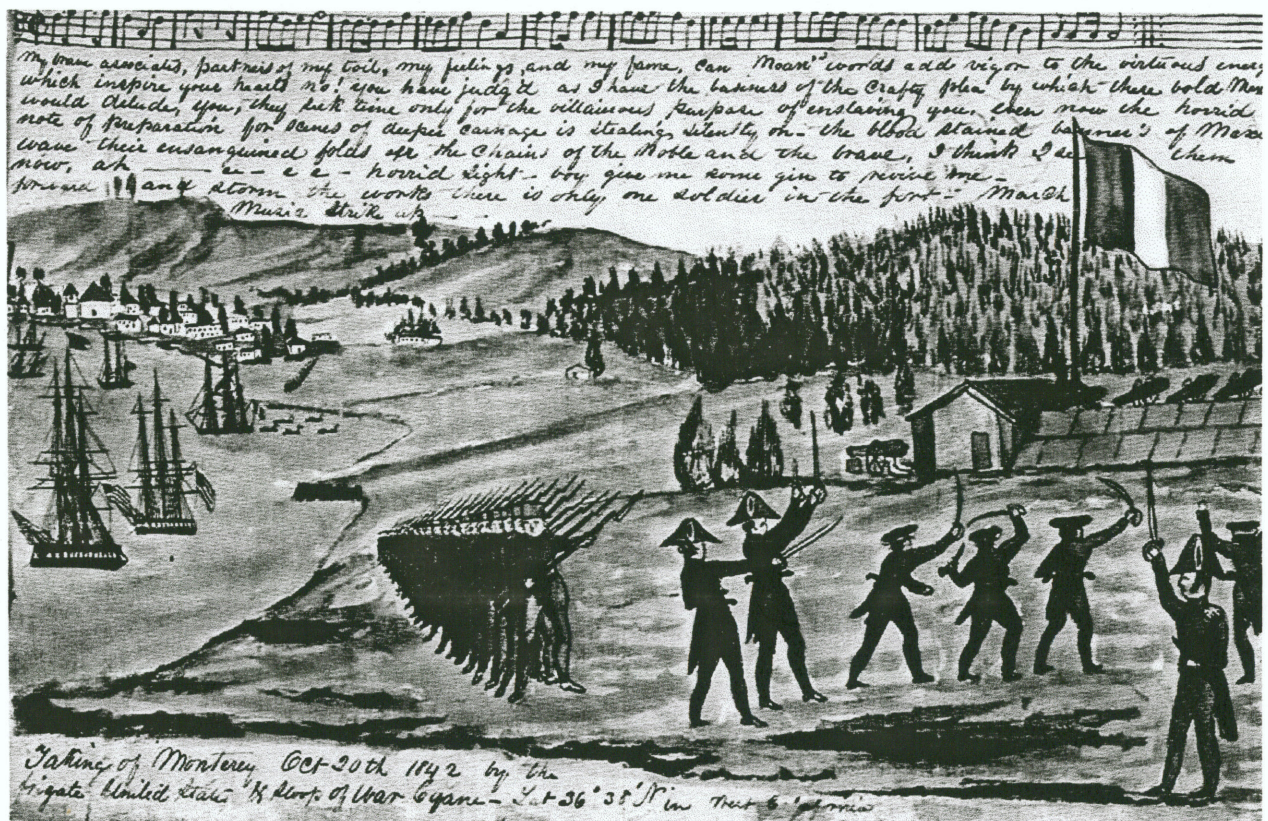


Historic Resources



Historic Resources

The story of the Presidio of Monterey has had many versions and even more authors. The purpose of performing the research necessary to present the narrative below is not to duplicate or rehash these previous efforts. It was to identify and verify sources of information, compare and contrast sources, and identify historic context themes and illustrations that could be useful to the interpretation of the site. One of the primary tasks of this project is to clarify the number and location of potential archaeological features, and the purpose and background of the site's many historic monuments.

The history of the Presidio of Monterey continues to unfold. Much of what is known is derived from traditional historical archival research, although the historical record is known to contain gaps of information. Historical archaeological investigations can augment the gaps, leading to more accurate understanding of what happened in the past. At the Presidio of Monterey, the combination of research and archaeology has led to the interpretation of events presented below. As historical and archaeological research continues, it is expected that more will be revealed about the prehistory and history of this important place. Background research will continue throughout the project, and the narrative will continue to be fine-tuned as much as possible. Interpretive panels ultimately erected on site will provide as accurate information as is possible at this time.

