



Fort Vancouver National Historic Site



Photos by Christopher Communications

Step Back in Time to A Fiery Night in 1844



IN LATE SEPTEMBER, 1844, A WILDFIRE broke out in the fields to the east of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Vancouver. Flames were first spotted on September 24th, and by the 27th a hot, easterly wind had blown the fire within striking distance of the fort. Fort employees - clerks, tradesmen, trappers and traders - sprang into action, carting barrels of water to the fireline and working tirelessly to preserve the wooden fort.

During the near-catastrophe, the fort's Chief Factor, Dr. John McLoughlin, was visiting the Willamette Valley, where fires were also raging. Chief Trader James Douglas was left in charge, and worked alongside his men to extinguish the blaze. In his report on the incident, Douglas recounted the night of September 26th, when the fire was within 6 miles of the fort:

“Having...made the best preparations in our power, to meet the assault of the devouring [fire] at every point, a period of the most painful suspense followed, while we listened, in perfect impotence, to its frightful ravages in the forest, which came upon the ear like the beating of the distant ocean.”

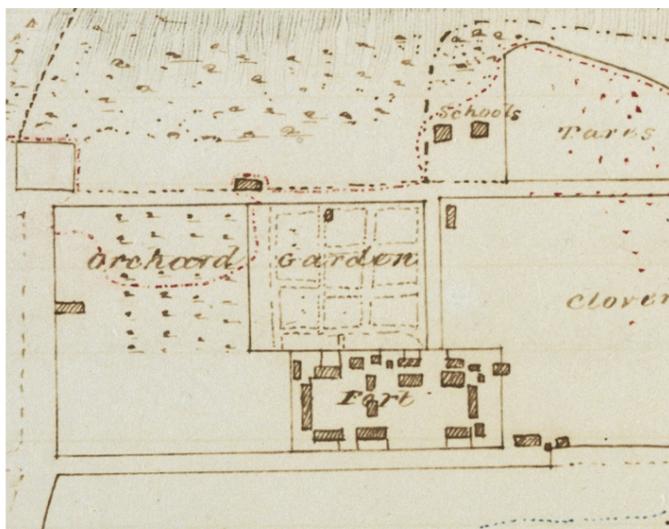
The next day, the fire came so close to the fort that some frightened Company employees deserted the post and fled with their families. The fort's important documents and money were evacuated to the southern side of the Columbia River. The fort's women and children also escaped across the river.

The fire was finally extinguished on the 28th, but it had come perilously close to the fort - within 300 feet. The orchard just to the northwest of the fort was burned, along with much of the field

north of today's East Fifth Street. Most of the Company's buildings outside the fort were saved, with the exception of five barns, located across the street from where Pearson Air Museum now stands. Throughout the fire, Company firefighters were helped by local American Indians, who were instrumental in helping to save the Company's saw mill, located to the east of the fort.

On **September 10, 2016**, our annual, free Campfires & Candlelight event will recreate the night of September 26, 1844 - a night when the residents of Fort Vancouver were unsure if their home would be destroyed. Inside the fort, from 5 pm to 10 pm, costumed re-enactors will portray the key figures of that night and their families. Visitors will have a chance not just to experience the fort by candlelight, but to experience the drama of that memorable night.

Outside the reconstructed fort, beginning at 4 pm, our Timeline of History brings together living history camps representing the Hudson's Bay Company Village, the Oregon Trail, and Vancouver Barracks during the 19th century, World War I, and World War II.



This map from 1844, drawn by Fort Vancouver Clerk Thomas Lowe, shows the area burned by the fire.



Hello, and welcome to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site!

172 years ago, a massive wildfire - the product of a dry, hot summer - came within just 300 yards of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Vancouver. Today, modern Northwesterners are still concerned with the effects of wildfires on our landscape and communities. According to the National Park Service's Fire and Aviation Management program, as many as 90 percent of wildland fires in the United States are caused by humans - from unattended campfires, burning debris, discarded cigarettes, or arson.

Fire safety is an important part of the National Park Service culture, and is vital both to protecting our national parks and to holding fun, community events like Campfires & Candlelight at Fort Vancouver. Here at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, we also share our campus with the headquarters of the U.S. Forest Service's Gifford-Pinchot National Forest, and we share their mission to prevent forest fires.

