symmetrical sub-works including four casements between each bastion. The alley behind these sub-works is protected by two casements. Tunnels from the quadrangle extend, at ground level, through the landward ramparts. On the terreplein of the bastion, located at (I-8), is an ammunition magazine; underground magazines with subterranean passages exist as well.

2. Glacis: Most of the glacis does remain. The counterscarp is constructed of random ashlar green stone. The ramp is missing from the interior corner of the east counterscarp. Originally, a ~~cornered~~ way surrounded the fort with the exception of the main sea front, as described in "Defense of Narragansett," (p. 494) and shown on the U. S. Coast Survey map of 1844. The newspaper article of c. 1908 (Fort Adams Scrapbook) indicates the proposed removal of a "high bank of earth extending along the entire east side of the Ramparts" beyond the existing glacis. Other minor earthworks also exist.

3. Redoubt: The formal casemented masonry redoubt is approximately 300 feet by 100 feet. The same kind of material was used to construct it as was the fort. Almost all of the scarp and counterscarp is made of coursed, gray granite; the counterscarp contains a series of rifle slots around the ditch. The center section is reached by crossing the dry moat in the main opening, the original parts of this being two granite piers and a lifting device for the draw-bridge.

The main structure is composed of radiating casements with a circular hall and a pair of interwoven spiral stairways to the terreplein in the center. The ramparts contain the cordon, exterior slope, superior slope, parapet, banquette, and terreplein. A tunnel leads from the main structure through the interior dry moat and to parts of the outer dry moats.

4. Commanding Officer's Quarters: Building (1) is a house located near Redoubt Hill believed to have been built as the Commanding Officer's Quarters about 1873 by architects George C. Mason and Son, according to plans at the Naval War College in Newport. (See primary and unpublished sources.)
5. Row of large, white wooden frame houses built in the later nineteenth century.
6. Post Cemetery: Approximately 267 graves.
7. Five batteries: (See Fort Adams Scrapbook, 1896-1901 at the Newport Historical Society.)
8. Stone dock and basin: Built primarily for the construction phase of the fort, it was here that the large granite blocks used in the construction of the fort were unloaded from schooners.

9. Three wooden piers: The "north dock" was built c. 1857; the dates of construction of the other two are uncertain.
10. Building (63): Storehouse, built later than (93), (96-97). Building (74) was not as carefully constructed.
11. Building (67): Old guardhouse has the possibility of being the old powderhouse. Its east side was added later, but the west end probably dates from the same period as the fort.
12. Building (68): Bakery, a later, one-story brick building with granite foundations and a hipped roof.
13. Building (74): Warehouse in poor condition.
14. Building (93): Stable with loft originally and refitted as a warehouse; it was built in two stages, the south part first.
15. Building (94): One-story brick structure on granite foundation, which was probably built later than most of the buildings as it is in better condition.
16. Building (96-97): Double house with two stories and basement, built of red brick laid in red mortar, on granite foundations in the post Civil War period. Its masonry is sound.
17. Building (100): Guard house, a later brick structure of one story and basement built on granite foundations.
18. Building (T-357): Warehouse and workshop, built late with brick and tile.

C. Conclusions:

1. Main-works: The parts of the main-works at the present time could simply be cleaned up and opened to the public. The most urgently needed preservation work is the removal of vegetation from the masonry. The building is an eloquent historical document, and only needs simple signs to indicate its original functions. As more work is done on the idea of a "museum designed within a building," the following two examples in Italy are well worth studying: the Museo del Castello Sforzesco in Milano (designed in the twentieth century by architects Belgioioso, Peressutti, and Rogers); and the Museo Nazionale di Villa Guinigi in Lucca. Both of these examples utilize the existing rooms in the building without removing or adding walls, windows,

or doors where at all possible. Although the rooms contain exhibited artifacts, the shape and relationship of the different rooms are emphasized by simple treatment of all room surfaces which express the structure of the building; e.g., the removal of plaster to reveal the existing brick vaulting. The hardware, lighting, graphics, and furniture added to the rooms are stark, well-designed, and expressive of their own functions. Archeological investigation should be undertaken before the ground within the main-works is disturbed.

2. Brick barracks: The brick barracks additions on the south sides of the main-works should be retained, not removed. They are an interesting and handsome annex to the fort, illustrating its historical growth. These additions could be stabilized and preserved without extensive restoration and thus become a picturesque and meaningful part of the complex.
3. Landward outworks: The landward outworks are a very important part of the original defenses of the fort. Vegetation needs to be removed from the masonry as soon as possible; and professional archeological investigation is essential before any other work is undertaken, or any of the earthworks disturbed. These earthworks are presumably part of the covered way surrounding the fort with the exception of the main sea front, as described in the "Defenses of Narragansett" (p. 494) and shown on the U. S. Coast Survey map of 1844.
4. Outbuildings: If the original main entrance is to continue to serve as the main entrance, the bakery (68) and the guard house (100) are inappropriately located, and they detract seriously from a proper view of the east facade of the fort. The old guard house (67), however, was built about the same time as the fort, judging from the material used in its original section; and it is a fine example of a dependency building of the period, which should be preserved.

The double house (96-97), storehouse (93), and warehouse (74) make an interesting later group and could very well be adapted to the needs of the administration and the visitors. Located far enough away from the entrance not to detract from the initial view of the main-works, these well-designed and well-built structures illustrate a later stage in the development of the fort.

5. Docks: The stone dock and basin are important as they were built primarily for the construction phase of the fort, and are thus some of the oldest surviving elements of the

site. The large granite blocks used in the construction of the fort were unloaded on this dock from the schooners. The dock and basin should be preserved.

The "north dock," built c. 1857, should be rejuvenated. In addition to its historical significance, it provides an interesting approach to the main east gate as well as a place to view the harbor. If building (74) is used as a sitting-oriented space, then the dock would relate to it very well.

Prepared by Gerron S. Hite
Architect
National Park Service
August-September 1970

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Fort Adams project was undertaken by the National Park Service, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey. Dr. Osmund Overby, Professor of Architecture, University of Missouri, was project supervisor. Architect Gerron S. Hite, Columbia University, prepared the written data.

Addendum to:
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Newport
Newport County
Rhode Island

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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