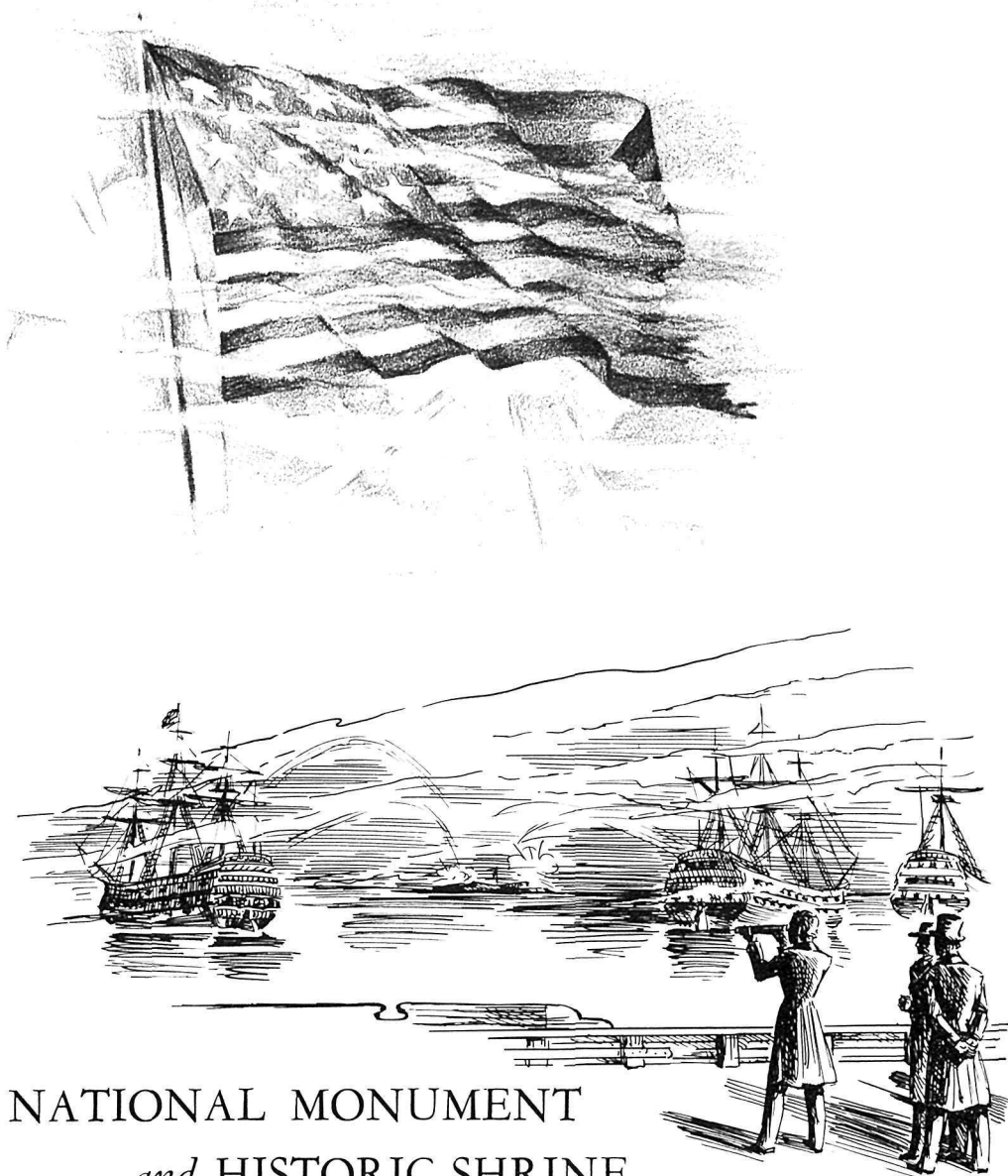
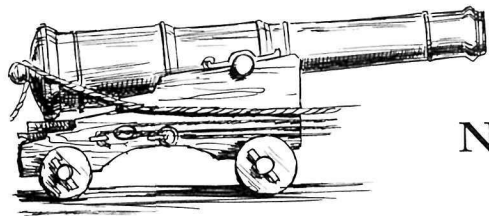