I hope that you will join us for this year's Campfires & Candlelight event, which will tell the story of the 1844 fire. Campfires & Candlelight is a long-held community tradition, and a wonderful way to experience history!

Lantern Tours are another great way to experience the national park after dark! On page 6 of this guide, you can find more information and a schedule for this fall and winter's fascinating tours.

I hope you enjoy your visit, and create wonderful memories here at your local national park!

Tracy Fortmann
Superintendent



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site

brings together a national park, a premier archaeological site, the region's first military post, an international fur trade emporium, one of the oldest operating airfields, the first national historic site west of the Mississippi River, and a waterfront trail on the banks of the Columbia River.

Superintendent

Tracy Fortmann

Park Visitor Center

360-816-6230

Mailing Address

612 E Reserve St
Vancouver, WA 98661

Web and E-mail

www.nps.gov/fova
For email, click "Contact Us"

Social Media

-  [instagram.com/FortVancouverNPS](https://www.instagram.com/FortVancouverNPS)
-  twitter.com/FtVancouverNPS
-  facebook.com/FortVancouver

National Park Service employees care for America's 412 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities.

What to See and Do

At Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, the history of the Pacific Northwest is told at four unique sites, through four unique stories.

VISITOR CENTER

Begin your visit by learning about all the park's venues through new exhibits and activities. Watch a short film about the history of the area, peruse the park's bookstore, and enjoy a display of artwork by American Indian artists. The Visitor Center is also home to visitor services for Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Visitors can plan trips to the forest, and purchase federal recreation passes.

FORT VANCOUVER

At Fort Vancouver, discover the site's roots as a British fur trading post, built by the Hudson's

Bay Company in 1825. As you approach the fort's gates, be sure to stroll through the garden, which is cared for by a team of dedicated National Park Service volunteers.

PEARSON AIR MUSEUM

Pearson Field is one of the nation's oldest operating air fields. Exhibits at Pearson Air Museum highlight early military and civilian aviators here, and the site's World War I Spruce Mill, which produced aviation-grade lumber for Allied planes.

VANCOUVER BARRACKS

Established in 1849, Vancouver Barracks was the Northwest's first U.S. Army post. Stroll among these historic buildings, which are marked with wayside exhibits interpreting their history. Though

the buildings are currently closed, the National Park Service and its partners are working to transform the barracks into a vibrant, public service campus.

McLOUGHLIN HOUSE

Dr. John McLoughlin, the Chief Factor of Fort Vancouver, moved to his home in Oregon City, Oregon, after his retirement in 1845. Free tours of this home - one of the oldest in Oregon - take place on Fridays and Saturdays. Call (503) 656-5146 for more information.

Left: Costumed re-enactors represent Civil War-era soldiers at Campfires & Candlelight.

Center: National Park Rangers and volunteers lead black powder demonstrations at Campfires & Candlelight.

Right: Fort Vancouver is decorated for the holidays for Christmas at Fort Vancouver.



Essential Information

Dates and Hours of Operation

All park facilities, including the Visitor Center, reconstructed Fort Vancouver, and Pearson Air Museum, are open Tuesday through Saturday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Please call 360-816-6230 for more information.

The public headquarters of Gifford Pinchot National Forest is located at the Fort Vancouver Visitor Center. At the Visitor Center, forest rangers can answer questions and help plan trips to the national forest. For information on visiting Gifford Pinchot National Forest, call 360-891-5000.

The park's McLoughlin House Unit in Oregon City is open Fridays and Saturdays from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Please call 503-656-5146 for more information.

Fees

The entrance fee to the reconstructed fort site is currently \$5.00 per person, and the receipt is valid for 7 days. Ages 15 years and under are free. Entrance to Pearson Air Museum is free. Entrance to the McLoughlin House Unit of Fort Vancouver NHS in Oregon City is free. America the Beautiful, and all other National Parks Passes, are honored.

An annual pass for entrance to Fort Vancouver NHS is available, and costs \$30.00. This pass grants entry to the pass holder and three additional adults for 12 months from the purchase date.

Information Centers

Information can be found at the Fort Vancouver Visitor Center, located at 1501 E Evergreen Blvd., Vancouver, WA, 98661. Call (360) 816-6230 for more information.