There may be more yet to learn about this site than has been learned in the 150 years since California's statehood. The existence of the first Spanish fortification at this site was completely unknown until it was discovered in excavations of 1985. Prior to that time, it was thought that the original Spanish fortification El Castillo had been located and excavated in 1967. This site was likely the second or even third fortification, used until the time of the claiming of California by the United States. Historical records indicate that more buildings and features were erected on this site, such as a Spanish era powder magazine and unidentified features shown on the 1847 and 1852 maps.

Ditches were dug for moat-like defensive features of the early batteries and the American redoubt (Reese 1968:16; Horne 1970:34,36). It is not known with absolute certainty if there were earthworks associated with all four of the bastions of Fort Mervine in the American period, or only the one extant. Archival information indicates that a road ran through the site from south to north directly west and above the two early batteries connecting with Mexican period fortifications at Point Pinos.

In 1967, National Park Service archaeologist Paul Schumacher termed the Monterey ruins “the most comprehensive Spanish military base remains west of Saint Augustine, Florida.” The historical significance of this site is international insofar as it was an integral part of Spanish exploration and settlement of the New World. The Presidio is both nationally and internationally significant for events of the Mexican War prompted by the United States policy of expansionism and Manifest Destiny—the nation’s stated intention to control the North American continent. It is significant statewide as the military command and government of California until statehood in 1850.

HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Prehistoric Village

William Pritchard first uncovered Native American remains at the lower Presidio in 1967, at site CA-MNT-101. Archaeologists have long been impressed with the depth and breadth of this site. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the 1970s. More archaeology has been done on the site and in the area. Understanding of prehistoric lifeways is becoming more refined, in part due to past archaeology done at this site.

Stephen Dietz (1987:7) revisited the area prehistory in the mid-1980s. He was somewhat frustrated with other local archaeologists about the lack of publication of and access to cultural assemblages, especially those from

purported Paleoindian contexts dating between 10,000 and 5,000 years before present (B.P.). Dietz identified the depth of CA-MNT-101 to 190 cm below the surface. Currently no published evidence exists for prehistoric human activity before about 4,000 BP. Because of the rich marine resources available throughout the Holocene, this gap in the archaeological record is probably the result of natural factors rather than cultural preferences. The rich food resources available on the coastline have probably attracted human groups since the end of the last ice age. The proximity of the lower Presidio to the Pacific Ocean presents both limitations and opportunities for research concerning regional prehistory. Changes in the sea level along the coast during the past 10,000 years have resulted in steadily higher water elevations. Water inundation and the resulting erosion and accumulation of sediment have destroyed or covered potentially important cultural resources dating to the early and middle Holocene. The truncation of the boundaries of CA-MNT-101 under what is now Lighthouse Avenue likely reflects the incursion of the ocean rather than the edge of human activity.

Lower strata of CA-MNT-101 appear to represent the Middle Horizon of the Central California sequence, from 3,000 to 2,000 BP. The site consists of nine feet of cultural deposits, including seven human burials, diagnostic bone and stone tools, and shell beads (Dietz 1987:60). Sites like CA-MNT-101 have allowed archaeologists the opportunity to study social complexity among hunter-gatherers. Evidence from the site suggests that the prehistoric population relied heavily upon milling tools and bedrock milling features to utilize local plant resources. They also relied heavily upon marine resources from the coastline. Use of that resource is visible today over much of the lower Presidio area, in the form of dark midden soil, filled with fragments of shell.

Dietz (1987) also noted site CA-MNT-298, located about 100 meters south of the larger site CA-MNT-101. Howard (1974) had first excavated this site in 1971, erroneously believing that it was the village of *Tamo-tak* identified by

Kroeber (1925:465). The site was again tested in 1976 by a small cultural resource firm, down to a level of 120 cm below surface (Dietz 1987:62). The site of CA-MNT-15, a small shell midden found near the Sloat Monument, was likely once part of the larger CA-MNT-101, but was truncated by construction of the monument (Roberts and Zahniser 1980:14). As they stand now, archaeological boundaries between prehistoric archaeological sites on the lower Presidio are somewhat arbitrary. Project demands and archaeological testing phases have, to some extent, been a factor in determining site boundaries. Given the geologic prominence and its strategic and defensive potential, it seems likely that the majority of lands that now make up the lower Presidio were used by prehistoric peoples. This seems especially true since portions of what is today Presidio hill were probably more wooded and consequently somewhat less exposed in the past.

