

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Fort Adams

AND/OR COMMON

Fort Adams Historic District

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Fort Adams Road at Harrison Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

Newport

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

STATE

Rhode Island

CODE

44

COUNTY

Newport

CODE

005

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
(except Jackson Road Houses, owned by U.S.Navy).

STREET & NUMBER

State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY, TOWN

Providence

VICINITY OF

STATE

Rhode Island

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Newport

STATE

Rhode Island

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey; National Register

DATE

1970-74; 1971

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress and Rhode Island Historical Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Washington and Newport; Washington

STATE

Commission; NR  
D.C.-R. I.; D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Fort Adams Historic District includes approximately 80 acres; the masonry fort from which the district takes its name; the fort's unique outworks and 2 redoubts; 6 Endicott-period batteries; 10 brick or frame officers' quarters; and 2 brick warehouses. The main work sits near the tip of a northeasterly thumblike protuberance of the southwest end of Aquidneck or Rhode Island. Narragansett Bay's east passage lies west of the fort, and Brenton Cove lies east. Stretching south from the fort along the west shore of the peninsula are four Endicott-period, reinforced concrete batteries. Two others are situated on the opposite shore of the peninsula. Also extending south, between the main work and its advanced redoubt, is a row of late 19th-century officers' quarters that front onto Jackson Road. These dwellings and the land on which they rest belong to the U.S. Navy, and they house staff officers of the U.S. Naval War College, Coaster's Harbor Island. All remaining structures and land within the historic district are the property of the State of Rhode Island.

The Masonry Fort. Fort Adams forms an irregular, hollow pentagon measuring about 1,000 by 1,200 feet overall. Its northern base is the shortest of the sides, and from it the east and west sides splay out to the south, where the fourth and fifth sides form a point and are protected by an elaborate system of outworks, including tenailles, which are found at no other 19th-century American fort. At the pentagon's northwest, northeast, and southwest angles there are aggressively projecting bastions that dominate the Narragansett Bay's east passage, Newport harbor, and Brenton Cove.

**The casemated** enceinte, or primary enclosure of the fort, forms around a large parade and features walls of Maine granite and native shale and vaults of brick. Along the enceinte's west front, where a high concentration of artillery was required to defend the bay's east passage, the structure is designed for two tiers of cannon en casemate and one tier en barbette. Original plans called for 24 and 32 pound smoothbores, but heavier guns were mounted about the mid-19th century. Openings for the guns reflect consideration of attack. Embrasures in the granite-covered walls are formed of brick, a soft material that would not splinter like granite when struck with cannon balls.

Elsewhere, on the east front, vaulted bombproof casemates--covered by earth ramparts and terrepleins and incessantly criticized by their former occupants for dampness--form secure quarters for officers. In the northeast bastion three large casemates house the three principal powder magazines, from which smaller magazines in the tenailles and counterscarp galleries were supplied. Other large casemates (about 18 feet by 52 feet) along the south interior fronts contain space for enlisted men's quarters, a hospital, quartermaster stores, a band, and a chapel. Smaller, more complex casemates in the southeast demibastion

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

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SPECIFIC DATES	1824-1947	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	U.S. Army/ Simon Bernard Joseph Totten
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although several seacoast forts have been made National Historic Sites and National Historic Landmarks already, there are overwhelming reasons why Fort Adams should be added to the list of landmarks.

First, built between 1824 and 1857, the installation uniquely illustrates American military engineering and technology as it developed throughout the 19th century, and it excellently demonstrates the defense recommendations of both the Bernard and Endicott Boards.

Second, the landward defenses of the earth-and-masonry fort include tenailles, works that, according to the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission and distinguished historian of military architecture and engineering Willard B. Robinson, were used exclusively in the United States at Fort Adams. It was in part because of these structures that, as Robinson points out, "Fort Adams was much admired by contemporary engineers for its complexity and uniqueness."<sup>1</sup> Such admiration is still forthcoming from military architects, and according to Jerry Rogers of the National Park Service, no other masonry fort on either the east or the west coast is interpreted, as is this one, for its military architecture.

