$3.00

NOTICIAS
del
PUERTO de MONTEREY

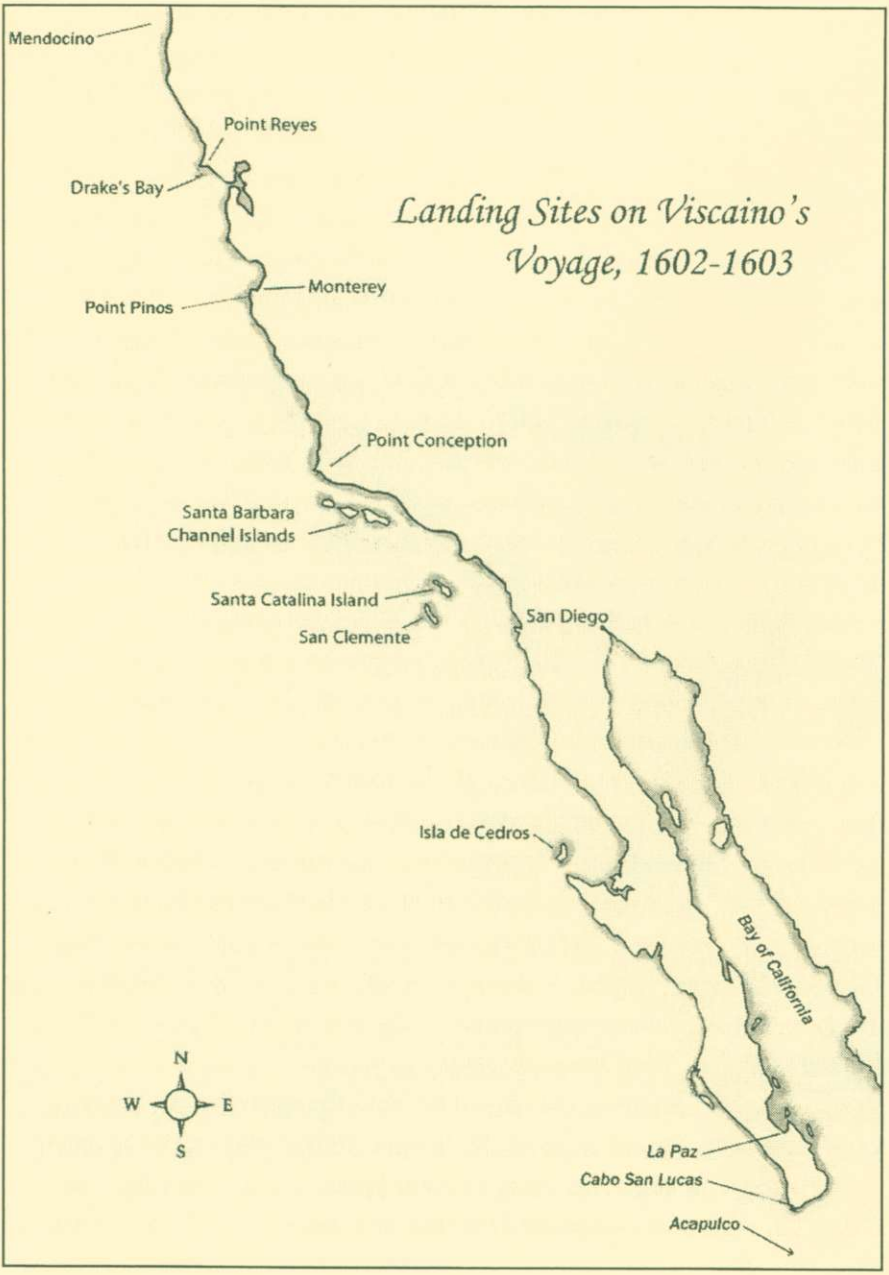
A Quarterly Bulletin of Historic Monterey Issued by
The Monterey History and Art Association

Vol. LI No. 4 Winter 2002

Inside: Journal of the Vizcaíno Expedition

Special Edition

Marking the 400th Anniversary of the Naming of Monterey


Landing Sites on Viscaino's Voyage, 1602-1603
Mendocino
Point Reyes
Drake's Bay
Monterey
Point Pinos
Point Conception
Santa Barbara Channel Islands
Santa Catalina Island
San Clemente
San Diego
Isla de Cedros
Bay of California
La Paz
Cabo San Lucas
Acapulco
N
W
E
S

Portions of the *Journal of the Vizcaíno Expedition* Along the Pacific Coast from November of 1602 to February of 1603, Including Impressions of Monterey Bay and Surrounding Area

