Form 10-300 (July 1969)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE:	
Maine	
COUNTY:	
Waldo	

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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Waldo	
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DESCRIPTION				(Check One)		
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ESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located on the west bank of the Penobscot River in a commanding position on a high bluff, Fort Knox is a massive granite-and-brick five-sided fortress with a dry moat and sloping glacis on the landward sides, and two powerful flanking shore batteries. Massively constructed of granite blocks, the main fortress is about 146 feet by 252 feet in size and its walls average about 20 feet in height and 40 feet in width. Two of its five walls face east upon the river and these contain a series of eight great arched casements with ceilings heavily vaulted to support the artillery platforms mounted on the stone deck above. Both levels in these walls were armed with heavy guns that dominated the river. At the junction of the river walls, in the center east, is a large projecting bastion, built with cannon ports and rifle galleries, to permit a flanking fire along the walls. To the north of the bastion, and located in the center of that river wall, is the main entrance to the fortress, - a large flat-arched doorway topped by a granite pediment and flanked by pilasters. The plan of the fort includes an open-This parade ground is marked by numerous manholes which provide access to large bomb-proof areas below ground that were intended for the storage of supplies and provisions. On the river side, in the northeast and southeast corners, are two magnificent spiral staircases in which a complete circular column is formed by the treads and rivers, which are of solid pieces of granite. The landside walls, to the north, south, and west, contained quarters, stables, and storage rooms, with rifle galleries along their outer faces, and heavy guns on the deck above. In the south wall, which is about 146 feet in length, were the officers' quarters; these were divided into two separate sections, each with two rooms each measuring approximately 50 by 20 feet. The enlisted men's quarters, located in the 252-foot west wall, were divided into eight compartments, each measuring about 30 by 15 feet in size. The north wall, about 146 feet in length, contained the stables and storage rooms.

The three landward walls are defended on the exterior by a wide and deep granite-faced dry moat. Rifle slits in the exterior face of the fort and also from rifle galleries in some exterior wall portions of the moat permitted a defensive fire along all sections of the moat. The exterior wall of the moat is covered by a massive sloping glacis or earthwork, which reduces the exposed granite landside walls of the fortress to a very silhouette. The northeast end of the glacis, facing on the river, is galleried, finely faced in granite, and pierced by canon ports and rifle slits. The entire north face of the glacis is also terraced with great rough hewn blocks of granite. The overall dimensions of the fortress, including the moat and glacis, are about 350 feet by 250 feet.

On the river side, near the northeast and southeast corners of the granite fort, are two wide and long tunnels. Granite staircases in these descend underground down the bluff to the two shore batteries located at a lower level and a short distance to the north and south of the main fortress. Both batteries are entrenched behind stone parapeted walls and contain brick hotshot ovens and magazines; the north battery having platforms for 14 heavy guns and the larger seaward south battery, for about 25 guns.

SIGNIFICANCE				
PERIOD (Check One of More as	Appropriate)			
☐ Pre-Columbian	16th Century	☐ 18th Century	20th Century	
☐ 15th Century	☐ 17th Century	X 19th Century		
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicat	ole and Known) 1844-6	54		
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Ch	eck One or More as Appropr	iate)		
Abar iginal	Education	☐ Political	Urban Planning	
Prehistoric	Engineering	Religion/Phi-	Other (Specify)	
☐ Historic	Industry	losophy		
☐ Agriculture	Invention	Science		
🔼 Architecture	Landscape	Sculpture		
☐ Art	Architecture	Social/Human-		
Commerce	Literature	itarian		
Communications	™ Military	☐ Theater		
☐ Conservation	Music	Transportation		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed by master craftsmen in the period 1844-64 and never fully completed, Fort Knox is a superb and completely unaltered example of a large mid-19th century granite coastal fortification. Fort Knox is also probably New England's finest unmodified specimen of the military architecture of this period.