FORT McHENRY



NATIONAL MONUMENT
and HISTORIC SHRINE

Maryland



Fort McHenry NATIONAL MONUMENT and HISTORIC SHRINE

The repulse of a British naval attack against this fort in 1814 prevented the capture of Baltimore and inspired the writing of our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

AT FORT MCHENRY the flag attains special significance for Americans. For it was a glimpse of the flag above these embattled ramparts that inspired Francis Scott Key to compose the immortal lines of our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

At this hallowed shrine, where the flag flies day and night by Presidential proclamation, the visitor can sense and appreciate that surge of inspiration, born amidst bombs "bursting in air," which impelled the creation of this classic expression of American ideals and patriotism.

Early History

The strategic position of the peninsula, on the tip of which is located Fort McHenry, was recognized as early as the Revolutionary War. In 1776, an 18-gun fort, with exterior batteries, was constructed there for the protection of Baltimore's harbor. Fort Whetstone, as it was called, never came under enemy fire.

In the 1790's, when it appeared likely that the young Nation might become involved in a war with either England or France, it was decided that Baltimore was sufficiently important to merit a permanent harbor defense. Funds were contributed by both the Federal Government and the citizens of Baltimore. The outer batteries were rebuilt and

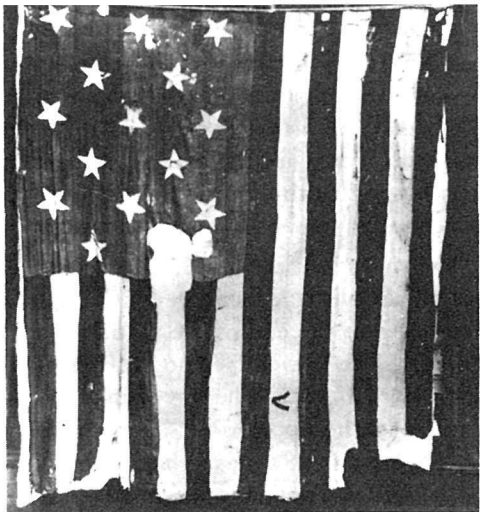
strengthened in accord with plans prepared by Maj. J. J. Ulrich Rivardi. A star fort was then completed to the rear of these under the direction of John Foncin. The whole was named Fort McHenry in honor of James McHenry of Maryland, secretary to George Washington during the Revolution and Secretary of War from 1796 to 1800.

War Comes To Baltimore

During the Napoleonic Wars, Britain and, to a lesser degree, France repeatedly violated the neutral shipping rights of the United States. These violations, among other factors, finally brought the United States to a declaration of war against England on June 18, 1812.

Military operations began along the American-Canadian frontier. Within 6 months the American land campaign had met with disaster, and overwhelming English naval superiority had practically converted Chesapeake Bay into a British lake.

In 1813, rewinning of the Lake Erie frontier was offset by American failures in the east. Then, following the defeat of Napoleon and the restoration of peace in Europe in the spring of 1814, large numbers of British troops, including many of "Wellington's Invincibles," were freed for a final all-



The flag flown over Fort McHenry during the bombardment. Courtesy, U. S. National Museum.



Portrait of Francis Scott Key by Charles Willson Peale. Courtesy, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

out offensive in America. A majority of these were sent to the Great Lakes area; others, before participating in the attack upon New Orleans, served in a campaign in the Chesapeake designed primarily to prevent America from reinforcing her northern frontier.

These British veterans routed the Americans at Bladensburg and captured Washington easily in August 1814. Baltimore, larger and more important commercially, was selected as the next objective. The British planned a joint land and naval attack on the city. On September 12, a force of about 5,000 troops landed at North Point and moved rapidly toward Baltimore. Maj. Gen. Robert Ross, the British commander, was killed in a skirmish just before the British engaged an American force under Gen. John Stricker on the North Point Road. After a stubborn, hour-long defense, the Americans retired to previously prepared positions to avoid encirclement by the British. The next morning, the British moved to within 2 miles of Baltimore and awaited the arrival of the fleet before attempting to storm her strong defenses.

