

## **Chapter 2. Site History**



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### Introduction

Alcatraz Island dominated the entrance of the San Francisco Bay until the Golden Gate Bridge was built. Ships entering the Bay had to pass through the central channel of Golden Gate, quickly altering course to avoid Alcatraz Island. In the 1850s, the Island was surveyed for its potential for harbor defense and as a location for one of the first Lighthouses built by the United States on the Pacific to assist with navigation. The first light was lit on the summit of Alcatraz Island in 1854.

The Island underwent substantial modifications by the U.S. Army between 1852 and 1859, creating a harbor defense built primarily of a series of batteries. The *“Plan of 1870”* restructured the Island and the Island’s batteries were rebuilt to conform to new theories of fortification - earthen fortifications replaced or filled earlier batteries. As the need for harbor defense diminished, Alcatraz Island transformed into a military prison and once again underwent major changes including the addition of the Main Prison on its Summit. The transfer of the Island to the Bureau of Prisons in 1933 began its period of use as a federal penitentiary resulting in changes to buildings and landscape alike.

In explaining the history of the Alcatraz Island landscape, it is important to correlate extant landscape features and existing elements with the layers of physical modifications that have occurred from various periods. The site history assists in systematically identifying and revealing the layers of change through the use of historical descriptions, photographs, maps, and other primary and secondary sources. Graphic representations in the form of plans depicting periods of landscape change illustrate the major physical changes in the Alcatraz Island cultural landscape. The plans are supported by narrative text, historic maps and photographs.

These periods of landscape change/historic periods differ slightly from previous studies, most notably the 1992 Draft Cultural Landscape Report<sup>1</sup> and the 2005 Cultural Landscape Inventory.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Delgado 1992: 11

<sup>2</sup> Bradley 2005

## Periods of Landscape Change / Historic Periods

Eight periods of landscape change describe the physical evolution of Alcatraz Island's cultural landscape development from the 1850s through 2009. Of these, seven periods are within the Island's period of significance (1847 to 1973) and therefore represent the Island's historic periods. These are in an italic font. These periods of landscape change document the physical changes that modified the cultural landscape of Alcatraz Island throughout its history.

- *Pre-Settlement and Exploration of San Francisco Bay (pre 1852)*
- *Initial Military Fortification / Aid to Navigation (1852-1867)*
- *Earthen Fortifications / Early Military Prison and Fortifications (1868-1907)*
- *Later Military Prison (1908-1933)*
- *Federal Penitentiary (1934-1963) / and Early General Services Administration (GSA) Caretaking (1963-1969)*
- *Indian Occupation (1969-1971)*
- *General Services Administration (1970-1973)*
- National Park Service / Golden Gate National Recreation Area (1974 to Present)

The beginning and end of each period corresponds to, and documents, points of major physical change on Alcatraz Island (the primary rationale in defining the beginning and end of each period for purposes of this study). Major physical change includes large scale topographic modification and construction of buildings, roads and earthen embankments such as occurred with the Island's initial construction in the 1850s for use as a military fortification. Other examples include modifications to buildings and structures such as the demolition of the Upper Prison and construction of the Main Prison in the early 1900s.

The major physical changes on Alcatraz Island generally correspond with changes in the use and/or governmental control of the Island. However, there are instances where the Island's social history differs slightly from physical modifications made to its cultural landscape. The Island's use or social history includes its initial use as a military fortification beginning in 1854; the change to a military prison in the 1860s; its transfer to the Bureau of Prisons for use as a federal penitentiary in 1933; its transfer to the General Services Administration (GSA) in 1963; its occupation by Native Americans in 1969 for an nineteen-month period (during GSA oversight); and its transfer to the National Park Service (NPS) in 1972.

### *Pre-Settlement and Exploration of San Francisco Bay (pre 1852)*

Before Europeans settled in the San Francisco area, the Bay area was inhabited by Native American groups including the Huimen band of the Miwok people who lived on the Marin Peninsula and the Ohlone who lived on the northern tip of the San Francisco Peninsula.<sup>3</sup> Alcatraz Island was a harsh environment, subject to strong winds and fog and not conducive for habitation. The rocky, steep island lacked a source of fresh water (as it does today), and was sparsely vegetated. It was likely its sparse vegetation, rocky cliffs and lack of terrestrial predators was conducive as habitat for colonies of waterbirds. There is no evidence that the Miwok or Ohlone lived on the Island or altered its landscape and no prehistoric archeological sites have been identified. However, it is likely that they used it as a fishing station or gathered its waterbird eggs.

Early explorers of Alta California and San Francisco Bay and its islands included Sergeant Jose Francisco Ortega who noted the Bay when scouting for Captain Gaspar de Portola's 1769 expedition. During a subsequent 1771 Spanish expedition, Don Pedro Fages described the three major islands of the San Francisco Bay, Angel Island, Alcatraz Island and Yerba Buena in his journal.

Alcatraz Island was first recorded by European explorers aboard the Spanish ship *San Carlos*, commanded by Lieutenant Juan Manuel de Ayala that anchored off Angel Island in August 1775. The *San Carlos*' pilot, Jose de Canizares, surveyed and charted the San Francisco Bay, its shoreline, and the three islands. Lieutenant Ayala named the islands, bestowing the name "*Isla de los Alcatraces*" on the island he described as "*so arid and steep that there was not even a boat harbor there; I named the island de los Alcatraces because of their [birds] being so plentiful there.*"<sup>4</sup> The map drawn from this 1775 survey noted today's Yerba Buena Island as "Alcatraces." The name "Alcatraces" was traditionally translated as "Pelicans." More recent translations indicate the word should be translated as "Cormorants."<sup>5</sup> The name has been spelled in a variety of ways - Alcatraces, Alcatras, Alcatrace. The spelling of "Alcatraz" was adopted by the U.S. Coast Survey in the 1850s and by the U.S. Army in the mid - 1860s.<sup>6</sup>

Alcatraz Island's strategic location at the northern end of San Francisco Bay and its potential for defense and navigation was first acknowledged by the Spanish colonial government who had ownership and control of all coastal lands (including islands) in California. In 1822, following its independence from Spain, the Mexican government assumed control of California. Mexico also recognized the Bay and the Island's importance, noting the "*increasing seaborne trade in hide and tallow, and an expanding influx of Anglo-American settlers resulted in the territorial ambitions of the young United States becoming focused upon California.*"<sup>7</sup> With permission from Mexican authorities the British Navy surveyor Captain Frederick Beechey surveyed San Francisco Bay in 1826. Captain Beechey gave Alcatraz Island, along with Yerba Buena, its present name.<sup>8</sup>

