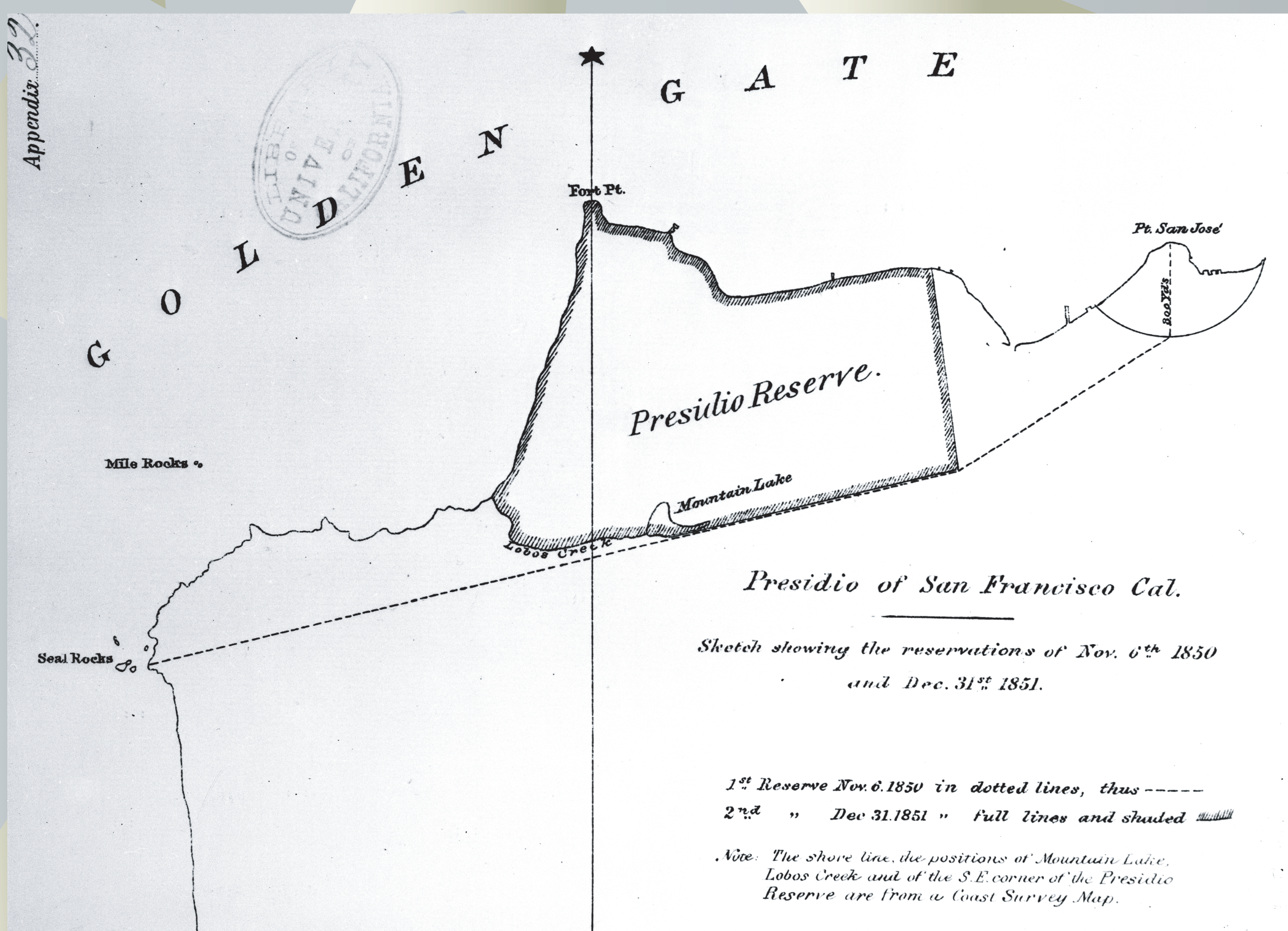




EARLY UNITED STATES (1850-1884)

The Gold Rush turned San Francisco into a booming city, and its riches attracted the attention of the world. The United States Army focused attention on developing coastal defenses around San Francisco Bay, in response to interest in San Francisco's excellent location and new wealth.



