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THE FOUNDING of THE PRESIDIO of SAN FRANCISCO

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Russell C. Ewing

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THE FOUNDING OF THE PRESIDIO OF SAN FRANCISCO

The presidio was one of the major institutions established by Spain in the New World. The word itself is derived from the Latin praesidium, meaning, in one sense, an armed garrison. This institution played an important part in Roman frontier policy. Under the empire every significant frontier had its praesidium. It marked the line between Roman and non-Roman lands. Behind lay the subjugated; in front, the barbarian and foreigner. During threats of foreign invasions, the Roman garrison was called upon to protect Roman domains. When such threats were removed and a given frontier became pacified, the praesidium was moved farther on into unconquered regions. It was this system, one of the many Roman legacies left to Spain by Rome, that was put into effective use in the New World.[1]

The Spanish thrust northward from Mexico City after the fall of Aztec power was assisted in no small measure by the chain of presidios established along the frontier. Sixteenth-century Spanish expansion into the Chichimec country[2]

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1. For a comparative study of the presidio and the praesidium, see Blaclemar, Spanish institutions of the southwest, 192-194.
2. Chichimec was a name applied to the Indians living immediately north of Mexico City.

owed a great deal of its success to those garrisons. The more hostile an area, the more presidios there were. To hold the Indians in check and to aid the missionary in the spreading of European civilization were the principal motives for presidio-founding in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Each mission had its allotment of soldiers, usually three, which were supplied by the nearest presidio. The soldiers were expected to maintain order at the mission, to protect the missionary from Indian attacks, and to accompany the religious on their tours of inspection and administration at rancherías[3] and visitas.[4] In times of native disturbances and uprisings, the entire body of soldiers at one or more presidios might be called upon to restore order. Had it not been for the presidial system, the story of Spanish conquest and colonization might have been appreciably different. It would be difficult to estimate the extra loss of life and property which would have attended Spanish advance into the Indian country without the support of the presidio.

Strategic sites were chosen for the presidios, and an effort was always made to found the garrisons near an adequate supply of water and pasturage. Grazing lands were an

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3. Rancherías are Indian settlements.
4. Visitas were specified places visited periodically by the missionary to administer to the Indian.

essential factor in determining the location of a Spanish frontier fort. The soldier early learned the value of the horse in Indian campaigns, and few were the presidios that were not within reasonable distance of pasturage. A commanding hill or table-land might mark the site of the military post, while close by would be grass lands and fresh water, ~~would be available~~.

At times the military posts were nothing more than unfortified camps without permanent quarters for the troops. If, however, there was reason to believe that an area demanded a permanent garrison because of the characteristically bellicose nature of the aborigines, the viceroy at Mexico City, with the assistance of other government functionaries, would decree the erection of fortifications and buildings to house the soldiers. Plans, usually drawn up by the adelantado or frontier governor, would then be submitted to the viceroy's officials for approval.

Economy and utility were the common guiding factors in the construction of the presidio. Building materials were those that the surrounding country afforded. Lack of stone called for the use of clay or adobe; scarcity of hard and durable woods was supplemented with other fibrous plants; while metals rarely found a place in presidial architecture.

The general scheme was to build those establishments along rectangular lines. A site once chosen, a large

quadrangle with sides varying from two to six hundred feet in length, was marked out. Upon this, walls of stone or adobe were built. The walls seldom exceeded twenty feet in height, and one of the sides provided an entrance into a large court or plaza. Facing the court and built against the walls were the buildings of the presidio. The commandant's quarters were usually the largest and most favorably situated of the presidial buildings. Extending around the remaining sides of the wall and in juxtaposition to one another were the remaining structures. The church occupied a prominent position among those edifices, as did the warehouses and the barracks. No presidio was without its guardhouse and enlisted men's quarters.

Such modest establishments were the presidios found on all important Spanish-American frontiers. They did not, however, confine their activities solely to Indian affairs. During the eighteenth century, fear of European encroachment upon Spanish territory along the northern salients of New Spain[5] added to the many duties of presidial troops. Towards the close of the seventeenth century the activities of La Salle and the Pensacola colony pointed out to the Spanish authorities the need of strengthening the fron-

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5. New Spain included the territory now known as Mexico and the greater part of southern and western United States.

frontier defense. More than a half-century later, French intrusions into New Mexico aroused apprehensions among the viceroyal authorities,[6] and rumors of foreign aggression in the Pacific caused no little concern at the court of Madrid. Russia, England, and France were all reported as having designs upon California.[7] Claiming by right of discovery, Spain put forth every effort to maintain her North Pacific possessions. To colonize Upper California and to establish adequate military defenses were therefore necessary if Spain were to hold on to a vast though little known area.