*Adapted by Julianne Burton-Carvajal from the translation by Donald M. Craig (**Noticias** volume VIII:4, 1964 and volume IX:1-3, 1965)*

INTRODUCTION

Exactly 400 years ago, by dint of determination and nautical skill, challenging the whims of wind and current, three small ships under the command of Sebastián Vizcaíno ventured forth from Acapulco. Hugging the jagged outer shore of the "island" of California, disembarking to reconnoiter wherever they could, but increasingly hampered by raw and raging winter weather, they finally reached their designated goal. Cape Mendocino was 1846 nautical miles north of their starting point, but they almost certainly had sailed double that distance, continually tacking back and forth to catch the fickle currents, frequently separated and doubling back again and again to locate one another.

At Mendocino, stormy conditions prevented either disembarking or pressing onward. Commander, counsellors and crew had just made the reluctant but inescapable decision to turn back (the third ship had done so weeks earlier, from the Port of Monterey) when another violent storm drove the remaining two ships, separately, even further northward along territory that they didn't even manage to name.

Reading this journal gives the word "hardships" a new freight of meaning. Only three fourths of the intrepid crew survived the voyage, the first expedition exclusively charged with exploring the outer coast of the two Californias, lower and upper. Those who returned owed their lives to the generous assistance of the Native Californian peoples they encountered enroute (like the Pericú fisherman on the cover) as much as to the combined expertise of their commander and his counsellors.

The story told in the following ship's diary, in a straightforward and unembellished manner, is both fascinating and harrowing. In order to produce a compact version that will appeal to 21st century readers, I have made extensive minor modifications to Donald Craig's 1964 translation,

originally published in four separate issues of this journal. These changes include adding section titles and adjusting paragraph divisions, modifying word choice and word order, eliminating redundancies as well as supplementary accounts inserted by Craig, and replacing explanatory footnotes with clarifications inserted into the narrative [in square brackets].

Craig and other translators use the term "general" to designate Vizcaíno, but I have substituted "Captain General" because in Spanish "general" can be an adjective meaning above all others, as is the case here, where the term designates the commander of an armed fleet carrying both soldiers and sailors. Similarly, "admiral" means second-in-command, and "frigate" denotes a small, open, three-masted vessel.

Not having had the opportunity to check word-for-word against the original Spanish, and crediting Craig's translation as a highly competent effort, I have concentrated here on sympathetic improvements. Hopefully, readers will want to share this special commemorative edition with family and friends of all ages. The story told here certainly warrants it — even [especially!] 400 years later.

Background

In 1599, at long last, authorities in New Spain (today's Mexico) were instructed to take protective measures against the rampant Dutch and British piracy that was besetting Spain's Manila galleons as they returned from the Orient, heavy-laden with goods. The Count of Monterey, Viceroy of New Spain, appointed Spanish-born merchant Sebastián de Vizcaíno (1548-1628?) Captain General of a maritime expedition to explore the coast of the Californias.

This was the third and last official expedition along the northern portion of what the Spanish called the Mar del Sur or South Sea, following Juan Rodrigues Cabrillo in 1542 and Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeño in 1595. Returning through the Channel Islands, Cabrillo broke his leg and died after gangrene set in. Cermeño's ship was wrecked in upper California and he had to manage the long voyage back in the auxiliary launch.

Vizcaíno's was the only expedition charged with locating viable harbors and settlement sites. The authorities desired more information than the first two expeditions had managed to produce, and they had

finally realized the impracticality of assigning this task to the galleons returning from the Phillipines. The Viceroy, Count of Monterey, chose Vizcaíno because of his prior expedition along the inner coast of Baja California in quest of pearl fisheries. Though the earlier effort had been a disastrous failure, Vizcaíno was anxious to make another try. The Viceroy, swayed by an even more generous bid from another merchant, offered Vizcaíno the longer and more challenging opportunity instead.

The expedition was mounted in the service of His Royal Majesty Felipe III, weak and beleaguered king of a weakening and beleaguered empire. Three ships were assigned to the task. Vizcaíno captained the "San Diego," referred to in the journal as the *Capitana*, while Admiral Gómez de Corbán commanded the *Almiranta*, as the "Santo Tomás" is called in the journal, and Ensign Sebastián Meléndez Rodríguez captained the shallow-draft frigate *Tres Reyes* (Three Kings, also referred to as "the launch"). Only the first of these three men would survive.