Food & Water

Snacks and drinks are available onsite at the AAFES Shoppette in Vancouver Barracks. Meals are available at the Grant House Restaurant on Officers Row and at a number of venues within walking distance of the park.

Bicycles

Cyclists must stay on designated roads and trails and yield to pedestrians. Travel at a safe speed and let others know when you are passing. Always wear a helmet and carry a patch kit and pump. If listening to music, ride with only one ear bud to be aware of your surroundings and other trail users.

First Aid

Onsite first aid is available inside the reconstructed fort at the Contact Station, and at Pearson Air Museum and the Visitor Center.

Pets

Dogs must be leashed at all times, and their waste must be collected and disposed of.

Reservations & Permits

If you are interested in holding a special event at Fort Vancouver NHS, visit the park website at www.nps.gov/fova/planyourvisit/permits.htm or contact our reservation coordinator Eva Dodd at 360-816-6241.

Firearms

As of February 2010, a new federal law allows people who can legally possess firearms under applicable federal, state, and local laws, to legally possess firearms in this park. It is the responsibility of visitors to understand and comply with all applicable state, local, and federal firearms laws before entering this park. Federal law also prohibits firearms in certain facilities in this park; those facilities are marked with signs at all public entrances.

Collecting & Vandalism

Metal detecting and any type of ground disturbance is prohibited. If you see an artifact on the ground, please leave it in place and notify a staff member or call the park's Cultural Resources Division at 360-816-6250.

Suggested Tours of Fort Vancouver NHS

If you have one hour...

If you have only one hour to visit the National Historic Site, we recommend that you see our namesake, of course: Fort Vancouver! After touring the Visitor Center to learn about the history of the site, proceed to the reconstructed fort located on the plain to the south.

Fort Vancouver was established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1825, and served as the headquarters and supply depot for a vast network of fur trading outposts in the West. By 1860, after the Pacific Northwest had become part of the United States, the British fort fell into decline and within a few

years burned to the ground. What you see today is a reconstruction of the fort, built on the original's archaeological footprint.

On your way into the fort, take a leisurely stroll through the fort's formal English-style garden - featuring plants that would have been grown at the historic post.

To see the only structure remaining of the original fort, be sure to take a look down the well in the northeast corner of the stockade!



If you have two hours...

If you have two hours to visit Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, after you've toured the Visitor Center and Fort Vancouver (see above), take a walk along the Spruce Mill Trail to Pearson Air Museum.

The Spruce Mill Trail leads from the gates of Fort Vancouver towards the northeast. This area was once the site of a vast Spruce Mill - the largest in the world. Built in 1917 as part of the nationalization of the lumber industry that occurred during World War I, the mill processed wood brought in from

logging camps throughout the northwest. The lumber was shipped to airplane manufacturers in the eastern United States and Europe. This was part of a massive war effort that ensured that the Allies would be able to compete with German aviation technology.

At Pearson Air Museum, discover the history of flight in Vancouver. Pearson Field has been in constant use since the earliest days of the 20th century, and has been the site of fantastic and historic aviation events, including the landing of the world's first transpolar flight.



Explore the history of the Hudson's Bay Company

The Hudson's Bay Company's establishment at Fort Vancouver was the heart of their fur trading empire in the Pacific Northwest. It is because they chose this spot on the north bank of the Columbia River that the modern-day cities of Vancouver and Portland are located where they are.

After touring Fort Vancouver, walk the Land Bridge Trail to the Village and Waterfront (see map on next page). The two small, one-room cabins you will encounter are reconstructions of two houses

that were located in the Village - Vancouver's first neighborhood and the home of the fort's employees and their families.

Next, cross over the Land Bridge. This beautiful pedestrian bridge features indigenous plants, and artwork designed by American Indian artist Lillian Pitt. On the other side, you will encounter the northwest's oldest apple tree at the City of Vancouver's Old Apple Tree Park. Continue on to discover the Fort Vancouver waterfront, an area that was historically the site of boat and canoe landings.