Third, when the fort was erected, defense of Narragansett Bay was considered one of the most important objectives of the national system. This view was reflected in the size of the fort. It had a perimeter of 1,759 yards measured at the cordons, and it could mount 468 cannon, more than either Fort Monroe or Fort Jefferson.

Fourth, the history of Fort Adams, more than that of any sister installation, is closely associated with both Simon Bernard and Joseph G. Totten, preeminent 19th-century military architects and engineers. Bernard developed the original design of the fort, and Totten modified it and supervised construction for more than a decade. It was here

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<sup>1</sup>  
Willard B. Robinson, "Fort Adams: American Example of French Military Architecture" Rhode Island History, XXXIV (August 1975), 93.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Cullum, George W., "Defense of Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island: Historical Sketch," Magazine of American History, XI (June 1884), 465-496.  
 "Fort Adams," Fort Adams State Park Leaflet, (Providence: Rhode Island Department of Natural Resources, n.d.).

(continued)

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 80 acres.

UTM REFERENCES

E	19	304690	4593540
F	19	304390	4593420
G	19	303980	4593590
A	19	304860	4594770
B	19	305040	4594250
C	19	304780	4594150
D	19	304570	4593750

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See last page of description.)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

George R. Adams, Managing Editor

ORGANIZATION

American Association for State and Local History April 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1400 Eighth Avenue South

DATE

TELEPHONE

615-242-5583

CITY OR TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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contain space for a bakery, a kitchen, cisterns, and latrines. Along the north side of the enceinte are more gun emplacements. Atop the west segment of the southside of the enceinte are a row of one-story, brick barracks erected in 1908. Far from distracting from the original architecture of the fort, these illustrate its continuing use into the Endicott period and beyond. In 1947 fire destroyed a similar row atop the east segment of the enceinte's south end, and due to cost and interpretive considerations, these will not be replaced in the restoration process. Entrance to the fort is by a large, rusticated, segmentally arched north portal and a smaller east postern.

The Redoubts. Fort Adams has two original redoubts, and the construction of both is patterned after the main work. The smaller redoubt, which doubled as a jail, forms a covered, elongated pentagon and stands just east of the east postern. The larger, advanced redoubt is situated on a rise about 1,700 feet south of the main work. Measuring about 100 feet by 300 feet, the casemated structure has several levels, is surrounded by a dry moat, and is designed so that the outer gallery is accessible only by a single tunnel extending under the moat and a second ditch on the south side. Two drawbridges provide north access from the main work. Although basically an example of a plain polygonal rather than a bastioned fortification, this redoubt is still an embodiment of the theories of the French school.

Warehouses (buildings 74 and 93). These 1 1/2-story, rectangular-shaped, red brick structures with their gabled, slate roofs and segmentally arched side windows and doors were built about 1878-79. They stand immediately east of the main work facing Brenton Cove and recall the Army's use of the installation as a staging and training center.

Commanding Officer's Quarters (Eisenhower House, building 1). This little-altered, 2 1/2-story, yellow-painted, frame dwelling with mansard roof was erected about 1873-75. It consists of a basically square-shaped central block and a rear wing, sits some 350 feet south of the advanced redoubt, fronts south onto Lincoln Drive, and recalls the transitional post-Civil War, pre-Endicott years of Fort Adams' history. Supported by decorative wood posts, a one-story, balustraded gallery--the east portion of which is enclosed--flanks the residence on three sides. At least four corbeled, brick, interior chimneys rise from the roof, and gabled dormers grace its lower slope on all sides. Main entrance is through a pedimented, sidelighted, double door in the center of the three-bay front facade. Inside, the house features a central hall plan with a parlor and two sitting rooms on the first floor of the main block and at least four bedrooms

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on each of the other two floors. Original trim remains throughout. The Parks Division of the Rhode Island Department of Natural Resources maintains offices in the building but has made no structural changes.