Each ship carried a pilot and assistant pilots, as well as a priest of the Barefoot Order of Carmelites. The cosmographer (map-maker) was Captain Gerónimo Martín Palacios. The unnamed scribe was possibly the person responsible for making these journal entries. The journal notes again and again how, whenever major decisions were to be made, a council was convened. The Captain General was under strict instructions to take no decisions without consulting either his nautical or his military counsellors, hand-picked by the Viceroy for that purpose. Vizcaíno himself had no vote in these councils, except in the case of a tie.

The three ships carried a year's provisions and a total of almost 200 men: 126 sailors and soldiers, plus officers, friars, cabin boys, ships boys, and counsellors. Vizcaíno's son Juan was also on board. After many postponements, the little fleet finally departed Acapulco on May 5th 1602. Contrary winds immediately beset them, impeding their progress. They ended up struggling upwind for nearly seven long, depleting months before reaching the port of San Diego, where we take up the account. It was by then early November, not an auspicious time for venturing further northward, but they had no choice. A ferociously cold and stormy winter, anything but "pacific," was one of the many unknowns that awaited them.



San Diego

On the 9th of November 1602, we discovered two islands and three great rocks at 33° north latitude, a little more than two leagues [7 miles] from land, along with a very large bay. The Captain General ordered Ensign Meléndez to go ahead in the frigate, and the *Capitana* and the *Almiranta* followed after her, although the frigate was skirting the shore [a risk for the two larger ships].

The *Capitana* came up to the islands. So great was the quantity of seaweed around them, growing up from the sea bottom which was fourteen fathoms deep, that it lay stretched out on the surface for thirty-six feet. The *Capitana* sailed over it as if it were a green meadow. This sea grass [kelp] has very gaily colored leaves, wide like those of a squash plant, and a kind of fruit like very large capers, and a trumpet-like tube that resembles a pump. These islands were called San Martín [the Coronados].

The fires that the Indians were lighting on the mainland were so many that, by night, they looked like a procession and, by day, their smoke clouded the sky. We did not go ashore at this place because the coast is very rough.

The next day, Sunday the 10th of November, we came to a port, probably the best there is in the whole South Sea [Pacific Ocean] because, besides being protected against all winds and having a good anchorage, it is at 33½° north latitude, has very good drinking water, plenty of firewood, and fish in great variety, of which we caught quantities with both net and hook. On land there is an abundance of game — rabbits, hares, deer, very large quail, geese, thrushes, and many other birds.

On the 12th of November, day of glorious San Diego [Santiago or Saint James, the patron saint of Spain], the Captain General, admiral, priests, captains, ensigns and almost everyone sprang ashore. A shelter was built, Mass was said, and the feast of San Diego celebrated. Once all this was over, the Captain General called a staff meeting about

what had to be done at this port in order to dispatch all business in the shortest possible time. It was agreed that the admiral — with the chief pilot and the other pilots as well as the masters, caulkers, and sailors — would careen the ships and give them a good cleaning, which they certainly needed, while Captain Peguero, Ensign Alarcón, and Ensign Martín de Aguilar would each hasten to get water in for his ship. Ensign Juan Francisco and Sargeant Miguel de Legar would superintend the carpenters on the firewood detail.

No sooner was this settled than about one hundred Indians, their heads bedecked with many plumes, and armed with bows and arrows, appeared on a hill and with a great shouting called out to us. The Captain General ordered Ensign Juan Francisco to take four harquebusmen [soldiers armed with a primitive gun supported on a forked rest] and go forward with them, followed by Padre Antonio, who was to greet them warmly and bring them in peacefully. The Ensign had orders to let the Indians go if they fled from him, and to give them gifts if they stayed.

The Indians stood their ground, although with some misgiving, so the Ensign and the soldiers returned. Then the Captain General and his son and the admiral went out to the Indians. Upon seeing this, two Indian men and two women descended the hill and came to the Captain General, the women weeping all the while. He made much of them and embraced them, giving them some trinkets and encouraging the rest of the Indians by signs. These came down peacefully and were rewarded with gifts. The fish net was cast and the catch distributed among the Indians, which encouraged them all the more. Then they went back to their villages and we to our ships to finish our tasks.

On Friday November 15th, the Captain General boarded the frigate, taking Padre Antonio, his son, the chief pilot, and fifteen harquebusmen to make soundings in a great bay that extended far inland. He did not take the mapmaker because he was ill and busy on the papers dealing with the voyage. This night, the Captain General went forward with a rising tide, and dawn found him six leagues [22 miles] inside the bay, which he discovered to be the best and most suitable for most kinds of ships, safer than either El Ferrol [on the northwest tip of Spain] or Acapulco, and even better for careening because ships can be beached on the mud on the high tide and taken off at the ebb, even if they weigh one thousand tons.