By 1846, the United States claimed control of California including San Francisco Bay. In 1847, the United States Army engineers surveyed Alcatraz Island with an eye towards its role for harbor defense and as an aid to navigation. This was the first field survey by the United States and one of the first land surveys on the Pacific Coast.<sup>9</sup> Earlier attempts to construct a navigation light on the

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<sup>3</sup> Haller 2006

<sup>4</sup> Thompson 1979: 3; Hart 1996: 4

<sup>5</sup> Hart 1996: 4

<sup>6</sup> Thompson 1979: 3

<sup>7</sup> Freeman 1999: 2-6

<sup>8</sup> Thompson 1979: 5; Martini 1990: 11

<sup>9</sup> Thompson 1979: 590 (from National Archives)

Island had failed. A naturalized Mexican citizen (Julian Workman) had been granted title to Alcatraz Island by the Mexican government with the condition establish a navigation light.<sup>10</sup> The title transferred to his brother-in-law, Francis P. Temple, but neither man fulfilled his responsibilities. Soon after, California's self-appointed governor, U.S. Army Captain John C. Fremont claimed to have bought the Island from Temple for \$5,000.<sup>11</sup> At the end of the war with Mexico in 1848, the United States government declared Alcatraz Island federal property and "*refused to recognize both Temple's claim to ownership and Fremont's petition for reimbursement for its purchase.*" Workman had never erected the navigation light required and Fremont had not been empowered to make a land purchases for the United States of America. All private claims [to Alcatraz Island] were null and void<sup>12</sup> and the Island remains the property of the federal government to present - day.

Throughout this historic period, Alcatraz Island known as 'Bird Island,' remained uninhabited and rarely visited (except for a time during the California Gold Rush (1849 - 1850) when Gull and other waterbird eggs saw a brisk market. This lack of human use was in contrast to nearby Angel Island, dubbed 'Wood Island' that was frequently visited by crews from harbor ships for its firewood and fresh water.

Prior to 1852, Alcatraz Island's natural topography was a mounded form, topped by two rounded peaks at elevations of 134.9 and 138.4 respectively. The Island was originally 1,705 feet long and 580 feet wide at its widest point. From its two peaks, the Island gradually sloped down to the water at its southern and eastern edges, while its West end was characterized by steep cliffs that rose from 10 to 120 feet above the water. Along its east and west shores, the Island had precipitous cliffs rising 50 feet straight up from the water on the west to a small ridge before climbing another 80 feet. On the Island's east side, cliffs rose 20 feet straight up from the water before steeply angling in to the two peaks at the Island's summit.<sup>13</sup>

This massive land form was described by U.S. Army engineers in the 1847 survey as "*irregularly stratified sandstone*" that was covered in thin guano deposits, giving it the name 'White Island.' Its shoreline was irregular and offered little opportunity for shoreline or beach access. It was described in the 1847 survey as "*the island with no beach and but two or three points where small boats can land.*"<sup>14</sup> One such spot is the present-day location of the Island's Wharf on the leeward side near the southern tip of the Island. Another was most likely the small cove known later as 'Pirate's Cove' on the windward side of the Island.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Thompson 1979: 6

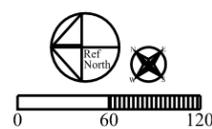
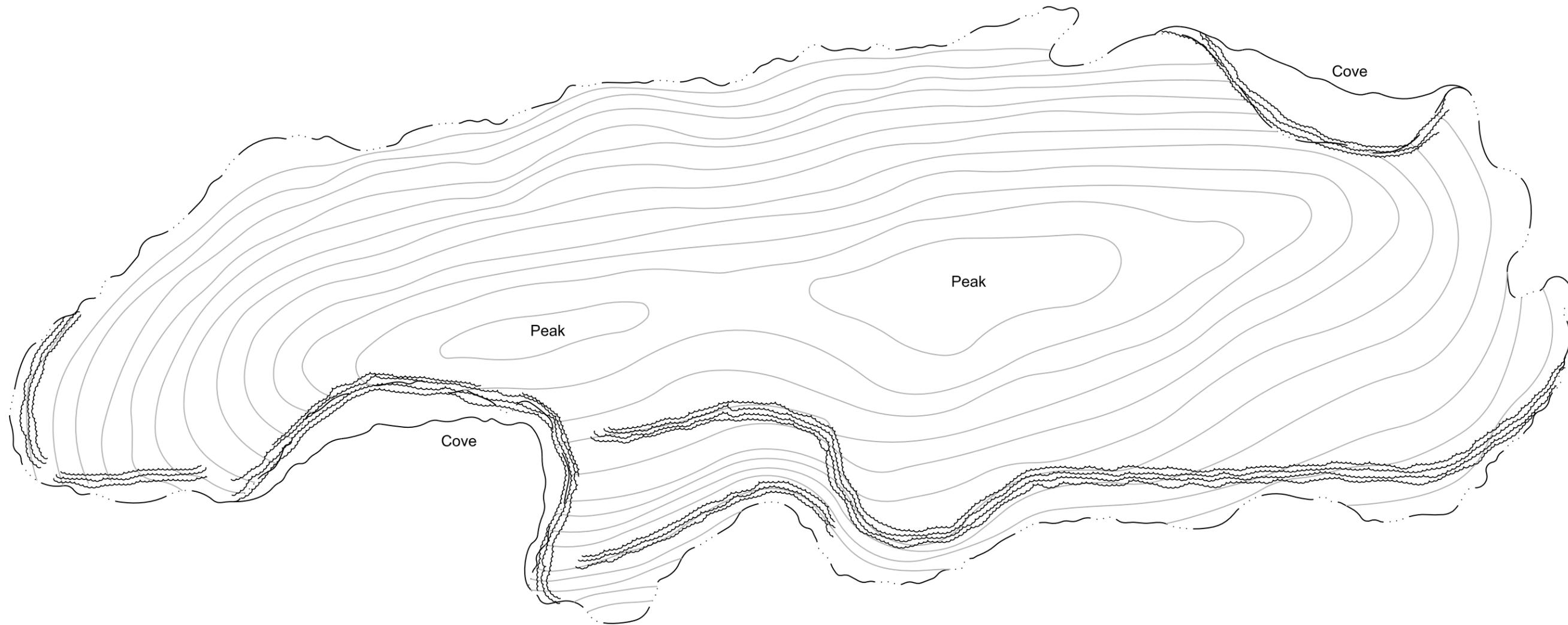
<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 6-7

