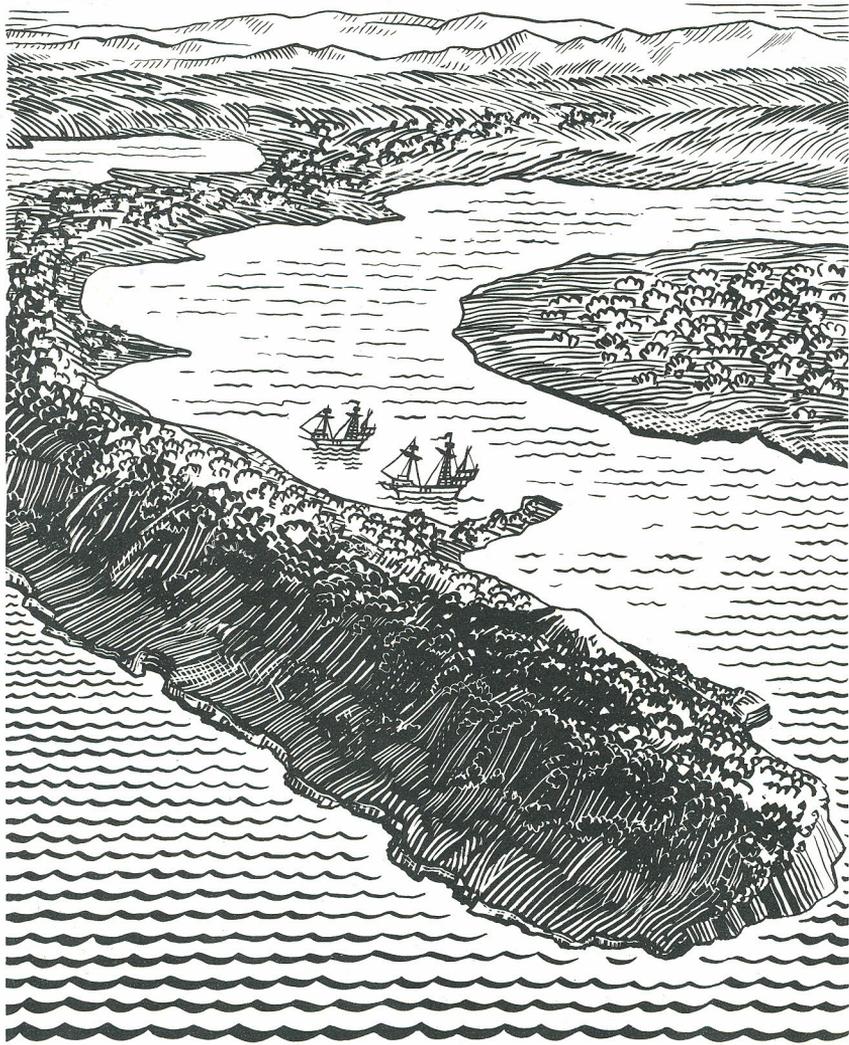


CABRILLO

NATIONAL MONUMENT



C A L I F O R N I A

CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT



United States Department of the Interior

Oscar L. Chapman, *Secretary*

National Park Service, Arthur E. Demaray, *Director*

The Pacific coast of the present-day continental United States was first sighted here by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo's Spanish Expedition on September 28, 1542

CABRILLO National Monument commemorates the discovery of the coast of California by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo on September 28, 1542. His landfall at Point Loma, on which the national monument is located, and his entrance and landing in San Diego Bay, which he called San Miguel Bay, mark the first contact of Europeans with this part of the New World.

Significant as Cabrillo's discovery was, it represents but an incident in the explorations which had such a profound effect on the institutions and the thought of our civilization. The voyage was one of many sea and land expeditions by means of which Spain extended

its dominions in the New World and made known the continental character and general outlines of the Americas. Nevertheless, the descriptions of California and its aboriginal inhabitants, contained in the records of the expedition, are among the earliest written sources for the history of our country.

The story of Cabrillo's voyage is a heritage in which both the United States and Mexico, her American neighbor, share. The history of each nation records the same sea expeditions which, under the brave and courageous Cabrillo and others following him, led to the exploration of the Pacific coast.

Point Loma and San Diego Bay.