In this report, I do not put ship's courses, nor landmarks, nor depths of water, because the mapmaker and pilots are themselves making sailing directions according to the art of navigation.

The Captain General and his companions went ashore in this bay, and after having walked more than three leagues [over 10 miles] along it, a great number of Indians appeared with bows and arrows and, although signs were made to them that we came in peace, they dared not approach. Only one Indian woman, so old that she looked to be more than 150 years, came up weeping. She was so ancient that her belly was as wrinkled as a blacksmith's bellows and her navel stuck out bigger than a gourd. The captain treated her kindly, giving her some beads and food.

The Indians, having seen this good treatment, came peacefully and led us to their villages, where they were harvesting the seed crop and heaping up little piles of it that resembled flax [possibly *chia*, a form of salvia, an important food source in the region]. They cooked their food in pots [probably made of steatite, or soapstone, by the Chumash Indians] and the Indian women wore animal skins. The Captain General would not permit any soldier to enter the villages, and since it was late, he went back to the frigate, with many Indians accompanying him to the beach.

On Saturday night he returned to the *Capitana*, which was already beautifully provisioned. More wood, water and fish were taken aboard, and on Wednesday the 20th of November we hoisted sail. I do not want to fatigue you by recounting how many times the Indians came to our encampment with skins of martens [weasels] and other things until the day we sailed, when they remained on the beach, calling to us. We named this port San Diego.

This same day of our departure, the Captain General had ordered Ensign Meléndez to go ahead in the frigate and explore a bay that lay to windward about four leagues [15 miles]. The pilot was to take soundings and sketch it and see what was in it. He did so, and the next day returned to the *Capitana* and reported to the General that he had entered said bay and that it was a good port, although a sandbar about two fathoms deep lay at its mouth. Inside, a heavily wooded lagoon ran inland, and many Indians were there. He had not gone ashore.

Two Pericú women from Cabo San Lucas; 1726 depiction based on 1712 description.

The Channel Islands

With this we continued our voyage, hugging the coast until November 24th when, on the eve of glorious Santa Catalina Day, we discovered three large islands [San Nicolas, Santa Catalina, and Santa Barbara]. With great difficulty, for the wind was dead ahead, we chose the middle island, which is more than 25 leagues [almost 100 miles] in circumference. Before we could drop anchor in the fine cove we found there, a host of Indians came out in eight-oared canoes made of cedar and pine planks, so nicely jointed and caulked that they seemed like galleys. Each canoe carried fourteen or fifteen Indians. They rowed right up without any fear whatsoever and, tying up to our ships, came aboard,

showing great joy at having seen us and urging us to go ashore with them. Like pilots, they guided us into the haven.

The Captain General received them very well, offering gifts, particularly to the children. We anchored, and the admiral, Ensign Alarcón, Padre Antonio, Captain Peguero and some soldiers landed. A great number of Indians were on the beach, and the women met us with broiled sardines and a kind of roasted fruit that tasted like sweet potato. There was fresh water, but at quite a distance from the beach.

The next day, the Captain General and the Father Commissary [delegate of the bishop] went ashore. A brush shelter was built and Mass was said, with more than 150 Indians being present and marvelling greatly to see the altar and the image of Our Lord Jesus Christ. They paid close attention to the Mass and, through signs, asked us what it meant. We let them know that it was from Heaven, at which they marvelled even more.

Once the divine offices were at an end, the Captain General went to their huts, where the women took him by the hand, leading him inside and giving him more food of the same type as before. When he returned to his ship, he brought with him six little girls from 8-10 years old whose mothers had trustingly allowed them to go with him. He clothed them in shirts and little skirts and put necklaces on them, and then sent them back to shore. When this was seen by the rest, they all came out in their canoes, bringing their daughters. We gave something to each so none returned without a garment.

These people wear sea lion skins for clothing, the women in particular being very careful to cover their nakedness. Their faces show their modesty. They are all, however, very thievish, taking anything that is left unguarded. They are great people for trading and bartering, because in dealing with the soldiers, they gave skins, shells, nets, string, and very well-made ropes, the latter in great quantity and resembling linen. Their dogs are like those of Castile [central Spain].

On Thursday November 28th, there was an eclipse of the moon that began on the eastern edge at a quarter past ten in the evening and lasted until after midnight. On the following day, the eve of San Andrés, we made sail, for the Indians told us by signs that farther up the coast of that same island there was a good port where they had dwelling places and food.