<sup>12</sup> Martini 1990: 13

<sup>13</sup> Delgado 1992

<sup>14</sup> Thompson 1979: 2

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



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| <b>FIGURE 2 - 1</b><br>UNITED STATES<br>DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR<br>NATIONAL PARK SERVICE<br>GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA | TITLE OF PROJECT<br><b>CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT</b>              |
|   | HISTORIC PERIOD<br><b>PRE-SETTLEMENT</b>                          |
|   | NAME OF PARK<br><b>ALCATRAZ ISLAND NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK</b> |
| REGION<br>PACIFIC   | COUNTY<br>SAN FRANCISCO   |
|   | STATE<br>CALIFORNIA   |



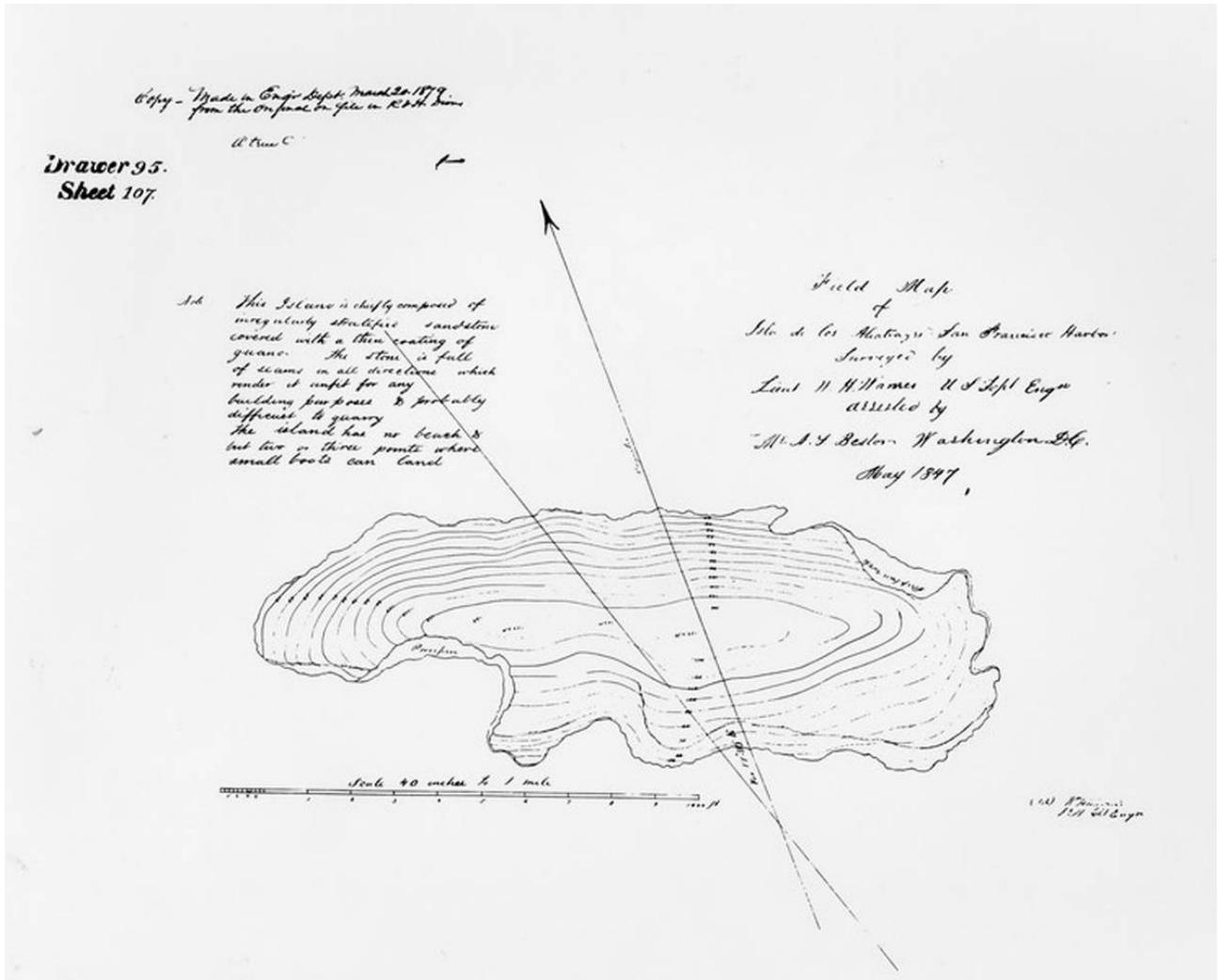


Figure 2 - 2. 1847 Field Map (source: NARA)

### ***Initial Military Fortification / Aid to Navigation (1852 - 1867)***

Alcatraz Island's location at the entrance to the San Francisco Bay along with its natural attributes such as its sloping topography and steep cliffs was recognized by the United States military in 1852 as a natural choice for a military fortification, especially for the site of a battery as the Island's steep cliffs were "*walls already mostly scarped by nature in the solid rock.*"

This historic period begins with the original U.S. Army plan for fortification (the 1852 plan)<sup>16</sup> and includes the subsequent construction that would continue through 1866 in response to its role as a military fortification. Construction on Alcatraz Island began in 1852 with the blasting of the Island's rock faces and shores for building open air batteries, including the first battery built - the South Battery, completed in 1855, and securing "*a perpendicular height of 25 feet all round*" the Island.<sup>17</sup> The first people to occupy the Island were civilian workers and officers from the U.S. Army's Corps of Engineers who oversaw construction of the initial Island fortifications.<sup>18</sup>

During this period, several engineering officers supervised the construction on the Island. All were graduates of the U.S. Military Academy and were entrusted with an astounding amount of responsibility for their rank. Among the earliest were First Lieutenant Zealous Bates Tower (West Point Class of 1841) and Second Lieutenant Frederick Prime, twenty-five, only three years out of the Academy.<sup>19</sup> During the Civil War, the Island also had several well-known commanding officers including Capt. Joseph Steward (1859-1861), Capt. William Winder (1862-1864), Lt. Col. Charles Wood (1864-1865) and Captain James Robertson (1865-1866).<sup>20</sup>

Extensive topographic changes and major earth moving characterize this period as these actions extensively modified the Island. Topographic modifications included terraced slopes and walls and the cut for the Main Road as well as the leveling of the two peaks at the top of the Island to create a summit. This period also includes the first buildings constructed on the Island - the lighthouse completed in 1854, fortified infantry barracks and Guardhouse as well as the construction of the Wharf on the Island's leeward side.

Beginning in 1852, Alcatraz Island's naturally occurring linear, mounded form that was characterized by two rounded peaks, was dramatically altered by the U.S. Army as they blasted away rock and soil at the Island's highest points to build a large level plateau that sloped down slightly from south to north. The Island's south peak was reduced from its original height of 138.4 feet to approximately 134 feet, and the north peak was lowered from its original height of 134.9 feet to approximately 131 feet. The shallow depression between the two peaks was filled with rock and soil removed from the blasting.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Delgado 1992

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Martini 2009: Construction laborers were hired from San Francisco, and were generally young, busted gold seekers with varying degrees of construction experience. At first they were ferried daily to the Island, but within months the U.S. Army had built wooden barracks and the workers lived on-site. It is unknown how many laborers continued to work and live on the Island after the permanent garrison was in place in 1859. Construction continued to expand and modernize the masonry batteries through 1868 with soldiers and civilian laborers providing the bulk of the work force.

