

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Massachusetts	
COUNTY: Suffolk	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Fort Warren

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Georges Island (Access by boat only)

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston Harbor

STATE: **Massachusetts** CODE: COUNTY: **Suffolk** CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Commissioner John Winthrop Sears, Metropolitan District Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
20 Somerset Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Boston** STATE: **Massachusetts** CODE: **02108**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Register of Deeds, Suffolk County

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Boston** STATE: **Massachusetts** CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Surplus Property Investigation Report

DATE OF SURVEY: **1958** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Division of History, Surplus Property Files

STREET AND NUMBER:
801 19th Street, N. W.

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D. C.** CODE: **20006**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: **Massachusetts**
COUNTY: **Suffolk**
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Georges Island, for many years the key to the defense of Boston Harbor, is an irregular oval, about 1200 by 1800 feet, containing 40 acres. It is located at the throat of the harbor, almost midway between its northern and southern arms.

The construction of Fort Warren began in 1834 under the direction of Lt. Col. Sylvanus Thayer of the Corps of Engineers. Finally completed during the Civil War, the post was a bastioned star fort, built mostly of Quincy granite. Its outer walls (eight feet thick and 600 to 666 feet in length) enclosed a parade ground of some four acres. Casemate guns (thirty 32 pounders) protected Front No. 1 (See plan), the principal front, while howitzers armed the bastions. The great balance of the fort's armament (mainly 8-inch and 10-inch Columbiads) stood on the parapets of the other fronts, on the great earthen coverface that protected Front No.2 and Front No. 3, and on the ravelin enfiling the ship channel from outside Front No. 5. Fort walls were loopholed for musketry "ditch defense" at various points. Beneath parts of Front No. 1 and Front No. 3 were underground casemates, some serving as kitchens. The main sally port was through Front No. 3, entered over a bridge from the coverface.

In the post-Civil War period, Fort Warren underwent two notable periods of modernization. The first was in 1871-1876, when the recommendations of the Board of Engineers for adaptations "for heavy modern guns" were partially carried out, and the second in 1898-1899, when mounts for long range, disappearing coastal guns were constructed in Bastion B, along and in front of Front No. 1, and down from Bastion A, on the outside of the star fort. These later modifications are in evidence today, along with such other more recent survivals as the power plant on the outside of Front No. 4, where originally there was an earthen slope. Many interior arrangements also post date the Civil War era. Basically and preponderantly, however, the star fort remains nearly the same structurally as it was during the middle 19th century.

Inside the star fort is a brick magazine with a slate roof of ancient vintage. Two other major structures are found outside the fort, a two-story brick hospital, probably built in the late 19th century, and a Mine Storage Building, which dates from World War I.

The Metropolitan District Commission administers the island and maintains a marina. Picnicking is permitted and limited facilities are available.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | <u>architecture</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary Statement

Located on Georges Island in Boston Harbor, Fort Warren, was one of the finest coastal fortifications built in the United States during the period 1816-1865. Begun in 1834 and finished about three decades later, it is considered the chief work of military engineer Sylvanus Thayer and the most important Civil War site in New England, because of its use as a prison for Confederate leaders, including James Mason and John Slidell of the Trent affair and Alexander Stephens, the Vice President of the Confederacy. Somewhat modified during succeeding wars, the fort remains basically intact. Administered by the Metropolitan District Commission of Massachusetts, the fort is open to visitors during the summer months and is accessible only by boat.

Fort Warren

The earliest known date of habitation for Georges Island, the site of Fort Warren, is 1628. Two centuries later, in 1825, the United States acquired it from the City of Boston, and in 1826 began developing the island. When completed in about 1863, Fort Warren became the principal fortification in Boston Harbor and remained so until its final abandonment following World War II.

Fort Warren is considered the chief engineering work of Sylvanus Thayer (1785-1872) -- sometimes known as the "Father of the Military Academy" -- who from 1833 to 1863 was in charge of the construction of the fortifications at the entrance of Boston Harbor and of the improvement of harbors on the New England coast. Authority on American coastal fortifications, Dr. Raymond Lewis, regards Fort Warren as one of the finest forts built as a part of "The Third System of Defense" completed in this country between 1816 and 1865.

Fort Warren is generally recognized as the most significant Civil War site in New England, because of its use as a prison for important Confederate officers and civilian sympathizers. Among the prisoners kept in the casement rooms of the fort were James Mason and John Slidell. The Confederate commissioners were on their way to England in November, 1861, when they were seized from the Trent by Captain Charles Wilkes of the U.S.S. San Jacinto. News of the seizure provoked war fever in Britain.

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Frank Barnes, Fort Warren, Mass., Surplus Property Investigation and Report (NPS, April, 1958)

Edward Rowe Snow, Historic Fort Warren (Boston, 1941)

Shurcliff & Merrill, Landscape Architects, History and Master Plan, Georges Island and Fort Warren, Boston Harbor (Boston, 1960)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	42 ° 19' 20 "	70 ° 55' 53"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	42 ° 19' 20 "	70 ° 55' 33"				
SE	42 ° 19' 02 "	70 ° 55' 33"				
SW	42 ° 19' 02 "	70 ° 55' 53"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
John D. McDermott, Historian

ORGANIZATION: **National Park Service, Division of History** DATE: **March 10, 1970**

STREET AND NUMBER:
801 19th Street, N. W.

