

Fort Monroe Chronology
APPENDIX A –National Park Service Reconnaissance Study
May 2008

Periods of Development:

1607 – 1818: Colonial Period; dominated by exploration and settlement of Hampton Roads and James River; temporary fortifications; lighthouse

1819 – 1860: Federal Period; Construction Period; Artillery School of Practice; dominated by the construction of the fort and essential military buildings.i

1861- 1865: Civil War; dominated by influx of personnel and supplies necessary for the war effort; fortification remained in Union hands.ii

1866 – 1899: Post-Civil War Expansion; period dominated by an Army building renovation campaign and construction of Endicott Batteries iii

1900 – 1929: Early Twentieth Century Development; dominated by the construction of the newly-reorganized Coast Artillery School and the necessary support buildings (1905 – 1915)iv

1930 – 1945: Depression/WWII Development; dominated by the construction under Depression work programs and World War II temporary structuresv

1946 – 2008: Post-WWII Development; Wherry Housing

1607 – 1818: Colonial Period

1607 Virginia Company, with John Smith, land and name Point Comfort; Smith builds defensive works on the Point at the mouth of the James River (Hampton Roads) where the channel was narrowestvi

1609 British, under Captain Ratcliffe, build Algernourne Fort (Fort Algernon) at Old Point Comfort, named in honor of William de Percy; earthwork with boards 10 hands high, held by 25 soldiers and 4 iron pieces.vii Fort Algernon protected the entrance to settlements along the James River estuary viii

1612 Fort Algernon burned ix 61

1730s Fort George built at Old Point Comfort, constructed as two lines of brick and shell lime walls set 16’ apart;x Governor William Gooch wrote in

1736 that “no ship could pass it without running great risks.”xi

1749 Hurricane destroys Fort George^{xii}

1802 Old Point Comfort Lighthouse constructed; octagonal stone tower with interior spiral staircase; treads keyed into masonry wall as well as supported by riser below^{xiii}

1812 War of 1812: British ships sail into Chesapeake Bay where they destroyed the city of Hampton and burned Washington, DC, unhindered by any coastal defenses^{xiv}

1819 – 1860: Federal Period

1817 Third System of Coastal Defense established; Simon Bernard, French trained military engineer, hired to give advice on fort design;^{xv} on the recommendation of the Marquis de Lafayette, Bernard, a former aide-de-camp to Napoleon Bonaparte known for the Defenses of Antwerp, was appointed to draft plans for coastal fortifications^{xvi}

1819 Major Charles Gratiot and contractor Bolitha Laws begin construction on Fortress Monroe at Old Point Comfort;^{xvii} Quarters 1 (DeRussy House) constructed inside what would become the stone fortress; two story Federal style residence with raised basements and two-story front porch^{xviii}

1821-29 The Fortress constructed, designed by Simon Bernard; consists of load bearing masonry structure and associated earthworks; modeled on classic French border fortifications perfected by Sebastien Vauban, Louis XIV's great military engineer;^{xix} the fort is an irregular hexagon with bastions; the 63-acre parade ground is lined with casemates along several fronts; Fort Monroe was the headquarters for the coastal defense system; the work was so massive that it was considered nearly impregnable;^{xx}

1822 Investors led by Marshall Parks build the Hygeia Hotel on Old Point Comfort outside the fort walls, after permission granted by U.S. Army^{xxi}

1823 Captain Mann P. Lomax, commanding Company G of the Third Artillery, leads first of 11 artillery companies into the fort that was still under construction;^{xxii} Quarters 18 and 18 (The Tuileries) constructed inside the fort walls; two story Federal style residence with raised basements and two-story front porch ^{xxiii}

1824 Parade Ground, an irregularly shaped interior space roughly centered within the fort walls, was cleared and leveled in preparation for Marquis de Lafayette's visit;^{xxiv} Live Oaks are prominent in clusters at the perimeter of the Parade Ground, documented in early photographs ^{xxv}

1824 Artillery Corps for Instruction, later named the Artillery School of Practice, established at Fort Monroe under the command of Brevet Colonel Abraham Eustis; curriculum included artillery exercises, gunnery practice, laboratory work, and arsenal construction^{xxvi}