<sup>19</sup> Martini 2009: In 1858, supervision of the works was assigned to Second Lieutenant James Birdseye McPherson from New York, twenty-nine, who hated the island. All three would go on to service in the Civil War. Gun batteries on the Island were named in their honor. McPherson is arguably the most famous of these officers, attaining the rank of General and dying in combat during the siege of Atlanta.

<sup>20</sup> Martini 2009: Winder may be the best remembered of these officers, partly because of his relationship to his father, General John Winder of the Confederate Army, and also because of an incident in October 1863 when the captain put a warning shot across the bow of a visiting British warship – the only time Alcatraz fired a gun in anger.

<sup>21</sup> Warner 1847; Ernst 1867; Thompson 1979: 69

Access to Alcatraz Island was made possible in 1852 with the construction of the Island's first wharf. The Wharf was situated on the Island's east side, away from the Golden Gate and approaching ships as well as out of the strong winds of the Bay. The site at the base of the Island's eastern cliffs was on its leeward side, near the Island's southern tip and at the point where the Island was easiest to navigate by ship/boat.

The construction of the Main Road, completed in 1853, was critical in the fortification of the Island.<sup>22</sup> The Main Road provided the primary circulation and access from the Wharf at the base of the Island's east-side to the new level plateau at its summit, and access to the Island's batteries being built on its west side. The Main Road was blasted out of the rock on the east side of the Island. To connect the lower Island with its fortified Summit, the Main Road was built as a series of steep ramps with three switchbacks, all of which remain today. The alignment of the road, climbing and terracing up the Island's hillside, formed a plateau that would ring the Island. The crumbling rock at the road's edges was retained by a series of brick and concrete walls that lined the road. Many of these walls served a dual purpose as defensive walls. In some areas, steep faces of rock retained the slope, and in early years rock slides were common. Two men were killed by rock slides during road construction.<sup>23</sup>

This road also had two branches: one at its first switchback that connected to the northern batteries; and one at its second switchback that connected to the southern and western part of the Island.<sup>24</sup> The southern branch was cut in 1865, with the excavation of the Wharf-side cliff to provide space for new Bombproof Barracks (lowest level of current-day Building 64). This action removed the land on which the road was located, and the branch now ended at the northern side of the barracks site.<sup>25</sup>

The U.S. Army built the Guardhouse in 1856 on the first stretch of the Main Road (that provided circulation to the north from the Wharf), straddling the Main Road.<sup>26</sup> The Guardhouse was constructed similar to the Island's two caponiers, and was to be armed with three twenty-four-pounder howitzers. In 1861, the Guardhouse and its associated Dry Moat were modified for the Island's new use as a military prison as the U.S. Army began to use the Island as both a military fortification and military prison. The Dry Moat and Guardhouse Complex remain today. Immediately north of the Guardhouse Complex on the Main Road, the U.S. Army built the Island's first cellhouse, or prison, in 1862 (on the site of today's Prison Site/Electric Shop). This use was later incorporated into the Lower Prison site.

On August 27, 1861, the U.S. Army officially designated Alcatraz Island as the official military prison for the Department of the Pacific – a vast area that extended roughly from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean and from Mexico to the Canadian border. The first prisoners were soldiers from the fort's regular garrison and were undergoing “company punishment” as opposed to later prisoners who would be soldiers shipped to the Island for a variety of charges from other frontier posts.<sup>27</sup> Not all prisoners sent to the Island were military men. During the Civil War, when President Lincoln suspended *habeas corpus* for reasons of supposed national security, the Guardhouse Complex became a site for incarcerating local citizens and politicians whose loyalties to

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<sup>22</sup> Delgado 1992: 10

<sup>23</sup> Haller 2009

<sup>24</sup> 1863 Map

<sup>25</sup> 1867 Map

<sup>26</sup> Delgado 1992

<sup>27</sup> Martini 2009: Typical military crimes included thievery, desertion, theft of government property, theft of another soldier's property, fighting, sleeping on guard duty, drunkenness, and escape from the guardhouse.

the Union were suspect.<sup>28</sup> In March 1863, the U. S. Navy seized the sloop *Chapman* on San Francisco Bay and found it loaded with men and arms. The crew was pro-Secessionists Southerners and included several prominent Californians.<sup>29</sup> The conspirators were confined on Alcatraz for a period, the leaders in due course tried and convicted of treason and sentenced to death, and were eventually pardoned by President Lincoln. Following the end of the Civil War, one last group of citizens joined the military prisoners incarcerated on Alcatraz Island when thirty-nine unrepentant southern sympathizers were seized for holding public celebrations following the assassination of President Lincoln.<sup>30</sup>

In 1859, just above switchback three on the Main Road, the U.S. Army graded a terraced plateau for four quarters for non-commissioned officers' (NCO) quarters. The terrace connected to the Main Road on its southern end and was defined by a retaining wall on its east-side. Historic maps indicate a plan for four houses, but only three appear in historic photographs. The northernmost quarters is not shown, and was likely never built.<sup>31</sup>

By 1854, the Island's first lighthouse was completed at the south edge of the Island's Summit, the plateau at the top of the Island, thus fulfilling another important role for the Island - as an aid to navigation. The lighthouse was first lit on 1 June 1854.<sup>32</sup> The fortified infantry barrack, known as the Citadel, was built in 1859, and housed soldiers and officers.<sup>33</sup> It was sited to the north of the lighthouse on the Summit and separated by a broad open area.<sup>34</sup> From this height (of the Citadel and Summit), the sentries had an unobstructed view of the waters surrounding Alcatraz Island, allowing for the entire Island perimeter to be defended. Built of brick, the Citadel was engineered to resist shot and shells from an exterior attack. There were no cannons in the building as it was designed to be defended by infantrymen. The building's exterior walls were fitted with iron shutters for its musket-slit windows, and the building was surrounded on all sides by a dry brick moat that was surrounded by an ornate iron fence. The Citadel was a commanding presence on the Island's Summit.<sup>35</sup> Its role as housing was made more habitable by the construction of two gardens that

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<sup>28</sup> Martini 2009: The most notorious of these non-soldier prisoners was probably a chairman of the State Democratic Committee who was locked up for giving an "incendiary" speech during the 1864 presidential campaign.