Officers' Quarters (buildings 2, 2B, 2C, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 13-14, and 17). Standing along Jackson Road between the advanced redoubt and the main work is a row of east-facing officers' quarters erected in the late 19th century. They recall post history both during the post-Civil War transitional era and the Endicott period. With the exception of building 17--which is a 2 1/2-story, rectangular-shaped, gable-roofed, red brick edifice with a two-tiered front gallery flanked by two-story hexagonal bays--the quarters are of frame construction. Multicolored, they vary in configuration and design from one and one-half to two and one-half stories and from mansard to gable and cross-gable roofs. All appear to have undergone only minimal exterior alteration and to be in good condition.

Endicott Batteries (Bankhead, Talbot, Reilly, Belton, Edgerton, and Greene). Constructed of reinforced concrete in the 1890's, these massive structures housed the weapons of the Endicott period. Although none retains its guns, all are in fair to good condition and well illustrate the purpose for which they were designed. Batteries Bankhead, Talbot, Reilly, and Belton rest in a line extending south from the main work and along the west shore. Batteries Edgerton and Greene stand near the east shore and the advanced redoubt. A pair of mortar batteries, they are unusual for while a mortar emplacement usually held only four weapons, sixteen were mounted here.

Boundary Justification. Included within the boundary described below are approximately 80 acres; the masonry fort designed by Bernard and modified by Totten; its unique outworks and 2 redoubts; 2 brick warehouses from the post's transitional 1870's era; 10 frame or brick officers' quarters from the same period and the Endicott period; 6 Endicott-period batteries; and the post cemetery. This entire area and all these structures are essential to the interpretation of both the installation's early military architecture and the evolution of U.S. coastal defense.

Boundary Description. As indicated in red on the accompanying maps [(1) U.S.G.S. 7.5' Series, Rhode Island; Newport Quad., 1957, photorevised 1970; and (2) HABS, Fort Adams, Survey RI-347, Sheet 1 of 3 of 50], a line beginning at the intersection of Lincoln Drive and the main driveway approaching the Eisenhower House (building 1) and running westward approximately 240 feet along the north curb of Lincoln to the intersection of Lincoln and Buchanan Road; thence, northward approximately 1,000 feet

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along the east curb of Buchanan to the north curb of Pierce Road; thence, eastward about 150 feet along the north curb of Pierce to the east curb of Polk Road; thence, north about 1,400 feet along the east curb of Polk to a point about 125 feet distant from the outworks of Fort Adams; thence, westward about 200 feet along a line on a plane 125 feet south of the outworks of Fort Adams to an unnamed access road rear, or east, of Battery Bankhead, thence, southward about 2,700 feet along the west side of an unnamed meandering road that passes immediately to the east of Batteries Bankhead, Talbot, and Reilly and immediately west of building 202, and east of the post cemetery to the north curb of Lincoln Drive; thence, westward about 425 feet along the north curb of Lincoln to the west shore of Aquidneck or Rhode Island; thence, northward about 4,800 feet along the water's edge (at low tide) to the tip of the peninsula on which Fort Adams sits; thence, southward about 1,600 feet along the edge of the water (at low tide) on the east shore of said peninsula to the north side of a fishing pier opposite the southeast corner of the fort; thence, westward about 1,100 feet along a line on a plane 125 feet south of the outworks of Fort Adams to a point opposite the north-south axis of Jackson Road; thence, southward about 1,330 feet along the west curb of Jackson to the south curb of Pierce; thence, southeastward about 400 feet along the northwest side of the main redoubt to the north edge of Batteries Edgerton and Greene; thence, eastward, southward, and westward about 1,000 feet along the north, east and south edges of the batteries to a point on a plane with the rear, or west, side of building 903; thence, south along said plane about 700 feet to Lincoln; thence, west along the north curb of Lincoln to the point of beginning.

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11/10/76

Fort Adams  
Newport  
Rhode Island

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Addendum re description of Fort Adams.

Countermines formed an important part of the defences of Fort Adams, extending under bastions and outworks for the purpose of detecting and intercepting enemy attempts to tunnel under parts of the fort, plant explosives, and breach a section of the works. Scarp countermining galleries, which were accessible from the counterscarp galleries, were installed along the faces and flanks of the bastions of the exterior fronts. Listening galleries, from which sounds of mining tools could be detected, were extended toward the country on the southwest, where the soil structure proved satisfactory for such construction. The presence of rock only a few feet below the surface prevented countermining under other sections of the glacis.

