



Ramparts

Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the War of 1812

Newsletter – Released Feb, May, Jun., Aug, Oct, Dec.

July 1, 2011

Vol.1 No. 2

Tina Orcutt arrives in August to be the 26th Superintendent of Fort McHenry & Hampton

HEADLINE: Letter from the Acting Superintendent Jim Ireland

Naturalist and explorer John Muir famously noted that “the only constant in the universe is change.” That is certainly true this year at Fort McHenry. As we celebrate the opening of the park’s new Visitor Center and Education building, we continue work to update our exhibits, expand our interpretive and educational programs, replant historic cherry groves, and widen and resurface the popular seawall trail. Planning and preparations are already well underway for the commemoration of the bicentennial of the War of 1812.

On April 8, Superintendent Gay Vietzke left the park after she was promoted to the post of Deputy Regional Director for Park Operations for the Northeast Region of the National Park Service, based in Philadelphia. This promotion was in no small part recognition of her many accomplishments here over the last six years. While it has been a true honor to have served as acting superintendent since Gay’s departure, I will be departing in mid-July for a new assignment as Superintendent of Timpanogos Cave National Monument, near Salt Lake City, Utah.

The new superintendent, who will arrive around August 1, is Tina Orcutt, who will be moving from Seneca, New York, where she is currently the Superintendent of Women’s Rights National Historical Park. A 23-year veteran of the NPS, Orcutt began her career at Gettysburg and Eisenhower. Subsequent assignments included Colonial, Jean Lafitte, and Jewel Cave, where she served as acting superintendent, Booker T. Washington, the NPS budget office in Washington, D.C., and C&O Canal.



Superintendent Tina Orcutt to arrive in August at Fort McHenry NM & HS from Women’s Rights National Historical Park.

Orcutt holds a bachelors degree in government and politics from the University of Maryland and is currently working on a certificate in legislative studies from the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University.

While superintendents may come and go, the staff at Fort McHenry remains among the best in the National Park Service. You would be hard pressed to find a more talented, knowledgeable, and dedicated group of park professionals, partners, and volunteers anywhere across the National Park Service.

Jim Ireland
Acting Superintendent

NEW PARK VISITOR CENTER ONLINE

For those visitors who have not visited the park and viewed the new visitor facilities here is a brief review.

On March 3, 2011 the park officially dedicated the new Visitor and Education Center. The ceremony was held on the 80th anniversary of the adoption of “The Star-Spangled Banner” as our national anthem.

The ceremony was filled with patriotic speeches, artillery firing, and fireworks on a cold crisp evening. The center replaced the old 1964 structure designed for 200,000 annual visitors. By 1980 visitation had surpassed the building’s 5,700 square foot capacity with over 600,000 visitors.

Design & Construction: The Baltimore architectural firm of GWWO/Architects, Inc., 17,655 square foot design features a “Green Project” sustainable structure with energy efficient elements for thermal air conditioning and heating. It was built with recycled materials by Forrester Construction Company of Rockville, Maryland.

Exhibits – The British design firm of Haley-Sharpe Design of Leicester produced all the displays for the Center

certainly an ironic twist of events for the Fort. The interactive exhibits have proven a success with the youngsters as well as the adults.

One of the most interesting exhibits is an original French 10,000 pound cast iron naval cannon with carriage. Cast in 1809 in France at the Leige Foundry, this cannon was made where the original French guns that defended the fort in 1814 were made.

The Movie: The digital formatted 10-minute movie, partially filmed here, is displayed on an enormous screen, revealing the main elements of the bombardment and the inspiration for "The Star-Spangled Banner." The film was produced by Aperture Films, Ltd., of Newport News, California, known for its large format films.

NEW WAYSIDE TRAIL & FORT EXHIBITS are underway for the American Bicentennial of the War of 1812 (2012-2015).