1828 Edgar Allan Poe, using the name Private E. A. Perry, served four months at Fort Monroe before entering the United States Military Academy^{xxvii}

1830 Two companies of artillery sent to Wilmington, NC, to discourage an insurrection^{xxviii}

1831 Second Lieutenant Robert E. Lee assigned to assist Captain Andrew Talcott, the engineer in charge of construction at Fort Monroe; lived with his wife in Quarters 17, known as The Tuileries; supervised construction of the moat and Fort Calhoun on the south side of the channel facing Norfolk, VA^{xxix}

1832 Five companies sent to Charleston, SC, during the Nullification Crisis^{xxx}

1833 Chief Black Hawk imprisoned at Fort Monroe; eight companies sent to Fort Mitchell, AL, to assist in the removal of white families from land ceded to the Creek Indian^{xxxi}

1834 Fort Monroe arsenal grows to become fifth largest in US, with 39 workmen, specializing in seacoast ordinance and manufacture of seacoast gun carriages; officers were taught the care and manufacture of gunpowder under the Artillery School's laboratory instruction^{xxxii}; school operations suspended until 1858 since the garrison was frequently absent due to uprisings and wars;^{xxxiii}

Quarters 50 built within the fort walls; two story Federal style residence with raised basements and two-story front porch ^{xxxiv}

1836 Fort Monroe construction considered complete^{xxxv}

1838 Recruits from Fort Monroe sent as precaution to Vermont during Canada's Mackenzie Rebellion^{xxxvi}

1845 Entire garrison sent to fight Mexican War^{xxxvii}

1855 Gunpowder accident at the arsenal; two men killed; building destroyed; Lieutenant Julian McAllister survived and commissioned a post chapel for Fort Monroe^{xxxviii}

63

1858 Artillery School reestablished for heavy guns^{xxxix}

Chapel of the Centurion consecrated by Assistant Bishop John Johns of the Diocese of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia;^{xl} designed in Carpenter-Gothic style derived from designs for a small, rural church published by Richard Upjohn ^{xli}

1858 Colonel Rene DeRussy resumed work on Fort Calhoun in preparation for war^{xlii}

1860 Saint Mary's Star of the Sea Catholic Church constructed; wooden church burned in 1903; replaced by current stone church^{xliii}

Bldg #27 - The Arsenal constructed, replacing the one destroyed in the 1855 accident ^{xliv}

1861- 1865: Civil War

1861 Fort Monroe plays a decisive role in the Civil War. The powerful batteries of Fort Monroe closed Hampton Roads and the James River to shipping that was vital to the Confederate war effort. The fort operated as a staging area and supply base for Union assaults.^{xlv} One of four forts located within the seceding Southern states to be held by the Union when the war began, Fort Monroe contributed more than any other pre-war coastal defense fortification to Union victory. ^{xlvi} During the Civil War, Fort Monroe resembled a bustling town, but none of the structures built at that time stand today ^{xlvii}

Three slaves owned by Colonel Charles K. Mallory of the 115th Virginia Militia took advantage of chaos during skirmishes between Union and Confederate forces to escape into Union lines seeking refuge from their

owner; General Benjamin F. Butler classifies them as “contrabands of war”, declaring the U.S. Fugitive Slave Law null and void within the Confederacy^{xlviii}; Fort Monroe became known as “Freedom’s Fortress.”^{xlix} 4,000 soldiers from Fort Monroe, commanded by General Ebenezer W. Pierce, engage Confederate forces under General Daniel H. Hill at Big Bethel, the first land battle of the Civil War.¹ Gen. Butler commissioned John LaMountain to make first aerial observation by balloon to observe Confederate troop positionsⁱⁱ

1862 Fort Monroe served as base for General George B. McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign against the Confederate capital of Richmond; 121,500 soldiers flowed into area camps via the fort; 64

Ironclads *Monitor* and *Virginia* (formerly the *Merrimack*) battle in Hampton Roads within sight of Fort Monroe; the *Monitor* and the guns of Fort Monroe prevent the *Virginia* from entering the Chesapeake Bay from Hampton Roads;

