

The purpose of the task force was to ensure the preservation of the historic part of the island, and to determine economic, viable, and appropriate uses for the island.

ferry or helicopter, is slated to receive barely enough funding to mothball the island for the next year or so.

How did the City of New York reach the estimated \$40 million in annual costs necessary to operate Governors Island?

The \$40 million figure is a rough estimate based upon analysis of the Coast Guard's annual budget for Governors Island.

Source: Governors Island: options for reuse after federal government..., Volumes 74-77

There is a question of fairness here. Governors Island was part of New York before the United States existed. In 1800, New York State rather magnanimously gave jurisdiction—but not title—over Governors Island to the Federal Government. Then, New York spent its own monies to construct Fort Jay and other harbor fortifications and batteries, such as Castle Clinton and Castle William. These fortifications successfully deterred the British from attempting to enter New York Harbor during the War of 1812. Governors Island has served our Nation well. It is the site, after all, where Operation Overlord was planned fifty-five years ago.

On June 18, 1958, a Federal district court determined that the Federal government needed to take title to the Island and awarded New York one dollar as “just compensation”. Since then, the Army moved out, and the Island’s most recent tenant, the Coast Guard, left in 1997. Now, the 173-acre island sits vacant in New York Harbor.

Source: The Congressional Record, Page 5879. Daniel Patrick Moynihan

This subject would ordinarily require its tackler to be a diplomat and an international lawyer. But our modern democracy, which hesitates at nothing, emboldens me to tackle it without such qualifications. If this were not enough there yet remains the excitement of the impatience of our part of the world at what it considers the flat failure of diplomats and international lawyers to save us from arming for wars. I do not share these extreme opinions about the diplomats and international lawyers. We have no right to expect so much of them. The world can not be run entirely by talk.

Source: Major-General Robert Lee Bullard (Governors Island, New York), *The Possibility of Disarmament by International Agreement*

This "circular castle," named for General William of the New York Militia, was completed in 1811, And now the Island was in fine trim for defense, if only it had been attacked; but it never was! A century of peace with France began. The War of 1812 came and went. Troops were on the Island. Four companies of artillery, three of the First Regiment and one of the Third made the garrison, with occasional detachments from other commands, and in the summer of 1814 there were more than a thousand officers and men at the post. The only blood shed, however, was that of deserters shot on the parade with all the dishonors of war,—soldiers drawn up in a hollow square with one side open; the victim kneeling on his coffin, the death warrant read, the fatal shot discharged, and the band playing softly the customary dirge, old "Roslyn Castle."

Castle William still stands on the northwestern corner of the Island, on a bed of rocks which it rescued from the covering tide. "This," said the Secretary of War when it was first completed in 1811, "is a stone tower, with fifty-two, forty-two, and thirty-two pounders mounted on two tiers under a bomb roof, and the terrace above is intended to mount twenty-six fifty-pound Columbiads." In untechnical description it is one of the beauties of the Bay,—a round tower, stately and imposing, like St. Angelo, but quite harmless and comfortable in these homely, practical days, when men-of-war six miles off can shell the town without coming within sight of these time-honored guns...

The six acres on the northeastern shore of the Island belong to the New York Arsenal, whose commanding officer is a second Federal military power, and whose pyramids of cannon-balls and rows of guns threaten ominously. But they, too, mean no harm, the dangerous material being stored out of sight.

But the bugler whom we left sounding the reveille has passed on to the guard mounting, the drill-call and recall, the parade and the retreat. The sunset gun is fired from the seawall below Castle William. The hundred prisoners who have been at work on the roads and lawns are again confined within its walls. The bugler calls to quarters. Night settles down. The lights die out. There is no sound but the wash of the water and the click of the sentry's heel. Fort, battery, castle, arsenal, and magazine are asleep. Governor's Island is as peaceful as when, three hundred years ago, "Pagganck" lay like an emerald gem pendent on the green chain of Long Island — and the bugler blows "Taps."

The deceased, who had acquired a domicile of choice in New York, became an officer in the regular army, and served in Texas, at Governor's Island, in Chicago, and again at Governor's Island, where his headquarters were at the time of his death. He intended to live in the District of Columbia after leaving Governor's Island. *Held*, that his residence in federal territory, Governor's Island, coupled with his intention to continue to live in federal territory, the District of Columbia, gave him a domicile of choice in federal territory, so that his estate was not subject to the New York transfer tax.