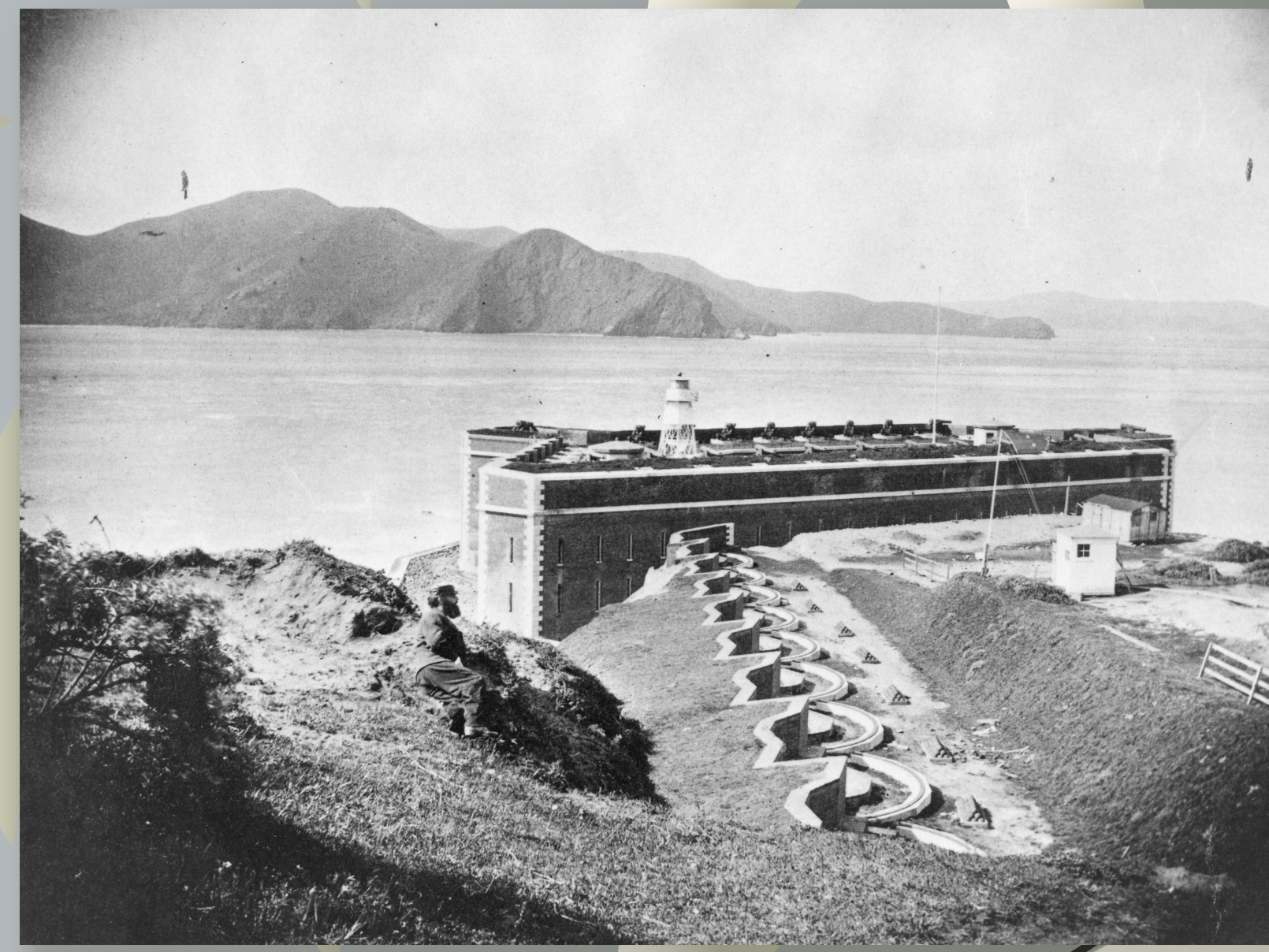
GGNRA, Park Archives, TASC Negative Collection, GOGA 33301.059
Presidio Military Reserve circa 1950

1850 - Bay Area military reservations declared

President Fillmore reserves the Presidio of San Francisco, Alcatraz Island, and Angel Island for military use.

1853 - Fort Point begins construction

Only multi-level masonry fortification built on the west coast. Designed for 141 cannon, but was never fully armed. Although intended to protect San Francisco Bay during the Civil War, Fort Point guns are never fired in anger. Masonry forts proved inadequate against cannon fire and the fort becomes obsolete by the early 1870s.



Credit: National Archives, Image Courtesy of GGNRA, Fort Point Photo Collection - Historic (through 1971), GOGA 35339.038
Fort Point during the Civil War Era

1854 - First lighthouse on western United States coast

U.S. Lighthouse Board, predecessor to the U.S. Coast Guard, erects the first of six lights on the Pacific Coast on Alcatraz Island. Others follow at Fort Point, Point Reyes, Point Bonita, Point Montara and Point Año Nuevo.



GGNRA, Park Archives, Fort Point Photo Collection, GOGA 35339.480
Pete Clark and Tom Gunerson, Members of Fort Point Life Saving Crew

1857 - Presidio of San Francisco named Army Headquarters

During continual reorganization, the Army switched headquarters between the Presidio of Monterey, Presidio of San Francisco and the Benicia Barracks before settling on the Presidio of San Francisco.

1861 - Alcatraz designated a U.S. Disciplinary Barracks, or military prison

1863 - Island defenses constructed

New coastal defense batteries constructed on Alcatraz and Angel Islands in response to the Civil War. Angel Island guns mounted in 1864 are rendered useless by 1865; Alcatraz guns are considered obsolete by 1874.

1864 - Earthwork batteries replace masonry fortifications

Defensive construction and protection methods evolved as new coastal batteries were shielded by earth barriers presenting low ground positions. Some examples include Battery Cavallo in Fort Baker and Battery East in the Presidio.



GGNRA, Park Archives, PAM Negative Collection, GOGA 35256.0557
Camp Reynolds, Angel Island

1866 - Army purchases land for Lime Point reservation

U.S. Army establishes a presence north of the "Golden Gate", now Fort Baker.

1883 - Fog Signal Station built at Lime Point

Station remains located below northern tower of the Golden Gate Bridge.

1884 - National Cemetery established

War Department designates the Presidio's former post cemetery and surrounding land as the first National Cemetery on the west coast.



GGNRA, Park Archives, Fort Point Photo Collection, GOGA 35339
Battery East