More than two hundred years elapsed between the discovery of Upper California and its settlements. Cabrillo, in 1542, was the first European to sail along its shores. In the course of the next sixty years such famous voyagers as Drake, Gali, Cermeño, and Vizcaíno engaged in California exploratory expeditions; but no colonies were then founded, and all left their tasks ignorant of the existence of one of the finest harbors in all the world. That discovery occurred in 1769, when one of the members of the Portolá expedition viewed the bay from the crest of a hill south of San Francisco.

It was some time, however, before the Spaniards

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6. See Bolton, "French intrusions into New Mexico, 1749-1752," in The Pacific Ocean in history, 389-407.
7. Bolton, Anza's California expeditions, I, 26; Chapman, The founding of Spanish California, 74-75.

realized that they had discovered a new body of water. They believed that what they had found was merely an estuary of San Francisco Bay, or the modern Drake's Bay. Later, when it was made known in Mexico City that a new bay had been discovered, Viceroy Croix promptly ordered the founding of settlements on its shores to secure it against occupation by some hostile power. On November 12, 1770, Croix gave orders for a thorough exploration of the port and the erection of a mission on its shores. But Pedro Fages, military commander of California, regarded the viceroy's order impossible of fulfillment because of the scarcity of troops to protect the mission. Father Junípero Serra, bitterly opposed to most of Fages' plans, disagreed with the commander's explanation for not carrying out instructions. Fages, however, prevailed successfully against the missionary's wishes, and the founding of the mission and presidio had to wait five more years.

The City of San Francisco owes its beginnings to the tenacity and energy of one of the greatest viceroys of New Spain -- Antonio María Bucarelí y Ursua. Bucarelí came into power in September, 1771. During the succeeding two years he was concerned, so far as California affairs went, primarily with maintaining what had already been established. He learned, however, that matters were not all that they should have been. Complaints from both the religious and

civil authorities of California distressed him. Missionary and soldier were seldom on amicable terms with each other. Serra complained of the activities of Rivera and Fages, and the two latter directed bitter invectives against the Franciscan father. Among the many other reports Bucareli heard concerning Upper California affairs, none gave him greater anxiety for the future of that country than the perennial lack of adequate supplies.

The supply base for California to 1774 was the port of San Blas on the western coast of Mexico. At set times each year, boats were fitted out to carry the necessities and comforts of life to the California settlers. But inhospitable seas and too elaborate colonial administrative machinery often worked to the disadvantage of the Californians. To remedy this condition, it was proposed to open an overland route from Sonora to Monterey. This project was accomplished in 1774 by the remarkable expedition of Juan Bautista de Anza, then captain of the presidio of Tubac, the first permanent military post in the state of Arizona. Anza's journey is one of the great exploratory expeditions of all North American history. As important and romantic as that event was, space does not permit the recounting of the story. Suffice it to say that Bucareli readily grasped the significance of the feat by authorizing the establishment of Spanish

defenses on the "harbor of harbors." He wrote,[8]

> Recognizing the importance of this matter, I was convinced that Captain Don Juan Bautista de Anza ought to make a second entry by way of the Colorado and Gila rivers, taking the soldiers necessary to guard... two missions of San Francisco, ... and to establish in that port certain sign of defense to indicate that it belongs to his Majesty.

In November, 1774, orders were given for a second Anza expedition to go by the newly-discovered route to California. Not only were colonists to form part of the expedition, but domestic animals were to be taken along to insure the permanency of a settlement on the shores of San Francisco Bay. A sea expedition was also planned by Bucareli for exploration of the port. This was to be under the command of Miguel Manrique, who was to sail from San Blas early in 1775 with several boats for the enterprise.

After his return from California, in 1774, Anza hastened to Mexico City to report to Bucareli. The viceroy was much pleased with the work of the captain, and undertook to explain to Anza the plans for another expedition. Anza was to recruit thirty persons, all married, and lead them and their families to the port of San Francisco. Others were to go with them, but only thirty were destined to settle

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8. Bolton, Anza, V, 259.