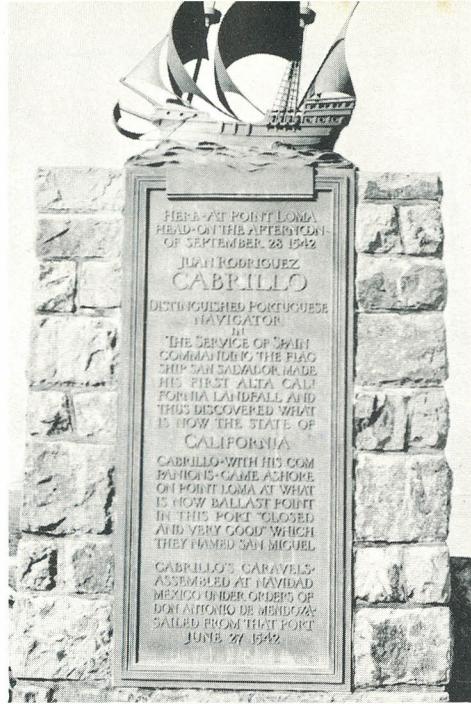


The Cabrillo Expedition

Fifty years after Columbus' epochal voyage and discovery of the New World, the veil of history was lifted along the North American coast of present-day California and Oregon. Balboa's discovery of the South Sea, in 1513, had been followed by the exploration of the western coast of Central America. From Mexico City, Cortés' men continued to the Western Sea, and from bases there the Conqueror pushed northward by sea. The Gulf of California was explored, Lower California was discovered and, by 1539, its peninsular character had been determined. The prospect of riches in the unknown country north of Mexico, the hope of finding an interoceanic strait, and a belief in the feasibility of sailing north to Asia lured men of different nations, including Spaniards under Cabrillo, to expeditions which were to help unveil the great "Northern Mystery."

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, a mariner of Portuguese birth, faithfully served the Spanish crown. He had gone to Mexico in 1520 with Narváez, was with Cortés in the conquest of Mexico City, joined Orozco's expedition into Oaxaca, and assisted Pedro de Alvarado in the conquest of Guatemala. In 1540, he sailed with Alvarado's fleet designed for exploration of the northwest coast. When Alvarado was killed in crushing an Indian uprising on the west coast of Mexico, Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza took charge of the fleet and assigned two vessels to Cabrillo for exploration of the coast to the north.

Two small vessels, the *San Salvador* and the *Victoria*, sailed under Cabrillo's command on June 27, 1542, from Navidad on the west coast of Mexico. Crossing the Gulf of California, the vessels proceeded along the outer coast of the peninsula and on August 20 reached *Cabo del Engaño* (Cape Deceit), the then most northerly point reached by earlier explorers. From there, they crept slowly up the untried course close in to land, stopping frequently to anchor for the night or to avoid adverse winds, to take on wood and water, and to interrogate the Indians.



Memorial plaque at Cabrillo National Monument.

Discovery of San Diego Bay

Three months of navigating brought the *San Salvador* and *Victoria* to the islands that can be seen off the Mexican shore, opposite San Diego Bay. At night, campfires revealed to the seafarers the location of Indian camps, similar to those which tradition holds were located on Point Loma. To Indians who might have been at points of vantage offered by Point Loma's heights on September 28, 1542, the two white blurs rising above the horizon in such unprecedented manner gradually took on the form of the bannered masts and sails of Spanish ships. The little vessels approached the *Islas de los Coronados* and Point of Rocks, passed through the extensive beds of kelp, over what is called today Gammon Shoal, into the Middle Ground, and finally sailed around Ballast Point. There, behind the high land of Point Loma, which had been seen first from the sea, was found a "closed and very good port," which they named San Miguel. They were, in fact, in San Diego Bay.

On going ashore, at what apparently is now Ballast Point, Cabrillo's men found that most of the Indians had fled; but those who were left surprised the foreigners with fatally directed arrows, killing three. Some of the Indians were lured by gifts. Signs, made by them in response to questions, were interpreted by the whites as indicating that the Indians knew of Spaniards to the east (probably those under Coronado) who were traveling about the land killing the natives.

Further Exploration and Cabrillo's Death

On October 3, after riding out a storm which did no harm, the expedition left San Diego. The vessels continued northward along the California coast, sighting or stopping at several points, including Catalina and San Clemente Islands, Santa Monica Bay, San Buenaventura, and the Channel Islands. After sailing through the Santa Barbara Channel, past Point Conception and northward beyond Point Reyes, they were forced out to sea by another storm. Turning south, they returned past Drake's Bay to *Isla de la Posesión*, one of the Channel Islands, where they anchored on November 23. This, now presumed to be the island known as San Miguel, was renamed *Isla de Juan Rodríguez* on the occasion there, on January 3, 1543, of Cabrillo's death, which resulted from a broken arm received during the preceding October. Buried on that island, his grave today lies unknown and unmarked.