The portions of territory, such as Governor's Island, over which the United States exercises exclusive control, are nevertheless portions of the legal units, the states, in which they lie. The decision therefore seems erroneous.

Source: Harvard Law Review, Vol. 27, 486. (1914)

"I rebuilt the detonator," Felter said. "And replaced the charge with C-4."

"How thoughtful of you," the man from Governors Island said dryly.

"What happens to me now?" Felter asked.

"You'd be surprised to know how far up this went," Hanrahan replied. "Before it was decided that you had done what had to be done, under the circumstances."

"That doesn't answer my question, sir, with all respect."

"Do you know how to ski, Felter?" the man from Governors Island asked.

"No, sir."

"You'll have plenty of opportunity to learn," the man from Governors Island said.

1755 saw the first military encampment. 1776 saw the first fortification. There had been unending talk about fortifying the Island. The Governors wrote about it but did not do it although, in 1774, an “Estimate of the Expence of a Fortress on Nutten Island” was carefully made, and called for 17,536 Pounds, 4 Shillings. Smith says,

About 6 furlongs southeast of the Fort lies Nooten Island, containing about 100 or 120 acres, reserved by an act of assembly as a sort of domain for the Governors, upon which it is proposed to erect a strong castle, because an enemy might from thence easily bombard the city without being annoyed either by our battery or the Fort.

But the “strong castle” was not erected, nor were any defenses undertaken until, in 1776, the storm center of the Revolution moved from Boston to New York.

Source: Governor’s Island by Blanche Wilder Bellamy (1897)

The shores of this island were frequently covered with offal and garbage, which, drifting up at high water and decaying as the tide fell, were (in summer) a source of constant danger to the health of the garrison.

In 1865 a project was adopted providing for inclosing the entire island by a masonry wall, to be built at or near low-water line, in order to prevent the lodging of such refuse matter.

Under an allotment made in 1865, 700 linear feet of masonry wall was built on the southwest side of the island in 1866, and under other smaller allotments 399 linear feet, as reported, was built. This was subsequently extended as a temporary dry wall nearly along the high-water line to Castle Williams, covering the entire southwest side of the island.

Source: Annual reports of the War Department, Part 1 - page 631 (1893)

One May day we embarked in a small steamer at South Ferry and landed on Governor's Island, a distance of about a thousand yards from New York City. The spire of Trinity, and the clustered towers and domes of the buildings on lower Broadway, reminded us how near we were to the surcharged arteries of commerce; but as we lay under one of the bastions the noisy traffic of the city was altogether inaudible, and we felt the alleviation of a sylvan calm. The grass was in the freshness of early spring, and rippled in the soft wind. We could see Staten Island in the south and the Orange Mountain in the west, both veiled in a purple haze, through which a suggestion of green was glimmering.

A multiform procession of vessels was beating toward the narrow estuary of the river, and a few schooners were approaching from the same direction. A perpetual fleet of tows and ferry boats was breaking the water off Battery Park into the foaming eddies and sibilant spray. While the city was so near that we could define the individual loungers in the little sea-bound park, its activity found for us no echo, and we might have been a thousand miles instead of a thousand yards away from the marts of the world.

The metallic ring of the blocks, as one of the schooners altered her tack, and the breathing of the tow boats, were the only sounds from beyond that reached this insular retreat. A flock of pigeons flapped in and out of the dark port-holes in the circular fort, and a hen marshaled her brood of chickens among a pyramid of black cannon-balls. A soldier in blue uniform, with the red stripe of the artillery down the seam of his trowsers, was crossing the greensward, and a nursery-maid added the pink of a parasol to the color of

the scene as she strolled along the sea-wall. We could hear the voices of some boys who were playing, and of two fishermen who were at work among the shad-nets along the southern shore. The muzzles of cannon pointed at us from the walls of the fort; but peace never seems more permanent than amid the unused materials of war, and idleness became sweet as we sat under the bastion.

Source: "Garrison Life at Governor's Island, New York Harbor." *Scribners Monthly*, Vol. 21, 593. (1880)

On the south side of the island, reaching from Castle William to Buttermilk Channel, a low sea-wall has been erected, and it is a favorite promenade of the nursery girls, who avert their eyes as the handsome young prisoners pass with the loads of earth. The blocks of granite deposited on the grass for future absorption in the wall are occupied by readers and idlers in an agreeable state of passivity.