On September 13, at dawn, 16 enemy

warships dropped anchor in the river about 2 miles below Fort McHenry and commenced a 25-hour bombardment. During the action a barrage of 1,500 to 1,800 bombs, rockets, and shells was fired in an effort to destroy the fort. Though the guns of the Star Fort returned the fire in vain (the British fleet was beyond their range), the heavier guns of the outer batteries kept the ships at bay. The critical hour came shortly after midnight on the 14th when a sizeable force of British sailors was sent to penetrate the Ferry Branch. This force threatened Fort McHenry and the "soft" southern side of the City of Baltimore. But half of the group entered the North West Branch by mistake, was detected, and driven off; the remainder of the force was likewise repulsed in the Ferry Branch. Meanwhile, Adm. Alexander Cochrane notified the army that hulks sunk across the entrance to the Northwest Branch by the Americans prevented him from entering the channel to give naval support. For this reason, Col. Arthur Brooke, who had succeeded General Ross, did not attempt to storm the city, but led his troops back to their transports. The Battle of Baltimore was over. Because most

of the garrison had been stationed in outer works, casualties were low: 4 men killed, 24 injured. Two of the buildings were damaged.

One month later the British left the Chesapeake. Ahead lay New Orleans and the end of the war.

"The Star-Spangled Banner"

"The Star-Spangled Banner" is actually an account of the emotions experienced by Francis Scott Key as he witnessed the attack on Fort McHenry. With John Skinner, Federal agent for the exchange of prisoners, Key had sailed from Baltimore for the purpose of securing the release of Dr. William Beanes from the British fleet. Beanes, a citizen of Upper Marlboro, had been seized for alleged violation of "good conduct" following Bladensburg. Making contact with the fleet in the lower bay, the Americans persuaded the British to release the doctor. They were detained, however, for reasons of

security. During the attack, the Americans were placed on their own vessel at the rear of the British fleet, but in a position where they could witness the progress of the assault.

Key remained on deck during the entire 25-hour attack. In the daytime he was assured by the sight of the flag waving defiantly over the ramparts. At night he could no longer see the flag, but as long as the British continued to fire, he knew that the fort resisted. Shortly after midnight the firing ceased, leaving Key puzzled and alarmed. He was unaware that the bombardment was halted to enable the landing force to approach the fort. For Key it was a period of suspense and anxiety. Finally, at dawn, he again saw the flag. The inspired moment came to him "Does not such a country and such defenders of their country deserve a song?" He said that "With it came an inspiration not to be resisted; and even though it had been a hanging matter to make a song,



"'Tis The Star-Spangled Banner." Painting by George Gray, now in museum at Fort McHenry.

I must have written it." On the back of a letter he began his immortal lines.

When Admiral Cochrane abandoned the attack, he permitted the Americans to return to Baltimore. As he came up the river, Key completed a rough draft of his poem. At the inn that evening he made certain revisions, and on the following day the revised copy was printed in handbill form.

Soon the poem was sung to the music of a popular English song, "To Anacreon in Heaven." With the passage of time the song increased in popularity, and in 1931 an act of Congress made "The Star-Spangled Banner" our official national anthem.

Fort McHenry After 1814

Although the strategic importance of Fort McHenry decreased after 1814, it continued to play a part in each of the Nation's emergencies. During the Mexican War, the Maryland Volunteer Artillery was mobilized at Fort McHenry. It also served as a prisoner-of-war camp in the Civil War. Many prominent residents of Baltimore suspected of being Southern sympathizers were detained there.

The Monument

Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine includes the 5-pointed brick fort and a surrounding area of 43 acres. First established in 1925 as a National Park, the area was redesignated, by act of Congress in 1939, as a National Monument and Historic Shrine.