In the countermining galleries temporarily sealed openings were spaced about every 20 feet so that defending counterminers could extend new tunnels where necessary to intercept enemy miners. At other points service magazines were positioned to hold tools and powder. The listening tunnels were 2 1/2 feet wide, and 4 1/4 feet high, while the counterscarp galleries were 6 feet wide and 8 feet high.



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that he conducted the studies that led to publication of his influential work Hydraulic and Common Mortars (circa 1840).

Finally, in later years, the Fort Adams installation served as the Civil War home of the U.S. Naval Academy, figured prominently in the coastal defense system recommended by the Endicott Board, and served as a summer White House during the Eisenhower administration.

Fort Adams Historic District includes approximately 80 acres; the masonry main work designed by Bernard and modified by Totten; its unique outworks and 2 redoubts; 6 Endicott-period batteries; 10 brick or frame officers' quarters erected in the late 19th century; and 2 brick warehouses. Most of this area and these structures are owned by the State of Rhode Island, which is restoring the masonry fort.

History

Situated on a northeasterly thumblike protuberance near the southwest end of Aquidneck or Rhode Island, Fort Adams guards the strategic eastern passage into Narragansett Bay and Newport harbor. This position probably was first fortified in the late 17th century. William Brenton arrived in Newport in 1683 bearing a charter from King Charles I for an area now known as Brenton Point. He erected a house somewhere on the point, and tradition holds that he ordered two cannon from England to protect his property from pirates and privateers. Since Brenton's contemporaries already recognized the present fort site as a key to the defense of the bay's east passage, it is likely that he placed his guns here.

In 1740, British subjects, fearful of a French invasion, built an observation post on the site, and during the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars, they established earthwork fortifications here. Half a century later, about 1799, the United States erected a robust brick fortress on this spot. Designed by Louis de Tousard, the installation comprised part of the Nation's "First System" of coastal defense and was named "Fort Adams" in honor of the country's second President. By the end of the War of 1812, however, this first Fort Adams stood in decay. Moreover, the British burning of Washington proved the inadequacy of America's entire coastal defense.

To rectify this situation, in 1816 the Government created a special board of officers to create and implement a program to improve seacoast fortifications. Headed by former French military engineer Simon Bernard,

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the group also included Lt. Col. Joseph G. Totten. Both men earned international reputations for their work, with Totten, according to scholar Raymond E. Lewis, becoming "one of the leading military engineers in American history."<sup>2</sup> Showing broad vision the Bernard Board developed a national defense plan that consisted of an interior system of communications, a militia, a navy, and permanent forts strategically situated to control navigable bays and rivers. The maritime frontier was divided initially into four subsystems: the Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, and Northeast Atlantic. Because, as architectural historian Willard B. Robinson points out, the board considered Narragansett Bay "one of the most important objectives of the national system," the area was selected as a center for the northeast region.<sup>3</sup> Only Narragansett Bay among northeastern harbors could shelter ships during violent northwestern storms, and between Cape Cod and Cape Hatteras only Narragansett Bay and Hampton Roads, says Robinson, were regarded by the board as "proper for naval rendezvous."<sup>4</sup>

The national importance of the Narragansett area was reflected in the magnitude of the polygonal fort designed for Rhode Island. Begun in 1824 and not completed until midcentury--at a cost of more than \$3 million--the new Fort Adams was one of the largest installations in the national chain. Designed to mount 468 guns, it had a perimeter, measured at the cordons, of 1,739 yards. The constructors used Maine granite for scarps, parade walls, and supports, brick for vaults, and shale for structural walls. Defense of the huge fort in time of war would have required 2,400 men, but in peacetime a garrison of 200 proved sufficient. Some military historians attribute the design of new Fort Adams to Totten, but Robinson, whose study of the fort dwarfs all others, has shown that Bernard drew the original plans and Totten modified and implemented them.<sup>5</sup> Thus the resultant edifice commemorates both of these important military

2

Raymond E. Lewis, Seacoast Fortifications of the United States: An Introductory History (Washington, 1970), 38.