The children are omnipresent, and their amusements reflect the military bent given to their fancies by their surroundings. There are enough toy drums, trumpets, cocked hats, and wooden cavalry horses to stock a shop.

While the nursery maids are sunning themselves on the sea-wall, scenes of carnage are being enacted on the greensward by their charges, and victories are won in the realm of the imagination, compared with which the most brilliant pages of history are lusterless.

Source: "Garrison Life at Governor's Island, New York Harbor." *Scribners Monthly*, Vol. 21, 599. (1880)

[Castle William] is a circular granite battery built on a bed of rocks at the extreme westerly point of the island, which being submerged at low water was formerly a peril to navigation. The castle, with its tiers of cannon, has a formidable look to passengers by the Staten Island ferry-boats which pass and repass within hailing distance of it, but it is in a condition of crumbling decay, and the guns of a *Thunderer* would make short work of leveling it.

During the war of the rebellion, as many as eleven hundred prisoners were confined in the castle at one time, and it is still used for a few military offenders.

We pass a sentry at the gate whose bayonet is twinkling in the sunshine, and beyond the narrow portals we stand in the reverberant amphitheater formed by the circular walls. It is chilly and humid in here: the air is prison-like, but the dome of azure sky and feathery clouds is ample. The prisoners are not deprived of sunshine and cannot complain of austere treatment. They are employed about the grounds of the fort, and though they are guarded in deference to the military code by a soldier with loaded musket and revolver, they usually find so much fellow-feeling in him that their industry is not overtaxed. While we sat under bastion, a pair of them passed from one mound to another with loads of earth, and their pace was measured to the furthest possible prolongation of idleness; meantime the custodian rested on his musket at a distance, and it seemed that if the men had been more energetic they would not have harmonized as well with the peaceful scene.

Source: "Garrison Life at Governor's Island, New York Harbor." *Scribners Monthly*, Vol. 21, 599. (1880)

As the Reachdeep Hueys approached Governors Island, which sat in the East River not far from Brooklyn, the team members saw that other parts of the federal government had already arrived. There was a landing zone in the middle of the island that had once been baseball fields. Two Army Black Hawk helicopters had landed, and a third Army Black Hawk was standing off to allow the Reachdeep helicopters to land first. The Black Hawks had pallets slung under them. They contained hospital gear for a theater medical lab. One by one, the Reachdeep Hueys touched down in the field.

Source: Richard Preston, *The Cobra Event*, page 194 (1998)

While spirit levels have been taken between Sandy Hook and Governor's Island, yet, owing to the considerable distance of the run, they are probably in error more than levels derived from the simultaneous tidal observations.

The levels derived from the four years of tidal observations agree almost precisely with the levels obtained from the simultaneous tidal observations in October, 1886, and are more suitable to reduce Sandy Hook observations to simultaneous ones at Governor's Island than the spirit levels. From the spirit levels of 1887 as revised in 1899, the elevation of B.M. Governor's Island, above B.M.T. Sandy Hook was 1.361 feet, and from the tidal observations of 1876-1879, 1.472 feet. This latter difference has been adopted in the reduction.

The observations at Sandy Hook have to be reduced to the equivalent values of half tide level at Governor's Island, which for the ten years of 1870-1879 was .067 feet lower than mean sea level, and consequently the elevations have been corrected by this amount.

Source: *The American Journal of Science*, Fourth Series. George W. Tuttle, "Recent Changes in the Elevation of Land and Sea in the Vicinity of New York City" (1904)

The island's name derives from an act of the New York legislature in 1698, setting aside land "for the benefit and accommodation of His Majesty's governors." Since then it has served as a sheep farm, quarantine station, racetrack, and game preserve. It is best known for use as a fortified army base, until 1966, and a Coast Guard station until 1996...

Castle Williams

Appearing from the harbor to be fully circular in shape (hence its onetime nickname, **The Cheesebox**), this 200 foot-diameter red sandstone fortification is actually chevron-shaped in plan on its inland side. Together with Castle Clinton at the Battery, it was built to crisscross the intervening waterway with cannonballs during the War of 1812. They were never used. *Williams*, its designer was *Benjamin Franklin's* nephew and the individual for whom Williamsburg, Brooklyn was named.

