



NEWSLETTER

Friends of Civil War Alcatraz



July 2026

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Island News

There are three new seasonal rangers and three new interns now on the island. Construction continues on the north end of the cell house. The citadel and chapel areas are still open for guided tours.

July 4th

FOCWA has no formal events scheduled for July 4th. Board member Steve Johnson will be at Fort Point to give talks on why the Civil War was the second American revolution and how it affected California. Board member Frank Avila will be marching with the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War in the July 4th parade in Monterey. All FOCWA members can put up a flag at their house to remind everyone that this special day is not just a holiday for picnics, but a day to celebrate freedom and the rights of individuals, cornerstones of our democracy.

Dates to Remember

Saturday, July 11
Living History Day
on Alcatraz

Friday, July 17
Ft. Point Workday

Saturday, August 1
Living History Day
at Fort Point

Living History Day on Alcatraz Island - July 11

The Living History Day on Alcatraz will take place on Saturday, July 11th. 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, ladies of the Womens Relief Corps, and the U.S. Balloon Corps. There will be displays of typical equipment carried by a soldier, period medical tools and medicines, and weapons of the Civil War. Let your friends know about the event, which only happens twice a year.



July 18 Fort Point CleanUp Day

Anyone willing to spend a few hours helping to clean up Fort Point can come any time after 10 am

The Civil War - America's Second Revolution

Some historians call the Civil War the second American revolution, and for good reason. The first revolution was a revolt against British rule and the founding of a republic. The Civil War was a revolution in that it ended an old regime, enhanced national sovereignty, and broadened citizenship. The period from 1860 onward profoundly changed American society, American government, and American identity. These were the changes that happened during and after the Civil War:

Three Amendments to the Constitution: The 13th Amendment (abolition of slavery), the 14th amendment (defining citizenship and the due process and equal protection of citizens), and the 15th amendment (federal protection of voting rights) limited states rights and placed these rights under the protection of the federal government

Transforming the social order With the abolition of slavery newly freed slaves became citizens, the old social hierarchy of the South was dismantled, and the structure of labor was changed

Economic reorientation The war accelerated industrialization and a national economy which affected everyone. Banks, railroads, factories, and a national paper currency now were part of American life.

National identity Before the war Americans identified themselves by what state they lived in; after the war people began to think of themselves as Americans

These changes took a long time to come to fruition, and at times the rights and protections initiated during the Civil War have been challenged and even defied. But when we celebrate the Fourth of July we should also remember that it was the Civil War that defined modern America, and we should honor the sacrifices made by our ancestors to perfect the American ideal of “all men are created equal” and worthy of protection under the law.

To see the lecture “Why the Civil War Still Matters” by the eminent Civil War historian James McPherson, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9XUiBgDz2Y>

To see how the 13th amendment got passed, watch the movie “Lincoln” (2012)

Read “The American Civil War and the Case for a “Long” Age of Revolution” by Daniel Koch

<https://www.journalofthecivilwarera.org/2022/06/the-american-civil-war-and-the-case-for-a-long-age-of-revolution/>

The 34 star flag, flown on July 4th in the first year of the Civil War, after Kansas was admitted to the Union