President Abraham Lincoln visited Fort Monroe to plan and expedite the capture of Norfolk and Gosport Navy Yardⁱⁱⁱ

1864 General Ulysses S. Grant met Gen. Butler to plan the strategy to attack Richmondⁱⁱⁱⁱ

1865 Peace conference aboard *River Queen* between Union and Confederate commissioners fails to reach agreement;^{liv} after the war ended, Confederate President Jefferson Davis was imprisoned at Fort Monroe, charged with conspiracy in the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln^{lv}

1866 – 1899: Post-Civil War Expansion

1867 Artillery School reestablished under Brevet Major General William F. Barry; a one-year course for new lieutenants included instruction in artillery, gunnery, mathematics, the application of artillery during campaigns and sieges, military law, and military history.^{lvi}

1875 Five frame quarters built on western edge of the Parade Ground; two built on Ingalls Road outside the fort;^{lvii}

1879 Building #5, Old Main Barracks built on north edge of Parade Grounds;
largest building with the fort walls^{lviii}

1881-98 Ingalls Road Corridor developed with the most significant group of
buildings outside the fortress walls: Bldgs #24 - Fire Station (1881), #77
– Post Headquarters (1894), #80 and #81 – Old Bachelor’s Quarters
(1897), #82 – Hospital Building (1898), and #83 – Post Office (1898);
these buildings are united by their similar scale, segmental arched
masonry openings, corbelled brick eaves, and roofs with dormers and
towers, reaching the finest expression in the Richardsonian Romanesque
Post Office;^{lix} the tree canopy along Ingalls Road contribute to the park like
quality of Fort Monroe;^{lx}

1885 President Grover Cleveland convened a board under Secretary of War
William Endicott to plan new coastal defenses; brick and stone forts were
no longer impregnable due to improvements in rifled artillery with greater
ranges, accuracy, and velocity, along with steam power and improvements
in naval armor^{lxi} 65

1890 Queen Anne Style bungalows built on Ingalls Road^{lxii}

1891 Construction begins on detached batteries of concrete protected with
earthen parapets, which maintain the strategic importance of Fort Monroe
in defense of the Chesapeake Bay^{lxiii}; built in response to Endicott Board
recommendations; Batteries Gatewood, DeRussy, and Church (1898);
Batteries Ruggles and Anderson (1899); Battery Irwin (1903); Battery
Parrott (1906)^{lxiv}

1900 – 1929: Early Twentieth Century Development

1900-09 Additional barracks and gymnasium built along north edge of Parade
Grounds; massive, hip-roofed brick buildings with external porches;
gymnasium is built of red brick in the Beaux Arts style with classical
ornaments^{lxv}

1906 Bldg #100 – Bachelor’s Quarters/Old Hundred constructed; designed in
the Queen Anne Style by architect Paul Pelz, it dominates the Ingalls Road

corridor with its three-story façade and alternating arched brick and cast iron balconies^{lxvi}

1906- 09 Brick duplexes designed by architect Paul Pelz built along Ingalls Road in 1906 in the Queen Anne style; more brick duplexes built in 1907-1909 in the Colonial Revival style along Ingalls and Fenwick Roads;^{lxvii}

1906- 11 Brick duplexes built along Tidball Road and along Moat Walk between the Hospital and the moat built to accommodate growing numbers of Coast Artillery School trainees; all use a less ambitious Quartermaster plan for lower ranking officers; vernacular designs use red brick with white trim, stone sills, gable roofs, and one-story screen porches;^{lxviii}

1907 Coast Artillery School created from Artillery School and School of Submarine Defense^{lxix}

Bldg #119 - Commanding General's Quarters built on Fenwick Road outside the fort walls; designed by Brigadier General Arthur Murray adapted from a Quartermaster design; Colonial Revival style with a monumental full height Doric portico, full entablature and cornice; grounds include a gazebo relocated from Quarters 1 and a garden laid out in squares with brick paths;^{lxx}