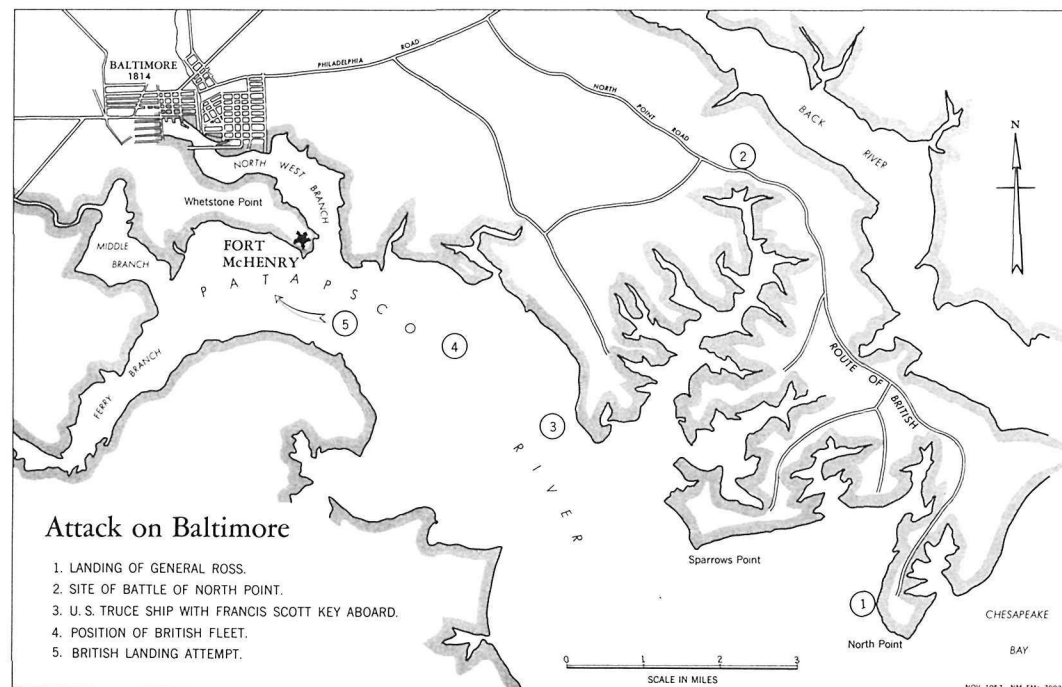
How To Reach the Fort

Fort McHenry is about 3 miles from the center of the city of Baltimore. It is readily accessible, East Fort Avenue leading to it from U.S. 301 and State Route 2.

About Your Visit

You may visit the fort every day except Christmas and New Year's. Buildings within the Star Fort serve as museums and are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.s.t. There is a small admission fee which is waived for children and educational groups. Arrangements for special service for organized groups may be made in advance with the superintendent.

You may purchase a 38-page historical handbook at the fort or by mail from the



The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and inspiration of its people.

Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C., for 25 cents. Information about other and related areas of the National Park System is available at the superintendent's office in Building C.

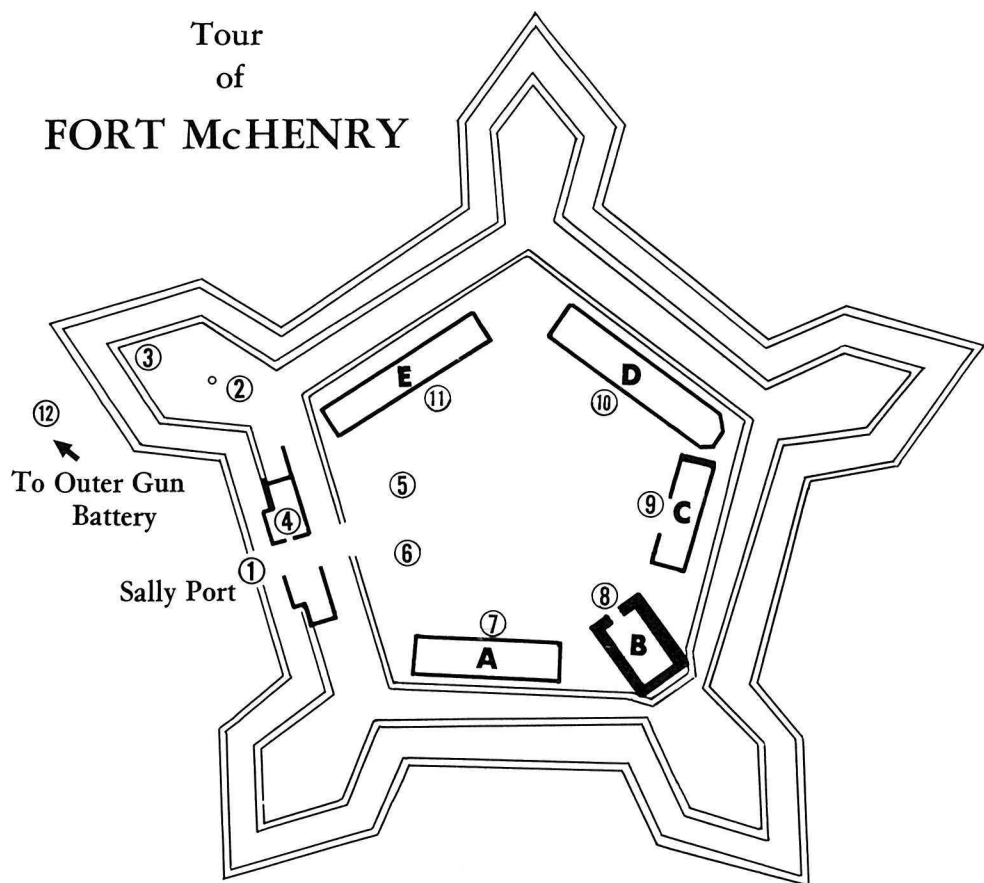
Areas of the National Park System which are related to Fort McHenry include Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial in Lake Erie, and Chalmette National Historical Park, La. The former commemorates the greatest naval battle of the War of 1812; the latter the Battle of New Orleans, the last