On the Day of San Andrés, at four in the afternoon, we came to the place that the Indians had described. They guided us with their canoes, and we found the port to be all that could be desired from the standpoint of safety and ground. There was a town on the beach containing more than 300 men, women and children. Ensign Alarcón went ashore to reconnoiter.

The next day the Captain General and many of our people landed. The Indian men received him well and the women embraced him, leading him to their houses. They are good-looking women. The Captain General, with great ceremony, gave them rosary beads while they gave him cactus fruit, seeds like the cereal seen in the Canary Islands, contained in some very well-made baskets, and water in basketry flasks woven on the inside and covered outside with a very strong varnish [possibly tar from the petroleum seeps, rather than the customary plant resin].

The Captain General went inland to see the coast on the other side of the island. On his way, he came upon a flat area cleared of brush where the Indians gather to worship an idol that was found there, a kind of demon with horns but no head, a dog at its feet, and many children painted all around. The Indians told the Captain General not to approach it, but he went right up and inspected it. He made a cross and put the name of Jesus above the head of the demon, telling the Indians that what he did was good and a sign from Heaven that the idol was a demon, at which the Indians marvelled. With the greatest goodwill, they took down the idol and welcomed our holy faith. By all appearances, these Indians are intelligent and eager to be our friends.

When the Captain General returned to the town, an Indian woman brought him two pieces of Chinese damask in fragments, telling him by signs that it had belonged to people like us who had come in a ship with Negroes during a great storm, and that the ship had been driven ashore further up the coast and shattered [a likely reference to the wreck of the Cermeño expedition in 1599]. The captain tried with all diligence to get two or three Indians to go with him so they might show him the place where the vessel was lost, promising to give them clothing. The Indians agreed and returned to the *Capitana* with him.

When we were weighing anchor to depart, the Indians said that they wanted to go ahead in their canoes instead of in the ship, for they feared that we would carry them off. [The Cabrillo expedition had

kidnapped four Channel Island men and two San Diego boys in 1543.] The Captain General, in order not to alarm them, answered, "Well and good." We hoisted sail and left the port, but the wind blew straight in our faces and did not allow us to go where the Indians pointed, so we had to put to sea, and the Indians returned to their village.

Thus we left this affair, because we did not have the launch, which had gone to explore another island that appeared to be near the mainland [Santa Catalina], and because the *Almiranta* was missing, having failed to make port. Besides, there was a dense fog, so thick that we could not see each other and, apparently, so many islands, rocks, and shallows that our pilots did not dare risk the *Capitana* among them in such weather.

So we proceeded on our voyage, and the next day the *Almiranta* and the frigate came up with us, thanks be to God who united us again. Upon our asking Ensign Meléndez what he had found on the island, he said that there were many Indians, and that by signs they had told him that on it were bearded people dressed like ourselves. Believing them to be Spaniards, he sent them a note and, in answer to it, eight bearded Indians dressed in animal skins had approached in a canoe. He did not find out anything more.

After this, the Captain General ordered that we continue on our way without further delay, for our people were suddenly falling sick, and the cold and winter weather were increasing. So we had to defer for the return trip any further investigation of what the Indians of Santa Catalina had told us by signs. Since we did not understand their language, all was confusion and there was little certainty about what they had said.

We left the island of Santa Catalina and the port of San Andrés on the 1st of December. On that day, as mentioned, we met up with the *Almiranta* and the frigate. The Captain General having consulted with the admiral and council members about what was to be done, it was agreed to go forward, since people were sickening and there was neither proper food nor medicine with which to cure them. If we stopped, the [charges and goals of the] voyage could not be carried out, and so we continued along the coast.

On Monday, December 2nd, we discovered two more large islands [Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa]. As we were going between the first of them and the mainland, a canoe came out to meet us carrying a great quantity of fish and two Indian fisherman who rowed with such speed

that they seemed to fairly fly. Coming up alongside, without saying a word, they circled the ship twice, so fast that it is impossible to describe. Once this was done, they drew up off the poopdeck quarter, bowing their heads courteously. The Captain General ordered that they be given a cloth full of bread. Taking it, they sent it back with their catch, most unselfishly, and then indicated by signs that they wished to depart.

They had scarcely gone when another canoe with five Indians arrived. This one was so well-designed and well-made that, from Noah's ark until now, there has never been seen among savages a canoe more beautiful and swift, with its planks better fastened. Four of the Indians rowed and an old man in the middle chanted, very much like in an Indian dance performance in Mexico, with the others making the responses. Before coming alongside, they stopped and the old man hailed us three times, going through much ceremony and bowing his head and body.