Like the exhibits within the old 1964 Visitor Center, those displays in the Star Fort and on the wayside trails are out of date, having been installed in 1986. Currently, new designs are being developed and produced for the Star Fort rooms and grounds. The new trail's approach to the Star Fort provides the visitor with new vistas and views of the landscape which leads to the development of twelve new wayside exhibits. Visitors will gain a fresh experience as they learn about the garrison of the 19th century.

WATER TAXI – A reminder that tickets for the Water Taxi may only be purchased at one of the Inner Harbor landing and departure sites. No tickets may be purchased at the park. For more information contact the Water Taxi office at (410) 563-3900.

FORT AVENUE BRIDGE – A reminder that on or about August 1 the bridge near the firehouse and over the CSX railroad tracks will be closed to traffic. A pedestrian bridge will be built for the local residents.

SUMMER HOURS: May 28 – September 5

PARK HOURS: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Visitor Center: 8 a.m. to 7:45 p.m.

Star Fort: 8 a.m. to 7:45 p.m.

Special Events - 2011

Here are the Summer & Fall events of the year – so far!

July 4 – “The Glorious Fourth...An Old Fashioned Fourth of July!

Noon-4:30 P.M. Join the 1814 Fort McHenry Guard, park rangers and assembled citizenry to celebrate America's second oldest national holiday on the 234th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The event highlight will be a public reading of the Declaration of Independence with toast of light summer refreshments. There will be no fireworks.

Defenders' Day – Friday, Saturday and Sunday, September 9-11.

This day honors those who defended the City of Baltimore at North Point and Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. The Fort McHenry Guard of 1814 and assembled regional companies march to the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House, then to the Inner Harbor, board boats to Locust Point, then a march to Fort McHenry. The main event with FIREWORKS, include military encampments and artillery firing. Bring a picnic and enjoy an evening with your family.

Tattoo – Fort George Fifes & Drums – Saturday, August 20, 6-7 p.m.

Join our own Fort McHenry Guard of 1814 and the fifes and drums of Fort George Historic Site of Parks Canada as we host them for the first time.

The park suggests having a late afternoon picnic under the shade of the trees near the park seawall, then bring your lawn chairs and blankets to enjoy the ceremony of patriotic music and salute to "The Star-Spangled Banner." To end the evening witness the firing of the 18-Pounder naval gun on the outer battery exhibit.



Fort McHenry's new Visitor Center is meeting visitors' expectations with the movie, exhibits, large restrooms, landscaping, water taxi dock, and for the staff, comfortable work stations, library...and there's more to come for the Star Fort and grounds.

Park News and History Notes

ON EXHIBIT : The George Keim Copy of “The Star-Spangled Banner” by Francis Scott Key in Key’s own handwriting long after the events of 1814 that first inspired him to write the song. A few years before his death in 1843, Key sent this copy to General George Keim (1805-1861) of Reading, Pennsylvania. There are eight known copies to exist in Key’s own handwriting, the earliest, and believed to be the one Key wrote on board the American flag-of-truce vessel is at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore, Maryland.

MAINTENANCE NOTES

U.S. Coast Guard Tower

Last week the U.S. Coast Guard retrofitted the 1914 seawall tower with a new light and painting. The light serves to guide shipping into the Northwest Branch, with another light at Tide Point.

French Guns of the L’Eole

On June 4, 1811, the French ship-of-the-line *L’Eole*, was placed on auction by the French Consul in Baltimore. The *L’Eole* was commissioned in France in 1790 and served in the West Indies. In 1806 she was dismantled and materially injured in a hurricane and by jury-rigging her rudder, was able to find refuge from the storm. She was chased by British warships and made port in the Chesapeake Bay, Annapolis and then Baltimore in 1808.

At Fell’s Point she was placed in auction with all her furniture, cordage, tackle, etc. Of special interest was her 56 naval guns, twenty-eight 18-Pdrs., and twenty-eight 36-Pdrs.

These were loaned to Fort McHenry and mounted in the Spring of 1813, and a year later saved the fort and city from destruction by the British Navy. The guns were eventually purchased by the War Department and in 1830 were sold at

auction by the U.S War Department. Here the trail of the cannon’s history was lost.