~~the~~ San Francisco.

The frontier captain, anxious to be on his way, hurriedly left Mexico City and proceeded to Horcasitas, a presidio in Sonora. His journey had carried him through the Sinaloa town of Culiacán. There he began to enlist colonists and gather provisions for the epic making trip. The best that the region could afford in the way of people and supplies found their way into the ranks of the captain. By May, Anza and the colonists were ready to begin the long march. Proceeding up the west coast, they reached Tubac after several unfortunate experiences, not the least serious of which were Apache raids upon the horse herds.

The caravan had by now grown to considerable proportions. On October 23, 1775, when Anza and the colonists took their leave of Tubac, there were 240 persons and some 1,000 head of domestic animals in the expedition. Three Franciscan friars from the College of the Cross of Querétaro were among the more distinguished members of the group. Fray Pedro Font was charged with taking the latitudes during the course of the march, while fathers Francisco Garcés and Thomas Eixarch were to remain on the Colorado River to preach to the Indians. Garcés and Eixarch established themselves at the junction of the Colorado and Gila, where they faithfully performed missionary duties for several years thereafter, Garcés

receiving a martyr's crown in 1781. Font became the great diarist of the Anza expedition. Indefatigably he recorded all the significant events. Possessed of a sense of humor, and a keen observer, Font wrote one of the most interesting accounts of all early California history. It is to his diary that we must turn if we would understand Anza's second journey to California.[9]

Anza's route led north to the Gila, and down that river to its junction with the Colorado, where the party arrived on November 28. Everywhere Anza and the colonists were well received. The Yumas and their chief, Salvador Palma, were particularly hospitable, lending valuable assistance to the Spaniards in their crossing of the Colorado. From there Anza led the expeditionaires across the Colorado Desert, one of the most forbidding places to the traveller in the West. On January 4, 1776, the captain and his courageous followers arrived at San Gabriel Mission, near the modern Los Angeles. The journey had so far been a success. Despite the hardships encountered, only one person had died, -- a mother in childbirth. But to offset this three children were born, and all reached California in good health. The story is not quite so remarkable, however, with respect to the stock. Some

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9. See Bolton, Anza, IV.

hundred animals had been lost en route.

At San Gabriel, Anza was detained for a time because of an Indian uprising at San Diego. The outbreak was unfortunate for the colonists. The commandant of the presidio of Monterey, Fernando de Rivera y Moncada, now refused to coöperate with Anza in the founding of San Francisco. Giving as an excuse the lack of troops, Rivera held aloof from Anza and his project. But Anza was not the sort of person to permit petty bickerings to divert him from his main purpose. He therefore proceeded to Monterey, arriving March 10.

March 23 found Anza, Moraga, Font and several soldiers continuing their march up the coast. Four days later, they camped on the shores of Mountain Lake, the same body of water that now lies at the north end of Twelfth Avenue, in San Francisco, within the presidio reservation. The following day, March 28, the party moved north to the vicinity of present-day Fort Point. Font has left a rather detailed description of the day's events:[10]

> March 28, -- The commander decided to erect the Holy Cross on the extremity of the white cliff at the inner point of the entrance of the port, and at eight o'clock in the morning we went thither. Ascending a small hill, we at once entered upon a very bare mesa of great extent, smooth, and inclining a little toward the port. It must be

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10. Bolton, Anza, IV, 257-259.

about half a league wide and somewhat longer, and it keeps getting narrower until it ends right at the white cliff. This mesa affords a delightful view. Indeed, from it one can see a large part of the harbor, its islands, the mouth of the port, and the sea as far as the eye can reach, even beyond the Farallones. The commander selected this mesa as the site of the new settlement and fort which was to be established at this port, for, being elevated, it is so commanding that from it the entrance to the mouth of the port can be defended with musket shots. And at the distance of a musket shot it has water for the supply of the people, namely, the spring or lake where we halted....

From this point the commander decided to go to examine the hills which extend toward the interior of the harbor... to see if in their vicinity there were good advantages for the convenience of the new settlement.... About five o'clock in the afternoon the commander and Lieutenant Moraga returned from their exploration very well pleased, for in the vicinity of these hills they had found more than they had expected. Their extent must be some three leagues. On them and in their canyons they found a great quantity of timber and firewood, plentiful water in several springs or lakes, abundant land for raising crops, and finally, a vast supply of pasturage in all the country, so that the new settlement may have plentiful fuel, water, and grass or pasturage for the horses, all near by.