major engagement between the American and British land forces.

Mission 66

Mission 66 is a program designed to be completed by 1966 which will assure the maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources of the National Park System in such ways and by such means as will make them available for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Tour of FORT McHENRY



1959 NM-FMC-7003

Administration

Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine is administered by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Baltimore 30, Md., is in immediate charge.

Guide to the Fort

For the best tour of the grounds, we suggest that you follow in sequence the numbered route indicated on the sketch of the Star Fort on the opposite page. Numbers at particular points of interest correspond to numbers and accompanying descriptive material.

1. **THE SALLY PORT.** To enter the Star Fort you must first pass through the arched sally port. At the time of the British attack, this was probably a simple opening in the walls of the fort, with doors of pine. The present covered way and Dungeons No. 1 and 2, which were bombproofs, were built between October 1814 and 1819, so represent defense "after the fact." Gunpowder was originally stored in the bombproofs. During the Civil War prisoners requiring the most severe disciplining were imprisoned here. You may visit these now or when you leave.

2. **BRITISH BOMBS.** The bombs at this location were explosive shells and among 400 estimated to have landed at Fort McHenry. They are said to have caused the area to be "all cut up Round about it," and are impressive evidence of British power.

3. **A STRATEGIC OVERLOOK.** The body of water before you is the Patapsco River. From here you can clearly see how the peninsula, on which Fort McHenry was built, divides the river into the Ferry Branch on your right and the North West Branch on your left. At the time of the attack, Baltimore was situated entirely on the North West Branch and well to the rear of Fort

McHenry. This enabled the fort to control the water approaches to the city.

During the 25-hour bombardment, the British fleet was located at a point 2½ miles distant and slightly to the right of the center of the channel.

On a clear day, Sparrows Point is visible in the distance to your left. Just beyond it, though blocked from your view, is North Point where the British troops landed.

4. **THE GUARD HOUSE.** Three cells were provided for solitary confinement of prisoners. If you wish, you may open the barred door to the first cell to inspect it. Here, as in the dungeon below, sanitary arrangements were hardly consistent with minimum health standards.

5. **THE CANNON ON THE PARADE GROUND.** The three cannon are field pieces used in the defense of Baltimore. One bears the seal of King George III of England, possibly dating back to the Revolutionary War. The others, cast about 1800, are American. The carriages were reconstructed in 1958.

6. **THE FLAG SITE.** The Fort McHenry 15-star, 15-stripe battle flag flew at this location from a wooden staff similar to the present flagstaff. The large flag was made in anticipation of a British attack upon Baltimore, and symbolized American defiance.

7. **BUILDING A.** This building was originally a story and a half high like buildings C, D, and E. The first floor was once the quarters of the commanding officer. It has been restored as the post headquarters. The room to your right is the officers' kitchen and dining room, that to your left is the commanding officer's office, while the third room on the extreme end is the adjutant's office. Although many of the pieces of furniture in these three rooms are reproductions, there are a number of authentic period pieces.