1909 Coast Artillery School complex built at Ingalls and Fenwick Roads to support this 1912 expanded training mission; part of the most significant building campaign since the construction of the fort; group designed in brick in the Beaux Arts style with classical details in limestone; Bldg #161
66

– Administration (1912); Bldgs #133 – Murray Hall and #134 – Lewis Hall (1909);^{lxxi}

1910-11 Quarters built to support the Coast Artillery School in several locations (Fenwick Road, Ingalls Road, and inside the fort on the south edge of the Parade Ground) adapted from Quartermaster designs in Neoclassical and Queen Anne styles; all share red brick walls, white trim, jack-arched window openings, and two story porches with classical details ^{lxxii}

1911 Five companies of coast artillery sent to Galveston, TX as precaution

during Mexican Revolution^{lxxiii}

1917 Coast Artillery School training program adjusted to heavy mobile artillery;
Fort Monroe became headquarters for Coast Defenses of Chesapeake

Bay^{lxxiv}

1923 Coast Artillery Training Center disbanded, replaced with Third Coast
Artillery District^{lxxv}

1928 Chamberlin Hotel built on site of first Chamberlin Hotel that burned in
1920; continues tradition of private resort development on the post that
began with the Hygeia Hotel in 1821;^{lxxvi} fifth in a series of civilian resort
hotel on post; largest building at Fort Monroe; commands a position at the
end of Ingalls Road which is highly visible to those entering the
installation through the main gate; it is also highly visible from the
Hampton Roads;^{lxxvii}

1930 – 1945: Depression/WWII Development

1930 Brigadier General Stanley D. Embick changes doctrine of the Coast
Artillery School to place anti-aircraft artillery for defense of harbors on par
with seacoast artillery^{lxxviii}

1930- 34 Colonial Revival duplexes and quadriplexes built from Quartermaster
plans as part of a nation-wide Army building campaign funded by the
Works Progress Administration and the Public Works Administration;
built in red brick with white trim, slate roofs, classical detailing;^{lxxix}

1933 Hurricanes in August and September caused extensive damage to the post
and prompted new construction. Additional room for new buildings was
obtained by infilling the Mill Creek shoreline.^{lxxx}

1934 Bandstand built in Continental Park on Fenwick Road^{lxxxi}

1934 Three masonry buildings built in industrial vernacular with Art Deco
ornament; located 67

1938 Between fortress and Mill Creek in newly filled land; Bldg #57 – Motor
Pool & #59 – Ordinance Machine Shop (1934); Bldg #28 – Submarine
Mine Depot (1938);^{lxxxii}

1942 Fort Monroe became headquarters for Chesapeake Bay Sector coastal

defense; controlled inner mine field, antisubmarine net and gate, and shipping in Hampton Roads during World War II^{lxxxiii}

1943 Military Affiliated Radio Station (MARS) signal station built on top of Bastion #4, southeast face of the fortress; designed by architects Beddow, Gerber and Wharples in the International Style.^{lxxxiv} Spiral stair, pipe railings, streamlined details and white stucco finish on concrete loadbearing walls are a rare example of Bauhaus School modernism on the post;^{lxxxv}

Mercury Boulevard constructed as a military highway to improve transportation to the post. The new road began in Newport News, bypassed downtown Hampton through residential Phoebus, and passed over Mill Creek on a new bridge. The railroad trestle was used as the main infill for a new route into the post. McNair Drive, the new route, bypassed the main post and proceeded directly to the main dock and hotel^{lxxxvi}

1946 – 2008: Post-WWII Development

1946 Coast Artillery School moved to Fort Winfield Scott and later disbanded;^{lxxxvii} Fort Monroe became headquarters for Army Ground Forces and headquarters for command of the armies of the continental US^{lxxxviii}

1953 Wherry Housing complex constructed on site of Batteries Montgomery and Eustis; 206 units in 53 buildings required by new role of Fort Monroe as training and command center;^{lxxxix}

1955 Fort Monroe became headquarters for Continental Army Command (CONARC), responsible for training and direct command of continental armies^{xc}

1973 Fort Monroe became headquarters for US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC)^{xc1} 68

Sources and Endnotes:

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Endnotes

i HABS, v 1, p 19

ii HABS, v 1, p 37

iii HABS, v 1, p 19

iv HABS, v 1, p 37

v HABS, v 1, p 37

vi HABS, v 1, p 3

vii HABS, v 1, p 3

viii Cobb, p 52

ix HABS, v 1, p 4

x HABS, v 1, p 6

xi Cobb, p 52

xii HABS, v 1, p 6

xiii HABS, v 1, p 10

xiv HABS, v 1, p 9

xv HABS, v 1, p 9

xvi Cobb, p 52

xvii HABS, v 1, p 10

xviii Army, HARMP v 2, p 4

xix Army, HARMP v 3, p 4-5

xx Weaver, p 49

xxi Quarstein & Mroczkowski, p 21

xxii Cobb, p 52-53

xxiii Army, HARMP v 2, p 4

xxiv HABS, v 1, p 23

xxv Army, HARMP v 3, p 15-16

69

xxvi HABS, v 1, p 12

xxvii Quarstein & Mroczkowski, p 22

xxviii HABS, v 1, p 12

xxix Cobb, p 53

xxx HABS, v 1, p 12

xxxi HABS, v 1, p 12

xxxii Quarstein & Mroczkowski, p 24

xxxiii HABS, v 1, p 12

xxxiv Army, HARMP v 2, p 4

xxxv HABS, v 1, p 11

xxxvi HABS, v 1, p 12
 xxxvii HABS, v 1, p 12
 xxxviii HABS, v 1, p 22
 xxxix HABS, v 1, p 13
 xl HABS, v 1, p 22
 xli HABS, v 1, p 22
 xlii Quarstein & Mroczkowski, p 24
 xliiii HABS, v 1, p 23
 xliv Army, HARMP, v 3, p 5
 xlv HABS, v 1, p 13
 xlvi Quarstein & Mroczkowski, p 120 - 125
 xlvii HABS, v 1, p 24
 xlviii Quarstein & Mroczkowski, p 36
 xlix HABS, v 1, p 13
 i Cobb, p 54
 ii HABS, v 1, p 14
 iii Cobb, p 55-56
 liii HABS, v 1, p 14
 liv HABS, v 1, p 15
 lv Cobb, p 56
 lvi Quarstein & Mroczkowski, p 110
 lvii Army, HARMP, v 2, p 9-10
 lviii Army, HARMP v 3, p 66
 lix Army, HARMP, v 3, p 9-10
 lx Army, HARMP, v 3, p 16
 lxi HABS, v 1, p 15
 lxii Army, HARMP, v 2, p 9-10
 lxiii HABS, v 1, p 15
 lxiv Army, HARMP, v 3, p 7
 lxv Army, HARMP, v 3, p 8
 lxvi Army, HARMP, v 3, p 9-10
 lxvii Army, HARMP, v 2, p 6-7
 lxviii Army, HARMP, v 2, p 8
 lxix HABS, v 1, p 16
 lxx Army, HARMP, v 2, p 24
 lxxi Army, HARMP, v 3, p 11
 lxxii Army, HARMP, v 2, p 7
 lxxiii HABS, v 1, p 16
 lxxiv HABS, v 1, p 16
 lxxv HABS, v 1, p 16
 lxxvi HABS, v 1, p 31
 lxxvii HABS, v 2, Chamberlin Hotel inventory form
 lxxviii HABS, v 1, p 16
 lxxix Army, HARMP, v 2, p 10-11

70

lxxx HABS, v 1, p 31
 lxxxi HABS, v2, Inventory #4
 lxxxii Army, HARMP, v 3, p 13
 lxxxiii HABS, v 1, p 16
 lxxxiv HABS, v2, inventory #209
 lxxxv Army, HARMP, v 3, p 14
 lxxxvi HABS, v 1, p 32
 lxxxvii Fort Monroe Casemate Museum website,
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 2008
 lxxxviii HABS, v 1, p 17

lxxxix HABS, v 1, p 32
xc HABS, v 1, p 17
xcixci HABS, v 1, p 17