The only thing that is lacking is timber for large buildings, although for cabins and barracks and for the stockade of the presidio there are plenty of trees in the groves. And with a little trouble they can have all the timber which they may wish, for from a point some six leagues on the other side of the arroyo of San Joseph Cupertino, as far as some three leagues this side of the arroyo of San Francisco, there runs a plain about fifty leagues long which they call the Llano de Los Robles, because it is very thickly grown with oaks of all sizes, and from which very good timber may be obtained.

Anza made no attempt at that time to found a settlement. After the survey of the region in the vicinity of the

modern presidio of San Francisco, he and his party proceeded around the bay, through present-day Oakland and Berkeley to the San Joaquin River. There the Spaniards decided to turn back, and a few days later they were again at Monterey. Anza himself soon returned to Mexico, leaving the actual founda-tion of the presidio of San Francisco to his subordinates.

Bucareli displayed much displeasure when he learned that no settlement had been made at San Francisco. The responsibility for the delay he placed upon the shoulders of Rivera, who affected more concern over the safety of San Diego than the establishment of a military post on the shores of the great northern bay.[11] Bucareli wrote letters to both Rivera and Anza stating that they had acted improperly in not founding a colony at San Francisco.[12]

Meanwhile, however, Rivera, as was characteristic of the man, had changed his mind. On May 8, he ordered Lieutenant Moraga to San Francisco to erect a fort there. At the same time, Rivera commanded Sergeant Pablo Grijalva to lead twelve families which Anza had left at San Gabriel to Monterey and thence to San Francisco.

Grijalva arrived with the families at Monterey on

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11. Chapman, "The founding of San Francisco," in The Pacific Ocean in history, 383.
12. Ibid., 384; Bolton, Anza, I, 458.

May 28. Moraga lost no time in complying with Rivera's orders, setting the middle of June for starting with the colony. The next day, the lieutenant went to Carmelo to report to Father Serra the order which he had received from Rivera. Serra professed some disgust at the neglect of Rivera to make provisions for the founding of missions as well as a fort. The Franciscan, however, as president of the California missions, named Fathers Francisco Palóu and Pedro Benito Cambón "to go with the expedition..."to administer the holy sacrament to the people who were going," and "to be ready" to take over missionary duties in the event that a mission were founded.

Fortunate it is for historians that so many California missionaries were devoted to literary pursuits. Palóu, like Font and many other religious, was at his best when writing about contemporary matters. It is from his pen, supplemented by a report made by Moraga to the viceroy, that we learn about the beginnings of the presidio. As a vital document for those who would know the origins of the modern military reservation at San Francisco, Palóu's account of this event bears quoting:[13]

> On the 17th day of June, 1776, about two in the afternoon, the company of soldiers and [illegible]

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13. Bolton, Anza, III, 387-388.

Families from Sonora set out for Monterey. It was composed of its Commander, lieutenant Don Jose Joaquin Moraga, a sergeant, two corporals, and ten soldiers, all with their wives and families except the Commander, who had left his in Sonora. In addition there were seven families of settlers, rationed and provisioned by the king; other persons attached to the soldiers and their families; five servant boys, muleteers and vaqueros, who conducted about two hundred of the king's cattle and some belonging to individuals, and the mule train which carried the provisions and utensils necessary for the road. All the foregoing belonged to the new presidio. And for whatever concerned the first mission that was to be founded we two ministers, Father Fray Pedro Benito Cambón and I, went with two servants who conducted the loads, and three unmarried Indian neophytes, two of them from Old California [Lower California], and the other from the mission of Carmelo, who drove the cattle for the mission, numbering eighty-six head, which were incorporated with those for the presidio.

The officers of the vessels, with their pilots wished to accompany the expedition, and they all did so for about half a league. [The Principe and the San Carlos had come from Mexico with provisions for the California establishments. The San Carlos was to go from Monterey to San Francisco with supplies for the colonists.] From this point the captain of the Principe and all the pilots turned back; but Don Fernando Quiros continued for the first day's march with the two father chaplains as far as the Monterey River, where the expedition halted and camped. On the following day, after having watched all the people cross the river and seen the line formed on the broad plain by all those people, the pack trains, cattle, and the horse herd, they returned to Monterey after taking farewell in the hope that we could soon meet in the port of Our Father San Francisco.