Explore the history of the US Army in Vancouver

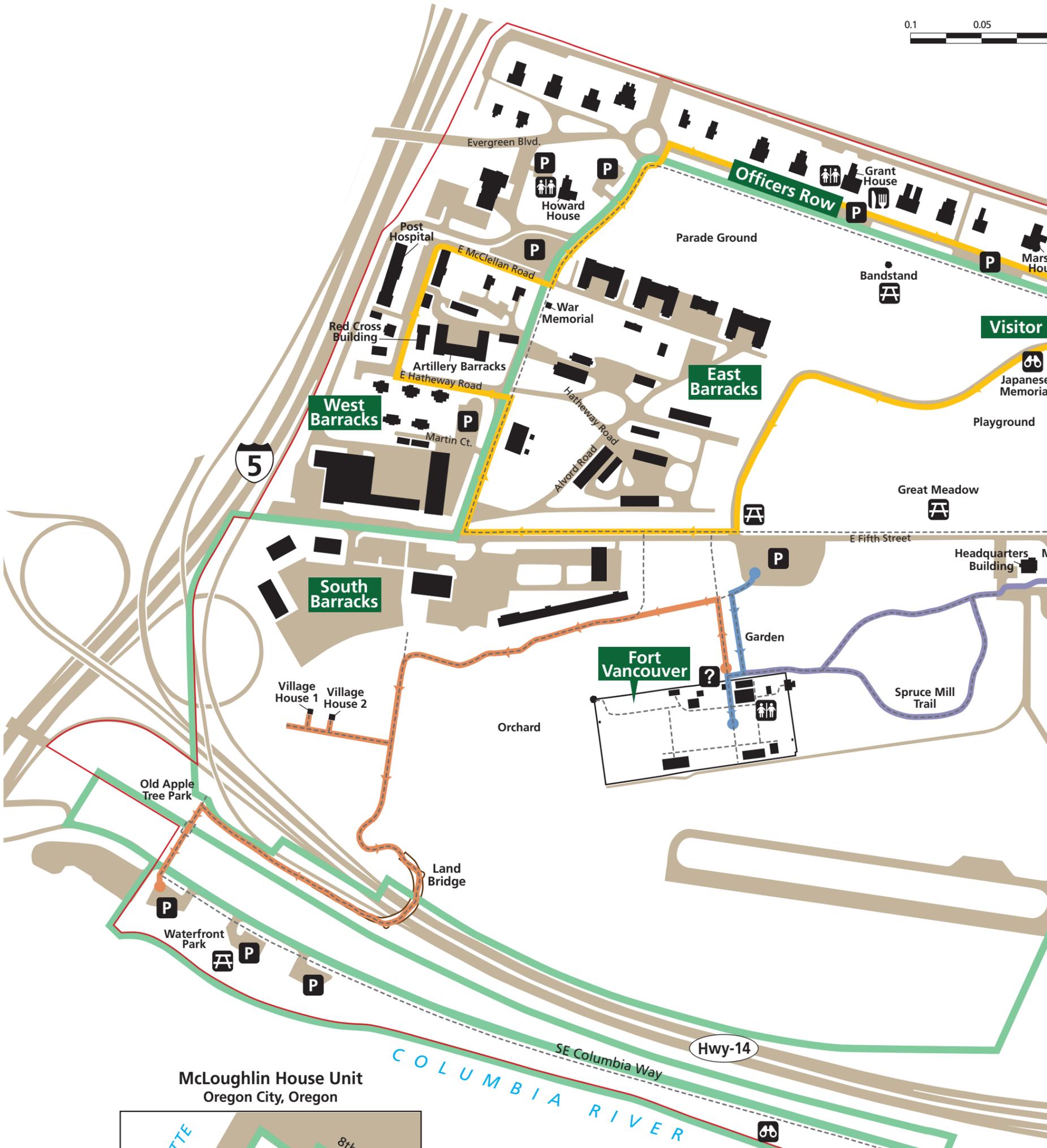
The US Army established Vancouver Barracks in 1849, the first military post in this part of the Pacific Northwest. The last US Army Reserve units were relocated in 2012. Today, the east and south sections of Vancouver Barracks are managed by the National Park Service, and the west section and Officers' Row are managed by the City of Vancouver.

