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The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

Supplement to Theme XIII.
Political and Military Affairs, 1830-60,
and
a Reevaluation, Theme IV - Spanish
Exploration and Settlement

A STUDY OF THE SAN FRANCISCO PRESIDIO
AND FORT POINT, CALIFORNIA

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P R E F A C E

At the April, 1960 meeting, the Consulting Committee recommended that the San Francisco Presidio and Fort Point, California be considered under Theme XIII - Political and Military Affairs, 1830-1860. The present study is submitted in response to this request. On the basis of additional evidence not available in 1959, the Spanish Period of the Presidio, 1776-1822, has been reevaluated under Theme IV - Spanish Exploration and Settlement. To complete the history of the Presidio, a summary of the Mexican Period, 1822-1846, under Theme XV - subtheme - The War with Mexico, has also been included. The following report was prepared by Charles W. Snell, Region Four Office, San Francisco.

A
correction
of words
available.

Also, Theme XIII, Mil. & Pol. Affairs 1830-60

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Part I -
Spanish Period - 1776-1822
Recommended for Exceptional Value
under Theme IV - Spanish Exploration and Settlement

Historical Significance: The Presidio at San Francisco, guarding the finest harbor on the Pacific Coast of North America, played a significant role in extending Spanish settlement into Northern California. Under the guarding aegis of this post, from 1776 to 1822, were founded four missions, one pueblo, one royal ranch, and one asistencia; the Presidio was also the base for the great Spanish exploring expeditions that penetrated the interior and area north of San Francisco Bay in 1817 and 1821.¹ From an original population of 63 soldiers, settlers and priests in 1776, the district protected by the Presidio had grown to include, by 1819, a total Spanish and Mexican population of about 670 individuals; and the Indian neophytes of the missions numbered about 4,000 more.

In addition to its original function of suppressing the Indians, the Presidio, after 1792, assumed an even more important role; the post became the northernmost bastion of the Spanish Empire and the chief barrier against British, Russian and American expansion south of the Golden Gate. Subjected to the greatest pressure in California, the original fortifications of the Presidio were accordingly expanded in 1793-94 and 1797. The Presidio succeeded in fulfilling both guardian roles until 1822, when Mexico won its independence from Spain.

¹
Missions founded: Mission San Francisco, October 9, 1776; Mission Santa Clara, 1777; Mission Santa Cruz, 1791, and Mission San Jose, 1797. Royal Ranch - Rancho del Rey, founded in 1777 with 115 cattle, had 1,215 head by 1791. The Pueblo of San José Guadalupe was founded at San Jose in 1777. The Asistencia at San Rafael, the first Spanish establishment on the north side of San Francisco Bay, was founded in 1817.

The general site for the Presidio at San Francisco was selected by Lieutenant Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza on March 28, 1776, and the work was executed by his lieutenant, José Joaquin Moraga.² Construction began on July 26, 1776, and by September 17 of the same year enough progress had been made to permit a formal founding ceremony to be held. The Presidio at San Francisco was the third of the four presidios to be erected by the Spanish in California.³

The plan for the San Francisco Presidio included a church, commandant's house, guardhouse, houses for the soldiers, and warehouses. The buildings were constructed in a very primitive manner -- with palisade walls and flat roofs covered with sod or tules.

Along with the fort, a military reservation for the fort or presidio was laid out, which, according to Spanish law, included 1,564 acres of land. By the end of 1776 the personnel of the Spanish establishments at the Presidio and the new mission totaled 63, including 39 officers and soldiers, eight settlers, 13 servants, two priests, and the presidial storekeeper.

Construction on the Presidio continued. The first palisade walls were to be replaced with adobe walls, but progress proved to be very slow, as the rainy weather caused the adobe brick to deteriorate

²The original site selected by Anza was the point on which Castillo de San Joaquin was erected in 1793-94 and later Fort Point in 1853; Moraga built the presidio on site about $1\frac{1}{3}$ mile southeast of the spot picked by Anza.

³Three other presidios in California were: San Diego, July 1, 1769, becoming officially a presidio in 1774; Monterey, established in June 1770; and Santa Barbara, established April 21, 1782.

so rapidly that it was necessary to begin rebuilding the adobe portions before the work was even completed. Indeed, Spanish officials seemed unable to comprehend that a different type of construction was needed at San Francisco from that used in the drier Southwest. Year after year, from 1776 to 1822, adobe buildings were constructed or repaired at San Francisco in the dry season, only to be washed out in the rainy period. In 1792, twenty-five years after the establishment of the San Francisco Presidio, and in spite of constant effort, only three out of the four original walls had been completed.

The finest description of the early Spanish fort is provided by Vancouver (see also 1792 Spanish Map).