3

Robinson, "Fort Adams: American Example of French Military Architecture," 78.

4

Ibid.

5

Willard B. Robinson, "Report on the Interpretation of Fort Adams' Theory of Design." Mimeographed. Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, June 1974, 6.

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engineers.

Fort Adams demanded two basic types of military architecture: one to protect against enemy ships in the bay and one to defend against land attack. In meeting these needs, Bernard and Totten created a fortress that included tenailles (land defense fixtures used exclusively in the United States at Fort Adams) and according to Robinson "was much admired by contemporary engineers for its complexity and uniqueness."<sup>6</sup> The tenailles formed part of a system of bastions, curtains, and other structures based essentially on the theory of the "First System" of fortification developed by Sebastien Le Prestre de Vauban, the brilliant military engineer of Louis XIV. The overall form of the fort resulted from adapting the estimated requirements for artillery and their enclosures to existing land forms. Within this context, the form of individual components was designed to fulfill the most essential conditions for securing defensive strength. The south approach was defended by the use of fortifications conceived to be sufficiently strong to resist an open assault; every point exterior to the defenses within range could be thoroughly swept by cannon fire; communication for the movement of troops was secure and easy within the defensive works and to the exterior; and the fort had bombproof shelters (casemates) in suitable locations to protect the troops, armament, provisions, and munitions. Along the seafront curtains, each of the casemates "was designed to contain two cannons, an uncommon feature," according to Robinson, "in American fortifications."<sup>7</sup> In most forts only one cannon was housed in each enclosure. Complementing the land defenses of the main structure was a formal casemated masonry redoubt measuring about 300 by 100 feet and situated some 1,700 feet south of the fort itself. Totten supervised most of the construction, and it was while here that he studied masonry and wrote Hydraulic and Common Mortars, an important technological work.

When completed, Fort Adams stood as a major American defense installation. During the Civil War, though, it functioned primarily as a staging and training facility and served briefly as the wartime home of the U.S. Naval Academy. After moving from Annapolis when that community was under

6

Robinson, "Fort Adams: American Example of French Military Architecture," 93.

7

Willard B. Robinson, "Report on the Restoration of Fort Adams." Mimeographed. Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, June 1972, 5.

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threat of Confederate attack, the school remained at the fort until temporary quarters could be found in Newport. In the postwar years, the Army adapted Fort Adams to other than defense uses, erecting quarters and warehouses south of the old fort and modifying some of the casemated artillery space for additional quarters and shops. Meanwhile, the development of more effective weaponry, especially in European nations, rendered most masonry fortifications obsolete. In 1875 Congress ceased for a time appropriating funds for harbor defense, and Fort Adams and other coastal installations began to deteriorate. With a sizable group of Congressmen, most Army and Navy officers, and much of the public concerned about this situation, President Grover Cleveland in 1885 appointed a board headed by Secretary of War William C. Endicott to review the entire coastal defense system. The joint military-civilian Endicott Board made the most comprehensive study since the Bernard Board and called for an enormous number of new works.

The Endicott report proved controversial but nevertheless provided the basic framework for a new and thoroughly modern generation of sea-coast fortifications. Emphasis now shifted from fortified structures to the weapons contained therein. Massive and costly reinforced concrete structures designed to blend in with the surrounding landscape began to replace stark, vertical-walled forts. At many seacoast installations, the new emplacements were built within or imposed over existing forts. At Fort Adams, however, the Army erected the new batteries generally along the bay south of the old fort. These remain today a striking contrast to the masonry post and with it present a significant example of the changing history and technology of seacoast fortifications during the entire 19th and early 20th centuries.

Although the nature of Narragansett Bay defenses changed near the turn of the century, Fort Adams retained its central role in the area. The post served through World War II as the command center for an extensive defensive network that protected both the bay and Long Island Sound. After the Second World War, the Army continued to use the fort in various capacities until 1953, when the Navy took charge of it; and during the Eisenhower administration, it functioned briefly as a summer White House. In 1964 the State of Rhode Island acquired the area of the main work and now is restoring both the fort and its landward defenses.

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