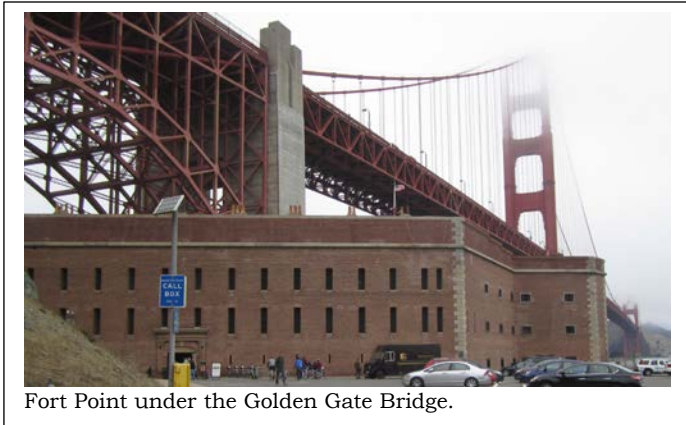


Fort Point

Dan Cunningham

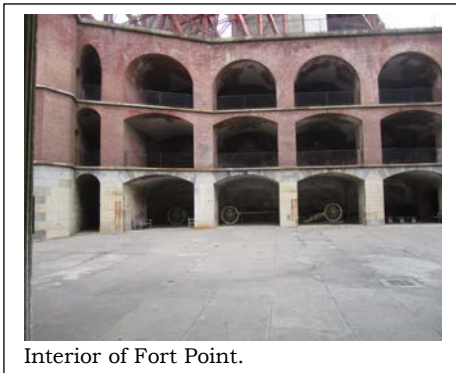
In 2002 I went to Daniel Island, South Carolina, to attend training for the new accounting system that we had purchased for Maine Audubon. While there I had the opportunity to go to Charleston and take a trip to see Fort Sumter. It was very impressive, but due to the various bombardments in the Civil War, the fort had been damaged severely. I wondered what the fort would have looked like before the war. I had that chance in 2015.



Fort Point under the Golden Gate Bridge.

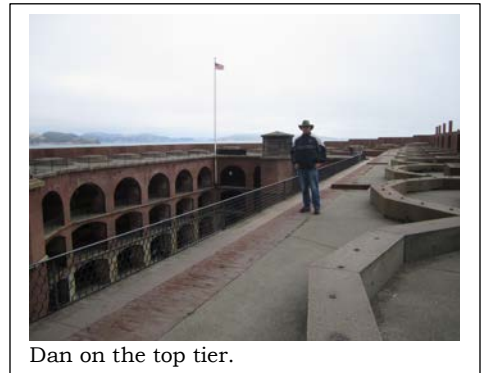
In the summer of 2015, my wife and I took our yearly trip to see her family who live in the Monterey Bay area. However, this time we decided to spend a few nights in San Francisco to go sightseeing. One of the places we went to see was Fort Point, which is located under the Golden Gate Bridge.

Fort Point was built between 1853 and 1861 for the protection of San Francisco Bay. It was built in the Army's traditional "Third System" style of military architecture

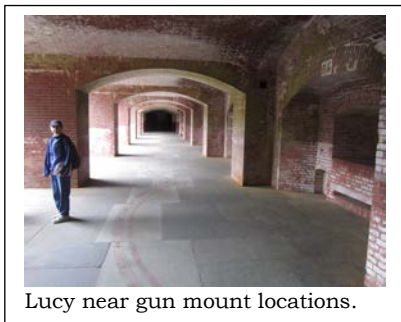


Interior of Fort Point.

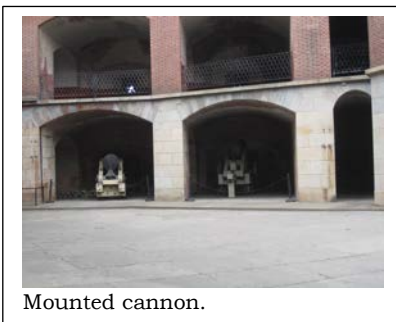
and is the only fort west of the Mississippi River of this design. The Third System combined many guns with thick masonry walls. This system came after the War of 1812 to fortify the coast of the United States and had at least two tiers of cannon while First and Second System forts often



Dan on the top tier.



Lucy near gun mount locations.



Mounted cannon.

had just one level. Overall, 42 forts of this design were built. Examples of this type of design that you may be familiar with are Fort Popham and Fort Knox in Maine and, of course, Fort Sumter.

We were happy to find out that the design of Fort Point is similar to that of Fort Sumter. As a result, I was able to see how Fort Sumter appeared before the Civil War. I took many pictures and some are included with this article. However, the opportunity to view this fort almost never happened.

In the late 1930's plans for the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge also involved plans for the demolition of Fort Point. The architectural value of the fort was recognized by Chief Engineer Joseph Strauss and he created a special arch which allowed the construction of the bridge to go over Fort Point. Over the next 20 years the Fort Point Museum Association

was created and they lobbied for Fort Point to become a National Historical Site, which it did in 1970.

Fort Point never saw action in the Civil War. However, it is certainly worth visiting due to its architecture and its historical location. It is located where the Spanish and Native Americans from nearby missions built a fortification called Castillo de San Joaquin in the 1700's to protect San Francisco Bay. The fortification was located on the cliffs at the entrance to San Francisco Bay. These cliffs were leveled when Fort Point was built. Inside the Fort are various military items including a cannon that was in the Castillo de San Joaquin; the cannon was named San Martin and was cast in Peru in 1684. There are many other items of note to see in the fort. If you ever go to San Francisco, I strongly urge you to take time and visit Fort Point.



If you go, it would be worthwhile to check out the National Park Service website. Much of the information in this article is from the website and they also have many pictures of the fort as it appeared in the 1800's. [<https://www.nps.gov/fopo/index.htm>]

All photos for this article were provided by Dan Cunningham.