On the evening of November 14, 1792, Captain George Vancouver sailed his ship Discovery through the Golden Gate and anchored in Yerba Buena Cove, the first non-Spanish ship, insofar as existing records show, to enter San Francisco Bay. Vancouver inspected the presidio and wrote:

"We rode up to the presidio, an appellation given to their* 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 200 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 uninclosed 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 14 feet high, and five in breadth, and was first formed by uprights and horizontal rafters of large timber, between

* military establishments

Plan of Quadrangle of the Presidio of San Francisco, 1792
drawn by Hermenegildo Sal, Comandante, (Bancroft Library)

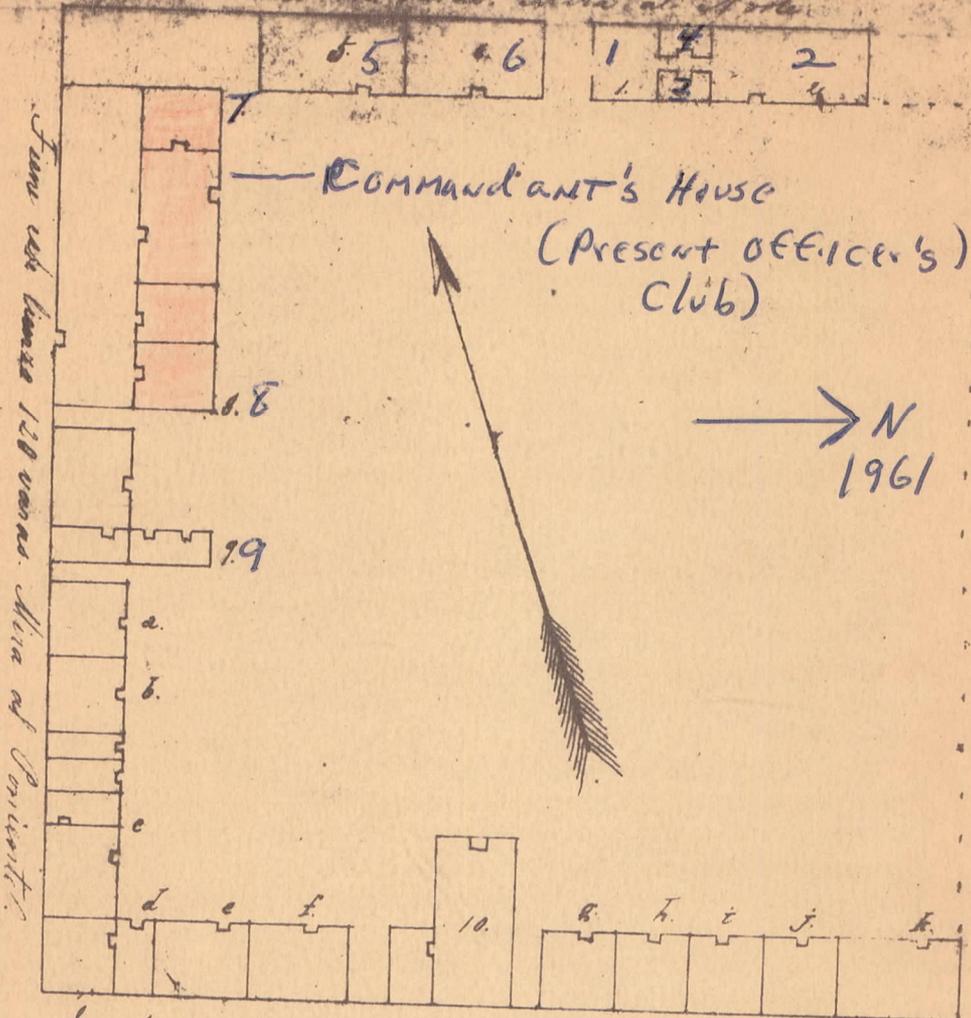
L E G E N D

North Boundary	116	varas*	(322 feet)
East Boundary	120	varas	(333 feet)
South Boundary	116	varas	(322 feet)
West Boundary	120	varas	(333 feet)

1. GUARDIA de PREVENCIÓN (Sentry Station), $6\frac{1}{4}$ varas long, $4\frac{1}{2}$ varas wide, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ varas high.
2. CUARTEL (Barracks), 16 varas long, $4\frac{1}{2}$ varas wide, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ varas high.
- 3.&4. CALABOSOS (Prison Cells), 2 varas long, $1\frac{1}{2}$ varas wide, and 2 varas high.
5. ALMACEN de ROPA (Clothing Warehouse), 18 varas long, 6 varas wide, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ varas high.
6. ALMACEN de VIVERES (Food Warehouse), 18 varas long, 6 varas wide, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ varas high.
- 7.&8. CASAS del COMANDANTE (Commander's Quarters), $37\frac{1}{2}$ varas long, 6 varas wide, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ varas high.
9. CASA del SARGENTO (Sergeant's Quarters), (No dimensions given.)
10. IGLESIA (Church), 19 varas long, 8 varas wide, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ varas high.
11. CASA MATA (Slaughter House), (Not specified.)
- (a) to (k). HABITACIONES de la TROPA (Enlisted Men's Quarters).

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

Plan de la casa de los cuarteles. Mirando al Norte



Escala que demuestra las habitaciones que tiene el Presidio de San Francisco.

