

Boston Harbor Islands

- BUMPKIN ISLAND
- BUTTON ISLAND
- CALF ISLAND
- DEER ISLAND
- GALLOPS ISLAND
- GEORGES ISLAND
- GRAPE ISLAND
- THE GRAVES
- GREAT BREWSTER ISLAND
- GREEN ISLAND
- HANGMAN ISLAND
- LANGLEE ISLAND
- LITTLE BREWSTER ISLAND
- LITTLE CALF ISLAND
- LONG ISLAND
- LOVELLS ISLAND
- MIDDLE BREWSTER ISLAND
- MOON ISLAND
- NUT ISLAND
- OUTER BREWSTER ISLAND
- PEDDOCKS ISLAND
- RACCOON ISLAND
- RAGGED ISLAND
- RAINFORD ISLAND
- SARAH ISLAND
- SHEET ISLAND
- SLATE ISLAND
- SPECTACLE ISLAND
- THOMPSON ISLAND
- WORLD'S END

EXPLORING

Gallop's Island

A SELF-GUIDED TOUR



WELCOME TO GALLOP'S ISLAND . . . Measuring 16 acres in size, Gallop's Island is one of the smallest islands in the harbor. Initially formed by the last glacier over 15,000 years ago, the island now consists of a central upland with eroded cliffs on its eastern and northern sides. A sandspit called Peggy's Point extends from its southern tip. Following the glacier's retreat and a subsequent rise in sea-level, groups of Native Americans migrated seasonally to the harbor islands to harvest shellfish and finfish from the bays and tidal flats. Wild fruits were gathered on the islands, and later, corn, beans and squash were cultivated on them as well.

The island's first owner was John Gallop, a Boston harbor pilot who, during the mid-17th century, spent summers on the island. A century later, during the American Revolution, contingents of French marines mounted cannon on Gallop's in both 1778 and 1782 to provide protection for their fleets anchored in the harbor. Various owners grazed livestock and raised crops on the island for the next 50 years; it later became the site of a summer inn owned by the Newcombe and Snow families that was known for its clam chowder.

The City of Boston bought Gallop's in 1860, and during the Civil War a training camp with over 20 wooden barracks was constructed. The barracks were used to house replacement and discharged troops, including the returning 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, whose story was told in the film "Glory". Following the war, several of the buildings along with some newly-constructed ones served as a quarantine hospital for the port of Boston. The island's use as a quarantine station continued until 1937. Two years later, it became the site of a seamen's training station that was converted and expanded into the United States Maritime Service Radio Training School. Between 1940 and 1945, over 5,000 men were trained here in a state-of-the-art facility that contained several dozen buildings, a water tower and a staff of nearly 300. Abandoned after World War II, and used for several years as a dump, Gallop's became part of the Boston Harbor Islands State Park in 1973.

This self-guided tour begins just beyond the gazebo. It heads up the drumlin, bears left, then circles the island clockwise via a scenic overlook of the Outer Harbor from atop the island's eroded cliffs. The numbered stops in this brochure correspond to the brown, numbered signposts along the trails. This walk should take about 45 minutes to complete.

1 SALT-SPRAY ROSE

Salt-spray Rose (*Rosa rugosa*) is one of the most fragrant and useful plants growing on the harbor islands. Originally brought to America from China in the 18th century, it is a bristly, upright shrub that produces deep pink or white flowers throughout the summer. Its fruits, called hips, are tasty and rich in vitamin-C. They can be used to make Rose Hip Jam and Rose Hip Tea, two New England favorites.

2 BAYBERRY

Colonists used the fragrant leaves of this shrub as a seasoning and as the source of a yellow dye for cloth. The waxy berries, an important food for migrating birds in the fall, were used for making bayberry candles. Using the traditional method, over 10 pounds of berries were required to make a single candle.

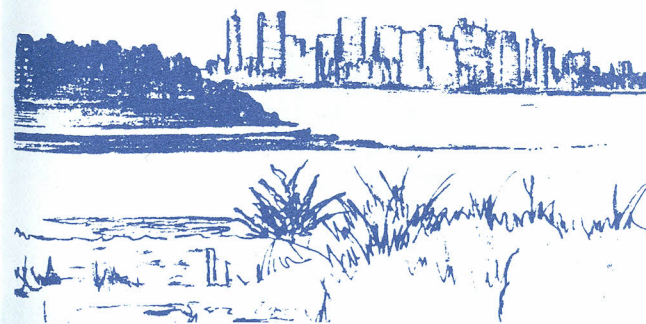
The tour heads to the left, past the two green composting toilets.