After touring through the Visitor Center, walk down the Park Road towards the reconstructed fort. To your right, the

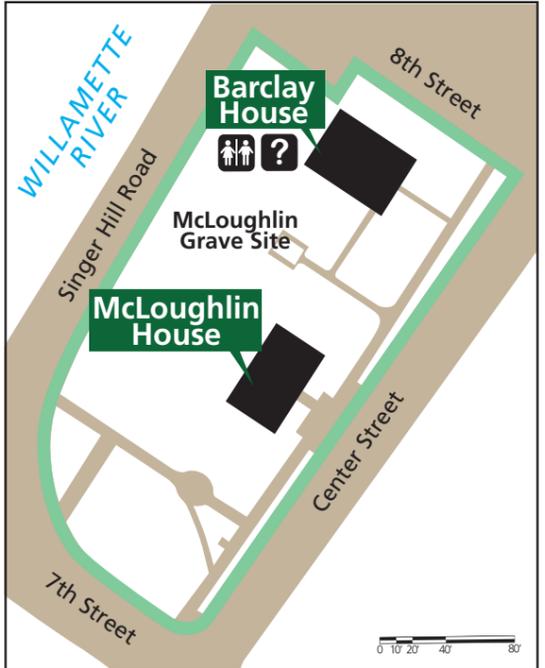
Parade Ground is where troops drilled. As you walk through the barracks (see map on next page), wayside exhibits will interpret the historic buildings, as well as buildings that are no longer standing, like the St. James Mission.

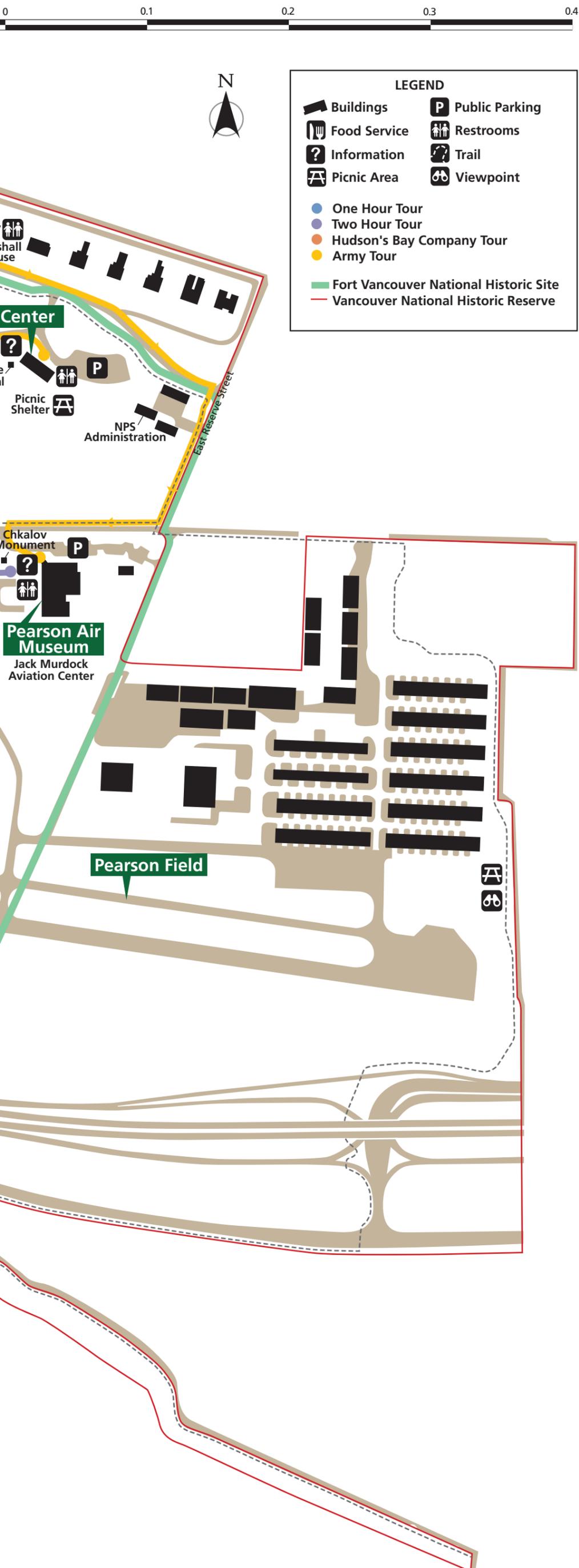
Be sure to see the beautiful Red Cross Building, the historic Post Hospital, charming Officers' Row, the Bandstand, and Pearson Air Museum, where you can discover the history of the 321st Observation Squadron, stationed at the post from 1921 to 1926.