<sup>29</sup> Martini 2009: The men included Asbury Harpending, Lorenzo Libby, Ridgely Greathouse, and Alfred Rubery. Harpending had a letter of marque signed by Jefferson Davis authorizing him to act as a privateer for the Confederacy.

<sup>30</sup> Martini 2009: A San Francisco newspaper reported in 1865 that they had been put to work laboring eight to twelve hours a day on the construction of new fortifications above the wharf, chained to 24-pound iron balls under the mortifying gaze of women and visitors to the Island. If they refused to work, they were confined to a sweatbox barely large enough to stand upright.

<sup>31</sup> 1867 Map

<sup>32</sup> Martini 2009: Beginning in 1854, chief keepers, assistant keepers and their families were assigned to the Island, and lived in the lighthouse building on the Summit near the Citadel. In the Lighthouse Service, who operated the light station, it was usually the chief keepers who had some previous experience in operating light stations while the assistant keepers were hired locally, frequently without any experience.

<sup>33</sup> Martini 2009: During the Civil War, the makeup of the Island's garrison changed as the Regular units from the 3rd Artillery were sent back East and replaced by infantry units composed primarily of local California militiamen and volunteers. Units assigned during this period included the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry Regiments, recruits for the 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons, and various companies from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> California Volunteer Infantry. Many of these men had little or no military experience and spent their time on the Island undergoing training.

<sup>34</sup> Haller 2009

<sup>35</sup> Capron 1920: Mrs. Cynithia Capron was an officer's wife who briefly lived on the Island during the summer of 1867. Her time on the Island is substantiated by her references to August and September, her husband becoming an officer in 1867, and her reference to Major John A. Darling who was only in command of Alcatraz from July 1866 to November 1867.

were in existence as early as 1867. A large garden was on the Citadel's south side and a smaller garden was on its east-side.<sup>36</sup> Underground cisterns were placed on the Summit for water storage.<sup>37</sup> On December, 30 1859, the post at Alcatraz Island was garrisoned and the "*first troops took up residence in the newly completed Citadel.*"<sup>38</sup> The arrival of the first soldiers marked the beginning of a permanent garrison that would last for the next seventy-five years.<sup>39</sup>

Construction of the Island's earthen fortifications began in earnest in the summer of 1853 as directed by First Lieutenant Zealous Bates Tower, continuing through the end of 1859.<sup>40</sup> The construction for the Island's fortification as a military post included building the North Battery, West Battery and South Battery<sup>41</sup> (the initial military names for the batteries generally noted their location on the Island) beginning with construction of the South Battery in 1854. The batteries ringed the perimeter of the Island on its northern, western and southern edges giving the island an all-round field of fire. These were meant to provide a strong defense for the Island and an attack appeared likely during the Civil War when Confederate raiders were reported in Pacific.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the batteries and their associated earthen mounds, tunnel entrances, roads and ancillary facilities, the U.S. Army built the North and South Caponiers, magazines and hot shot furnaces.<sup>43</sup>

The North Caponier was built in 1856, on the northernmost tip of the Island. It was constructed of concrete and brick and followed a design that was otherwise similar to the sandstone South Caponier. Both caponiers included a lower floor for the powder magazine. On the second floor were mounted eight twenty-four-pounder howitzers to defend guns of batteries on both sides. On the top of the caponier was an eight-inch Columbiad mounted en barbette that also had an infantry parapet. The Magazine portions of the North Caponier still stands.<sup>44</sup>

The completion of the West and North batteries, and the completion of the new battery between the West and South Battery in 1863 made the initial naming system of the batteries difficult to distinguish which battery was which. This led to the replacing the geographic names of the batteries with U.S. Army officers' names to recognize the accomplishments of those were important at the time.<sup>45</sup>

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*"The officer's occupied the citadel, a large brick building with openings in the thick walls, perhaps ten inches wide but as long as any window. These windows were so narrow and the walls so thick that only a little could be seen from them. The commanding officer and his wife kept a suite of rooms, and all other officers messed together. I was the only lady in the mess."*

<sup>36</sup> Capron 1920: Mrs. Cynithia Capron's garden descriptions are the earliest references to gardens on the Summit.

*"The commanding officer married a Spanish lady from Chile. She was very fond of flowers, and had room for a very small flower garden which she had watered, and everything grew luxuriantly. Outside in the garden the fuchsias climbed over the top of a high fence. The scarlet geraniums almost as tall as one's head were loaded with blossoms. The pinks were the finest I had ever seen."*

<sup>37</sup> Thompson 1979: 605

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 203

<sup>39</sup> Martini 2009: These first soldiers were from Company H, 3rd U.S. Artillery, a traditional company, from the Washington Territories who were specifically there to occupy the new fort. There were eighty-six men in Company H. Eleven men from the company were put into confinement in the Guardhouse upon their arrival, although reasons for confinement were not specified in the military records. Likely reasons included attempted desertion, theft, drunkenness, or possibly a combination thereof. These soldiers were undergoing company punishment, not to be confused with soldiers that would later be shipped to Alcatraz for incarceration.

<sup>40</sup> Bradley 2005: 4

<sup>41</sup> Thompson 1979

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 609

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 593-594

<sup>44</sup> Thompson 1979; Martini 2009

<sup>45</sup> Martini 2009

The following describes the naming of each of the batteries (changed in 1863) and their positions on Alcatraz Island.<sup>46</sup>

- North Battery, enlarged in 1865, included a semi-circular brick and concrete Fortification Wall (now under the Model Industries Building)<sup>47</sup>
- South Battery
- West Battery
- Three Gun Battery
- Battery Halleck was the right face and the first sixteen positions to the left of the north caponier of the former North Battery on the Island's north shore. Battery Halleck was named in honor of Henry Wager Halleck - Commander in Chief of U.S. Army.
- Battery Rosecrans included the five positions to the extreme left of the former North Battery on the Island's north shore. It was named in honor of Major General William Starke Rosecrans of the U.S. Army.
- Battery Mansfield included the new twelve-gun battery on the West peak of Island, and was named for Major General Joseph King Fenno Mansfield. Mansfield inspected battery works on the Island in the 1850s.
- Battery Stevens referred to the new work on the West Battery that consisted of six positions stepped like a staircase on the northwest side of the original (old) West Battery. It was named for Major General Isaac Ingalls Stevens who was a former engineer officer and the first governor of the Washington Territory. Stevens was killed in battle in 1862.
- Battery Tower included both faces of the original (old) West Battery and was named in honor of Zealous Bates Tower, a brigadier general from the East Coast who was formerly stationed on Alcatraz Island.
- Battery McClellan included the entirety of the original (old) South Battery including its caponier and was named for the commander of the Union armies in 1862<sup>48</sup>
- Battery McPherson included only the four 'new' positions to the southeast of Battery Tower, connecting the South and West batteries.<sup>49</sup> Battery McPherson was named for former Alcatraz engineer Major General James Birdseye McPherson.
- Battery Prime included all four gun positions of the original (old) Three Gun Battery