Interpreting the archaeological evidence, it appears that about 2,000 years ago, ancestors of the Hokan language family lived along the entire length of the California coast. Ohlone-speaking peoples (also known as Costanoan) arrived in the San Francisco and Monterey Bay area about 1500 years ago (Levy 1978:486). The reconstruction of Ohlone political boundaries is quite complex, and is based mostly on mission registers (Milliken et al. 1993:29). The Ohlone were once considered by the anthropological literature as a unified group (e.g., Kroeber 1925). Today, it is understood that although Ohlone-speaking peoples had a common language base, they never saw themselves as a single distinguishable culture, but rather based their primary affiliation with their own villages, and nearby villages to whom they were related by marriage and other social alliances. In the area of present-day Monterey and the lower Presidio, ethnographic literature places a group known as the Rumsen Ohlone (Milliken 1986; Milliken et al. 1993).

Styles and changes in artifact patterns suggest that CA-MNT-101 was periodically occupied and abandoned, and that utilization of different food

resources were emphasized during different time periods. Dietz (1987:318) referred to this as "episodes" of human occupation. He identified four episodes of habitation, listed from earliest to youngest:

- 1) 2469-2853 B.P.
- 2) circa 1761 B.P.
- 3) circa 1461-1533 B.P. (This corresponds to about the time that Levy suggests for the arrival of Penutian-speaking people to the area. At CA-MNT-298, cultural assemblages from this period lend further support to the hypothesis for the arrival of the Ohlone-speaking peoples. Their arrival seems to coincide with an economic shift from primarily seed milling to shell collecting.)
- 4) circa 878-936 B.P. (circa A.D. 1000-1100)

To date, no archaeological evidence found in archaeological sites located within lower Presidio boundaries suggests that the indigenous people who lived here were in residence on this site at the time of first contact with the Spanish explorers.

Consultants Roberts and Zahniser observed the following in 1980: The dark soil, the fragments of shell whose presence they never questioned, the apparently accidentally fractured pieces of stone fascinate people when they learn that they are the product or by-product of the human presence over many millennia. The continuing reminder that they are not the first on this soil, and will not be the last, is a valuable philosophical contribution to their lives. The grassy lawns of the Presidio of Monterey, covering over the middens, traces of which show through here and there, may be especially valuable primarily because of the subtlety of the message (Roberts and Zahniser 1980:15-16).

Archaeological evidence at the site suggests many interpretive opportunities, such as discussions of the structure of prehistoric sites, cultural chronology,

subsistence, settlement patterns, and evidence of trade and exchange. Kinds of activities and patterns indicated by the archaeology include residential areas, foraging base camps, collecting base camps, and an area to leave caches of food. Although much archaeology has been conducted on prehistoric sites of the lower Presidio, there is more to learn. CA-MNT-101 is an especially complex resource, and one that has not yet been tapped for its full archaeological data potential. As such, it merits protection.