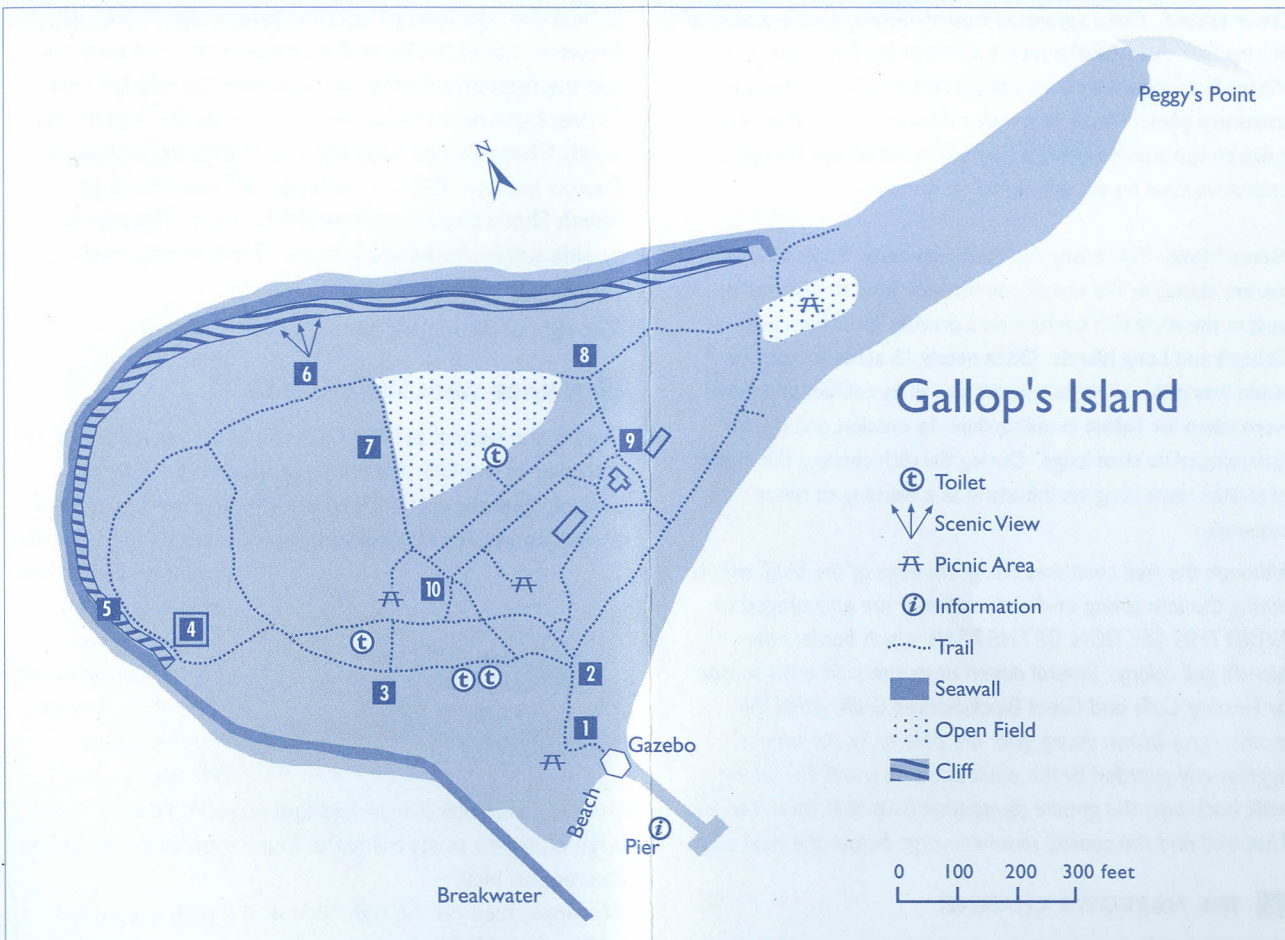
3 STAGHORN SUMAC

The shrub growing on both sides of the trail is the furry-stemmed Staghorn Sumac. Named because of its resemblance to a deer's velvety antlers, it is a close relative of both Poison Ivy and Poison Sumac, but lacks the oil that causes skin irritation. The plant's fuzzy, red berries can be harvested in midsummer and used to make a cold drink called sumac-ade. Staghorn Sumac is considered a pioneer species on the harbor islands because it is among the first plants to return to an area disturbed by fire, construction or cultivation. On parts of the island, the sumacs have reached maturity and are beginning to die off.

4 GRANITE FOUNDATION

This structure, built in 1863, was the island's stable for many years. As the successive layers of construction materials suggest (granite, fieldstone, brick, concrete), the building was renovated several times, being used most recently as a commissary, uniform and linen storehouse, and paymaster's office for the Radio School.





