

HISTORY - PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO

In 1776, while the American colonies on the Atlantic Coast were putting into effect the Declaration of Independence, the Spanish rulers of Mexico sent exploring parties northward along the California Coast, establishing missions and military posts and making possession of the land in the name of Spain. The northernmost of these posts was the Presidio of San Francisco.

At a point that is now the center of the main post, the Spaniards laid out their Presidio. The name, "Presidio," is derived from the Roman word, "praesidium," meaning a garrison or a fortified camp. The original Presidio was a walled camp of approximately 200 yards square surrounded by a palisade-type wall. The old quadrangle is marked by former buildings used by the Mexicans when their independence in 1822 and was garrisoned by the Mexicans until the United States took forcible possession in 1847. The Presidio was formally occupied by American troops under the command of Major James A. Harde on March 27, 1847.

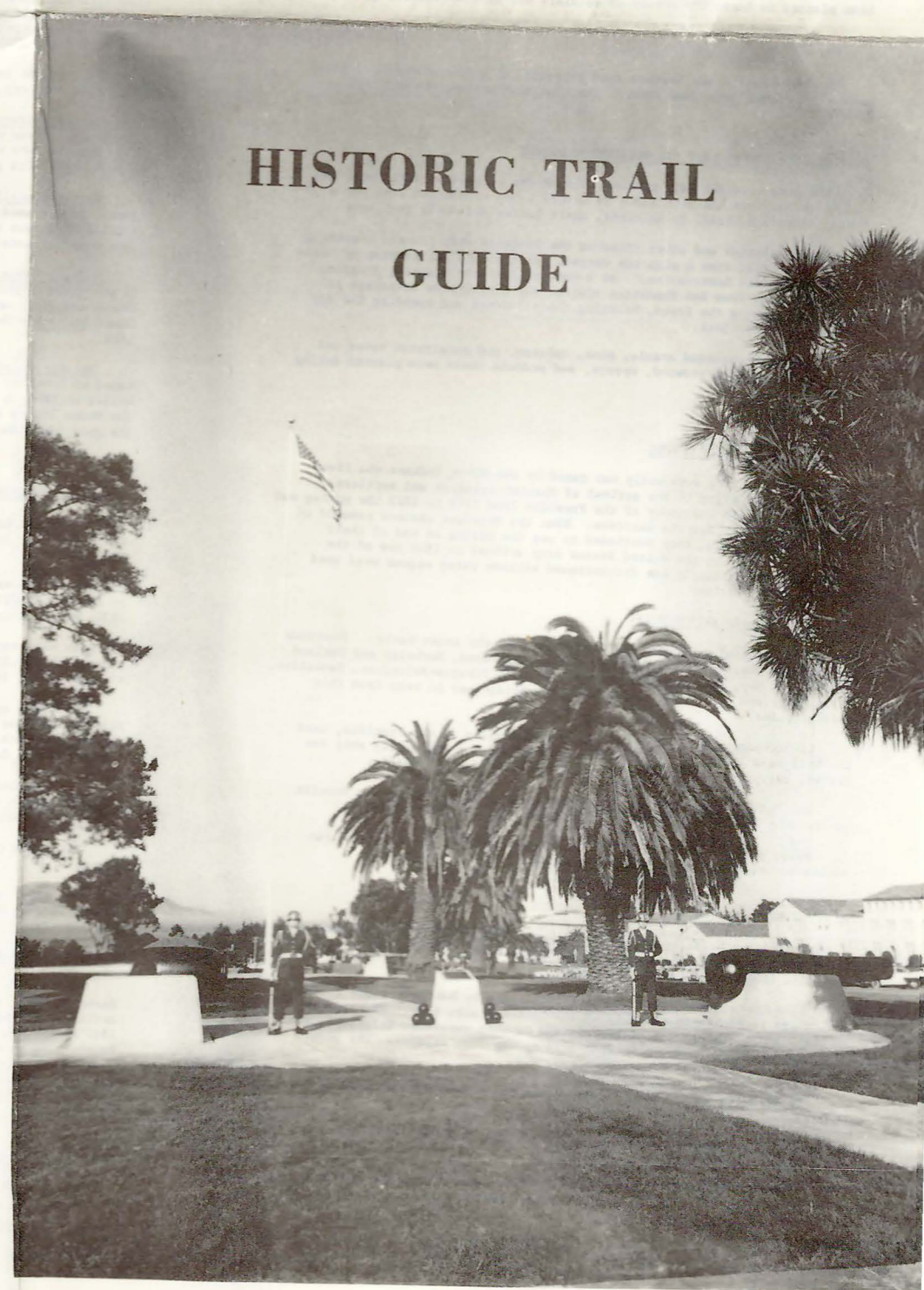
The Presidio reservation consists of approximately 1,400 acres occupying the northernmost point of the peninsula of San Francisco. Major General Robert S. Johnson, in 1859, had large areas were planted with eucalyptus and pine trees. This, with the building of rocks and was in that condition until the 1890s when the hills and the entire reservation was cleared on the peninsula of San Francisco.

The Presidio contains many points of interest, and some of the Army's most illustrious names are associated with the Presidio. Major General Irwin MacArthur, Lieutenant General Sherman, Lieutenant General Philip H. Sheridan, Lieutenant General Hunter Liggett, Brigadier General James H. McLaughlin, and Lieutenant Arthur MacArthur, the father of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, all commanded the post at one time or another. General John J. Pershing, when in command of the Eighth Brigade, was stationed at the Presidio in 1914 before leaving for the Mexican Expedition. It was here that his great personal tragedy occurred, the death of his wife and three daughters in a fire which destroyed their home on the post on August 27, 1915. Today, the area surrounding the main flag pole is known as Pershing Square, in memory of the General's family. In February 1963 the Presidio was named a Registered National Historic Landmark. Two huge Rodman cannons and a historic platoon of soldiers are on display in Pershing Square.

During the Civil War, the Army trained Union regiments at the Presidio and the defense for the Western Frontiers during the Indian campaigns of the 70's and 80's. During the Spanish-American War, volunteers from the Presidio on what is now known as Infantry Terrace.

When a major earthquake, followed by a devastating fire, struck San Francisco in the early hours of April 18, 1906, Presidio troops were ordered to assist in the relief work. The Presidio was a city's chief of police to help keep order, assist refugees, and fight the fire. A model refugee camp was set up on the Presidio grounds where rations, tents, blankets and medical attention were provided for thousands of the city's homeless.

During World War I the Presidio was an officers' training camp for II western states. At the outbreak of World War II the Presidio command of Lt. Colonel George F. Moore and the Western Defense Command of Lt. Colonel George F. Moore. Early in 1946 the Sixth U.S. Army, which had fought through 25 major assaults from New Guinea to the Philippines during World War II, was stationed at the Presidio when the War Department replaced the name service commands in the zone of interest with six Continental Army commands. The Sixth U.S. Army area covers the states of Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, North and South Dakota.



PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
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