Upon his ordering the Indians to paddle, they sped around our ship so quickly that in a moment they had circled us twice. Once they stationed themselves off our quarter, the old man spoke, telling us by hand motions that we should go to his village where they would give us much food and water, for there was a river nearby. He passed over a water flask that he was carrying and a basket of food, a kind of mush made from acorn meal.

This Indian made himself so well understood by signs that the only thing lacking was the sound of our language. He even gave us to understand that to verify what he said, one of us should get in his canoe and go to his village while he himself would stay aboard our ship as hostage. The Captain General, seeing the courageousness of the Indian, ordered a soldier to get into the canoe. The Indian immediately and very cheerfully boarded us and told his oarsmen to go to the mainland and prepare food for all of us.

In the meantime, since the sun was setting, the *Almiranta* came up to us and a meeting of the Captain General, the admiral, the ensigns and the pilots was called to determine what should be done. The wind was filling our sails for the first time since we left Acapulco, and with this in mind, it was agreed that the Indians should be sent away with the assurance that we would visit their country some other day.

So insistent was the Indian that we go to his village that, in order to tempt us, he said he would give each of us ten women ["mujeres" also means wives] to sleep with. This Indian demonstrated such great

understanding that it was obvious he was no mere barbarian but a person of great intelligence. We showed him lead and tin and plates of silver. He tapped them all with his finger. The silver was good, he told us, but the others were not.

After the Indian departed, the northeasterly wind freshened our sails all night long, so nicely that we sailed more than fifteen leagues [55 miles] among islands, although not without some care and risk, for we did not know where we were going. Dawn found us hemmed in between the islands and the coast, tacking back and forth.

On the 4th of December, a northwesterly gale suddenly swept down upon us with great force and a high sea [probably soon after they rounded Point Conception]. We had to take in the bonnets and run with just the lower courses of sails, with the result that each vessel drew away from the others. The *Capitana*, by great good fortune, found herself at daybreak in the lee of an island.

A canoe with two Indians and a boy, small in body with blackened areas around his eyes, came out to invite us to visit their village, but the sea ran so high and there were so many shoals around the island that we dared not approach it. Out to sea we veered again, where we found the frigate. After making her the usual signal, she came up close aboard and it was agreed that she should go ahead of us, and we would see if there was any place where we might shelter from the wind. She did so, and meanwhile the *Almiranta*, which had been behind, also appeared.

The launch went ahead between this island and another. We were trailing her when the master-pilot and the other pilots declared it unwise to do so because, as there seemed to be many shallows and kelp beds, and night was coming on with seas and winds still raging, we ran the risk of shipwreck. The Captain General ordered us to tack out again, but the frigate remained deep between the two islands. The next day, the gale died down and we went on up the coast with heavy hearts, for the frigate was nowhere to be seen, and we hoped she had not come to misfortune.

We continued our voyage with favorable winds until the 12th of December. On Santa Lucía's Eve, to our great contentment, the frigate caught up with us. We were even more pleased when the Ensign and his pilot told us that they had been on the middle island, where there was a town with more than 200 large huts, each sheltering more than 40 Indians. In the center of the town were two poles sunk in the ground,

with one on top like a gallows. More than 20 canoes had come out to the frigate, but because they were all alone [without the accompanying ships], the sailors did not dare stay there. In addition to the great number of Indians at this place, there were indications that the mainland [today's Santa Barbara area] is heavily populated and fertile, with pine forests and oaks and a fine climate that, although it may get cold, is not enough to trouble one.

Monterey Bay, Santa Lucías, Carmel River

At four in the morning on Santa Lucía's Day, a southeasterly wind, the first we have had on this voyage, blew up and stayed with us until the next day at sunset. We arrived that night at a stopping place at 37° north latitude. The Captain General sent Ensign Meléndez on ahead to explore a great bay and see if there is any port, for this location is the best and most suitable for His Majesty's purpose that has been found on this voyage. Since the bay was so large and night was falling, we kept well out while he went in.

The next day, the 16th of December, the frigate came alongside and the pilot told the Captain General that they had found a good harbor, and brought a sketch of it. The Captain General called a council to determine the proper action. It was agreed to go to said port to fill the water casks and refresh the company, as there were many sick now. We came in the same day and anchored at seven in the evening.