The expedition continued by the same road which was travelled in the exploration of that harbor in the year 1774 [Palóu refers to an expedition made to San Francisco Bay by Rivera in 1774.] .... But the days' marches were shorter, in order not to fatigue the little children and the women, especially those who were pregnant, and for this reason it was even necessary to make several stops. On the whole

there was not a single mishap, thanks to God. We were well received by all the heathen whom we met on the road, who were surprised to see so many people of both sexes and all ages, for up to that time they had not seen more than some few soldiers....And they were astonished at the cattle, which they had never seen before. 2 Spaces

On the 27th day of June the expedition arrived in the neighborhood of the harbor, and the commander ordered the camp halted on the bank of a lagoon called by Señor Anza Nuestra Señora de los Dolores, which is in sight of the bay of Los Llorones [Mission Bay] and the beach of the bay or arm of the sea which runs to the southeast, with the intention of waiting here for the bark in order to select the spot for the founding of the fort and presidio, and in the meantime to explore the land. On the following day he ordered a shelter of branches built to serve as a chapel in which to celebrate the holy sacrifice of Mass. [The beginning of Mission Dolores.] In it the first Mass was said on the 29th, the feast of the great, holy apostle, San Pedro and San Pablo, and we continued to celebrate in it every day until the camp was moved to the site which it occupies near the landing place, when the ground and the convenience of water permitted it....

For an entire month the expedition remained in that camp, which was composed of field tents, waiting for the bark San Carlos. Meanwhile soldiers, citizens, and servants employed themselves in cutting logs in order to have this much done when the bark should arrive. The lieutenant busied himself in exploring the land in the vicinity, where he found some springs of water, lagoons, pastures, and good sites for all kinds of stock. Near the white cliff at [Fort Point] he found two springs of water sufficient for the use of the presidio, and not far from them he found a good plain [now part of Main Post] which is in view of the harbor and entrance, and also of its interior. As soon as he saw the spot the lieutenant decided that it was suitable for the presidio but he delayed moving the people there, as he was waiting day by day for the arrival of the packet.

Seeing that it did not appear for a whole month, and, as they wrote from Monterey by the pack train which went to bring provisions, that it had sailed long ago [contrary winds had blown the San Carlos as far south as San Diego], the lieutenant decided to move to that spot so that the soldiers might begin

to build their huts for shelter, since it was nearer at hand for making a beginning of the houses. This he did on the 26th of July, setting to work immediately to construct some tule huts. The first was the one that was to serve as a chapel, and in it I said Mass on the 28th of the same month....

When the expedition left Monterey the packet San Carlos remained at anchor loaded in that port, while its commander delayed sailing until the return of the messenger whom he had dispatched to San Diego. [The commander of the San Carlos was Captain Don Fernando Quiros. His pilots were Don Jose Cañizares and Don Cristobal Revilla.] As soon as the courier arrived the San Carlos sailed from that port bound for San Francisco, but immediately after leaving Monterey it began to experience contrary winds, so strong that it was driven down to the parallel of San Diego, but very far from the coast. From that point it went on gradually ascending and gaining altitude until it reached forty-two degrees, at which latitude it approached the shore and then descended as far as Point Reyes. There it put in between that point and the northern farallones, dropping anchor on the north coast in the Gulf of the Farallones on the night of the 17th of August. On the following day it successfully entered the harbor, and about two o'clock in the afternoon it anchored not very far from the spot where the soldiers were lodged, but not in sight of them, as the view was cut off by the point of the hill on whose skirts the camp was placed; but it was in sight of the white cliff and the entrance to the harbor.

As soon as the bark was made fast, the commander, pilots, and Father Nocedal went ashore. When they saw the site of the camp they were all of the opinion that it was a very suitable place for the fort and presidio.... In view of the opinion of the captain of the bark and the pilots, work was begun on the building of the houses and the presidio. A square measuring ninety-two varas each way was marked out for it, with divisions for church, royal offices, warehouses, guardhouses, and houses for soldier settlers, a map of the plan being formed and drawn by the first pilot. [The map has not been found.]

And so that the work might be done as speedily as possible, the commander [Quiros] designated a squad of soldiers and the two carpenters to join the servants of the royal presidio in making a good ware-

house in which to keep the provisions, a house for the commanding officer of the presidio, and a chapel for celebrating the holy sacrifice of the Mass, while the soldiers were making their own houses for their families....

