

Cabrillo

NATIONAL MONUMENT • CALIFORNIA

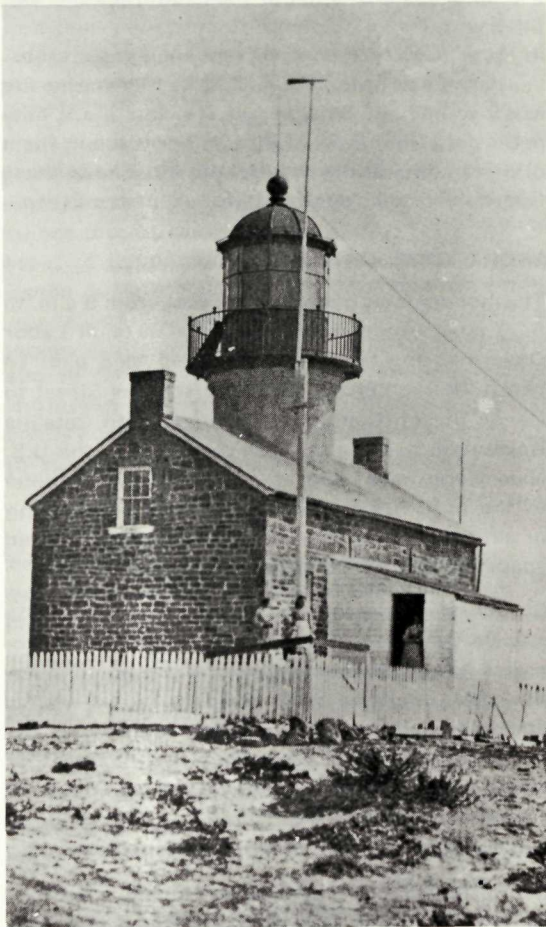
ADMINISTRATION

Cabrillo National Monument is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 6175, San Diego, CA 92106, is in immediate charge.

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U. S. Department of the Interior

National Park Service



OLD LIGHTHOUSE IN 1860'S

Four hundred years ago Europeans were sailing the seas to search out the secrets of their New World, so recently discovered. Fascinated by the unknown and lured by tales of legendary cities of gold, of shorter routes to the Orient's riches, of strange and beautiful Amazon-like women on the "Isle" of California, the more enterprising risked all in the attempt to gain fame and fortune.

One of these was Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, a mariner of Portuguese birth who was recruited by Pedro de Alvarado, Governor of Guatemala, to explore the yet unknown lands to the north. After Alvarado's untimely death, Antonio de Mendoza, Viceroy of New Spain, helped Cabrillo to obtain two small ships—the *San Salvador* and the *Victoria*—and sent him on the expedition that would make him the first explorer to visit the west coast of what is now the United States.

The expedition sailed from Navidad, on the west coast of Mexico, on June 27, 1542. After 3 months at sea—with frequent stops ashore to avoid bad weather, to take on wood and water, and to interrogate the Indians—it reached the site of present-day San Diego. On September 28 the ships passed by Point Loma and on into San Diego Bay, a "closed and very good port," which Cabrillo then called San Miguel. Going ashore at Ballast Point, a small spit of land jutting into the harbor, Cabrillo claimed the land for the King of Spain. While here they learned from the Indians of armed and

mounted Spaniards to the east (probably part of the Coronado expedition, which had set out 2 years earlier).

Cabrillo and his men left San Diego on October 3 and continued north, passing Catalina and San Clemente Islands, Point Conception, and Monterey Bay. Beyond Point Reyes, storms drove the ships out to sea. Turning south, they sailed to San Miguel Island, one of the Channel Islands, where on January 3, 1543, Cabrillo died from injuries sustained in a fall several weeks earlier.

After Cabrillo's death, the expedition continued under Bartolome Ferrello. Turning north again, it sailed to, and probably beyond, what is now the southern boundary of Oregon. Storms and dwindling supplies, however, forced Ferrello to turn south. After a brief stop at San Diego again, the expedition succeeded in reaching Navidad in the spring of 1543.

Cabrillo's voyage, while representing but an incident in the many land and sea explorations by which Spain gained a foothold in the New World, provided the Spanish with a new knowledge of the Pacific coast, its climate, and its people. It uncovered no cities of gold or great civilizations, but it did serve as an incentive to the Spanish to continue their investigation of the Pacific coast and helped to open the way for others, in centuries to come, to settle the land, to build cities from the ocean's edge to the mountains, and to fulfill the promise of the new discovery.



CABRILLO STATUE, CARVED BY ALVARO DeBREE OF PORTUGAL