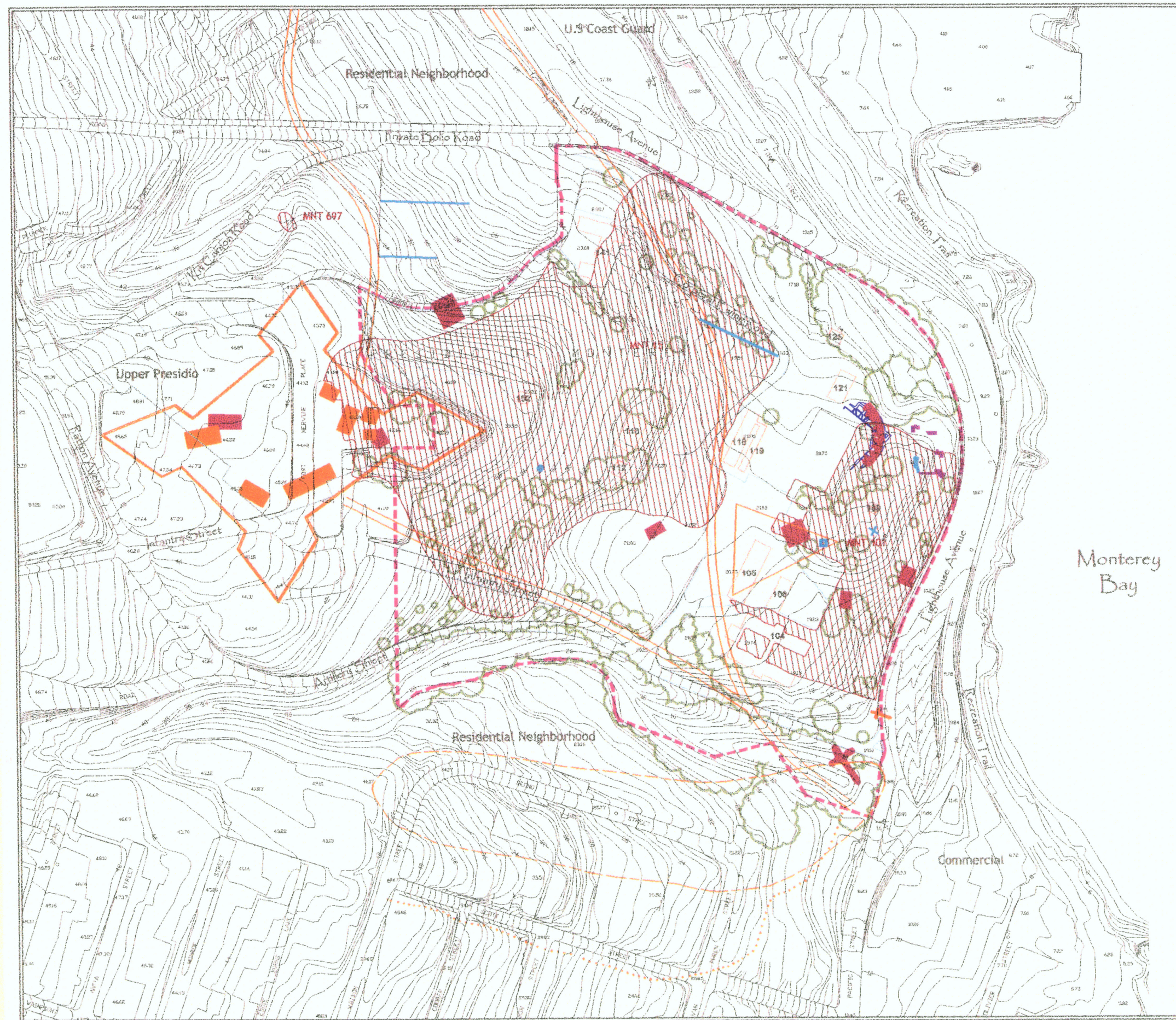
In historic times, self-proclaimed "Indianologist" Alexander S. Taylor, a Monterey druggist, was told by an unidentified Indian informant that Fort Hill was called Hunnukul in a native language (Taylor 1860-63:n.p.).

Much of the lower Presidio is of vital importance in understanding the occupation of California by prehistoric native groups. As such it is to be treated with respect. From an anthropological, archaeological, and aesthetic perspective, it is truly an awe-inspiring place.

Early Exploration

Sebastian Viscaïno on December 16, 1602 came ashore at the landing site below Presidio Hill and claimed the land for Spain. Viscaïno named the bay Monterey for the Viceroy of Nueva Espana (Mexico), the Count de Monterey. Mass was celebrated "...under a large oak close to the sea side..." (Venegas 1759:282 quoting Torquemada 1620). Historian Bancroft reported that mass was celebrated beneath a large oak tree "whose branches touched the tide water, twenty paces from springs of good water in a ravine, which *barranca*, with similar trees not quite so near the shore, is still a prominent landmark in Monterey" (Bancroft 1886 I: 101).

Although he noted no villages atop the lower Presidio hill proper, Torquemada noted that the harbor was "surrounded with rancherías [villages] of Indians, a well-looking affable people," historically called Rumsien (Venegas 1759:287).



Scale 1:1000

Archaeological Sites

Historic Items/Sources (see Appendix A)

- = Whittier
- = Neasham
- = Rupp & Flynn
- = Dietz '84
- = Pritchard
- = 5-3633 Study Area Map
- = Existing Trees

Other History Markers

- = Bouchard Monument
- = Nino Grave Marker
- = Rain Rock
- = Wall(s)
- = Large Wood Cross

Lower Presidio Historic Park

Site Analysis

Prepared For:
City of Monterey

Bellinger Foster Steinhilber
200 California Street
Monterey, CA 93940
Edna E. Kimbro, Historian
Past Forward Archaeology



Cardero's view of local Rumsien from 1791. Original in the Museo Naval, Madrid.

The Founding of Monterey

Father Junipero Serra landed on shore at the inlet known as the "Serra landing site" on May 31, 1770. On Sunday, June 3, the Spanish erected a cross there and buried at its base Alejandro Nino, a free black ship's caulker from Acapulco who had died the previous day on the expedition.

Note: For this reason, the Nino monument should be moved to the landing site, perhaps on the north.