It was estimated that the earthwork modifications for the 1852 plan that resulted in the wholesale change from a natural landform into a fortified military base included approximately 267,500 cubic feet of rock excavated. In addition, 56,303 cubic feet of brick was used for building and wall construction, another 60,945 cubic feet of brick and concrete used together, and another 90,239 cubic feet of concrete with 638 square yards of asphalt was used.<sup>50</sup> Additional filling took place between 1864 and 1865 in front of the masonry Fortification Walls to protect them from long range artillery fire.<sup>51</sup>

In 1865, work began on the Bombproof (casemated) Barracks along the western edge of the Wharf, replacing a defensive wall that was already in place but that had no room for artillery

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<sup>46</sup> Thompson 1979; Martini 2009

<sup>47</sup> Thompson 1979: 613

<sup>48</sup> Martini 2009

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Delgado 1992: 10

<sup>51</sup> Martini 2009

positions. The U.S. Army built the first tier (or first floor of the barracks) using the fortification wall as the front building wall. Behind the barracks to the west, a series of rooms were built, connected by a linear passageway. These rooms were actually casemates built next to the outside wall (on the west side). This part of the building was later referred to as Chinatown by the U.S. Army, and after 1933, Bureau of Prison personnel. The NPS began using the name China Alley following 1974.<sup>52</sup> Today, the area is again referred to as Chinatown. The casemates in the lower tier never had guns mounted, but instead served as other functions including kitchens, storerooms and mess halls. In later years, several of these Alcatraz casemates served as the first storehouses in San Francisco for submarine mines. An unused powder magazine at the north end of the casemates became one of the first operating rooms for the electrically controlled mines, designated a “mining casemate.”<sup>53</sup>

The defense of San Francisco was a lower priority to far-off Washington D.C. throughout most of the Civil War,<sup>54</sup> and the work that continued on Alcatraz Island was minor in comparison to other historic periods. The start of the Civil War effectively halted major construction, concluding the initial construction phase of the Island’s military landscape.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Thompson 1979: 617

<sup>54</sup> Martini 1990: 49

<sup>55</sup> Thompson 1979: 87



**Legend**

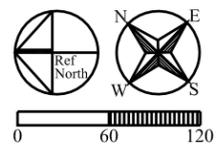
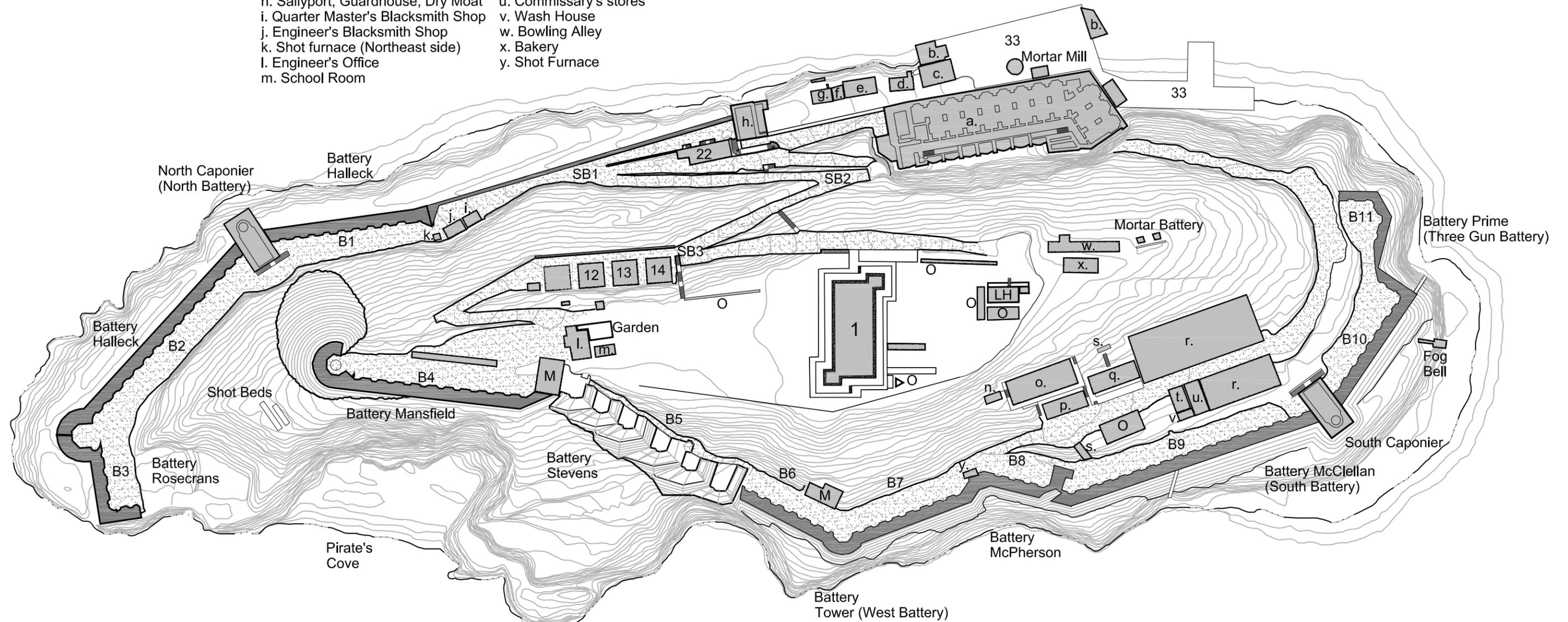
- 1. Citadel - Defensive Barracks
- 12. Non-Com Officers' Quarters
- 13. Non-Com Officers' Quarters
- 14. Non-Com Officers' Quarters
- 22. Prison
- 33. Wharf

- a. Casemates
- b. Boathouse
- c. Engineer's Storehouse
- d. Water Tank
- e. Quartermaster's storehouse
- f. Coal Shed
- g. Sutlers Store
- h. Sallyport, Guardhouse, Dry Moat
- i. Quarter Master's Blacksmith Shop
- j. Engineer's Blacksmith Shop
- k. Shot furnace (Northeast side)
- l. Engineer's Office
- m. School Room

- n. Wash House
- o. Engineer's Quarters
- p. Stable
- q. Laundress' Quarters
- r. Temporary Barrack
- s. Privy
- t. Carpenter's Shop
- u. Commissary's stores
- v. Wash House
- w. Bowling Alley
- x. Bakery
- y. Shot Furnace