- Nº 1. Guardia de Precesion, tiene de largo $6\frac{1}{2}$ de ancho $4\frac{1}{2}$ y $3\frac{1}{2}$ de alto.
- 2. Cuartel de largo $16\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{1}{2}$ de alto y $4\frac{1}{2}$ de ancho.
- 3 y 4. Calabozos de $2\frac{1}{2}$ de alto, 2 de largo y $1\frac{1}{2}$ de ancho.
- 5. Almacan de ropa, $18\frac{1}{2}$ largo, $4\frac{1}{2}$ alto y 6 ancho.
- 6. Idem de viveres " " " " " "
- 7 y 8. Casas del Comandante, $3\frac{1}{2}$ largo, 6 de ancho y $4\frac{1}{2}$ de alto.
- 10. Oficina $19\frac{1}{2}$ de largo, 8 de ancho y $4\frac{1}{2}$ de alto.
- 11. Casa mata, $4\frac{1}{2}$ en cuadro y $2\frac{1}{2}$ de alto.
- 9. Casa del Sargento.

Habitaciones de la Forja desde a hasta k.

(Es copia suada del original).

"which dried sods and moistened earth were pressed as close and as hard as possible; after which the whole was cased with 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.

"The Spanish soldiers composing the garrison amounted, I understood, to 35; 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 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 white-washed 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 ceilings 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...."

Vancouver's observations had quickly revealed that the Golden Gate was defenseless. He noted that the presidio had only one brass cannon, a three-pounder mounted on a carriage that was beginning to fall apart, and that the only other cannon had no carriage at all, but was mounted on a log at the headlands.⁴

In 1788 foreign intrusion into the North Pacific led to renewed activity in the Spanish empire. Reports of Russian and English advances into this region, and of the appearance of the first American ships caused new Spanish exploration.⁵ In 1789 José Martínez found a small English tradingpost and English and American ships at anchor at Nootka Sound. Acting on orders, Martínez seized the English vessels and dismantled the tradingpost. As a result of her difficulties and diplomatic defeat by the British at Nootka Sound, Spain decided to strengthen her strategic position at the Golden Gate.

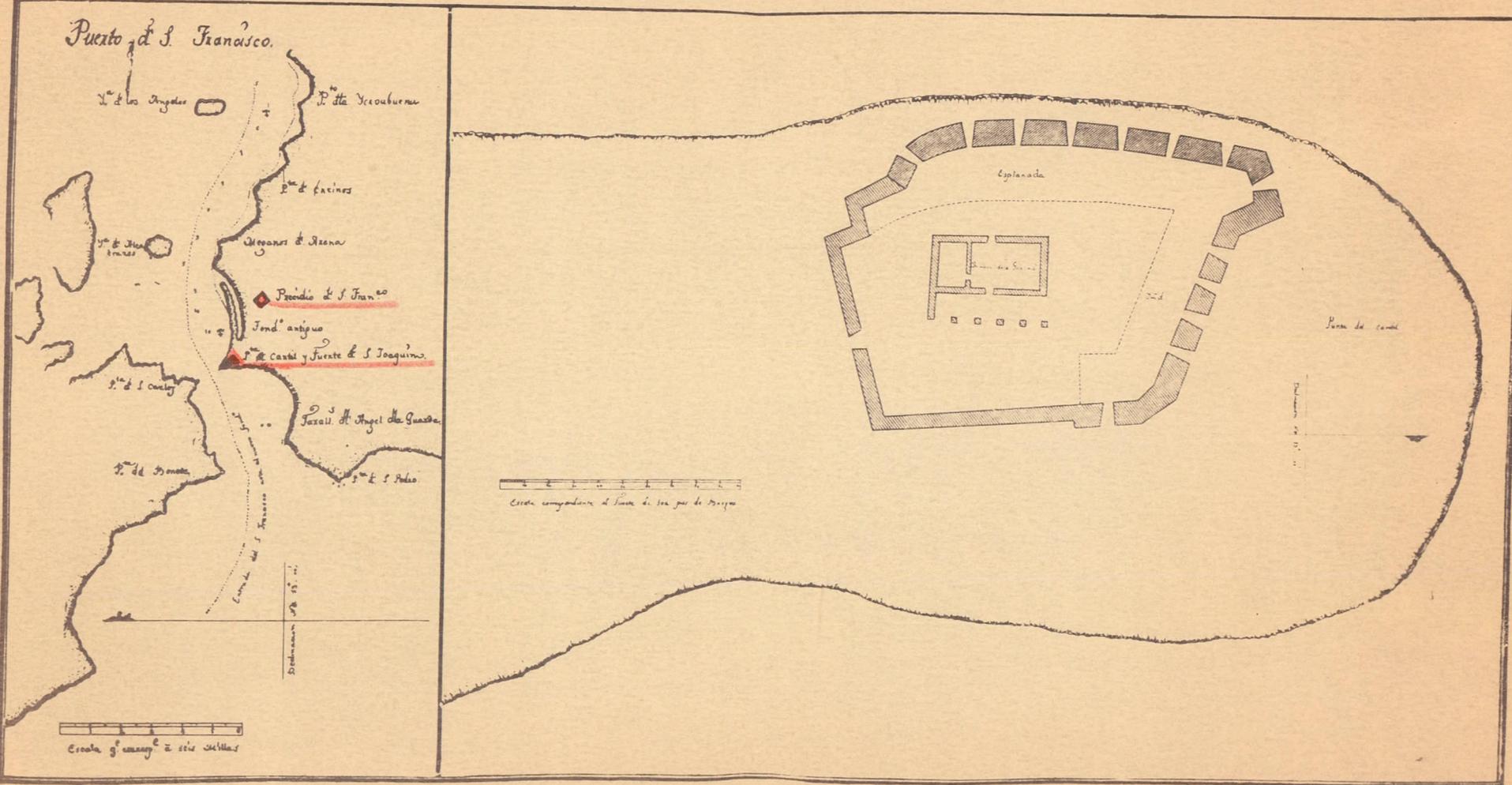
Vancouver's visit in 1792 further alarmed the Spanish; the Viceroy Revilla Gigedo decided to build a new fort at the San Francisco Presidio. The site for the new work was situated on a rock promontory named Punta del Cantil, located about one and one-third miles northwest of the original presidio.⁶ (See 1794 plan.) The new fort, named Castillo de San Joaquín, was located about 100 feet above the shoreline of the Golden Gate. Construction began in the summer of 1793

