



Foundation Document Overview

Fort Point National Historic Site

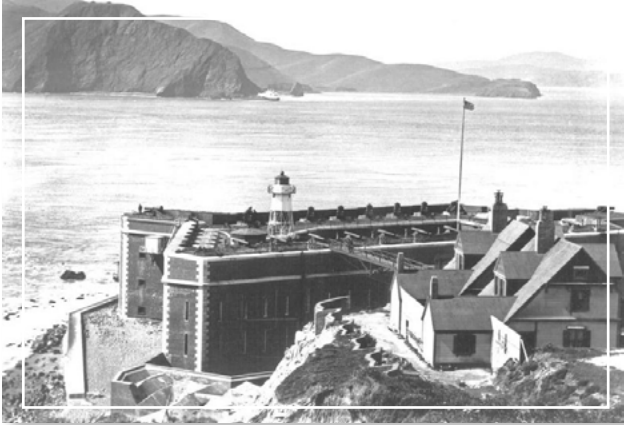
California



Contact Information

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Purpose



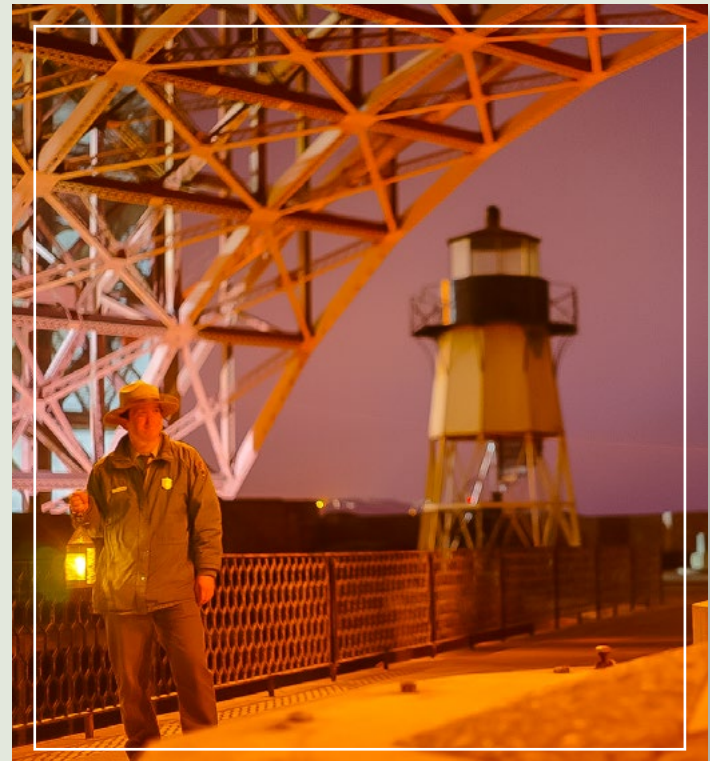
The purpose of FORT POINT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is to preserve and interpret Fort Point—one of the finest examples of Third System Civil War-era forts in the United States—and the immediately adjacent fortifications guarding the Golden Gate.



Significance

Significance statements express why Fort Point National Historic Site resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Fort Point is the only major 19th-century fortification on the West Coast and one of the finest examples of Third System forts in the United States. It represents the culmination of American military technology, architecture, and construction during the first half of the 19th century.
- Fort Point sits at the entrance of the San Francisco Bay, a strategic location that has held economic, political, social, and environmental influence on the region and world from 18th-century Spanish settlement through the present day.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Historic Fort Point and Adjacent Fortifications.** The historic fort at Fort Point includes the masonry Third System fortification, the Fort Point Light mounted on the barbette tier, Batteries East and West, and associated structures and buildings within the legislated boundaries.



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

Completed in 2014, the *Golden Gate Long Range Interpretive Plan* identifies the following six interpretive themes that encompass stories and resources of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, and Fort Point National Historic Site.

- **Geological Forces**
- **Islands of Refuge**
- **Ohlone and Coast Miwok Peoples**
- **Military Legacy**
- **Freedom, Justice, and Equality**
- **Scenic Landscapes**

The following interpretive theme has been identified for Fort Point National Historic Site as part of the foundation development process:

- Fort Point, guardian of the Golden Gate, reflects the strategic importance of San Francisco Bay, starting with the establishment of the Presidio by the Spanish through the gold rush and Civil War. The fort, a multi-tiered masonry Third System fortification, is the only example of its kind on the West Coast.



Description

Fort Point National Historic Site stands at the southern entrance to San Francisco Bay in the shadow of the Golden Gate Bridge. Built on the site of an old Spanish gun battery, Fort Point was one of the first major U.S. Army installations in the Bay Area. It guarded the Bay and San Francisco Harbor from the gold rush era in the 1850s until World War II. The fort is an outstanding example of masonry fort construction and is the only one of this style on the West Coast of the United States. As a testimony to its importance, the southern anchorage of the Golden Gate Bridge was designed to gracefully arch over the fort.

In 1959, a group of military retirees and civilian engineers—impressed with the structure—formed the Fort Point Museum Association. The association raised funds for preservation and lobbied for establishment of the fort as a national historic site. The grassroots movement to save the fort culminated on October 16, 1970, when President Richard M. Nixon signed the bill that authorized the establishment of Fort Point National Historic Site. Today, the fort is managed as a distinct park unit within the larger Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Due to its location, the park offers a unique vantage point to view and interpret the Golden Gate Bridge, including how the fort's presence influenced the design of this landmark. Seasonally, the fort is open to the public for self-guided and ranger-led tours.