History

The present site of Fort Knox was selected by Major General Wool in 1838, at the time of the United States' controversy with Great Britain over the northeastern boundary with Canada. The land for the site, 124.5 acres, was acquired in September, 1843-March, 1844. The post was named in honor of the Revolutionary War hero and first U. S. Secretary of War, General Henry Knox, of Thomaston, Maine. Construction began in 1844 and continued until 1864, when it ended forever. About 80% complete, the total cost of construction was \$928,500.31.

The fort was first garrisoned during the Civil War and was occupied from July 1863 to March 1866 by a detachment of some 50 Maine Volunteers. The fort was armed at this time with 111 heavy guns. During the Spanish American War, in June and July of 1898, the post was again occupied by a regiment of Connecticut Volunteers, who numbered about 354 men. An Act of Congress, March 4, 1923, authorized the Secretary of War to dispose of the Fort Knox reservation and its buildings. These were purchased by the State of Maine for the sum of \$2,121 on December 4, 1923. Fort Knox State Park has been administered by the Maine State Park and Recreation Commission since July 1, 1943.

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9. MAJOR	BIBLIOGRAPHICAL R	EFERENCES				
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Mair	ne, A Guide to "I	Oown East" ((Ameri	ca	an Guide Series) (Boston, 1937), 2	227.
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ORGANIZ	ATION Division of	History.	Office		of Archeology and	
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STREET	AND NUMBER:					
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tional 89-665 in the evalua forth b	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: I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register. National Register. Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation					
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Name					ATTEST:	
Title .					Keeper of The National Register	
Date					Date	

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED S ES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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2. Boundaries for Fort Knox State Park, Prospect: 124.5 acres of land.

The precise boundary of Fort Knox State Park are shown in detail on the following two maps on file with the Branch of Historical Surveys:

- 1. "Fort Knox Reservation, Prospect, Maine, dated November 11, 1941; Scale 1 inch equals 200 feet."
- 2. "Plan of the Public Grounds at the Narrows of the Penobscot River, Drawn by A. W. Tinham, July 4, 1844, U.S. Engineer Department."

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FOR NPS USE ONL	Υ
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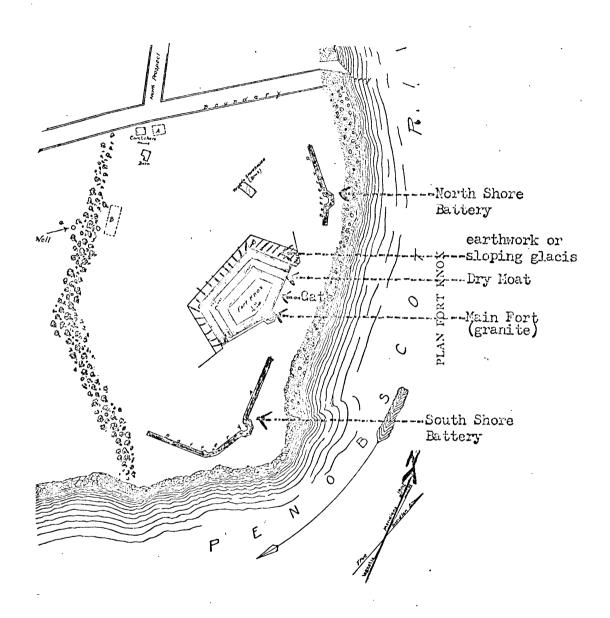
7. Description

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page 1

Constructed to mount a total of 137 cannon, only three heavy guns remain in the fortress today; these are two 10-inch Rodmans and one 15-inch Rodman.

The fortress was nearly completed when construction ended in 1864. Only more grading and a limited amount of building and finishing had been projected. The brick and stone work of the fort are of the finest quality and remain unaltered except for removal of small amounts for building purposes. The fort is in good condition and is open to visitors as an historical exhibit.



Plan of Fort Knox near Prospect, Maine