Source: *The AIA Guide to New York City*, p. 950

May 1995

79th Street	3	0-0.5	9.0	16.9	0.75	0.65	0.13±0.45	0.71±0.26
0.18±0.64								
Governors Island	4	0-0.5	-3.2	24.8	0.68	0.86	1.3±0.4	1.2±0.2
1.1±0.4								
Verrazano Bridge	5	0-0.5	-13.1	26.6	0.53	1.24	-0.42±0.43	0.36±0.20
-1.2±1.4								

Source: *Geochimica et cosmochimica acta*, Vol. 63, 2481

Parting from Mr. Parton at the headquarters of General Wool, I had mounted to the top of an omnibus, and made my way with all possible speed to the Battery. The route was obstructed with vehicles, and it was past seven o'clock before I reached the South Ferry. There, to my consternation, I was told that not a boat could be procured to convey me to Governor's Island. Every boatman had knocked off work two hours before, and disappeared from the locality, probably to reinforce the mob which was then raising high havoc in the upper part of the city.

I must, however, cross to the island; and going rapidly along the docks, I at last came upon an old longshoreman, in a rugged tarpaulin and greasy trousers, quietly smoking a pipe on the taffrail of a low fore-and-aft schooner, from whose stern a small boat was dangling. "Old man," I said to him, "I have a ten-dollar greenback in my pocket that is yours, if you will jump into that boat and row me at once to Governor's Island."

"Can't do it sir," answered the man; "the captain is away. Couldn't do it for ten times that money."

Source James R. Gilmore ("Edmund Kirke"), "The New York 'Tribune' in the Draft Riots." McClure's Magazine, Vol. 5, p. 445. 1895.

At the present stage of affairs the discussion of the site is going on vigorously, Governor's Island finding a good many advocates. When there was talk of a world's fair eleven years ago, the witty editor of the then flourishing *Appletons' Journal*, Mr. O.B. Bunce, urged Governor's Island as a site in the following terms: "This island is one of the general government military centers, but we may assume that Congress or the executive, wherever the power lies, would promptly surrender it for the purpose proposed. The situation is superb. It is nearly at the junction of the Hudson and East Rivers, less than a mile from the Battery, and is equidistant from Brooklyn and New York. It lies directly upon the channel which leads to the sea; is fanned by breezes from the ocean and rivers; is healthful, salubrious, and every way charming ... Superb facades could be constructed at the water's edge, facing the harbor and the city, presenting a grand picture to the approaching visitors."

Source: "The World's Fair and Men of Science" (Editorial). *Science*, Vol. 14, p. 96. (1889)

The island is a place frozen in time—kind of a ghost town where you'll find abandoned mansions, forts, bus stops (but no buses), and parade grounds.

The views of downtown Manhattan are spectacular and the lack of cars and traffic make it a serene antidote to the bustle of the Financial District. In 2007, a design plan for a 40-acre park on the southern half of the island was approved. Former Coast Guard buildings were demolished in 2008 to make room for an 8-acre park, offering majestic views of downtown Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty; future plans include a 2-mile waterfront promenade and an improved park on the island's northern historic district, where hills will be created from the detritus from the buildings that will be destroyed.

Source: *Frommer's New York City 2010* by Brian Silverman, Kelsy Chauvin, Ricard Goodman. p. 320.

[Lieutenant Post] is 23 years old, was graduated from Harvard in 1916, after which he straightway took up his life in the air, training at Buffalo, Governor's Island, and Mineola. He was in France with his mother when the army mobilized for war with Germany, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Mrs. Post persuaded her son to return with her and finish his course at Harvard.

He wanted to enlist for France.

Following his training in aviation at Buffalo he became experimenter for the Wright-Martin aeroplanes, making record flights and establishing himself as an aviator with whom all others would have to reckon.

He made himself personally acquainted with every detail of his machines, was an expert mechanic and an automotive engineer.

In addition, he had the natural equipment of calm, steady nerves, good judgment and a sportsman's keen love of the game.

Early every morning, before getting on the Wright-Martin job for the day, he flew at Governor's Island, and on Sunday, his day off, he spent hours flying for pleasure over Manhattan and perhaps the Bronx or Brooklyn. He, like Hobey Baker, was part of the famous Governor's Island squadron, the flying equipment of which was paid for by a patriotic life member of the Aero Club of America.