- LH Light House
- SB1 Switchbacks on Main Road
- O Ordnance
- M Magazine
- B Battery

- B1 Battery No. 1
- B2 Battery No. 2
- B3 Battery No. 3
- B4 Battery No. 4
- B5 Battery No. 5
- B6 Battery No. 6
- B7 Battery No. 7
- B8 Battery No. 8
- B9 Battery No. 9
- B10 Battery No. 10
- B11 Battery No. 11



|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>FIGURE 2 - 3</b><br>UNITED STATES<br>DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR<br>NATIONAL PARK SERVICE<br>GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA | TITLE OF PROJECT<br><b>CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT</b>              |
|   | HISTORIC PERIOD<br><b>1852 - 1867</b>                             |
|   | NAME OF PARK<br><b>ALCATRAZ ISLAND NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK</b> |
| REGION<br>PACIFIC   | COUNTY<br>SAN FRANCISCO   |
| STATE<br>CALIFORNIA   |   |



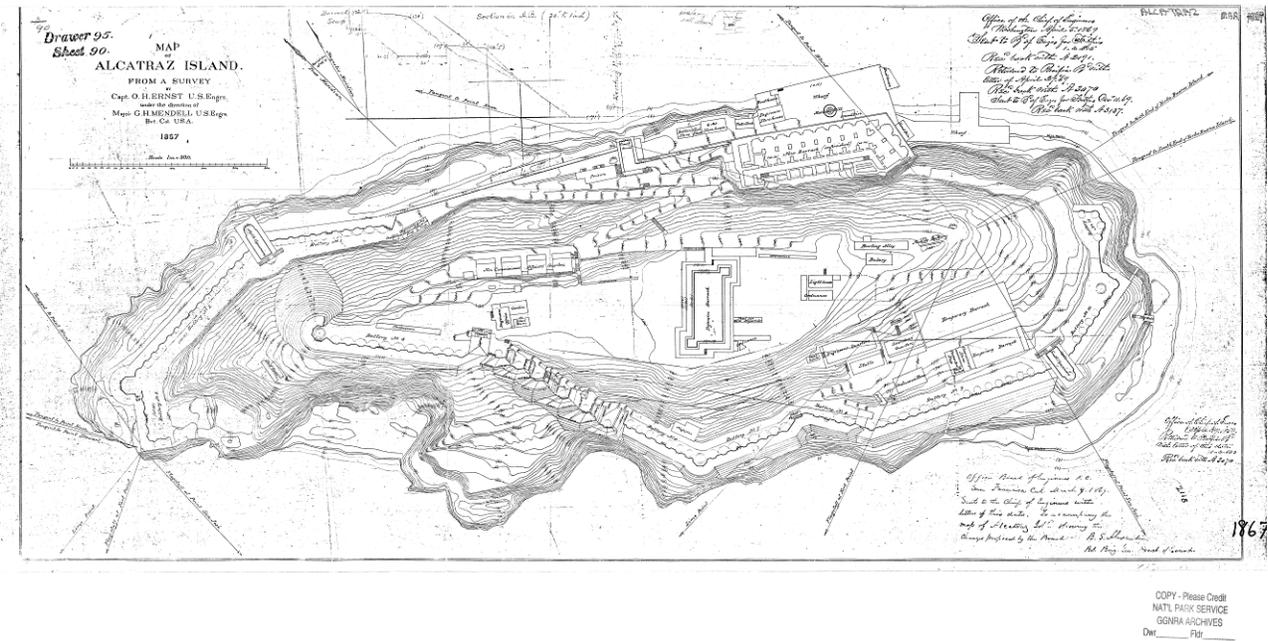


Figure 2 - 4. Alcatraz Island Topography (c1867); (source: NPS GGNRA Archives)



Figure 2 - 5. View to Alcatraz from Nob Hill (c1852); (source: GOGA-3363)

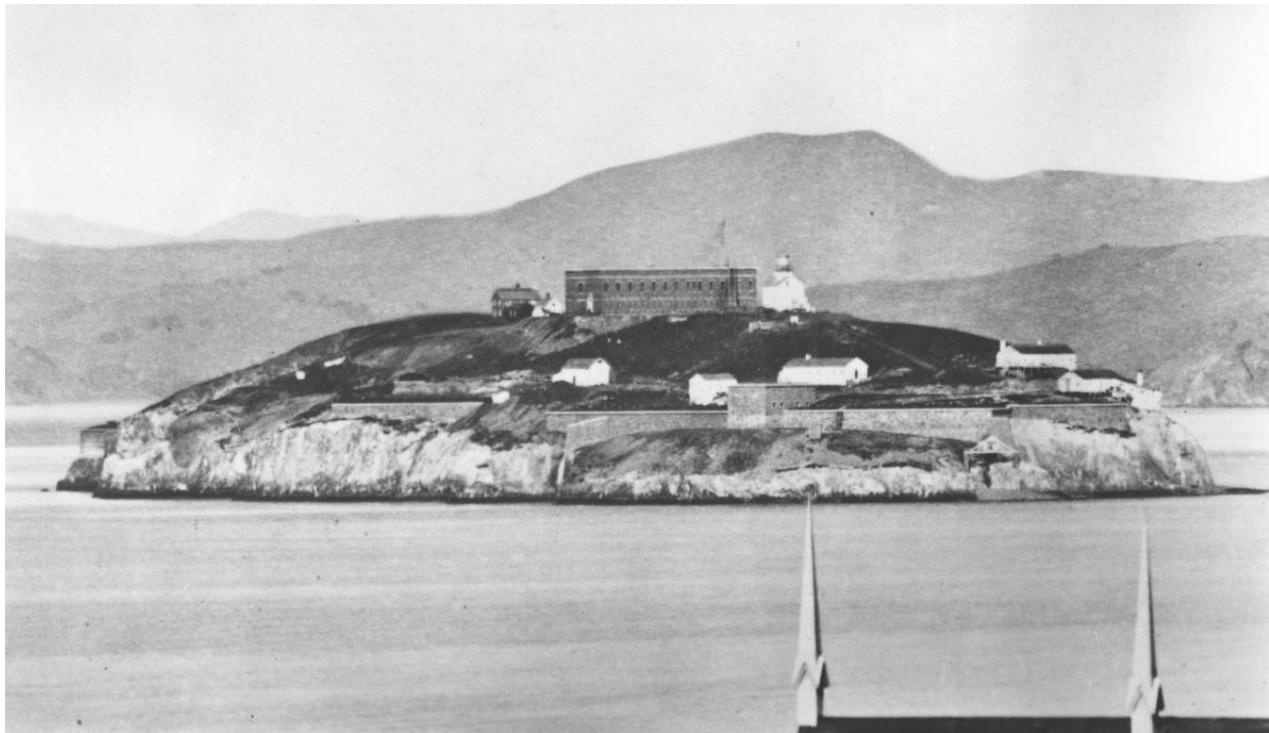


Figure 2 - 6. View to Alcatraz Island from Telegraph Hill (c1860); (source: CSL Watkins)

