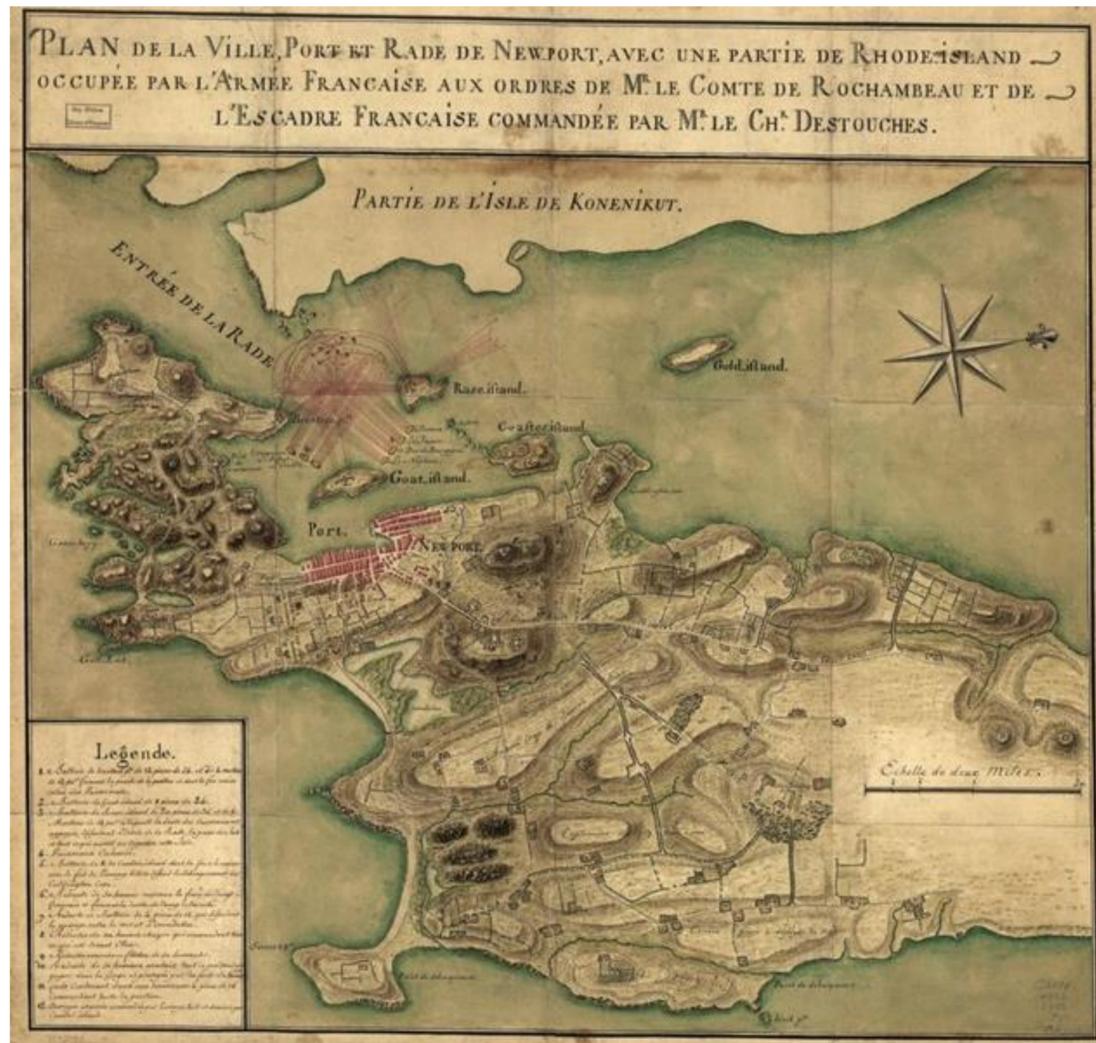


# Fort Hamilton

In 1675, Peleg Sanford, then major in command of the colony's militia and later governor of the colony of Rhode Island, purchased Rose Island (then called Conskuit) from the Native Americans. Likely around the 1740s, the Island became owned by Daniel Goddard. Daniel Goddard was a cabinet maker born in Jamestown RI and lived in Massachusetts. In the 1740s, his family moved to Newport, RI, and became esteemed cabinet makers. Daniel Goddard owned the island until his death in 1764, when he fell out of a window. As his death was sudden and unexpected, it is likely that he did not have a will, which may have led to difficulty in selling the island. The family held on to the island until 1766, when John Goddard, acting as executor, placed an ad in the paper to sell two-thirds of Rose Island. The ad remained in the papers until 1799, when John Adams, President of the United States, purchased the Island for use by the US government.