When America declared war against Germany Lieutenant Post and Lieutenant Barker were two of the few chosen for the unit organized at Mineola known as the First Reserve Aero Squadron, destined to be the nucleus of General Pershing's aerial corps.

Source: "Lieut. Ned Post Cited for Bravery." *Flying*, Vol. 7. p. 50. February 1918

It took him exactly three hours and thirty-two minutes to get from Albany to Inwood, in New York City, including one stop of an hour at Poughkeepsie. The distance, according to the course followed, was 128 miles, the average speed of the machine having been a little over fifty miles an hour. After officially ending his flight at Inwood, Curtiss again rose and proceeded to Governor's Island, making these last fourteen miles in twenty-two minutes. The prize for this feat was valuable and the glory of the achievement great, but the trip was by no means without its moments of extreme hazard to Curtiss and his machine. Flying as he did over river, mountain, and valley, he several times encountered contrary currents of air that threatened him with disaster, but his skill and coolness brought him through in safety.

Source: "Curtiss's Flight Down the Hudson." *The American Review of Reviews*, Vol. 42, p. 24. (July-December 1910).

On the 3rd of July, two cases of cholera occurred among the recruits on Governor's Island. On the 9th of July cholera broke out on Hart's Island in recruits who had been sent there from Governor's Island. At this post a severe epidemic occurred, and the garrison was removed to David's Island, where a few new cases occurred among the troops so transferred. One case occurred at Fort Schuyler in the person of an officer who had slept on a steamboat used the day before in transporting the cholera-infected command between Hart's and David's Islands. The other garrisons in New York harbor escaped, nor did any cases occur among enlisted men on detached duty in New York City. The total number of cases reported among these infected troops was 181 with 75 deaths.

Source: "The Epidemic of 1866 in the United States Army." *Wood's Library of Standard medical Authors*, Vol. 94. 19

As the exhibitions of the aviators were entirely dependent upon the wind, and as the wind blew as it listed, the would-be spectators of the aeroplane flights were in a continual state of anxiety for the first week. The flying machines being housed on Governor's Island and the weather more likely to be propitious early in the morning than at any other period during the last twenty-four hours, tens of thousands were crowding the Battery wall and park soon after daylight for six days to witness what only a few years would have been considered miraculous—a man propelling himself through the air as he willed.

Source (I think): Francis Rufus Bellamy, "The Hudson Fulton Celebration." *The Outlook*, Vol. 93, p. 381. (1909)

Shall a great part of New York Bay be filled in so that Manhattan Island may be made larger? To do this would merely be to carry out on a greater scale what has already been done with Governors Island, in the bay, whose size has now been greatly multiplied by filling in the shallows just to the south. That enlargement would be engulfed in the proposed new filling, and Governors Island would cease to be a separate entity. The extension would make Manhattan about six miles longer, and the North and East Rivers would join at a new "Battery" not far from the entrance of the Narrows.

Source: Edward Jewitt Wheeler, Isaac Kaufman Funk, William Seaver Woods, Arthur Stimson Draper, Wilfred John Funk, "To Make Manhattan Six Miles Longer." *The Literary Digest*, Vol. 71, p. 18, 1921

The *Aurania*, at 2:05 PM, was but a little astern of the *Republic*, between Governor's Island and Castle Garden. Her engines were then first put at continuous "full speed." She had been stopping, backing, and slowing before that; and it does not appear how long after 2:05 it would take for her to acquire full headway. She must have got full headway, however, by the time she passed the *Republic*, which, as the evidence shows, was not far from midway between Bedloe's Island and Robbins Reef; i.e., about 10,000 feet below Governor's Island. The *Republic* must have reached that point about nine and a half minutes after passing Fort William. From this point to the *Aurania*'s place at the time of collision, the distance by the sailing (dotted) course is about 95,700 feet. To this must be added the amount of the *Aurania*'s loss of speed, at the rate of about two and a half to three knots, according to the evidence, during six minutes of "half-speed," while she was passing Flynn's knoll, viz., about 1,700 feet; and also 400 feet for the effect of her port helm (two revolutions per minute) in rounding 11 1/2 points, and for the curve in her course,—making in all the equivalent of 96,800 feet, traversed in 69 1/2 minutes, an average of 13.74 knots, against an average tide of about 1 knot, or 14.74 knots through the water. If the tide north of Sandy Hook be taken as running north, the *Aurania*'s speed through the water would be 14.63, and her speed by land nearly the same.

