



NEWSLETTER

Friends of Civil War Alcatraz



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Island News

Because the island was going to be closed for dock repairs the fourth week of April, the boats to the island were overbooked with visitors who wanted to make it to Alcatraz before the closure. Boats were bringing almost 400 visitors each time, which put a strain on the resources and the rangers. The big attraction on the island, besides the presence of Bill Baker (the last living inmate of the 1960s), were the two families of Canada geese, with at least 8 little goslings in tow. Part of my job as a volunteer was to make sure the public kept their distance from the geese and try to shepherd the geese families to less traveled areas. -SJ

Dates to Remember

Memorial Day
May 25

Saturday, June 20
Living History Day
on Alcatraz



Memorial Day

On Monday, May 25th, the National Cemetery at the Presidio will have its annual commemoration, starting at 10:30. Typically members of FOCWA greet visitors at the gate, attend the ceremonies, and give graveside talks after the speeches. However, there will be fewer members in attendance this year. Some members of FOCWA/Sons of Union Veterans will instead attend the Memorial Day commemoration at the Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland, and this writer will be one of the guest speakers. The theme will be “California and the Civil War” and will include stories of some of the Civil War veterans who are buried there, at the Grand Army of the Republic plot. The ceremonies start at 10 a.m. and will include music, singers, and refreshments.

Living History Day Coming to Alcatraz Island - June 20

The Living History scheduled for April 11th was canceled due to a spring rainstorm. The date is now set for June 20th. Re-enactors will have exhibits in place so visitors can learn about life as a soldier in the Civil War. Friends of Civil War Alcatraz will host the event and will lead tours of the island and the Citadel. Participating groups include the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the 20th Maine, the Third Artillery Brass Band, the U.S. Balloon Corps, Fife and Drum Corps, and ladies of the U.S. Sanitary Commission (the early Red Cross). There will be displays of soldier's equipment, period medical tools and medicines, and weapons of the Civil War. Let your friends know about the event, which only happens twice a year.

State Historic Sites with Connections to the Civil War (other than Alcatraz)

1. **Angel Island SP**, Marin County https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=468 Beginning in 1863, the U.S. Army installed cannons on the west side to stop any enemy vessels from passing through Raccoon Strait to attack the Naval Station in Benicia. Camp Reynolds housed almost 400 soldiers at one point. An officer's house, bake house, and a quartermaster building still remain. On occasion reenactors portray the military history of various eras.
2. **Broderick-Terry Duel Site**, San Mateo County <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/broderick-terry-duel-site> Hot words by anti-slavery Senator David Broderick and pro-slavery ex-chief justice of the state supreme court David Terry led to a duel near Lake Merced. Broderick was mortally wounded and the incident aroused the anti-slavery movement in the Bay Area.
3. **Museum of History Benicia**, Solano County <https://mohbenicia.org/>. Since 1851 Benicia was the location of the U.S. Army Arsenal, which made, repaired, and stored army weapons and gun powder. The museum has excellent exhibits telling that story, as well as the story of the U.S. Camel Corps, which was housed at the adjacent camel barns.
4. **California State Railroad Museum**, Sacramento County <https://www.californiarailroad.museum/> During the Civil War the idea of a transcontinental railroad was realized with the formation of two competing railroads - the Central Pacific building eastward and the Union Pacific building westward. The whole story is depicted in dioramas, wall paintings, and displays; but the biggest attraction are the many types of locomotives and cars on display. During the summer you can ride a historic train.
5. **Drum Barracks Civil War Museum**, Los Angeles County <https://recreation.parks.lacity.gov/museum/drum-barracks-civil-war-museum> At the beginning of the Civil War troops were sent to Los Angeles to quell the pro-South population that was forming militias. The Union soldiers were permanently housed in a large camp with 22 buildings; the museum is in the last remaining building. Exhibits give a history of Southern California during the war through exhibits, and there are occasional living history days.
6. **Empire Mine SHP**, Nevada County https://parks.ca.gov/?page_id=499 Gold is what brought thousands to California, precipitated statehood, and became a major boon to the U.S. economy during the war. One of the biggest producers of gold was the Empire Mine, and you can see how the ore was dug out miles below the surface, crushed in huge stamp mills, extracted from the rock using mercury, and formed into bricks.
7. **Fort Humboldt SP**, Humboldt County https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=665 This fort was established in 1853 to mainly prevent attacks on settlers by Native California tribes whose

land was being taken over by ranchers and who were starving because cattle and sheep were devouring their staple foods. The fort's claim to fame is the fact that Captain Ulysses S Grant was stationed there for a time before he resigned due to a drinking problem. The only remaining building is the hospital, which has exhibits on life at the fort 1850s - 1860s.

8. **Fort Tejon SHP**, Kern County https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=585 This fort on today's Grapevine highway was garrisoned between 1854 - 1864. Both army and cavalry detachments were housed here and their main occupation was to protect local tribes and settlers from more hostile tribes in the area, and to protect the Butterfield stagecoaches from attack. Several restored abode buildings have exhibits, and there are living history days throughout the year.
9. **Lincoln Memorial Shrine**, San Bernadino County <https://www.lincolnshrine.org/> This little museum was built in 1932 and dedicated to the memory of President Lincoln. Inside are exhibits showing the history of slavery, the life of Abraham Lincoln in potraits and photographs, the story of Civil War notables, and more. Reenactors come on special occasions, such as on Lincoln's birthday.
10. **Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park** El Dorado County https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=484 This is where it all began, with John Marshall's discovery of gold in 1848. There is a reproduction of the sawmill where he was working and many exhibits showing the consequences of his discovery. It was the out-of-work miners who formed the majority of the 17,000 California volunteers who joined the army in 1861.

Time-Life Series on the Civil War for sale

The complete 28 volume set of the Time-Life series on the Civil War is out of print and remains one of the most comprehensive histories of the American Civil War. Among its many volumes are: Spies, Scouts, & Raiders; the Blockade; Gettysburg; War on the Frontier; Sherman's March; Brother Against Brother; the Coastal War. Donated to FOCWA and now offered for sale for \$300. Funds will go to Living History programs. Free delivery within the immediate Bay Area. Call 650-355-7173 and leave a message.



'Wise statesmen ... established these great self-evident truths, that when in the distant future some man, some faction, some interest, should set up the doctrine that none but rich men, or none but white men, were entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, their posterity should look up again at the Declaration of Independence and take courage to renew the battle which their fathers began.' Abraham Lincoln