McLoughlin House Unit
Oregon City, Oregon





Art & Artifacts: Local Artists Celebrate the NPS Centennial in Upcoming Exhibit

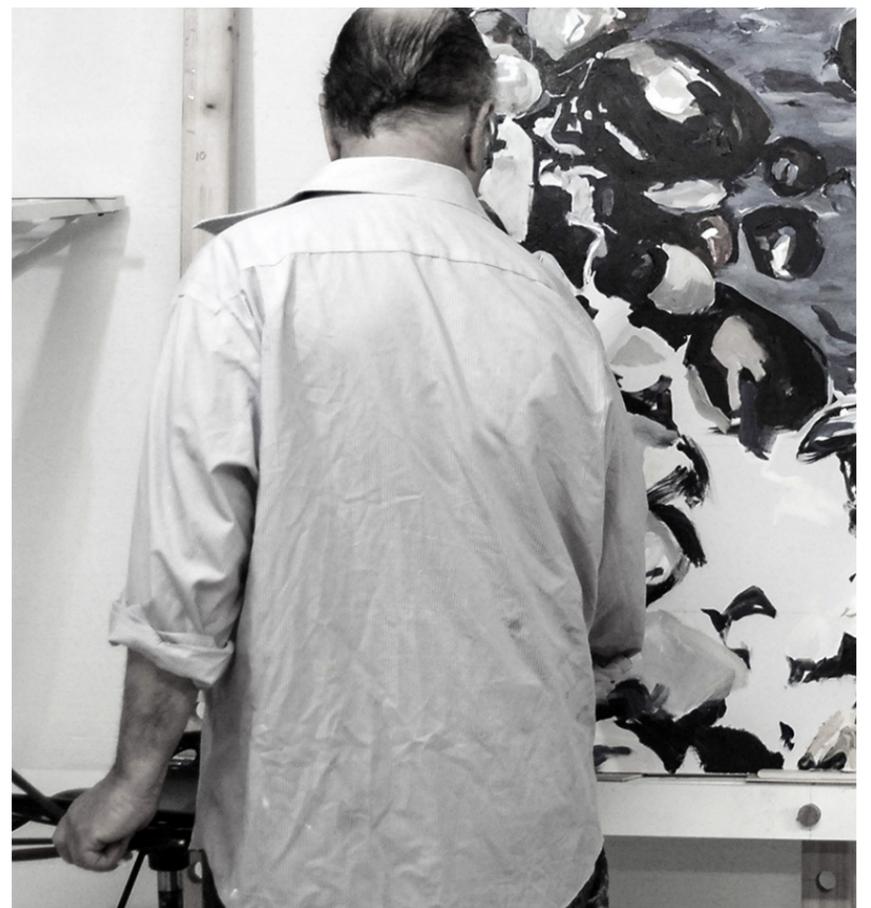
There are many different ways to celebrate our national parks. For some, the best way to connect to our national treasures is through a peaceful nature walk. For others, watching an exciting historical re-enactment might do the trick. For a group of local artists, celebrating the centennial year of the National Park Service means doing what they do best: creating works of art inspired by their local national park.

Organized by artist and art educator Maureen Montague, professional artists from the Vancouver area were invited to create original two-dimensional works of art inspired by their experiences at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Participating artists toured the park and met with the national park's curators to explore and draw inspiration from artifacts in the museum collection.

Historically, the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Vancouver served as inspiration to several notable artists - both professional and amateur. Canadian painter Paul Kane visited the fort in 1846 and sketched scenes from local Native villages. Ethnologist George Gibbs and Royal Navy Lieutenant Trevenen Penrose Coode painted and sketched scenes of Fort Vancouver that have helped inform our recreation of the fort today. In 1846, British Army Lieutenant Henry J. Warre visited the Pacific Northwest - and Fort Vancouver - on an undercover reconnaissance mission for the British government. During this trip, Warre produced many sketches, including many of forts throughout the region.

More recently, artists, authors, and photographers have created a tradition of using their craft to honor the wonders of America's national parks. 2016 marks the centennial year of the National Park Service, which was founded on August 25, 1916, and artists involved with this exhibit will also draw inspiration from this landmark event.

The exhibit will open at the Fort Vancouver Visitor Center at 5 pm on Friday, November 4, 2016, as part of Vancouver's First Friday Downtown.