The next day, the Captain General ordered Ensign Alarcón to land, bearing a message to build a shelter where Mass might be said, and to see if there was drinking water and what the soil was like. At a great live oak tree next to the beach, he found good water, and there the hut and enclosure were erected for saying Mass. Then the Captain General, admiral, commissary, captains, ensigns and all the rest of our people came ashore.

After Mass had been said and the day had cleared, for it had been very foggy, we found ourselves in the best port that anyone could desire. Besides being sheltered from all winds [except the northwesterlies, as they unfortunately failed to note], it has many forests of pine suitable for masts and yards, plenty of live oaks and white oaks, and water in great abundance, all close to the beach.

The land is fertile, like Castile in climate and appearance. Game abounds — stags like yearling bulls, deer, bison [probably elk], and enormous bears. Also rabbits and hares and flying creatures of all kinds — geese, partridges, quail, cranes, ducks, vultures and many other kinds of birds which I do not relate for fear of wearying you.

The land is heavily populated with Indians beyond number, who came to our encampment at different times, seemingly a mild and peaceful people. They indicated by signs that inland there were many towns. Besides fish and shellfish, the daily food eaten by these Indians are the acorn and another fruit thicker than a chestnut [common buckeye]. Such is what we were able to find out from them.

Because we had many men sick, and the *Almiranta*'s pilot and his assistant were very ill, without sufficient number of sailors to allow her to go on, and because the victuals were nearly exhausted due to our long delay in arriving here, it became difficult at this time for the Captain General to investigate everything without reinforcements of personnel and supplies. So a meeting was called with the admiral and the council to discuss what had best be done for His Majesty's service.

It was decided that the *Almiranta* would return to New Spain and carry to the Lord Viceroy information of the discoveries made up to our arrival at this stopping place. This ship would carry back the most desperately ill, requesting new men and equipment to enable us to conclude, once and for all, the exploration of what remained of this coast and of the Mouth of the Californias [the entrance to the Gulf of California], and detailing the time and place where they were to be sent [to join us]. Other things were discussed in the council and put in the letter to the Lord Viceroy, among them that we in the *Capitana* and the frigate would proceed to Cape Mendocino and beyond, weather permitting.

The aforesaid having been agreed upon, it was immediately put into action by providing the *Almiranta* with wood and water and passing in to her the sickest of the men. Everything that had been noted on the voyage — charts, sailing directions, diaries — was copied out, which was no small labor on account of the illness of the map-maker and scribe. But by doing everything possible with the greatest diligence in this as well as in the matter of wood and water, for the people were very sick, the *Almiranta* departed well-provisioned on Sunday, the 29th of December at eight in the evening, the admiral bearing instructions not

Late 1890s photograph of the coast oak tree where Mass was held by Viscaino (1602) and Father Serra(1770).

to stop in any port until he had reached Acapulco, to take the best care of the sick, and all the other things that were sent in said report.

The rest of us stayed behind, getting together what was necessary for our voyage to Cape Mendocino, with everybody working especially hard to take in water and firewood because of the terribly cold weather. The cold reached such an extreme that on New Year's Day 1603, a Wednesday, dawn broke with the mountains so covered with snow that they looked like the volcanos of Mexico. In the waterhole where we drew our water, the ice was as thick as a man's hand is wide, and the water-filled containers that had remained out all night were frozen solid. Although they were turned over and rolled around, not a drop came out.

In view of the critical state of affairs, necessity forced us all to set to work vigorously. Encouraged by the example of the Captain General, who pitched in to load the water-casks and help with other chores, and by the good efforts of Ensign Alarcón and Captain Peguero who, although he was sick, also came to aid us, and by the example of the pilots who did not shirk from our business, we were all ready to sail by Friday night, the 3rd of January.

Earlier that day, the Captain General, the commissary, and ten harquebusmen had gone inland toward the southeastern side because the former had received information that over there was a rushing river

that emptied into the sea [the Carmel River] and another good port [the Bay of Carmel], and also to see better the character of the land and the people and animals therein. He marched about three leagues [10 miles] and discovered another good harbor. Into it entered a large river that came down from high, snow-covered mountain ranges that were covered with pines, white and black sycamores, and willow trees. There was also a great plain made by said river, and on this strand were many animals as big as cows. These were apparently stags, although they differed in their coat, because their pelts dragged on the ground and their antlers were nine feet wide on each side [elk in winter peltage]. Every effort was made to kill one, but nobody could get within reach.

No people were found. Because of the great cold, they were living further inland. The Captain General sent Ensign Juan Francisco with four soldiers to a village to see what was in it but, finding it abandoned, he returned. The Captain General came back to the *Capitana* at dusk, and we swung on one anchor. At midnight, aided by an offshore wind, we made sail and, clearing the port, were so assisted by the favorable northeasterlies that by dawn, when the wind died down, we were ten leagues [36 miles] further on [at Point Año Nuevo].