Northernmost Limit of Expedition and Return to Navidad

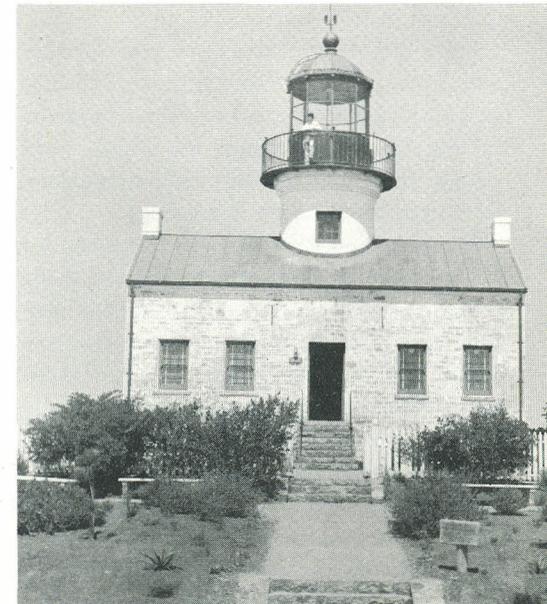
Bartolomé Ferrello, or Ferrer, the chief pilot, now succeeded to the command of the men whom Cabrillo, before his death, had "strongly charged not to fail to discover as much as possible all along the coast." Ferrello continued the explorations northward until March 1, 1543, at which date he was beyond probably what is now

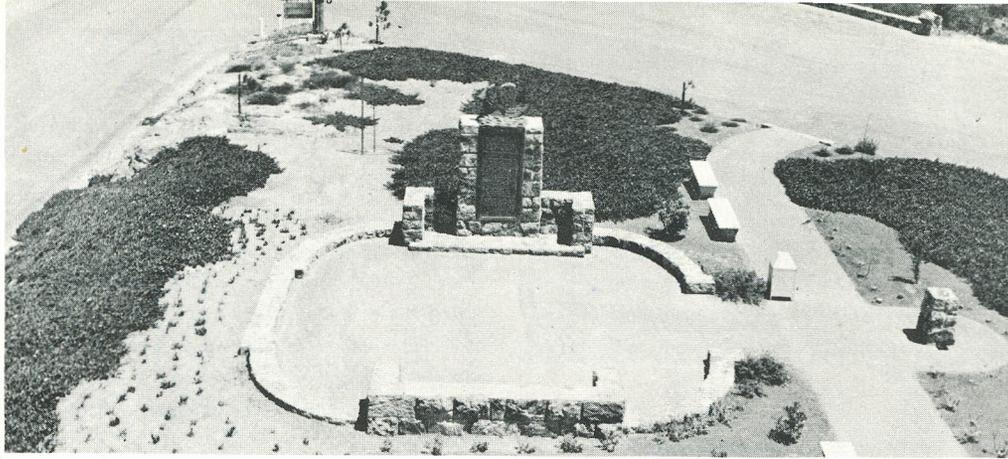
the southern Oregon border. In the face of adverse winds and with depleted supplies the voyagers once more were driven southward by storms. The *San Salvador*, becoming separated from her sister ship, put in again at San Diego, after touching at other points. After waiting 6 days for the *Victoria*, she proceeded down the coast. There was much rejoicing on March 26 when the errant consort put in her appearance at Cedros Island. Lack of supplies precluded further exploration, and the ships proceeded to Navidad, their port of departure, which they reached on April 14, 1543.

The Monument

Cabrillo National Monument, consisting of 0.5 acre, was established by Presidential proclamation on October 14, 1913. The principal historical structure in the area is the old San Diego Lighthouse on Point Loma, which was first lighted on November 15, 1855. It was one of several lighthouses authorized for the Pacific coast by Congress in 1850, shortly after the American occupation of California. Some of the

Old Lighthouse.





Memorial monument and plaza.

bricks used in its construction were taken from nearby Fort Guijarros, the site of the old Spanish fort at Ballast Point. This, together with the fact that many of the keepers of the Point Loma Lighthouse married Mexican women and here reared Spanish-speaking families, gave rise to the somewhat misleading designation, "Old Spanish Lighthouse." The lighthouse served until 1891. Because of the excessive height of its focal plane, which was 462 feet above sea level, it was replaced by a new one nearer the water's edge, the light of which could more easily be seen beneath the clouds by ships at sea.

From the tower of this sandstone building, which was rehabilitated in 1935, visitors behold one of the great seascapes of the world: an inspiring scene comprising the ocean, bays, islands, mountains, foothills, valleys, and plains which surround the city of San Diego.

From the light tower can also be pointed out the locations of Ballast Point, where Cabrillo probably landed, and where Sebastian Vizcaino, who applied the name of San Diego to the bay, is generally believed to have held Holy Mass when he visited the bay in November 1602. On this spit of land, extending from Point Loma into San Diego Bay, was also situated Fort Guijarros, which served Spanish and Mexican California as a coastal defense. Today the site is occupied by one of the fortifications of the Fort Rosecrans Military Reservation.