Participating artist Tom Relth at work in his studio. Photo by Dean L. Popek.

Lantern Tours at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site



EVERY YEAR, WE INVITE VISITORS TO A UNIQUE PROGRAM after hours at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Lantern Tours offer an opportunity for the public to experience Fort Vancouver and Vancouver Barracks after dark. In the evening, when the park is lit by candlelight, it is easy to imagine oneself transported back in time. During the 2016-2017 Lantern Tour season, three different tours will be offered.

An Evening at the Fort

During these tours, which take place inside the reconstructed Fort Vancouver, national park rangers guide visitors through the buildings inside the fort. Each adult visitor carries their own lantern to guide the way. As visitors step into each of the buildings, they are greeted by volunteers performing a historical vignette. These short plays transport the viewer back in time and show what life was like at Fort Vancouver in the 1840s. Lantern Tours are a special opportunity to be immersed in our community's history. *Lantern Tours: An Evening at the Fort* begin at 7 pm, but visitors are asked to arrive at 6:45 pm for check-in. Admission is \$15/adult and \$10/youth.

Walking Vancouver Barracks

These evening walking tours take place at historic Vancouver Barracks. Each adult visitor carries a lantern as a national park ranger guides the group on an outdoor walking tour of the military post. This tour gives visitors an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the US Army history of our park. Learn about Ulysses S. Grant, Oliver Otis Howard, George C. Marshall, William S. Harney, and other names significant to the history of our nation. Visitors will experience the growth of Vancouver as a community through stops on the walking tour. This tour takes place entirely outdoors, and covers some uneven and unpaved ground. *Lantern Tours: Walking Vancouver Barracks* begin at 7 pm, but visitors should arrive at 6:45 pm for check-in. Admission is \$10/adult and \$7/youth.

An Evening at the McLoughlin House

This new evening program takes place at the McLoughlin House in Oregon City, a unit of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Visitors are invited to explore the life of Dr. John McLoughlin, the "Father of Oregon," on these ranger-guided tours through his Oregon City home. Please note that no lanterns are provided on this tour, for protection of the historic home. Admission is \$10/adult and \$7/youth.

2016-2017 Lantern Tour Schedule

An Evening at the Fort

- October 8, 2016
- October 22, 2016
- November 19, 2016
- December 3, 2016
- December 17, 2016
- January 7, 2017
- January 21, 2017
- February 4, 2017
- February 18, 2017

Walking Vancouver Barracks

- October 29, 2016
- November 26, 2016
- January 28, 2017
- February 25, 2017

An Evening at the McLoughlin House

- November 5, 2016 at 6 pm and 7:30 pm

To reserve a spot on an upcoming Lantern Tour, call (360) 816-6244.

For more information, visit our website at <http://go.usa.gov/xCp84>

A New Partnership with Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum Brings New Opportunities for Students to Pearson Air Museum

This fall, as part of a new partnership between the Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum (EASM) and Pearson Air Museum at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, the EASM educational staff will provide educational programming for local students at the Pearson Air Museum campus. This partnership will increase the availability of aerospace-focused Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) based programs at Pearson Air Museum, and will allow both organizations to expand their educational enrichment activities.

This program will provide all the high-quality aviation programming available at the EASM, located in McMinnville, Oregon, to Portland/Vancouver metro area students. The lessons and activities have a hands-on approach, and bring technology and a lot of fun into the classroom. Some of the topics presented during the visits will include: "Art and the Cosmic Connection," "Aerodynamics - From Flying Boats to Jets and Fighters," "Robots are Real," "Living and Working in Space," and more.

"We are excited about this partnership with Pearson Air Museum and are looking forward to growing our programming as we expand outside of our museum campus. Our educators are out of this world when it comes to STEM programming, and we are looking forward to sharing their knowledge and passion with the students in the Portland metro area," said Ann Witsil, Interim Executive Director for the Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum.

Through this partnership, EASM hopes to share and provide its national and state standards-aligned STEM Experiences



programs to a group of students that geographically could not visit the EASM campus in McMinnville. EASM is also expanding with new lessons for each grade-level experience that will provide teachers with additional resources to integrate STEM into their curriculum. From aviation math to solar system science, EASM's programs at Pearson Air Museum will give teachers and students a glimpse of what the future holds.