5 THE NUBBLE CHANNEL

From this stop, located atop the foundation of the Radio School's incinerator, you can look across the Nubble Channel. This channel, located between Gallop's and Long Islands, runs from President Roads, the main shipping anchorage of Boston Harbor, into Quincy Bay. Looking from left to right, the view includes:

Peddock's Island. Four glacial landforms connected by three sandy beaches make up one of the largest of all the harbor islands. The left-most end is the site of Fort Andrews, a turn-of-the-century fortification that served as an Italian prisoner-of-war camp during World War II. The island is accessible by the Park's water taxi; camping is permitted.

Rainsford Island. Prior to Gallop's, Rainsford was used as the port's quarantine station for immigrants. Several hundred people were buried on the island, including many of the victims of the epidemics that swept through Boston in the late 18th century.

Long Island. The northernmost end of the island, Long Island Head, lies directly across from Gallop's. Concealed atop this drumlin are the ruins of Fort Strong, another turn-of-the-century fort. During World War II, an underwater net with 'gates' that could be opened, extended across President Roads from Long Island to Deer Island (the one with the giant 'eggs'), to prevent enemy vessels, especially submarines, from entering the harbor.

Deer Island. Once separated from Winthrop by the waters of Shirley Gut, this 'island' is now the site of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority's multi-billion dollar wastewater treatment plant. The facility, with a capacity of 1.3 billion gallons a day, pumps treated effluent nine miles out to sea through a bedrock tunnel measuring 26 feet in diameter.

Nixes Mate. This triangular black-and-white navigational marker stands at the site of a similarly-shaped structure that was built in the early 19th century on a gravelly shoal between Gallop's and Long Islands. Once nearly 15 acres in size, the island was reduced to its current size as its cobbles and gravel were taken for ballast in sailing ships, by erosion, and by the quarrying of its slate ledge. During the 18th century, the bodies of pirates were hung on the island as a warning to other seafarers.

Although the trail continues along the edge of the bluff, visitors during the late spring and early summer are encouraged to AVOID THIS SECTION OF THE TRAIL which borders the island's gull colony. Several dozen nests are built each season by Herring Gulls and Great Black-backed Gulls. Until the mottled gray-brown young gulls are able to fly, the area is aggressively guarded by the adult birds. To avoid the colony, walk back past the granite foundation (stop #4), then turn left. That trail and the coastal route converge before the next stop.

6 THE NARROWS CHANNEL

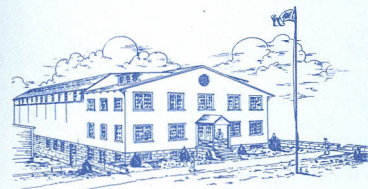
Thousands of years ago, when sea-level was much lower, the ancient Charles River carried water from the last melting glacier into the ocean somewhere beyond what is now Cape Cod. As sea-level rose and the harbor flooded, the now-submerged riverbed became the only natural, deep-water channel into Boston Harbor. Because of the narrowness of the channel in this area, George's Island was considered the ideal site for a massive fort. Construction of a seawall around George's began in 1825 and work on granite-walled Fort Warren began eight years later. Lovell's Island, directly across the Narrows, like Gallop's and many of the other harbor islands, was shaped by the last glacier. Its large central hill, a drumlin, conceals parts of Fort Standish, a harbor defense facility built around the turn of the century. Lovell's has the distinction of being selected as the runner-up site, behind Bedloes Island in New York Harbor, for the Statue of Liberty. It is accessible by the Park's water taxi; camping is permitted.

Behind the right end of Lovell's, Boston Light on Little Brewster Island stands at the entrance to Nantasket Roads and the Narrows; further out and over Lovell's left end, Graves Light now marks the entrance to the North and South Channels, currently the major shipping routes into Boston Harbor. Beyond the 'eggs' of Deer Island, the North Shore stretches along the horizon. The two side-by-side smokestacks are located 12 miles away, as the gull flies, in Salem, Massachusetts.

Turn right at the marker and walk down the steps.

7 PARADE GROUND/REC HALL

During the period of 1940-1945, this area was alive with the activities of the U.S. Maritime Service Radio Training School. Five-thousand Merchant Marine radio operators as well as smaller numbers of cooks, bakers and machinists



trained here before shipping-out to Europe or the Pacific during World War II. To the left, on the asphalt Parade Ground,

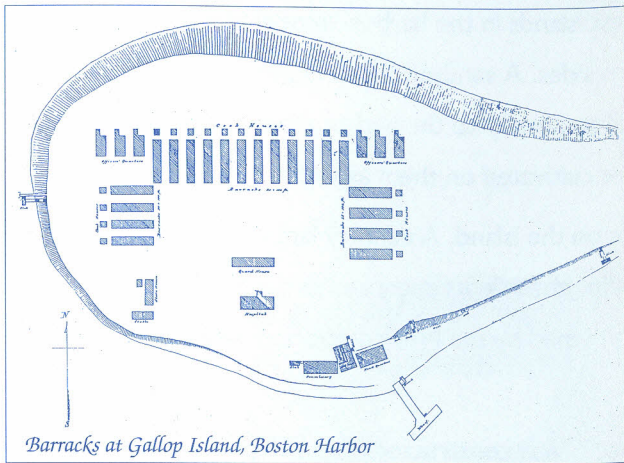
students assembled, marched and played; to the right, the large concrete posts mark the foundation of the school's Recreation Hall.