How To Reach the Monument

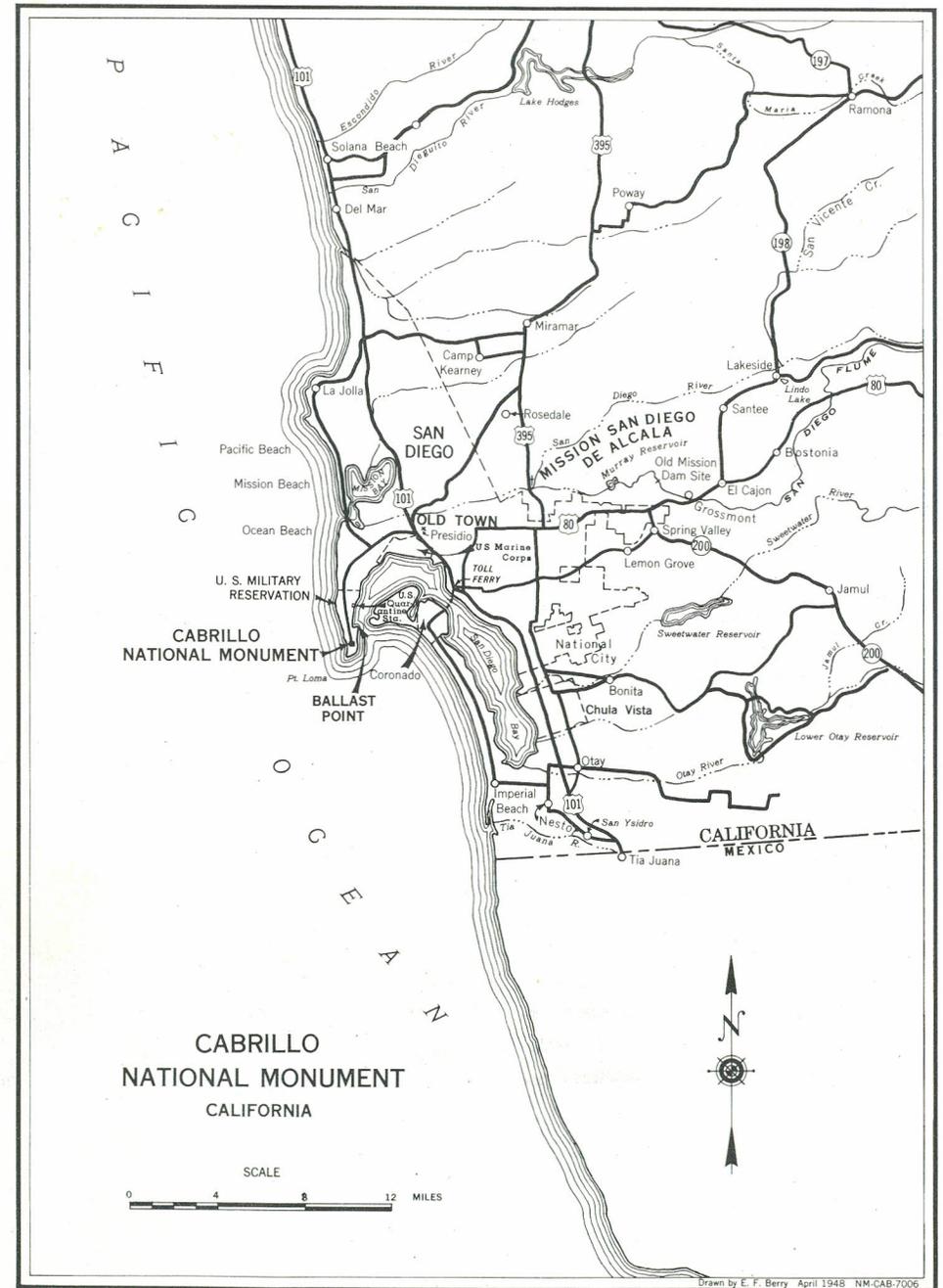
Cabrillo National Monument is near the southern tip of Point Loma, that arm of land forming the west side of San Diego Bay. It is 10 miles from downtown San Diego and can be reached by following Pacific Boulevard (United States Highway No. 101) to the highway junction at the U. S. Marine Corps Base, from which a well-marked road leads to the monument.

Public Service and Facilities to Visitors

The area is open, without charge to the public, from 9 a. m. to 5:30 p. m. Since the monument is within a military reservation, all visitors must be out of the reservation area by 6 p. m. Visitors may obtain literature and information from the custodian at the monument. Souvenirs may be purchased from the concessioner.

Administration

Cabrillo National Monument is a part of the National Park System owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. For additional information address the Coordinating Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Three Rivers, Calif.



Cover: *Artist's conception of Cabrillo's Anchorage in San Diego Bay.*

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