⁴ George Vancouver, Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Around the World (6 vols., London, 1801) III, 9-13.

⁵ The American ships in 1788 were the Columbia and Lady Washington, captained by James Kendrick and Robert Gray.

⁶ This was the point that Anza had chosen on March 26, 1776 as the proper site on which to erect the presidio.

Plano que manifiesta el Puerto de San Francisco situado en la Costa Septentrional de California en 32.° 31' de Altura de Polo N. y en 122.° 55' al S. del Meridiano de San Blas como han mismo el Fuerte nombrado de San Joaquin colocado en la punta del cantel del mismo Puerto construido por el Señor Gobernador vizcaino de la Pninsula de California D. Jose Joaquin de Arce en el presente año de 1794 por Orden de Coma S. M. C. de Sevilla Agodo Vizoy de N. E. adviriéndose que los batios de muralla q' lleva el color de carmin indica sea de cal y canto y lo restante que hace frente ala entrada del Puerto es de piedra viva. Nota que desde la repugnancia del agua en la punta del cantel con el canto de la muralla tiene de Altura 120 pies



PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO, AND BATTERY OF SAN JOAQUIN, 1794. (Hitherto unreproduced)

and officially completed on December 8, 1794. Total cost was over 6,000 pesos. The Castillo was an irregular-shaped quadrilateral whose exact shape and dimensions have been subject to dispute, probably due to modifications of the fort's shape during later repairs and reconstruction. Dimensions as given by various authorities vary from 100x120 feet to 140x240 feet.

When completed, the fort had about 12 cannon. The heaviest had four wheel carriages and were positioned to overlook the sea and the Golden Gate. The wall on that side, 10 feet thick, was faced with brick, but had an adobe core. Within the wall was an esplanade, approximately twenty feet wide and constructed of heavy timbers, upon which was spiked a heavy plank flooring. The gun carriages rested on this esplanade. On the land side the walls of the Castillo were only about five feet thick. The guns on this side were smaller and were mounted on two-wheeled carriages which rested on the ground, since an esplanade was constructed for the heavy guns only. In the center of the Castillo was located a barracks, containing two rooms, built of adobe bricks and roofed with tules.

In 1793 the original armament was increased from two to eleven cannon. Six of these guns are still in San Francisco.⁷ In 1796 the 35-man garrison of the presidio was increased 100% by the arrival of 26 Catalan volunteers, eight artillerymen and additional cannon.

⁷Douglas Watson, "San Francisco's Ancient Cannon, An Inquiry into their History and Origin," California Historical Society Quarterly, XV, No. 1 (March, 1936), 58-59. These guns are reputed to have been cast in Peru between 1628 and 1693.

In March, 1797 construction was begun on a third fortification, known as the Battery at Yerba Buena. This work was located at Point San José (or Yerba Buena, later Black Point and now Fort Mason), about two miles to the southeast of Castillo de San Joaquín. The new battery was completed in June, 1797 and was constructed of brushwood fascines and earthworks hastily put together. The battery had eight embrasures and mounted five eight-pounders. No permanent garrison was kept at this post; a sentinel paid it a daily visit.

These improved fortifications were the result of Spain's European wars with France and England, as well as the result of increased British activities in the North Pacific.

On April 5, 1806 a new intruder arrived on the California scene, when Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov, imperial inspector of the Russian establishments in America, sailed into San Francisco on the Russian-owned ship Juno. Seeking a supply of food to provision the Russian post at Sitka, Rezanov, after overcoming the many difficulties placed in his way by the Spaniards, attained his goal and left San Francisco for Sitka on May 21, 1806. Rezanov died in Siberia during his return trip to Russia, but his visit to San Francisco had a strong influence upon Russian plans for expansion into California.

Rezanov recommended the acquisition of a site on the California coast where agriculture might be developed to support the Russian posts in Alaska and trade could be initiated with the Spaniards. He considered it safe to ignore Spanish claims to land north of San Francisco Bay and, after establishing a foothold on that coast, Rezanov believed that Russia might eventually seize all of Spanish California. In 1809,

1829

Ivan A. Kuskov, sailing from Sitka in the Kodiak, arrived at Bodega Bay in Northern California. Here he remained until August, exploring the region, constructing temporary buildings, and trading with the Indians. In 1812 the Russians established a strong post at Fort Ross, and Russian and Aleut hunters soon appeared in the San Francisco Bay region in pursuit of the sea otter.