The apple tree on the right side of the path is studded with rows of holes made by a migratory woodpecker called the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. This bird drills holes in tree trunks, then returns to feed on the drops of sap that ooze out.

The tour route continues across the Parade Ground, then follows the trail that begins at the far end of the stone retaining wall. The next stop is at the point where the trail forks.

8 CEMETERY

The area ahead of you, where the trail heads downhill toward the shoreline of Peggy's Point, skirts the island's unmarked cemetery. Thirteen soldiers were buried there during the Civil War, then later disinterred. An additional 237 bodies, including the victims of a smallpox epidemic and immigrants detained at the Quarantine Hospital, were buried in the cemetery under wooden markers during the late 19th century. For these immigrants, Gallop's was the final stop on their journey to the New World.



Take the right fork, then turn right again onto the second paved path. Follow the markers to the foundations of the three buildings.

9 QUARANTINE HOSPITAL

In 1866, the City of Boston opened a hospital on the island to monitor the health of immigrants arriving from Europe. By 1886, the medical staff was examining over 33,000 passengers a year. The Federal government assumed control of the hospital in 1916.

Dr. Alvin Sweeney, a skilled horticulturalist, was the hospital's director from 1927 to 1935. He planted many trees and ornamental shrubs on the island, including most of the apple, pear and peach trees that continue to bear fruit each fall. These foundations date from the Sweeney era and

supported houses used by members of the hospital staff. The left-most one was renovated in the 1940s and turned into the Radio School's sickbay. The others were used as the officers quarters and mess. Following the war, two of the three buildings were moved to Hingham and Weymouth, where they still stand.

Return to the paved path and turn left. The long foundation on your right, interrupted by a small wet area, was the site of one of the Radio School's classroom buildings.

10 ORNAMENTAL SHRUBS

At the intersection of these two paths some of Dr. Sweeney's plantings continue to thrive. Grouped together are lilacs, False Spirea (with feathery pink flowers in the summer) and two kinds of dogwood. These plants are not native to the island. In fact, as a result of the plants brought over from Europe by the colonists, more than three-quarters of all the species growing on the harbor islands are foreign to the area.

Turn left at the intersection and follow the path down the hill and back to the gazebo.

We hope you enjoyed your walk around Gallop's Island and that you'll explore some of the other islands in the Park as well.

If you do not wish to keep this brochure, please recycle it in the box in the gazebo.

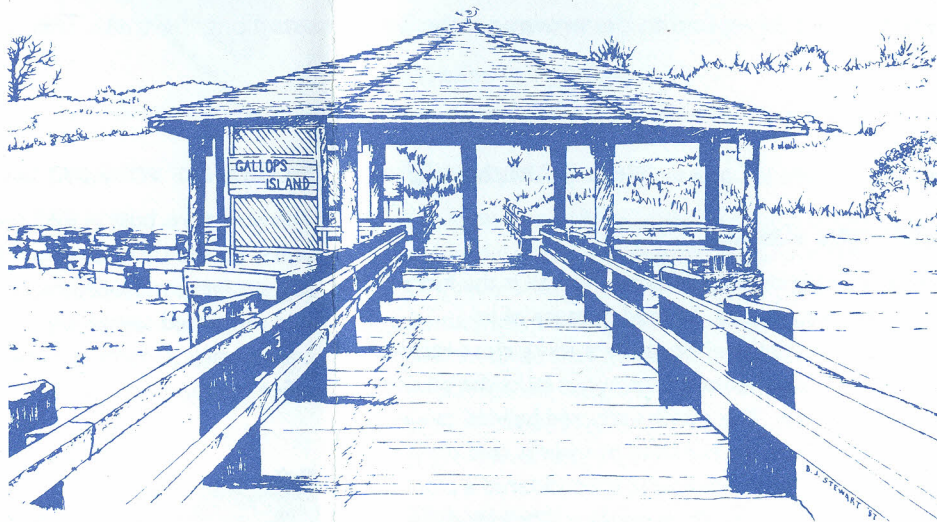


Illustration by Bryant Stewart.



Massachusetts Department of
Environmental Management

Boston Harbor Islands
National Recreation Area
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