It was then decided that the formal act of possession should take place, the day appointed for it being that on which our Mother Church celebrates the impression of the stigmata of Our Seraphic Father San Francisco, that is, the 17th of September, a most appropriate day, since he is the patron of the harbor, the new presidio, and the mission. And for taking formal possession of the mission the 4th of October was designated, which is the day dedicated to Our Seraphic Father San Francisco. The commander of the packet, his two pilots, and the greater part of the crew were present at the ceremony of taking formal possession of the presidial site, only those who were absolutely necessary remaining on board; and with the people of the presidio, troops as well as citizens, they made up a goodly number of Spaniards. There were also present four friar priests, all of our College San Fernando de Mexico, that is, the two missionary fathers of this mission, Palóu and Cambón, the chaplain of the bark Nocedal, and Father Fray Tomás de la Peña, who had come from Monterey to examine the site for the second mission, of which he had been named minister.

A solemn Mass was sung by the ministers, and when it was concluded the gentlemen performed the ceremony of taking formal possession. This finished, all entered the chapel and sang the Te Deum Laudamus, accompanied by peals of bells and repeated salvos of cannon, muskets, and guns, whose roar and the sound of the bells doubtless terrified the heathen, for they did not allow themselves to be seen for many days. The ceremony concluded, the commander of the presidio, [Moraga] invited to it all the people, conducting himself with all the splendor that the place permitted, and supplying with his true kindness what else would have been lacking, for which all the people were grateful, expressing their gratitude in the joy and happiness which all felt on that day.

Thus we have Father Palóu's account of the founding of the presidio of San Francisco. With one exception, the

good father's narration of that historic event leaves nothing to be desired. That exception, for our purpose, deals with the act of taking formal possession. We know that the presidio was formally established on September 17, 1776, that in celebrating the event special religious services were held, and that an impressive military ceremony concluded the activities of the day. But of what did this act of taking formal possession consist?

The usual procedure in such matters was first to offer up an invocation to the Holy Trinity, whereupon it was announced in the name of the Divine Being that possession was taken upon the authority of the king of Spain. Then the name and title of the commandant were announced. This was followed by those present kneeling in adoration of the Holy Cross, which was erected in the name of the king; "and that by orders of the viceroy of New Spain the Commandante [sic] did take possession of this land forevermore for the Crown of Castile and Leon, as belonging to it by virtue of the 'Donation [sic] y Bula Que el Muy Santa Padre Alexandro Sixto Sumo Pontifice Romano,' executed to the 'Mui Altos y Catolices [sic] Señores Don Fernando V y Doña Ysabel su Muger, Reyes de Castilla, y Leon,' at Rome on the 4th of May, 1493."[14]

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14. Davidson, Discovery of San Francisco Bay, 127.

In taking possession, the commandant, sword in hand, cut grass, bushes, branches and trees, and moved stones which were in his way as he walked about.

Two years passed before any substantial progress was made in erecting the presidio. At the end of 1778 an adobe house for the commander had been completed, the walls of the fort had been raised a few feet, a slaughter house had been built of stone, and a church, two warehouses and quarters for the troops had been made of earth.[15] But this work was soon to go for naught. In January of the following year, torrential rains destroyed most of the presidial buildings.[16] The erosive effects of the driving rain on adobe reduced the commandant's house, the church, the warehouses, the slaughter house, and six of the buildings quartering enlisted men to ruins. By the end of the year there was not one left of the original edifices.[17]

Work was again undertaken to reconstruct the presidio. It took several years, however, before the garrison resembled a real army post. Even in 1792, when Captain George Vancouver visited San Francisco during the course of

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15. Sal to Romeu, San Francisco, March 4, 1792. Provincial state papers, XI, 52.
16. Ibid.
17. ~~Sal to Romeu, San Francisco, March 4, 1792. Provincial state papers, XI, 52.~~ Ibid.

his memorable expedition, the presidio was far from being a formidable establishment. Vancouver has left a description of the garrison as he saw it:[18]