Despite still being under the ownership of the Goddard family in 1778, the British constructed a battery on Rose Island. The Battery is believed to have been located in the location of a bastion that was added as part of Fort Hamilton. No evidence of this battery remains. In the 1780s, the French commander, General Lafayette, and the Rhode Island militia improved the fortifications of Narragansett Bay, fearing a potential attack by the British. The Fortification Improvements included the construction of a battery on Rose Island, which was armed with forty pieces of heavy artillery. This battery was constructed in the current location of the barracks of Fort Hamilton. No evidence of the French battery remains. It is unknown how these fortifications were constructed as the island was still owned by the Goddard family in the 1780s. However, as they had been trying to sell the land since 1766, they may have had an agreement with the government allowing them to begin construction before officially selling them the land.

In 1799, the US government, under French architect Lewis Toussard began the construction of Fort Hamilton on Rose Island. The fortification was intended to be the largest of the defenses of Narragansett Bay. As this would be the first fort seen when sailing into the bay, it was likely intended as an intimidation factor. As it was to be the largest fort, it included bomb-proof barracks, the first fort in the US to do so. It was not until during the War of 1812 that other US forts were constructed with or remodeled to include bomb-proof barracks. Despite the early attention given to the fort, construction was halted in 1801, at which time it was only half completed, and the fort was never used for military purposes.

