



Angel Island History Timeline

- Pre 1769 The island is used by Miwok Indians for hunting and fishing. It was probably not used as a permanent encampment.
- 1769 Portola's expedition first sights San Francisco Bay.
- 1775 The Battle of Lexington begins the American Revolution.
Lt. Juan Manuel de Ayala of the Royal Spanish Navy sails into the bay on the San Carlos, the first European ship to enter. He anchors in the cove that now bears his name, and spends over a month charting the bay.
- 1809 A Russian otter-hunting party is seen near Angel Island .
- 1814 A 16-gun British sloop, the HMS Racoon, is repaired in what is now Ayala Cove, giving her name to Rac(c)oon Strait.
- 1821 Mexico gains her independence from Spain.
- 1836 Richard Henry Dana, a sailor on the Alert, visits Angel Island, in a search for wood for the ship. He described this visit in his classic Two Years Before The Mast. The island is used by ships as a source of wood and water; it is often known as "Wood Island".
- 1839 Don Antonio Maria Osio, an official in the government, secures a grant to Angel Island from the governor of California, Juan B. Alvarado.
- 1846 The United States declares war on Mexico.

Osio leaves Angel Island.
- 1850 President Fillmore declares Angel Island a federal military reserve.
Quarrying begins on the east side of Angel Island.
- 1861 The Civil War begins.

- 1863 The threat of a Confederate attack on San Francisco Bay causes the U.S. Army to begin strengthening the defenses of San Francisco Bay. Construction of artillery batteries begins on Angel Island, on Point Stuart, Point Knox, and Point Blunt. The new post on the west side of the island is named Camp Reynolds, in honor of Major General John F. Reynolds, commander of I Corps, Army of the Potomac, who was killed on the first day of the battle of Gettysburg, July 1, 1863.
- 1864 Mark Twain, reporter for the San Francisco Call, accompanies General Irwin McDowell, Union commander at the First Battle of Bull Run and currently commander of the Department of the Pacific, on a tour of Angel Island.
- 1870-1890 Camp Reynolds is used as a headquarters, rest camp and 1890 replacement depot for troops fighting the "Indian Wars" in the western territories.
- Quarters 10 & 11 (buildings no. 52 & 53) constructed ca. 1870 – reassembled 1882. These two building were first built on Yerba Buena Island (Bay Bridge) then dismantled and moved to Angel Island in 1882. They were used to house officers and their families. Qs 10 was restored by Robert and Mary Noyes and is now used as a house museum.
- Camp Reynolds Mule Barn (building no. 69) constructed ca. 1870. This building served as a barn and adjacent blacksmith shop. Mules were the primary source of transportation on angel Island during this period and the care and feeding of the animals was an important assignment.
- 1891-1935 A Quarantine Station for ships entering San Francisco Bay is opened at Hospital (Ayala) Cove; it is operated by the United States Marine Hospital Service, part of the Department of the Treasury.
- 1898 U.S declares war on Spain.
- 1899-1902 Following Spain's surrender a guerrilla war, the Philippine Insurrection, is waged by the Filipinos against the United States.
- 1899 A Detention Camp for soldiers with infectious diseases is established at Quarry Point.
- 1900 Batteries Ledyard, Wallace and Drew are constructed on the southwest side of Angel Island, replacing the older batteries, now obsolete. The post on Angel Island is named Ft. McDowell by the War department, in honor of General Irwin McDowell.

- 1901 The Detention Camp at Quarry Point is turned into a Discharge Camp for soldiers returning from the Philippines. A new detention camp is built on Pt. Simpton, between China Cove and the Discharge Camp.
- 1909 Construction begins on East Garrison of Ft. McDowell. Post headquarters is moved to this new garrison. The original artillery batteries on the island are abandoned.
- 1910-1940 The Immigration Station opens at China Cove under the direction of the Bureau of Immigration, part of the Department of Commerce and Labor.
- 1917 The United States enters World War I. Ft. McDowell processes troops being sent to the Pacific. Enemy aliens are detained at the Immigration Station.
- 1940 More than 500 German seamen, the crew of the Columbus, a German luxury liner scuttled off the east coast of the United States, are placed in custody on Angel Island.
- The trial of Harry Bridges, San Francisco labor leader, and a national figure, is held at the Immigration Station. A fire destroys the Administration Building at the Immigration Station. The station moves to San Francisco.
- 1941 The crew of the Columbus leave Angel Island for a camp in New Mexico. The United States enters World War II. A processing center for prisoners of war is opened at the former Immigration Station (now North Garrison). Fort McDowell is made part of the San Francisco Port of Embarkation, which also includes the Oakland Army Base, Fort Mason and Camp Stoneman.
- A searchlight unit of the 216th Coast Artillery is stationed on Mt. Ida for anti-aircraft defense. Over 13,000 soldiers were processed for overseas duty at Fort McDowell in one month.
- 1942 The first prisoner taken by U.S. forces in WWII, the commander of a Japanese midget submarine, is detained at the Prisoner of War Processing Station at North Garrison (Immigration Station). The first group of Japanese prisoners of war arrives on the island. Seventy-thousand troops were processed and shipped out of Fort McDowell in one twelve month period.
- 1943 Following the Tunisian campaign three captured German generals are among the prisoners of war at the processing center at North Garrison (Immigration Station).

- 1944 The first contingent of the Woman's Army Corps to be stationed on Angel Island arrives.
- Men of an Italian Service Unit (former Italian POW's) are assigned to Angel Island.
- 1945 Germany surrenders in May.
- Japan surrenders in September, ending WWII.
- The first one thousand veterans return to Angel Island from the Pacific Theater. A "Welcome Home" sign with letters sixty feet tall is erected on the south side of the island where it can be seen from troop ships returning from the Pacific. The resources of Ft. McDowell turn to processing men returning from the war in the Pacific.
- 1946 The last Japanese prisoner of war leaves Fort McDowell for Japan. The number of returning veterans diminishes rapidly. Fort McDowell is closed in August, and all personnel and property are removed to Camp Stoneman. Angel Island is declared surplus by the War Department.
- 1954 The army builds a Nike missile base on Angel Island, as part of the anti-aircraft defenses of San Francisco.
- Thirty-seven acres of the island, the Ayala Cove area, are granted to the California State Park Commission.
- 1962 The Nike base closes, and the missiles, now obsolete, are removed from the island.
- The entire island, except for the Coast Guard facility on Point Blunt, is turned over to the state of California for use as a state park.