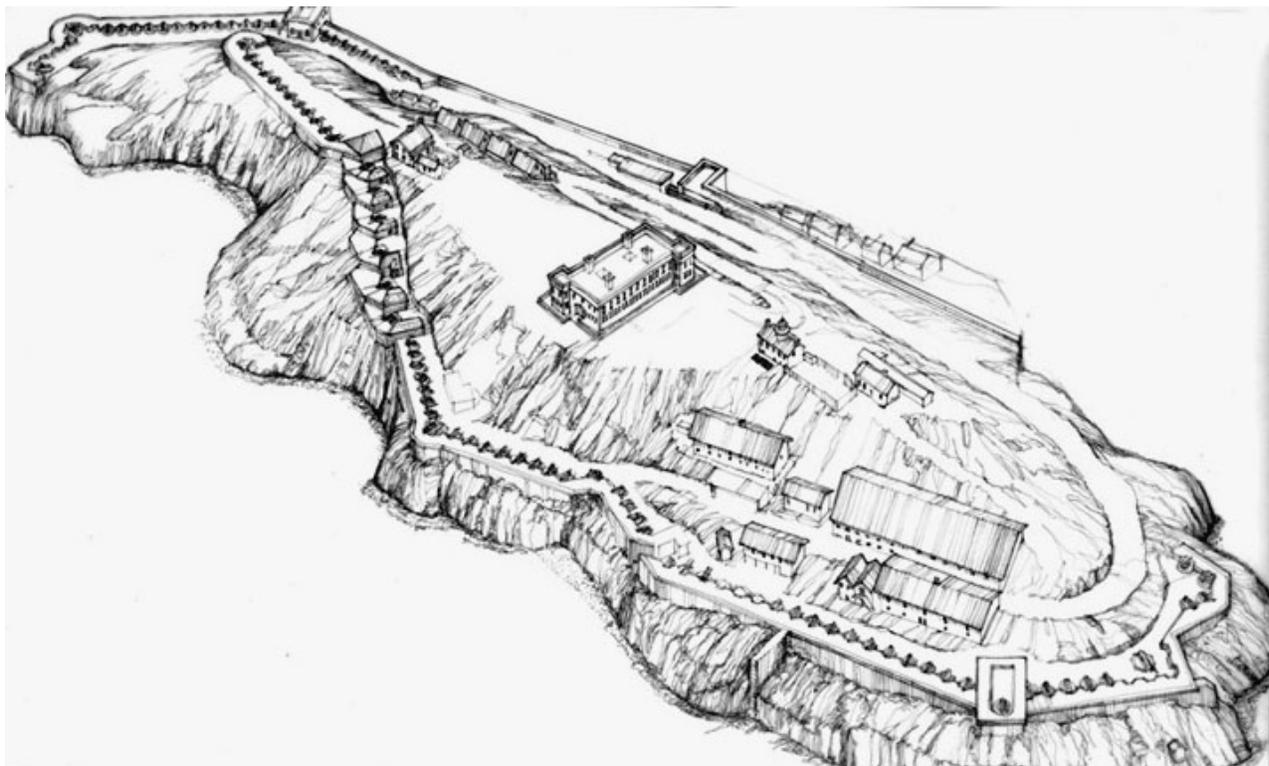


Figure 2 - 7. Aerial Graphic (1864); (source: Ormsby & Thickstun)



**Figure 2 - 8.** Alcatraz Island, west side (c1865); (source: CSL)



**Figure 2 - 9.** South Battery, note its masonry construction (c1864); (source: NARA)

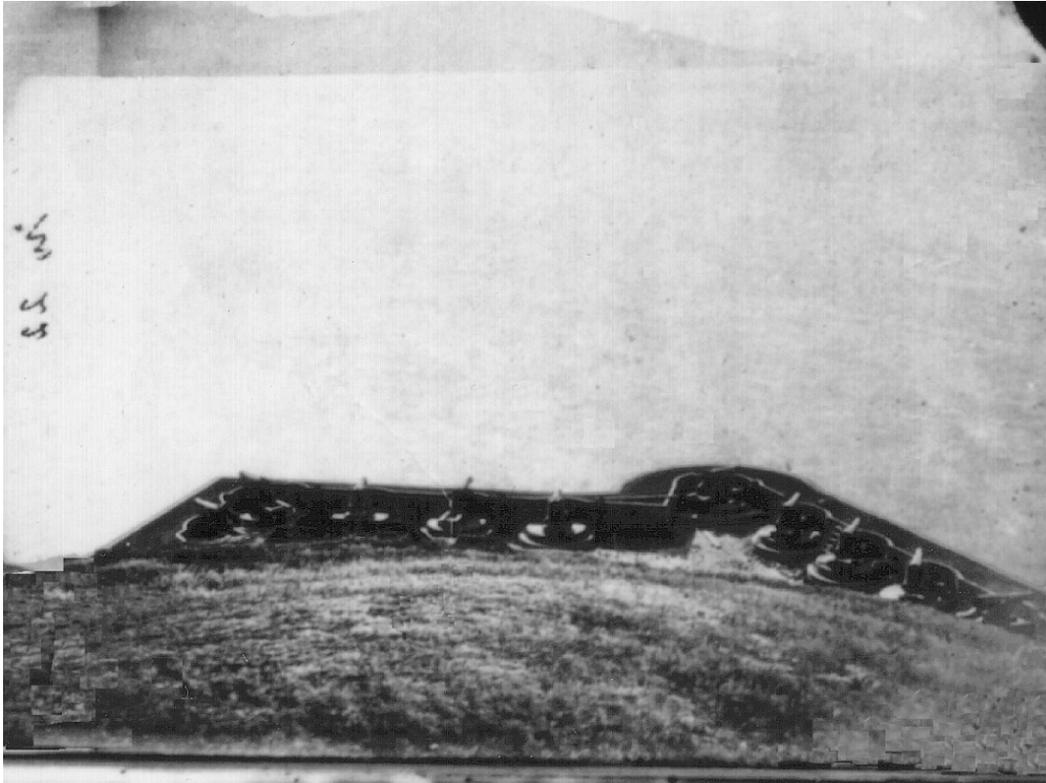


Figure 2 - 10. North Battery (c1864) Note the vegetated slope above the battery; (source: NARA)



Figure 2 - 11. West Battery (c1864); (source: NARA)



**Figure 2 - 12.** West Battery (c1864); (source: NARA)