Source: "The *Aurania* and the *Republic*." *The Federal Reporter*, page 111. (1887)

The facilities available in New York and on Governors Island early in 1917 were hardly sufficient for peace requirements and totally inadequate for war. With the development of the Transportation Service for France it was determined to occupy a large amount of storage space of the Hamburg-American and North German Lloyd Steamship Wharves. This subsequently proved to be inadequate, and besides the space was required for shipping purposes, so it was necessary to increase the warehouse facilities. Governors Island with more than 100 acres of land available, offered immediate relief. Other sites examined required much time and preparation, whereas the Governors Island project would permit storage facilities within sixty days. A plan was prepared for this, which was approved by the Department Commander and by the War Department. Work was to be done in accordance with the plans, by the purchase of material, a construction firm to furnish the labor. The work was pushed rapidly, but was delayed for ten days, because of objection to the use of Governors Island site for Depot purposes, made by the Depot Committee of the Council of National Defense, which committee favored a site located on Newark Bay.

Source *The Quartermaster Corps in the year 1917 in the world order.* 325-326

This national competition sought proposals for new uses for Governor's Island, the last remaining piece of open land close to Manhattan. Managed by the U.S. Coast Guard and connected to Manhattan by ferry, this island, with its historic structures of Castle William and Fort Jay, has the potential to be a 21st-century community.

Howey's entry solution envisions a 100-story skyscraper on four legs of garden apartments with retail and an elevated transit system crossing at its base. The overhead tram travels along the island edges to connect low-rise apartments, residences and a community center to both the tower and ferry station. Upper floors of the high-rise would house offices, hotel, and condominium apartments with communications at its top.

Source: Lawrence Scarpa. *John Howey & Associates: Selected and Current Works*, page 185.

The first permanent work to be erected in New York Harbor was on this inner line of defence. This was Castle Williams, the reddish stone tower on Governor's Island, just opposite the Battery, which is a familiar object to everyone who has been on the bay. It was built in 1807-10. In 1812 a somewhat similar structure—Fort Lafayette—was erected on a shoal near the eastern shore of the Narrows. In 1824 the land was purchased on the adjacent shore of Long Island, at New Utrecht Point, and the construction of Fort Hamilton was commenced and rapidly pushed to completion. In 1826 the land was acquired at Throgg's Neck for Fort Schuyler. General Totten had urgently insisted in his earliest reports upon the necessity of fortifying this point, but his views were opposed on the grounds that it was too far distant from the city, and that the difficult navigation of Hell Gate was in itself a sufficient defence on the side of the sound. His views finally prevailed, however, and in 1833 the construction was commenced in earnest. Between 1831 and 1834 Fort Columbus was built—to the south of Castle Williams, on Governor's Island.

Source: F.V. Greene, Captain of U.S. Engineers, "Our Defenseless Coasts." *Scribner's*, Vol. 1, page 55. (1887)

In the joyous season of spring then, did these hardy adventurers depart on this eventful expedition, which only wanted another Virgil to rehearse it, to equal the oft sung story of the Eneid—Many adventures did they meet with and divers bitter mishaps did they sustain, in their wanderings from Communipaw to oyster Island—from oyster Island to gibbet island, from gibbet island to governors island, and from governors island through buttermilk channel, (a second streights of Pylorus) to the Lord knows where; until they came very nigh being ship wrecked and lost forever, in the tremendous vortexes of *Hell gate*, which for terrors, and frightful perils, might laugh old Scylla and Charybdis to utter scorn—In all which cruize they encountered as many Lystrigonians and Cyclops and Syrens and unhappy Didos, as did the ever pious Eneas, in his colonizing voyage.

At length, after wandering to and fro, they were attracted by the transcendant charms of a vast island, which lay like a gorgeous stomacher, dividing the beauteous bosom of the bay, and to which the numerous mighty islands among which they had been wandering, seemed as so many foils and appendages. Hither they bent their course, and old Neptune, as if anxious to assist in the choice of a spot, whereon was to be founded a city that should serve as his strong hold in this western world, sent half a dozen potent billows, that roled the canoes of our voyagers, high and dry on the very point of the island, where at present stands the delectable city of New York.