# Fort Hamilton

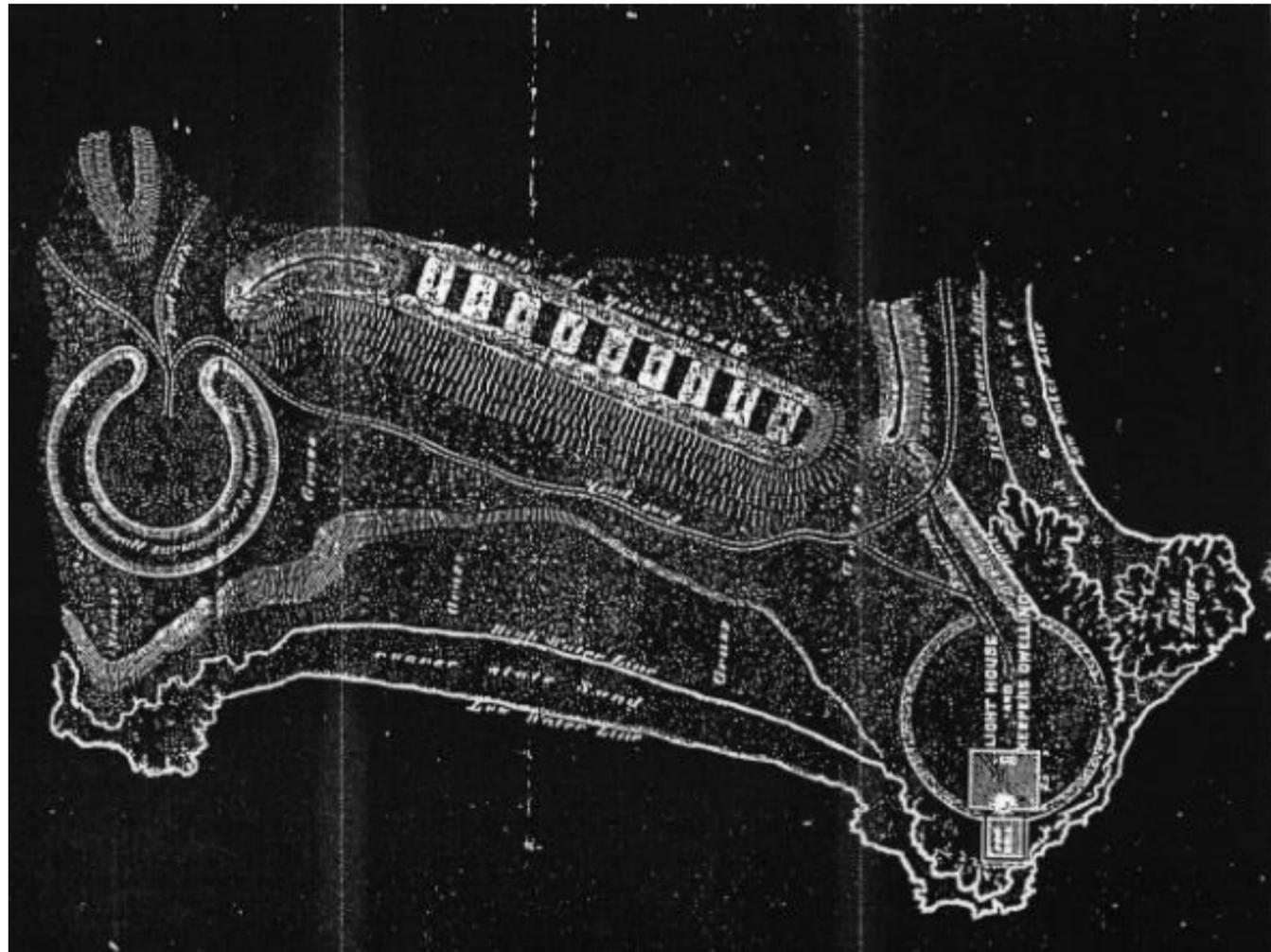
In two letters from Fort Hamilton's architect, Lewis Toussard to Alexander Hamilton, then commanding general of the US army, in 1798 and 1799, Toussard requested permission to construct two forts in Newport. The letter indicates the intention to name one of these forts, Fort Adams and the other Fort Hamilton, after Alexander Hamilton. This name was likely selected as a means of becoming in Hamilton's favor. The Fort to be called Fort Hamilton was constructed on Rose Island, expanding French fortifications on the Island from 1780 that included 40 pieces of heavy artillery. Toussard expanded upon this to construct a work with four bastions designed for sixty guns and bomb-proof barracks that could house 300 men.



At this time, and up until 1878, at which time the War Department gave a general order that Forts were to be named only by regional officers, forts were typically named after an esteemed individual, as chosen by the local commander. However, the Fort on Rose Island was not finished and was therefore never used for military purposes. As the fort was not completed, it was likely never officially named Fort Hamilton, and instead became referred to as the fort on Rose Island on all ensuing reports and papers. Around the 1880s, the Fort began being referred to as Fort Hamilton, and has since been known by this name. Two other forts in the United States were likewise named after Alexander Hamilton: Fort Hamilton in Ohio, constructed in 1791 by General Arthur St. Clair, which was in operation until 1796; and Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, New York, constructed in 1825, which is still operational.

# Fort Hamilton

Fort Hamilton was built as a part of the first system of seacoast fortifications, which stretched from 1794-1808, and included the construction of twenty forts in thirteen states. This system was established in response to the need for stronger fortifications following US independence and unrest in Europe. The system also set a precedent that the US government would buy or lease all lands that were used for forts. This first system was largely underfunded, and fort design and construction were largely left to local and French military engineers. Wood and earthworks were primarily used, with bastions often constructed in a star layout.



Fort Hamilton has two pentagonal bastions, as well as two circular bastions. These circular bastions stray from the conventional methods at this time, making Fort Hamilton very unique. The lack of funding for this first system and decreasing unrest in Europe may have contributed to the halt in construction of Fort Hamilton in 1801. By the time construction of Forts was picked up again, with the War of 1812, military methods had evolved and there was no longer need for so many forts in the Narragansett Bay. Instead, focus was placed on enlarging Fort Adams in Newport, leaving Fort Hamilton to no longer serve any military purpose.