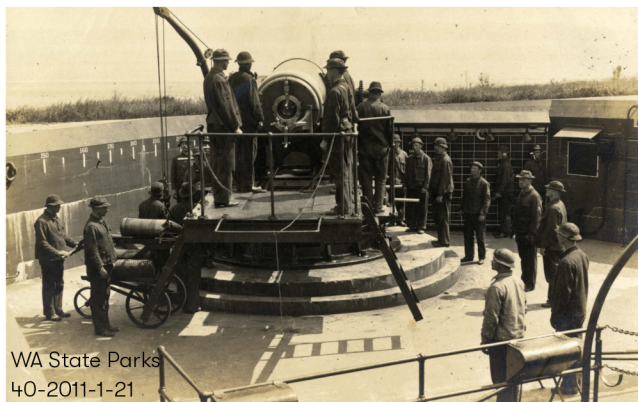


7

What do you notice about the landscape?

The forest was cleared here to provide an open view of the waterway. There would have been no trees in front of the batteries. [Turn and face the treeline.] Taller fire control and Battery Commander stations were constructed along the tree line. From the position of a ship entering Puget Sound these structures would have been out of sight. The hill covered batteries would have also camouflaged into the landscape, giving the Army a positional advantage.

Fort Flagler worked in tandem with Fort Worden on the NW side of Admiralty Inlet and Fort Casey on the NE side. Had enemy vessels entered this territory, the three forts would have coordinated attacks to prevent a hostile fleet from reaching the Bremerton Naval Shipyard.



8

With rapid advancements in technology occurring at the turn of the 20th century, the US Military decided to use a variety of armaments scattered across the landscape in small batteries. The size of guns at Fort Flagler ranged from 3-inch to 12-inch. Battery Wilhelm once held two 12-inch barbette (or fixed mounted) guns. The barrel of this gun was as long as a school bus and it could fire rounds as far as nine miles! To give you some perspective, Fort Casey on Whidbey Island is only about 4 miles away... Though the guns were never fired at an enemy, there were a few friendly fire reports and accidents. One such occurred on Whidbey Island. Here at Fort Flagler, the gun crew once set the elevation too high, and a shell was lobbed into a farmer's field on Whidbey Island. The farmer dug up the shell and put it on display at Coupeville, to the embarrassment of the Coast Artillery.

When the guns were fired, they produced a very strong concussion or shock wave. Have you ever been at a stoplight with someone in a car close to you, listening to music with a powerful audio system, turned up really loud? You can not only hear the bass, but you can feel it. It vibrates through your car. The pressure wave of the guns was something like that but much, much stronger.

Time for safety training! They were told to spread their legs, get up on their toes, open their mouths wide and cup their hands over their ears. This is how the men protected themselves. Do you feel safe? (Additional Fact: The rings seen around the walls were used to mount the barrel of the gun onto the carriage.)

Army Engineers labeled each of the rooms in the lower section of the batteries for ease of use. Many of the labels remain today.

Note: Powder Room= Gun Powder Room, not the bathroom!

Self-guided Tour

Campus to Main Gunline

Take an easy half mile stroll from the museum to the main gunline and uncover the mysteries of the buildings and fields along the way. Follow along the stops listed on the map inside. Have questions? Return to the museum to ask your hosts! Enjoy!

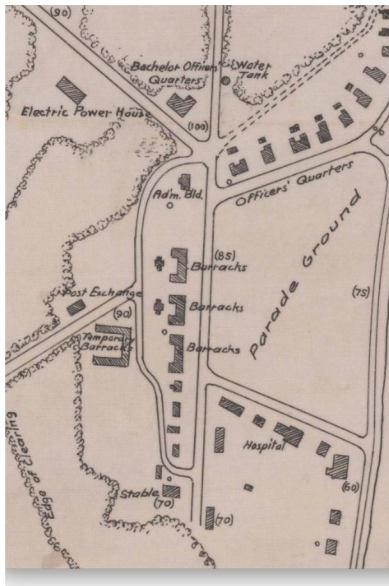
1

First stop: interpretive panels outside museum

Fort Flagler was named in honor of Brigadier General Daniel Webster Flagler who was a distinguished officer that fought for the Union during the Civil War. This fort was built over 120 years ago, at the turn of the 20th century, along with Fort Worden in Port Townsend and Fort Casey on Whidbey Island. These forts worked together to defend the main entrance to Puget Sound.



2 As we look around at the buildings, what do you notice? Some are gray and some are yellow. For the most part, the gray buildings are from the original era of construction (pre-WWI) and would have once surrounded the parade grounds.

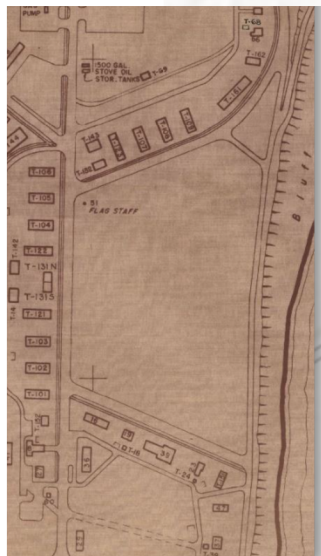


Barracks would have been along this sidewalk, separated from the Officer's homes along the far side. After WWI, the fort was put into caretaker status and only a few men remained to care for everything. Many of the original structures rotted and had to be demolished.