For more information on class schedules and content, and to reserve these STEM experiences for your students at Pearson Air Museum, call (503) 687-2439 or (503) 687-2423.

Upcoming Events at Fort Vancouver NHS

Event	Date & Time	Location
Campfires & Candlelight Step back in time at this free, family-friendly event! Discover the history of our site from the 1840s to World War II.	September 10 4 pm - 10 pm	Reconstructed Fort
Apple Tree Festival National park rangers join the City of Vancouver to celebrate the state's oldest apple tree.	October 1 11 am - 3 pm	Old Apple Tree Park
Spirits of Oregon City Costumed re-enactors share the darker side of history at the McLoughlin House in Oregon City.	October 15 6 pm - 9 pm	McLoughlin House in Oregon City
Centennial Art Exhibit Join us for the debut of new, original artwork from local artists inspired by Fort Vancouver and the Centennial of the National Park Service.	November 4 5 pm	Fort Vancouver Visitor Center
Veteran's Day The National Park Service joins Vancouver's Community Military Appreciation Committee to honor our veterans.	November 5 9 am - 1 pm	Officers' Row
Heritage Holidays Celebrate the season, 1850s-style at the historic McLoughlin House in Oregon City.	December 3 12 pm - 6 pm	McLoughlin House in Oregon City
Christmas at Fort Vancouver Join costumed volunteers for 1840s holiday music, dancing, refreshments, and crafts.	December 12 10 am - 4 pm	Reconstructed Fort
Re-Opening of the McLoughlin House Join us for the seasonal re-opening of the McLoughlin House unit of Fort Vancouver NHS!	February 10 10 pm - 4 pm	McLoughlin House in Oregon City
Sweetheart Dance Swing the night away at this 1940s-themed dance and fundraiser hosted by the Friends of Fort Vancouver.	February 11 7 pm - 10 pm	Historic Hangar at Pearson Air Museum

For more information, visit www.nps.gov/fova or call (360) 816-6230



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort Vancouver National Historic Site
612 E Reserve St
Vancouver, WA 98661

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2016 | FIND YOUR PARK

National Park Service
CENTENNIAL

The National Park Service turns 100 on August 25, 2016, and you're invited to take part in the celebration! The centennial will kick off a second century of stewardship of America's national parks and engaging communities through recreation, conservation, and historic preservation programs. Learn more at findyourpark.com

What Makes Fort Vancouver NHS Special?

Fort Vancouver, of course!

Fort Vancouver, established in 1825, was the capitol of the British Hudson's Bay Company's fur trading empire in the northwest. Fort Vancouver NHS tells this story of the early days of this region, both before and after European settlement.

An American Legacy

This national park also tells the story of the transition between two nations, which occurred here. This was a place where Oregon Trail pioneers rested before starting the last leg of their journey. Vancouver Barracks, established here in 1849, served as the earliest military post in the Pacific Northwest.

Cultural Landscapes

Today, we see the past in historic buildings, in heritage trees, in the preservation and interpretation of this land so many have called home.

A Dense and Layered Archaeological Record

Fort Vancouver NHS is one of the northwest's premier archaeological sites. Excavations have taken place here since 1947 and continue today, resulting in a museum collection of over 2 million artifacts.

A Place for Play

With our wide open green spaces, Fort Vancouver NHS is ideal for afternoon picnics, playdates, and special family and community events.

Connections to our Community

This land has been a gathering place for thousands of years, and Fort Vancouver NHS is proud to be a part of our local community today. The presence of the National Park contributes millions of dollars to our local economy. Fort Vancouver NHS also hosts many free community events.

Become a Junior Ranger!

Anyone can become a Junior Ranger if they are ready to learn about Fort Vancouver National Historic Site and have fun! As a Junior Ranger, your responsibility is to enjoy and protect all the national park sites you visit.

The Junior Ranger booklet, available at the fort, Pearson Air Museum, and the Visitor Center, has activities for children ages 6 to 12, but younger children can complete it with help. Older kids and adults are welcome to participate as

well. Once you complete your booklet, Junior Rangers will be officially "sworn in" and receive their Junior Ranger badge!

The booklet can also be printed at home before your visit from our webpage at <http://go.usa.gov/3H2aY>

For kids with access to the internet, the National Park Service also has an exciting new WebRanger program that kids can complete online at www.nps.gov/webrangers/