> We rode up to the presidio, an appellation given to their military establishments in this country, and signifying a safe guard.... Its wall, which fronted the harbor, was visible from the ships; but instead of a city or town, whose lights we had so anxiously looked for on the night of our arrival, we were conducted into a spacious verdant plain, surrounded by hills on every side, excepting that which fronted the port. The only object which presented itself, was a square area, whose sides were about two hundred yards in length, enclosed by a mud wall, and resembling a pound for cattle. Above this wall the thatched roofs of their low small houses just made their appearance. On entering the Presidio, we found one of its sides still unineloseed by the wall, and very indifferently fenced in by a few bushes here and there, fastened to stakes in the ground. The unfinished state of this part, afforded us an opportunity of seeing the strength of the wall, and the manner in which it was constructed. It is about fourteen feet high, and five in breadth, and was first formed by uprights and horizontal rafters of large timber, between which dried sods and moistened earth were pressed as close and as hard as possible; after which the whole was cased with the earth made into a sort of mud plaster, which gave it the appearance of durability, and of being sufficiently strong to protect them, with the assistance of their fire-arms, against all the force which the natives of the country might be able to collect.
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> The Spanish soldiers composing the garrison amounted, I understood, to thirty-five; who, with their wives, families, and a few Indian servants, composed the whole of the inhabitants. Their houses were along the wall, within the square, and their fronts uniformly extended the same distance into the area, which is a clear open space, without buildings or other interruptions. The only entrance into it, is by a large gateway; facing which, and against the centre of the opposite wall or

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18. G. Vancouver, A voyage of discovery ..., II, 5-7.

side, is the church; which, though small, was neat in comparison to the rest of the buildings. This projects further into the square than the houses, and is distinguishable from the other edifices, by being whitewashed with lime made from sea-shells; as there has not yet been any lime-stone or calcareous earth discovered in the neighborhood. On the left of the church, is the commandant's house, consisting, I believe, of two rooms and closet only, which are divided by massy walls, similar to that which encloses the square, and communicating with each other by very small doors. Between these apartments and the outward wall was an excellent poultry house and yard, which seemed pretty well stocked; and between the roof and ceiling of the rooms was a kind of lumber garret: These were all the conveniences the habitation seemed calculated to afford. The rest of the houses, though smaller, were fashioned exactly after the same manner; and in the winter, or rainy seasons must at the best be very uncomfortable dwellings. For though the walls are a sufficient security against the inclemency of the weather, yet the windows, which are cut in the front wall, and look into the square, are destitute of glass, or any other defense that does not at the same time exclude the light.

The apartment in the commandant's house, into which we were ushered, was about thirty feet long, fourteen feet broad, and twelve feet high; and the other room or chamber, I judged to be of the same dimensions, excepting in its length, which appeared to be somewhat less. The floor was of the native soil raised about three feet from its original level, without being boarded, paved, or even reduced to an even surface; the roof was covered in flags and rushes, the walls on the inside had once been white-washed; the furniture consisted of a very sparing assortment of the most indispensable articles, of the rudest fashion, and of the meanest kind; and ill accorded with the ideas we had conceived of the sumptuous manner in which the Spaniards live on this side of the globe....

Such were the beginnings of the presidio of San Francisco. Conceived by Spain as a bulwark against the designs of hostile European powers, the presidio has had

a continuous existence as a military post. Colorful and important has been its history. Soldiers of three nations have been quartered behind its walls. Spain, Mexico and the United States, each in turn, found the presidio of San Francisco a valuable military base on the Pacific, and each has been indebted to Bucareli, Anza, and Moraga for the excellent site upon which it stands. Today only one of the original buildings remains as a memorial to the genius of a people who conquered more than two-thirds of the Western Hemisphere. This structure, hardly recognizable as one of those edifices raised by the hands of Moraga and his successors, stands remodeled as a club for officers of the United States Army.

L E G E N D

North Boundary	116 varas
East Boundary	120 varas
South Boundary	116 varas
West Boundary	120 varas

1. GUARDIA de PREVENCIÓN (Sentry Station), 6½ varas* long, 4½ varas wide, and 3½ varas high.

2. CUARTEL (Barracks), 16 varas long, 4½ varas wide, and 3½ varas high.

3, 4. CALABOSOS (Prison Cells), 2 varas long, 1½ varas wide, and 2 varas high.

5. ALMACEN de ROPA (Clothing Warehouse), 18 varas long, 6 varas wide, and 4½ varas high.

6. ALMACEN de VIVERES (Food Warehouse), 18 varas long, 6 varas wide, and 4½ varas high.

7, 8. CASAS del COMANDANTE (Commander's Quarters), 37½ varas long, 6 varas wide, and 4½ varas high.