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D. C.** CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

(Continuation Sheet)

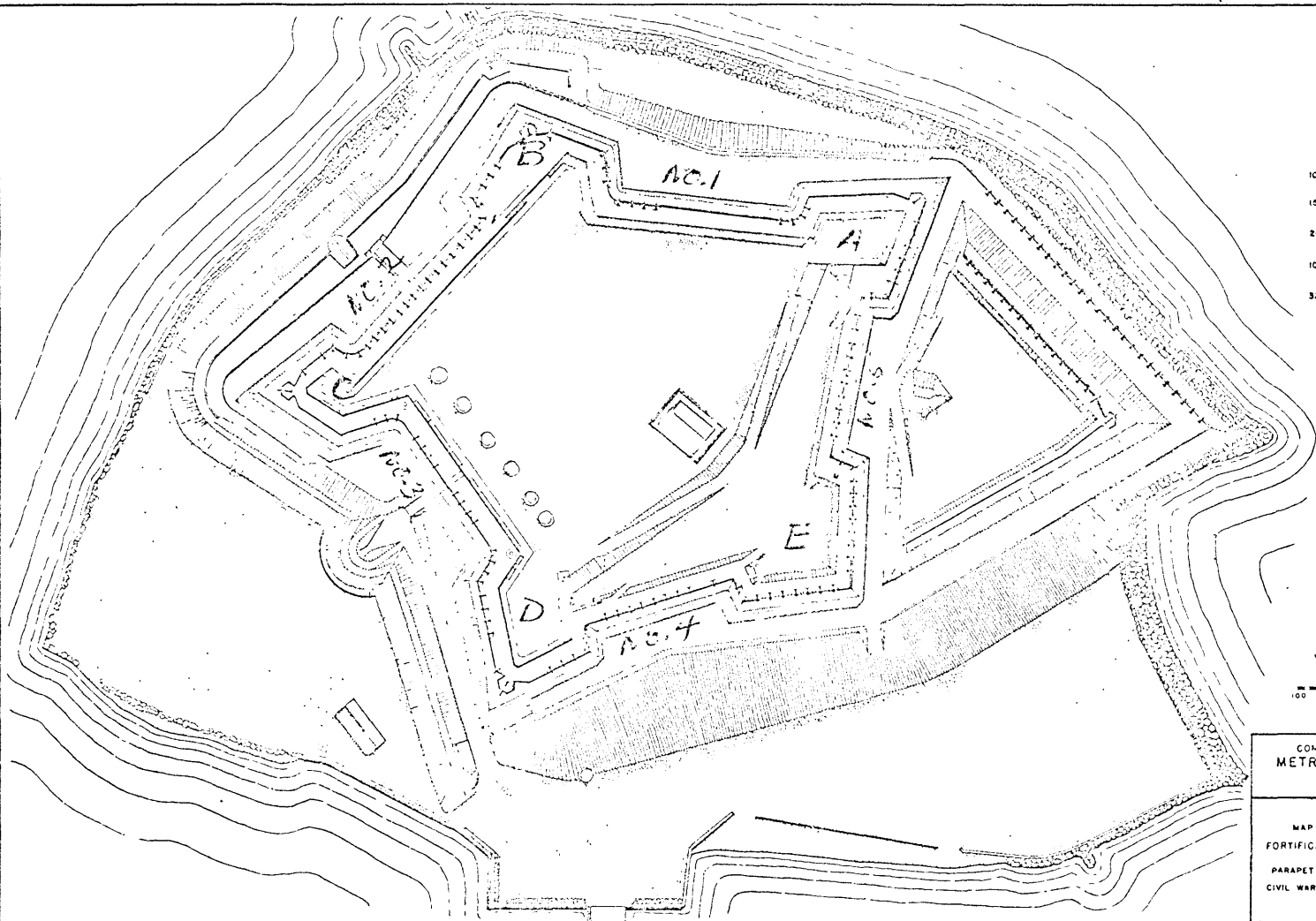
STATE Massachusetts	
COUNTY Suffolk	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. Significance - continued

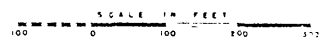
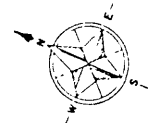
but the crisis passed when Secretary of War Seward ordered the release of the envoys after a month at Fort Warren. Other notables confined in the fortress were Southern generals Simon Bucker (captured at Fort Donelson) and Richard Ewell, and, immediately after the war, the Vice President of the Confederacy, Alexander Stephens.

The United States deeded Fort Warren to the Metropolitan District Commission of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1958.



LEGEND

		TOTALS
10 INCH ROOMAN (SMOOTH BORE)	⊕	147
15 INCH ROOMAN (SMOOTH BORE)	⊕	5
200 POUNDER PARROT (RIFLED)	⊕	2
100 POUNDER PARROT (RIFLED)	⊕	1
32 POUNDER (RIFLED)	⊕	1



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
 METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION
 PARKS DIVISION

MAP OF
 FORTIFICATIONS
 PARAPET LEVEL
 CIVIL WAR PHASE

FORT WARREN
 GEORGE'S ISLAND - BOSTON HARBOR
 SHUNCLIFF & MERRILL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 14 BEACON STREET - BOSTON