From 1810 to 1816, the San Francisco presidio, as Spain's northernmost outpost, was subjected to the greatest Russian pressure, and at a time when the presidio was completely isolated from the mother country. During this period Spain was completely helpless as a result of her European conflicts and the wars of independence which were disrupting the Spanish colonial empire. Mexico was torn by insurrections, and the viceroy had little power left to deal with problems on the fringes of New Spain. Six years were to pass before the first supply ship from Mexico was able to reach San Francisco again. Only the wealth of the missions and an illegal trade for Russian goods, in the San Francisco area, saved the Spanish military forces in California from disintegration.

In 1817, with order restored, the presence of the Russians at Bodega and Fort Ross again stimulated Spanish interest in the region north of San Francisco and in the Sacramento valley. Even as the last years of the Spanish empire approached, the Spaniards at San Francisco began to push their frontiers north of the bay.

News arrived in California in March, 1822 that Mexico had won its independence from Spain. On April 11, the soldiers and citizens of Monterey took the oath of allegiance to the Mexican government.

The formality was repeated at San Francisco on April 13, and the days of the Spanish empire in California had ended.

Condition of the Site (Spanish Period):

The Spanish military reservation of the presidio contained 1564 acres in 1776. Today this reservation contains about 1460 acres of the original reservation.¹

The site of the 1776 fort or presidio, which by 1792 measured 333 by 322 feet, now forms the southern portion of the Presidio parade ground.² With the exception of the altered Commandant's house, there are no surface remains of the Spanish fort. The fort site, however, is open and clear of intrusions.

Four of the original Spanish cannon are located on the parade ground and two other original guns are situated at Fort Mason.

The one surviving Presidio building -- the Commandant's house, is now known and utilized as the Officers' Club. The structure is located on the south side of Moraga Avenue and opposite the intersection with Graham Street. The building is a one-story adobe structure that was erected in 1776-78 as the headquarters and residence of Lieutenant José Joaquín Moraga. The house was slightly remodeled in 1850 and further altered in 1900. Electric fixtures were installed in 1912 and additional changes made in the house in 1915.

¹In 1884 and 1894 a total of 25 acres in the presidio were set aside as the San Francisco National Cemetery. On May 9, 1876, Congress granted a strip of land 80 feet in width, containing 62.79 acres, along the eastern side of the reservation to the City of San Francisco for street purposes. In 1928 10 acres of land on which the Palace of Fine Arts is situated was given to the City of San Francisco.

²The south wall of the presidio ran about 75 feet south of and parallel to Moraga Avenue. The east wall was bounded by and parallels Mesa Street. The west wall was situated a few feet west of and ran parallel to Graham Street.



Commandant's House, 1776-78
(present Officers' Club)

Moraga Ave. and Graham Street
San Francisco Presidio

June 10, 1958

Lee Abel
Neg. 618-B, Region Four

In 1934, under a Federal and Local Civil Works Administration project, the Commandant's house was "restored" to its original architecture. This work included the rebuilding of the roof -- using "Spanish Tile" -- and side wall of the assembly room, reconstructing "Spanish ceilings," remodeling to a "Spanish" fireplace, and stuccoing the entire front of the building. The original structure has also been much enlarged by later additions made to the rear (south) side of the building. In spite of these considerable alterations, the front portion of the building still incorporates about 75% of the original Spanish adobe walls.³

Castillo de San Joaquín, built in 1793-94, was located at the site now occupied by Fort Point. All traces of the Spanish fort were destroyed in 1853 during construction of the American fort at this site.

The Spanish battery at Yerba Buena, built in 1797 at Point Medanos (or Point San José, or Black Point), is now included in Fort Mason. There are no remains of the Spanish battery, but the site, located in the small park north of the loop at the north end of Sheridan Road, is marked by a historical marker.

Recommended for classification of exceptional value, under Theme IV, is the original site of the 1776 fort, at the southern end of the present Parade Ground. Included in the recommended site are four original Spanish cannon and the altered Commandant's house.

³The original adobe walls remaining in 1934 are clearly shown on the plan "Original Presidio Boundary -- Survey made by C. St. Croix in 1939 under direction of Major James D. Carter." Plan included in Historic American Buildings Survey report.

San Francisco Presidio

References:

George Vancouver, Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Around the World (6 vols., London, 1801) III, 9-13;

Russell C. Ewing, "The Founding of the Presidio of San Francisco," (Typescript, Berkeley, 1936) California Registered Historical Landmark Series, No. 79, 28 pp.

George Tays, "Castillo de San Joaquín" (Typescript, Berkeley, 1936) California Registered Historical Landmark Series No. 82, 50 pp.

Douglas Watson, "San Francisco's Ancient Cannon, an Inquiry into their History and Origin," California Historical Society Quarterly XV, No. 1 (March, 1936) 58-59.

Captain B. L. Meeden, "Army's Finest Club Building -- Restoration of the Officers' Club at the Presidio of San Francisco," The Quartermaster Review, November-December, 1934.

Historic American Buildings Survey -- "The Presidio of San Francisco, 1776-1846," Wm. Howard Knowles, Project Supervisor -- an important collection, of some 200 pages of primary and secondary descriptions of the Presidio, including historical plans, maps, drawings, and many historical prints and photographs; the report, however, lacks a summary and conclusion on the evidence contained.