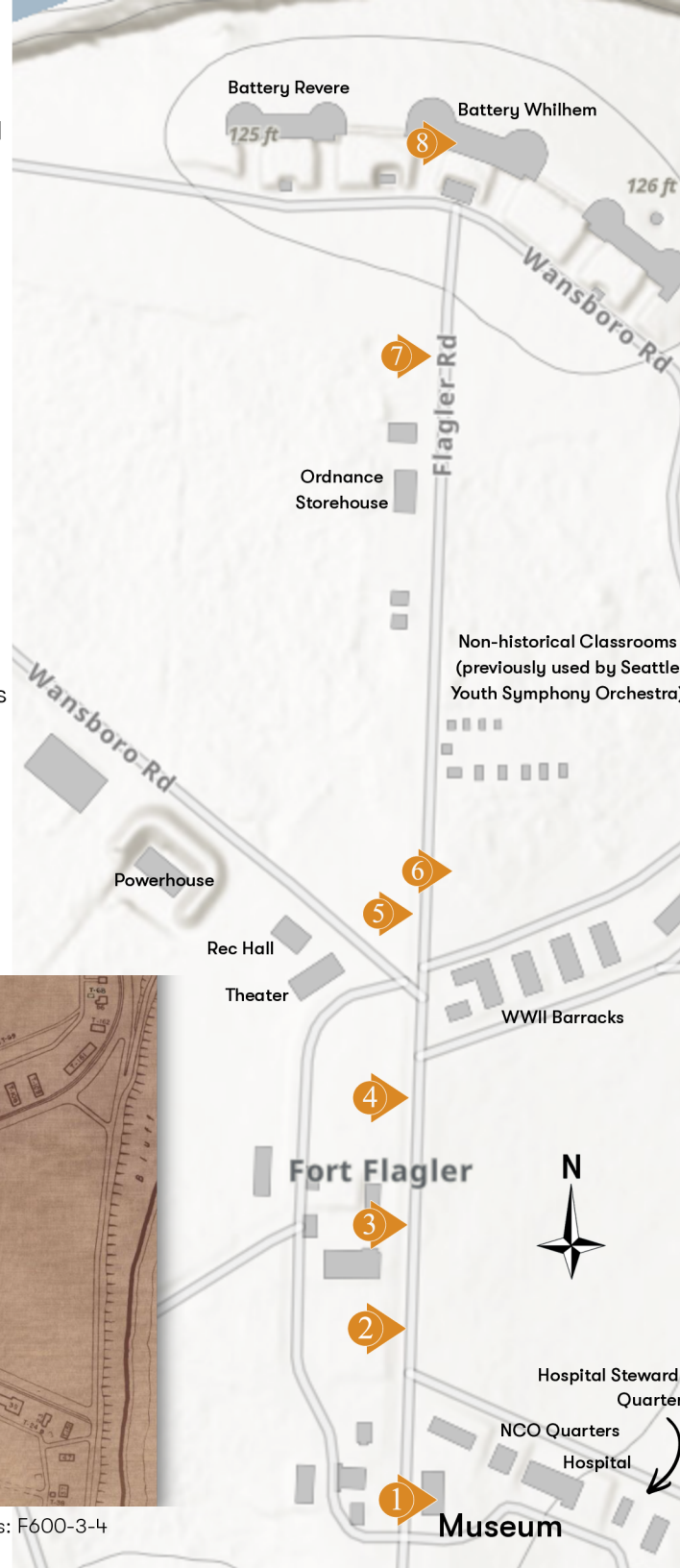
WA State Parks: F600-87

3 The yellow buildings are temporary, WWII structures. How are they temporary if they are still here? The Army built these structures quickly when the fort was reactivated and only intended for them to last 10 years, but incredibly they lasted for about 80 years! As you can see, they are a bit worse for the wear now and Washington State Parks is evaluating their future use.

In comparison, the original (gray) structures look great for 120-year-old buildings! State Parks has been working on restoring these structures to keep them alive for future generations to enjoy.



WA State Parks: F600-3-4



4 As we stare out across the parade grounds, you might find yourself asking why the open field. Historically, it was common practice to keep open fields around castles and forts to keep an eye out for unexpected visitors or enemies. Open parade grounds kept with this tradition and provided space for drills, marches, ceremonies, and recreation.

5 The Army's Coast Artillery Corps, akin to today's special forces, needed skilled personnel, but the remote location of Fort Flagler made retention difficult. This led to high desertion rates among soldiers. Recreation was vital for morale, with facilities like a YMCA, bowling alley, handball courts, and a theater, desertion rates were reduced. They also established inter-fort baseball, football, and boxing leagues/tournaments.

The newly restored yellow building is the WWII Theater and next to it is a Recreation Hall. The fields behind used to have handball courts, a tennis court, and a baseball field.



Photo courtesy of Jefferson County Historical Society

6 Keeping a constant supply of freshwater at Fort Flagler was a struggle. Can you guess why? Since the fort is on an island, surrounded by saltwater, any attempts at drilling wells resulted in saltwater intrusion. Meaning salty water. Several attempts were made over the years to provide ample freshwater to everyone living at the fort. This stone foundation was once the site of a 60,000 gallon water tower, as you may have seen in the museum's video that plays on loop. Notice the water tower in the background of the picture above.