



Governors Island: The Jewel of New York Harbor

Ann Bittenwieser

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On the southern edge of Manhattan stands a quiet piece of Americana. Governors Island, situated in New York Harbor, blends a sense of nostalgia with twenty-first-century amenities. The pristine setting showcases the island's rich history, including the vital role it played until recently in the country's armed forces. From its early days as the site of a British fort in the 1700s, to its longstanding role as a station for the U.S. Army and the Coast Guard, to its function as a venue for political receptions and parties, the island has hosted a dazzling parade of the brave and the dignified. But Governors Island encompasses more than military history; it offers a vivid reflection of historic events in New York City and the world at large. Ann L. Bittenwieser brings this rich legacy to life, creating a striking portrait of the island through never-before-published photographs, blueprints, architectural plans, and interviews with former residents. Records from Castle Williams reveal an evolving national penal system, while those from the hospital tell the story of worldwide contagion and local sanitation. Accounts of the lives of the island's female residents offer insight into ethnic assimilation and the changing roles of women in the military, and a compendium of military and civilian recreational life on the island illuminates the changing meanings of open space and recreation over time. Lavishly illustrated and filled with fascinating vignettes of the people and events of this unique landmark, *Governors Island: The Jewel of New York Harbor* will captivate enthusiasts of military and New York history alike.

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