Lawrence Kinnard, "History of the Golden Gate and its Headlands - Part I - From the Beginning to 1846," first six chapters, 135 pp. (Typescript, San Francisco) completed by Dr. Kinnard for the N.P.S. in September and December, 1961). This report contains the finest interpretation of the significance of the Presidio in the Spanish period.

Part II

Mexican Period, 1822-1843

(Sites Also Evaluated under subtheme - The War with Mexico -
_____ of Theme XV) _____

Careless and negligent as Spain had been of its defenses and military establishments in California, Mexico was to be even more so. A period of decadence was now entered, during which the physical disintegration of the Presidio and Castillo de San Joaquín, due to rainy weather and little or no repairs, proceeded rapidly. In spite of this neglect, however, the Mexican government did maintain a garrison of varying size -- ranging from 50 to 75 men, at the San Francisco Presidio from 1822 to 1835.

In this latter year, Lieutenant Vallejo, the commandant of the northern frontier, was transferred with most of the Presidio garrison to the newly established frontier post of Sonoma. Only seven artillerymen were left to guard the ruined presidio. The new town of Yerba Buena, now San Francisco, was also founded in 1835. By the end of 1836, all regular troops had been withdrawn from the Presidio, and only a few retired soldiers and their families remained at the San Francisco forts. By 1840 the forts were in ruins.

The climax of the Mexican period at the Presidio occurred during the Bear Flag Revolt of 1846. On July 1 of that year Captain John Charles Frémont and Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie, with about 20 American settlers, made an amphibious attack on Castillo de San Joaquín. Crossing San Francisco Bay in a launch, Frémont spiked the ten cannon at this fort, waded back to the boat, and returned across the bay. As Bancroft remarked, "In the absence of a garrison, with no powder,

"it is not surprising that, as far as can be known, not one of the ten cannon offered the slightest resistance."¹ On July 9, 1846 Commander John B. Montgomery, of the sloop-of-war Portsmouth, raised the American flag at the town of Yerba Buena and took possession for the United States. On March 8, 1847 Colonel Stevenson's regiment of New York Volunteers arrived in San Francisco and were quartered at the Presidio, also taking possession of Fort San Joaquín. With the signing of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, on February 4, 1848, ending the war between Mexico and the United States, the Presidio and Fort San Joaquín were formally ceded to the United States.

As has been noted, there are no remains of the Castillo de San Joaquín, which stood on the site that is now occupied by Fort Point.

¹ Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of California (7 vols., San Francisco, 1886) vol. V, 177.

Part III

American Period -- 1848-1860 -- Fort Point

Recommended for Classification as Possessing Exceptional Value under
Theme XIII - Political and Military Affairs, 1830-1860

Significance: Fort Point stands today as a classic example of a coastal fortification of the mid-19th century -- the greatest to be erected on the West Coast of North America and one of the best examples in the United States. This massive fortification also symbolizes the commercial and strategic importance that the great harbor of San Francisco has had in the development of the western United States.

With the exception of a six-year period, the Presidio has served from 1849 to date as the headquarters of the Department of the Pacific.¹ From this post were directed the campaigns against the Indians of the Far West as well as all military preparations for the defense of the Pacific Coast.

Among the distinguished soldiers who held command at the Presidio during the 19th century were: Albert Sidney Johnston, Edwin V. Sumner, George Wright, Irvin McDowell, Henry W. Halleck, George H. Thomas, George M. Schofield, O. O. Howard, and Nelson A. Miles.

The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed February 4, 1848 and ending the war between Mexico and the United States, formally ceded the Presidio and Fort San Joaquin to the United States. By two Executive Orders, dated November 6, 1850 and December 31, 1851, signed by President Millard Fillmore, the former Spanish military reservation known as the Presidio, including the 1776 fort and Fort San Joaquin, and also Point San José, or Black Point, were reserved "for public purposes." United States troops occupied the Presidio on March 7, 1847;

¹From 1851 to 1857 headquarters of the Department of the Pacific were located at Benicia Arsenal, California.

the old Spanish forts were repaired and put into a defensible condition. From 1849 to 1859, the Presidio garrison was made up of one Company of the 3rd Artillery .

In 1851 plans were prepared for fortifying San Francisco Bay. This project called for the construction of two new forts, one at the entrance to the bay, on the site occupied by the ruined Castillo de San Joaquín (at Fort Point), and second on Alcatraz Island. Batteries were also proposed for construction on Angel Island and at Point San José (Black Point, now Fort Mason). These latter two batteries, however, were not erected until 1863-64. Work was started on the two forts in 1853, when Congress appropriated \$500,000 for this purpose.