In 2001 the park obtained from South Mountain Antiques in Maryland a 36-Pdr.French cannon that had been cast in 1809 at the Leige Foundry – the same site as the *L’Eole* guns.

Since then the park acquired two more and may be seen in both the Visitor Center and the 1814 Water Battery Exhibit.

36-Pdr. Statistics

Date: 1809

Model: 1786

Metal: Iron

Bore Diameter: 7 inches

Weight: 10,000 lbs.

Breech marks: 1809 187

Recovery Site: Holland



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort McHenry is the birthplace of the U.S. national anthem “The Star-Spangled Banner” written during the War of 1812 in Baltimore harbor. Here, literally, “by the dawn’s early light” on September 14, 1814, following a 25 hour naval bombardment by the British navy, Maryland attorney Francis Scott Key, while on the deck of an American flag-of-truce vessel, witnessed the raising of the fort’s great garrison flag over the ramparts of the Star Fort.

Established as a national park in 1925, in 1939 it was re-designated as a national monument and historic shrine commemorating the defense and inspiration of a new national song.

Address

Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine, National Park Service
2500 East Fort Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21230

Phone

(410) 962-4290

Front Line: 200 Years Ago during the War of 1812 – “the dogs of war”

On August 3, 1811, the Baltimore *Federal Gazette* published a *tongue-in-cheek* conversation by Mr. Augusta John Foster (1780-1848), the British Minister Plenipotentiary to America on the eve of the War of 1812, as he presented his credentials to the U.S. President and Secretary of State, expressing demands upon America.

“To suffer us to continue to take their vessels, kidnap their seamen, and trade no where but with us; That they must not complain about anything we have done or may do, for we are all powerful at sea;

That they must not mention anything about the Chesapeake affair, because this has been long forgotten by us, and it is our royal will and pleasure to hear no more about it, nor of any other murders committed by our humane and loyal man-of-war’s men;

They must not suffer any French vessel, or vessel of any other nation to enter their harbors, we alone ought to be exclusively admitted, because we have a natural inherent right there, no nation else.

But this is not all – they must submit to our omnipotent power to tell them what kind of goods they may carry: - conditions you are to offer to the revolted Americans, and on their consenting to them, it is our royal will and pleasure, to treat with them, on the most just and equitable terms; but in case they prove refractory, then you are to tell them that, the dogs of war will be let loose upon them....These are the instructions Mr. Foster brought with him, and like all negotiators before him, and from that Isle of honesty and humanity; and I dare him to controvert my statement.”



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine
2500 East Fort Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

First Class Mail
 Postage and Fees
PAID
 City, State
 Permit Number



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

This late 18th century star-shaped masonry fort is world famous as the birthplace of the U.S. national anthem. As the guardian of Baltimore harbor during the War of 1812, the valiant defense by American forces led Francis Scott Key to write the words of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Newsletter Editor

Scott S. Sheads, Park Ranger.

Chief of Interpretation

Vince Vaise

Contributors / Assistant Editor

Genna White, Catherine Holden, Park Rangers

Comments? Write to:

Scott S. Sheads, Park Ranger
 Fort McHenry National Monument
 National Park Service
 1400 East Fort Avenue
 Baltimore, MD 21230
 (410) 962-4290, x 203

Marque Lafayette and Washington's War Tent at Fort McHenry, October 1824

On October 7, 1824, the Marquis de Lafayette, the young French aide-de-camp to General Washington during the American Revolution. Upon his arrival, the Old Defenders' of 1814 lined the road to the Fort. As he arrived at Fort McHenry he walked through the Sally Port, a line of soldiers before him opened their ranks, and there was the tent used by Washington.

Above all flew the original Star-Spangled Banner of 1812. Among the guests were President John Q. Adams, Col. Jacob Hindman, Generals Samuel Smith and John Stricker, Perry Benson, Philip Reed, all who had served with La Fayette and Washington and were members of the Cincinnati of Maryland. Here two icons, one of the past and one of the future, had been brought together forming a common bond.