On the second floor of this building above the officers' kitchen and dining room is a room featuring panels which explain the

causes, actions, and results of the War of 1812, and a case containing equipment used during this war.

8. **BUILDING B (POWDER MAGAZINE).** This building was hit during the British bombardment by a 186-pound bomb. Because it was the main powder magazine of the fort and was considered too weak after the bombardment to withstand a renewal of the attack, it was immediately enlarged to its present size. Here, 1,000 pounds of powder packed in small cloth bags was stored in kegs.

9. **BUILDING C.** Junior officers' quarters were provided on the first floor of this building. It is now the office of the superintendent.

10. **BUILDING D.** Enlisted men of the regular garrison of about 100 men were furnished sleeping space in each of 3 individual sections of this building and the barracks building just to the left. Food was prepared and served in each of the 6 units in which large open fireplaces with swinging cranes were provided.

Presently, there are such attractions upstairs as a wall panel tracing the evolution of the American flag, a number of such official flags from the Fort McHenry flag collection, and several displays on the history of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Downstairs is displayed the E. Berkely Bowie collection of firearms, which spans the period of American history from the 1700's to World War I.

11. **BUILDING E.** This building was also formerly used as a barracks for enlisted men. Today there is an electric map on the right wall which explains the story of the British attack upon Baltimore and Fort McHenry's contribution to her successful defense.

Switch 28 indicates the likely position of the American truce ship carrying Francis Scott Key at the end of the British attack. From here he viewed the Fort McHenry flag and started to write "The Star-Spangled Banner." In the upper right-hand corner, a tracing from an 1819 map gives a clear view of the fort as it probably was in 1814.

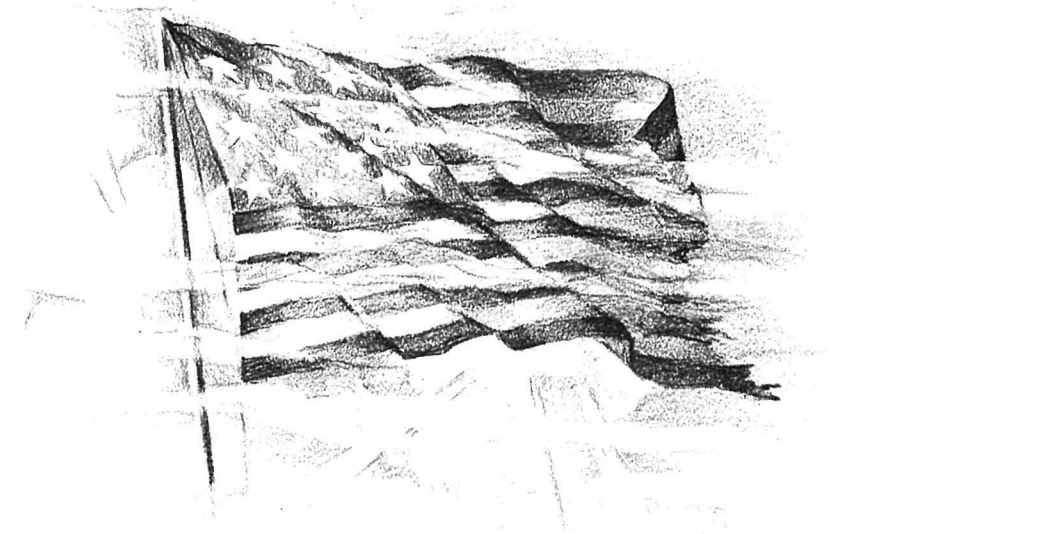
The George Gray mural, " 'Tis the Star-Spangled Banner," is upstairs. After you have viewed this and the exhibits in the adjoining room, a stairway in the center section of the building returns you to the ground floor. You may view several temporary displays in this room before leaving the building and proceeding to your right toward the sally port.

12. **OUTER GUN BATTERY.** This is the principal feature outside the Star Fort. You can reach these fortifications by following the brick pathway leading to the right below the sally port entrance.

These works were built between 1850 and 1877 to replace the old "water battery" that was once located near the parking area. The separate structures forming a part of this battery are powder magazines.

This concludes the self-guiding tour.

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