9. CASA del SARGENTO (Sergeant's Quarters), (No dimensions given).

10. IGLESIA (Church), 18 varas long, 8 varas wide, and 4½ varas high.

11. CASA MATA (Slaughter House), (Not specified).

a to k. HABITACIONES de la TROPA (Enlisted Men's Quarters).

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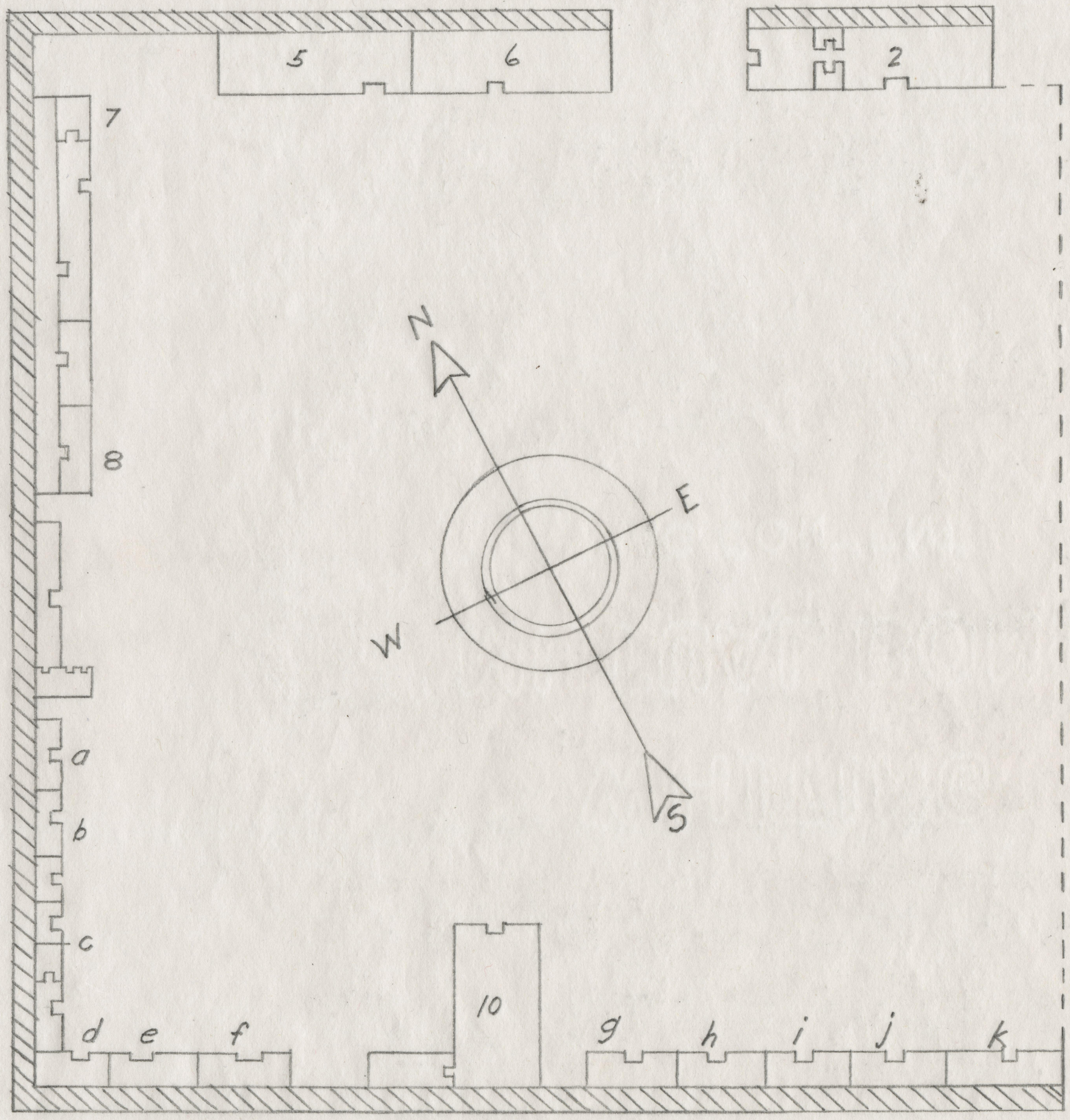
* A vara is a Spanish unit of measure equal to 2.78 feet.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V. MANUSCRIPTS

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