The military unfurled the Spanish flag and Fathers Serra and Crespi then celebrated a mass of thanksgiving "in that little valley [*barranquita*] and under the same live-oak, close to the beach where it is said Mass was celebrated at the beginning of the last century" (Serra translated by Tibesar 1955:169). Afterward Governor Gaspar de Portola and his officers performed the official acts of taking possession of the land, accompanied by ringing bells and cannon fire. Serra remarked in his official report "There is no *rancheria* in the vicinity of this port" with regret.

The State Historic Park is located on a portion of the Serra landing place was purchased in 1904 and given to the state in 1905 (Powers 1934:19). The tree known as the Viscaino/Serra Oak was located on this site but closer to the shore. The oak tree was said to have been about 25 feet from the sea in 1853 (David Spence Scrapbook 1853, No. 5 in Alexander Taylor Collection, Bancroft Library). In 1905, its roots undermined by salt water, and it washed out to sea during filling of the cove for street widening. The trunk was salvaged and portions of it survive today at the Royal Presidio Chapel, Carmel Mission and the Pacific House. For many years prior to the widening of the street, a white wooden cross marked the former presumed location of the Viscaino Oak at the Serra Landing site.

Monuments in the State Historic Park commemorate the landing the Serra Landing in 1770 and Portola's founding of Monterey, the sacred and profane aspects of the same event. Another monument to Serra's Landing is located atop Presidio hill. The number of monuments on the hill speaks to the importance given these historical associations.

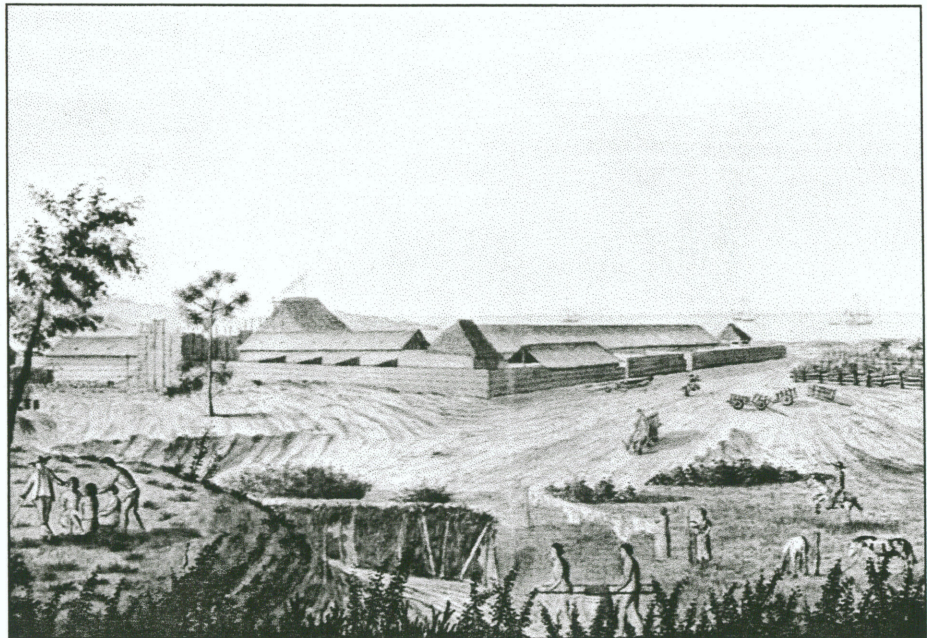


Historic Postcard Showing Cross and Stream. Edna E. Kimbro collection.



Unsigned painting of the Serra landing mass attributed to Leon Troussel. California Historical Society collection.

Governor Portola and engineer Miguel Costanso established the Presidio and Mission of Monterey near Lake El Estero with military and religious ceremony. Lake El Estero (meaning in Spanish a brackish lake with salt and fresh water) was an extension of Monterey Bay that once extended further inland than it does today. This area was open to the Bay in historic times. The combined Presidio and Mission of San Carlos de Monterey was named for King Juan Carlos and his Viceroy (vice-king) in Mexico (Serra translated by Tibesar 1955:171). Over the last quarter of the 18th century, the initial wood palisaded enclosure was transformed gradually into an adobe and stone fortress with red tile roofs housing the Governor, the soldiers and their families. Father Serra moved the mission to Carmel where the Indians congregation in 1771.



View of the Presidio of Monterey in 1791 by Malespina Expedition artist Jose Cardero. It shows El Estero on the right, and on the left cliffs, the seasonal reaches of the lake. Indians are depicted bringing water in barrels from the spring at Aguajito, while shepherds are tending sheep on the mesa where Boranda would later build his adobe in 1817. Bancroft Library collection.