Source: Washington Irving, *A History of New York*. 1809

A chronological summary is presented in the report of all cases of yellow fever that occurred, during the summer and autumn of 1856, in the port and vicinity of New York. In this are recorded five hundred and thirty-five cases, three cases being added that occurred among patients convalescent from other diseases in the Marine Hospital; it gives a total of five hundred and thirty-eight well-authenticated cases, as ascertained by the most rigid investigation. Of these more than one-third died of black vomit. Of the twenty-nine cases recorded as occurring in Brooklyn, seven were persons resident in the eastern district of that city, and twenty-two in the western district, or the City of Brooklyn proper. The origin of a large proportion of these cases, we are assured, was traced directly to infected places and infected goods.

The first case of yellow fever occurred among the garrison on Governor's Island, on July 29, and the malady continued to prevail quite steadily until the 10th of September. Though a very large number of cases occurred in that military command, the victims were selected exclusively from the south battery, which has a southerly and easterly exposure, facing, as it were, the quarantine ground, and all those portions of the bay shores which, with propriety, might be termed the great seat of infection. The officers of the command at Governor's Island assured the author of the report that no *material* cause of infection was conveyed to or existed upon the island.

Source: "Annual Report of the Physician-in-Chief of the Marine Hospital at Quarantine."

The American Journal of the Medical Sciences, Vol. 34, p 471. (1857)

The Cornell University Medical College is inaugurating a course of military medicine and sanitation for members of the senior class. A week of practical training, with intimate talks from the instructors, has been given at Governors Island, beginning on March 15. All regular college exercises for seniors were suspended in that week. Following this week at Governors Island, a course of lectures extends over a period from March 22 to May 31, covering such subjects as army organization; sanitary units and lines of aid; recruiting and systems of training; military importance of marching; camp sanitation, with a consideration of wastes and their disposal; water supply, food supply and preparation; tent and camp sites, etc.; military surgery; work on lines of aid, bringing out especially the difference in principle and application between civil and military surgery; military medicine, with a discussion of preventable diseases, and three lectures on tropical medicine. These lectures, as well as the instruction at Governors Island, are being given by members of the medical corps of the United States Army.

Source: *School & Society*, Vol. 5., No. 121, page 467 (1917).

The following game was against a team of the sons of the Coast Guard that were stationed on New York's Governor's Island. As the ferry pulled into port with my ragtag bunch, we were greeted by a welcome wagon that whisked us off to their cafeteria where a great lunch awaited. I had to watch them carefully, so that their gluttonous instincts didn't destroy our basic initiative.

The Governor's Island team was coached by the players' fathers and their militaristic egos. I overheard one of the coaches say to another, "What do we do if these kids become discouraged after they are forced to cope with a real football program?" The Governor's Island team had beautiful uniforms and all of the best equipment. Their well-manicured football field and working electronic scoreboard were intimidating...

Source: Dennis Watlington, *Chasing America: Notes from a Rock 'n' Soul Integrationist*.

page 205 (2006)

Joe Galiano was poised to take off the moment Mercer closed the door and belted up.

“We’ve got to go to Governors Island, Joe. We’ve got to search there.”

“Have you lost it, Coop?”

“Call Peterson, Mike. Tell him to get a crew over as fast as humanly possible. Tell him to call the park Service and — “

Lightning sliced the sky ahead of us and thunder boomed over the sound of the chopper’s engines.

“Pay no attention to her, Joe. Let’s get this buggy home.”

“That was Nelly Kallin I called. Forget Kiernan Dylan. Troy Rasheed has taken that girl to Governors Island. Don’t fight me on this one, Mike. That’s where they went on Sunday. That’s where she is,” I said, not speaking the words *dead or alive*.

Source: Linda Fairstein, *Killer Heat*, page 317. (2008)

Captain Duncan, British Navy, Reports to Governor Clinton That the Remaining British Troops Are Withdrawn from Governors Island.

Governors Island, December 3rd, 1783. 7 AM.