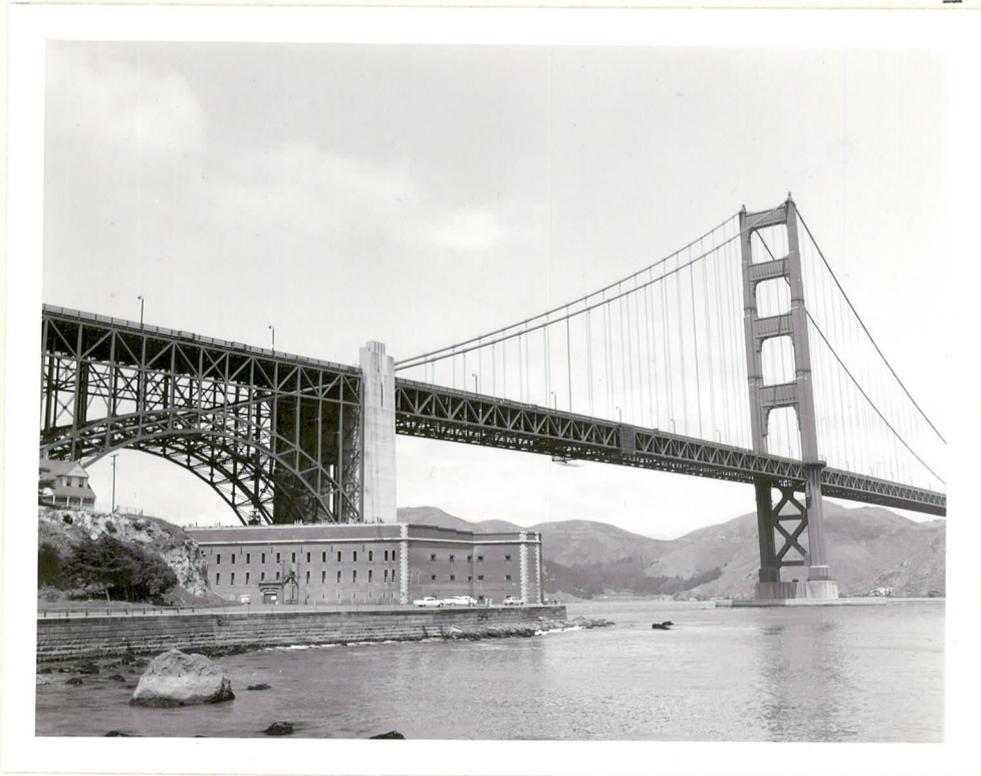
The engineers in charge of this construction were, successively, Lieutenant Colonel James L. Mason, Major J. G. Barnard, Lieutenant Colonel R. E. De Russy, and Major Z. R. Tower. The fortification constructed on the south side of the Bay entrance, on the former site of Fort San Joaquín, was called the "fort at Fort Point" until 1861, when the designation "Fort Point" first appeared in orders and returns. In 1882, general orders officially changed the name of "Fort Point" to "Fort Winfield Scott."

The first great task in the construction of Fort Point was the reduction of the 100-foot high bluff on which the Castillo had stood, down to a level of about 10 feet above high water. Construction on Fort Point continued from 1853 until completion in early 1861. The cost of the fort was about \$2,800,000 -- and a 2,000-foot long granite sea wall built at this point cost an additional \$400,000. The fort on Alcatraz Island was completed in 1860 and cost \$600,000.

Description of Fort Point: Fort Point, modeled somewhat after the plan used in the construction of Fort Sumter, South Carolina, is built in the shape of an irregular quadrangle. The width is 150 feet, the longest side is 250 feet, and the height is 45 feet. The thickness of the walls averages about seven feet, but some walls are 36 feet thick. There are two bastions extending outward about 40 feet, one to the northeast and the second to the northwest, that permitted a flanking fire. The walls are constructed of brick and trimmed and finished with granite quoins at the angles. These walls enclose a paved courtyard, which is surrounded on the three sides facing the water with galleries of tiered brick arches. Here, located one above the other, are three tiers of gun ports. Above these is a fourth tier of guns, the barbette, which ran entirely around the four sides of the fort and covered the approaches from both land and sea. These four tiers once mounted 149 cannon. ||

On the land ^{side} is the well protected entrance to the fort, consisting of outer and inner sets of doors. The entrance has two heavy iron-bound doors, studded with large nails, and is secured by means of a long iron bar which pivoted on one of the doors. A passageway, with loopholes along the side walls to permit small arms to fire on any enemy who might force the outer doors, leads to a second set of strong doors. To the right of the inner doors is a group of three prison cells.

The fourth wall, located on the south or land side, contained shops and living quarters for the garrison. Shops for various utilities, such as wheelwrights, forges, and tools were situated on the first floor. On the second floor of the land side wall were located



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the officers' quarters. Each set originally had two bedrooms and a parlor. The separating partitions in these quarters have since been removed. The enlisted men's quarters were located on the third floor of the land side wall.

The galleries of the land side wall are supported by fluted iron columns. The second, third, and fourth floor galleries of this wall also have iron railings, with iron grills beneath. Three granite spiral staircases lead up to three towers. One staircase terminates in an octagonal metal lighthouse, built in 1856, that surmounts the northwest tower.

Originally, there were also two shot furnaces, each 15 feet in length, located in the courtyard; but these installations were removed at some date after 1890. Rain water caught on the sloping asphaltic roof, was carried through iron pipes to a double storage cistern situated below the fort.

Other Buildings in the Vicinity of Fort Point

A wharf used in the construction days was originally situated about 2,000 feet east of Fort Point. This site is now occupied by a more modern dock. Immediately south and southeast of these wharfs were located approximately 20 buildings, built between 1853 and 1862. The rare McDowell Map of 1879 identifies these buildings and the legend dates some. Among the buildings listed and dated are: the bakery, 1853; commanding officer's quarters, missionary storehouse, blacksmith shop, all built in 1858; officers' quarters, barracks, kitchens and mess rooms, laundresses' quarters, ordnance sergeant's quarters, and stables, all erected in 1862. Also shown is a group of eight unidentified buildings on the hill and southwest of the

Commanding officer's quarters. These buildings may have been built as early as 1853 for use of the construction personnel. None of these buildings exists today.

Fort Point in the Civil War (Theme XIV), 1861-65.

Bvt. Brigadier General Albert Sidney Johnston was in command of the Department of the Pacific, with headquarters at the Presidio, in mid-January of 1861. The troops at San Francisco at this time were Company I, 3d Artillery, stationed at the Presidio and Fort Point, and Company H of the same regiment, stationed at the fort on Alcatraz Island. In February, as war clouds gathered in the East, Johnston, acting under order, transferred two Companies (A and B) of the 3d Artillery from Fort Vancouver to San Francisco to strengthen the Golden Gate defenses. The small, unfinished portion of the defenses at Fort Point was also rapidly completed.

On April 9, 1861, Johnston tendered his resignation in the U.S. Army, which was accepted by the Secretary of War on May 3.¹ On April 25, 1861, Brigadier General Edwin S. Summer arrived at San Francisco and assumed command of the Department of the Pacific.

Fear of attacks by Confederate privateers and raiders on California gold shipments, which were vital to the Union cause, and also of the possible intervention in the war by France and England, lead to a further strengthening of the San Francisco Bay defenses. In November, 1861, Lime Point, on the north side of the Golden Gate entrance and opposite Fort Point, was taken possession of. But no guns were apparently mounted at Lime Point during the Civil War. In 1866, the Lime Point Reservation was purchased, at a cost of \$200,000 and much later became the site of Forts Barry and Baker.

¹Johnston then joined the Confederate Army and was killed at the Battle of Shiloh in 1862.

The reported armament for Fort Point in 1862 was 28 42-pounders and two 24-pounders in the lower tier; 28 8-inch columbiads and two 24-pounders in the second tier; 28 8-inch columbiads and two 24-pounders in the third tier; nine 10-inch columbiads, 17 8-inch columbiads and 11 32-pounders in the fourth (barbette) tier -- in all, a total of 127 guns. In September, 1863, 10 additional 42-pounders were located in a new battery situated on the hill to the south of the fort.

In 1863-64 batteries were also constructed at Black Point (Fort Mason) and on Angel Island. From 1861 to 1865 the artillery complement at Fort Point consisted of one or two batteries of artillery, reinforced, from 1862 to 1865, by from one to eight companies of infantry.

The Civil War ended without the firing of a single shot in anger by Fort Point or any of the other Bay defensive works. However, had war with England or France ever materialized, a different situation might have occurred. No Confederate privateer attempted to enter San Francisco Bay, but Captain James I. Waddell, of the Shenandoah, was actually planning to make such an attack in 1865, when the war came to an end before he could put his project into execution.

The Later Years, Fort Winfield Scott, 1866-1910(Theme XXI)

Between 1870 and 1876 additional batteries were erected along the 100-foot contour line above Fort Point . Mounted in these earthen barbettes, which extended for about three-quarters of a mile, were Rodman guns and heavy mortars. Also built were traverses with 13 brick magazines. A few of these magazines still stand but are boarded up. Two of the Rodman guns, each weighing nearly eight tons, were found in this area and are now situated in the Ordnance Yard at the Presidio. These cannon, originally 10-inch smooth bores built in 1865, were modified by the insertion of eight-inch rifled alcoves in 1885.

On November 25, 1882, General Orders No. 133, War Department, issued by command of General William T. Sherman, officially changed the name of "Fort Point" to "Fort Winfield Scott." The entire western part of the Presidio reservation then took on the name of Fort Scott and soon became a system of powerful armaments and defenses. Fort Point's guns, including those of its exterior batteries, became obsolete with the advent of breech loading, disappearing guns, and other developments. Work on a new series of reinforced concrete installations thus began in 1893 and continued for about 15 years. The new batteries along the hillside included 6, 8, 10, and 12 inch guns on disappearing carriages, also 12 and 16 inch mortars, and three 15 inch dynamite guns. Most of the old (1863-1876) works on the bluff were destroyed by this new construction.

In 1897 the old Civil War guns and shot in Fort Point were made available for transfer to permanent Army posts for ornamental use. In 1901, such cannon in Fort Point as had not been disposed of by these means, were sold for scrap.

Fort Point was declared obsolete in 1905 and its batteries abandoned in 1914. The Golden Gate Bridge, constructed just west of Fort Point in 1933-37, now passes above and over a portion of the old fort.

Condition of the Site (Fort Point):

Except for the absence of her guns and the ravages of the elements, the brick and granite fort is much as it was when completed in 1861. All of the iron work is badly rusted, and the mortar pointing of the masonry is deeply eroded. The vacant fort is boarded up and has been little used in the present century. For location of Fort, see 1961 map following page 11.

Recommended as possessing exceptional value under Theme XIII, is Fort Point, the old 1853-61 fort.

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