Sir, Having received orders from Rear Admiral Digby to withdraw the Guard together with the whole naval Hospital from this Island, I beg to acquaint your Excellency, that at the hour of Eleven AM this day, the Guard, together with the Naval Hospital, will be withdrawn from the Island, Lieutenant Graham of the Navy only excepted, who will remain a certain time in order to deliver up the Keys of the different buildings to whom you shall think proper to send and take charge of them

I am also desired to inform your Excellency, that the only property disposed of belonging to Government on Governors Island are the hulls of Two Brigantine's, hawled up on each side of the Wharf formerly Occupied as Store hulks for naval provisions, and sold sometime ago by John Delasons, Esq. Agent Victualler, in consequence of orders to him given by Rear Admiral Digby to a Mr. Joseph Mercereau of Staten Island.

I shall do myself the honor to inclose for your Excellency's better information a description list of the different buildings regularly numbered with the Keys to the person you shall think fit to take charge of them from Lieutenant Graham, who will have the honor of delivering this and will Answer such questions respecting the present state of the Island as your Excellency may be desirous of knowing.

I have the honor to be Your Excellency's Most obedient & Most humble Servant.

James Duncan

Captain in the Navy

Source: Public Papers of George Clinton, Documents of the Senate of the State of New York, Volume 5, No. 5300.

The Arctic relief steamers *Thetis*, *Bear*, and *Alert* with the bodies of the dead of the Greely expedition, arrived in the New York Harbor on Thursday night. At half-past ten o'clock on Friday morning the fleet weighed anchor, and moved slowly up the bay. Four of the bodies were on the *Thetis*, and seven on the *Bear*. As the *Thetis* passed Castle William at 10:40 o'clock, a detachment from Company B of the Fourth Artillery fired the national salute of twenty-one guns. The vessels came to anchor near Bedloe's Island. The Government tug *Catalpa* then steamed out from Governor's Island to receive the bodies. Secretary Lincoln, Lieutenant-General Sheridan, and General Hazen, arrived at Governor's Island about 11 o'clock, where they were met by General Hancock and an escort. The *Catalpa* reached the Island with the bodies of the dead about half past 12 o'clock. At the end of the dock the relatives of the dead received them. The coffins were each covered with an American jack. General Hancock and his distinguished visitors received the officers of the relief expedition and the bodies of the dead at the sore end of the dock. All the while minute guns were fired from Castle William. A procession was then formed and the coffins were borne to the hospital, where they lay in state. All the bodies but two were removed on Friday and Saturday by relatives, and taken to various parts of the country for burial. On Saturday those two, Private Charles B. Henry and Private Roderick R. Schneider, were buried with military honors at the Cypress Hills National Cemetery.

Source: "Summary of the Week's News." *The Nation*, Volume 39, number 998, page 124.

(Aug 14, 1884)

Fort Columbus, Governor's Island, New York Harbor, in charge of Lieutenant Colonel John Newton, Corps of Engineers, until April 21, 1877; since that date in charge of Captain James Mercur, Corps of Engineers.—The only work done during the past fiscal year consisted in extensive repairs to the engineer wharf.

No appropriation was made for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1878.

Appropriation asked for next fiscal year: \$5,000

New Barbette Battery at Fort Columbus, Governor's Island, New York Harbor, in charge of Lieutenant Colonel John Newton, Corps of Engineers, until April 21, 1877; since that date in charge of Captain James Mercur, Corps of Engineers.—No work was done here during the past fiscal year, and none contemplated during the present year.

No appropriation was made for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1878.

No appropriation asked for next fiscal year.

Castle Williams, Governor's Island, New York Harbor, in charge of Lieutenant Colonel John Newton, Corps of Engineers, until April 21, 1877; since that date in charge of Captain James Mercur, Corps of Engineers—No work was done here during the last fiscal year.

No appropriation was made for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1878.

No appropriation asked for next fiscal year.

South Battery, Governor's Island, New York Harbor, in charge of Lieutenant Colonel John Newton, Corps of Engineers, until April 21, 1877; since that date in charge of Captain James Mercur, Corps of Engineers— No work was done here during the past fiscal year, and none contemplated during the present.

No appropriation was made for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1878.

No appropriation asked for next fiscal year.

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Source: "Report of the Chief of Engineers." *Report of the Secretary of War: Being a Part of the Message and Documents Communicated to the two Houses of Congress at the Beginning of the Second Session of the Forty-Fifth Congress*. Volume 2, Part 1.

Washington: Government Printing Office, 1877.