Point Reyes and Cape Mendocino

Helped by the land breeze, we arrived at the place of the cove where the San Agustín was lost when Ensign Meléndez had been her pilot [at Drake's Bay in 1595]. Although chief pilot Bolaños also recognized this place, we did not stop because we were enjoying a favorable wind. The next day, however, a great gale out of the northwest forced us to take shelter in this bay. We anchored just outside to seaward [off Point Reyes, named for the date, January 6th, Day of the Three Kings], with the intent to land the next day, but at daybreak the landbreeze struck us and made us hoist sail.

While we were sailing away, there came out of said port two canoes with one Indian in each, both shouting to us to return to port and to beware of the lee. Since they did not dare approach the ship [where they could have communicated more effectively through hand gestures], we left them so as not to lose time. Indeed, it was not fitting to lose any, for people were very sick, and the cold was getting worse, and the frigate

was nowhere to be seen. In the recent storm out of the northwest, it had disappeared.

Aided by favorable winds from the land, we ran along the shore until the 12th of January, when the moon was in conjunction [dark]. We found ourselves as far as Cape Mendocino, so desired by us all, for it had taken us so much labor and difficulty to reach it.

So that our travails might be the more esteemed, God willed that the new January moon entered with such a fury of south wind and so much rain and fog that it put us in great doubt as to whether to go ahead or to turn back. For it was as dark by day as by night, and the seas were so great that we could neither make headway nor lie to. Everyone fell so sick that only two sailors could be found to man the maintopsail.

The Captain General, seeing our great necessity and the confusion we were in, called a meeting of the captains, pilots, and their assistants to discuss what more could be done in His Majesty's service. It was agreed that it was unwise to go forward, for there were no men fit for it, the cold was great, and the sea and winter weather were worsening all at once, so that if we did go on, we would all perish. In accord with this reasoning, the Captain General ordered us to return to Cape San Lucas as soon as weather permitted.

The next day the weather improved and the sun came out, allowing the pilots to calculate our position, which they found to be 41° north. Although we had determined to turn back, a windstorm out of the southwest hit us and sorely afflicted us. On the 17th of January, San Antonio's Day, at eight in the evening, with the sea on our beam, the ship met two waves that heeled her over so far that it was believed that her keel actually came out of the water and that the vessel was capsized. In that great rolling and pitching, both sick men and well were thrown from their beds, as was the Captain General from his, who fell on some boxes with a heavy blow that broke his ribs.

We remained in this predicament until the 20th, San Sebastián's Day, when the storm subsided and we found ourselves at latitude 42° with the currents and waves bearing us rapidly [northwards] toward the Strait of Anián [a long-sought but nonexistent clearwater passage across the upper North American continent]. This day we saw the mainland on the cape, as well as up the coast, all forested with great pines, with so much snow covering the peaks that they looked like volcanos, and the snow coming all the way down to the shoreline.

The Return Voyage: "With the Greatest Difficulty in the World"

On the 21st of January, God granted us a little northwesterly wind, such an obstacle to us on our voyage up and so longed for on our return, and it carried us out of our difficulty. We sailed back down along the coast, seeing again all that had been seen before, until the 25th when we got to this stopping place at the port of Monterey, where the Indians sent up smoke signals to us.

We did not enter the port, however, so great was our need for health. The sick were clamoring, [and we were] without either doctor or medicine or any comfort to give them except rotten jerked beef, sea biscuit mush, and weevil-infested beans and chickpeas. All of us had mouths full of sores, and our gums were swollen bigger than our teeth, so that we could scarcely even drink water [classic symptoms of scurvy, caused by lack of Vitamin C]. The ship resembled a hospital more than a vessel of the Royal Armada. The situation reached such an extremity that he who had previously been a helmsman now had to steer, set the mainsail, and do everything else, while those who were able to walk assisted at the cook-stoves, making mush and poultices for the sick.

Above all, we were greatly worried by the frigate's failure to appear, fearing that she had been lost in the last storm. But such was our distress, as just explained, that we could not wait for her [at Monterey] but planned to do so at Santa Catalina island, where we arrived on the 29th of January. Although many canoes of Indians came out with fish and other things, inviting us to go ashore, the Captain General did not dare cast anchor, for there were not enough sound men to raise the anchors up again, and the sick were perishing from hunger.

Thus we continued our voyage to the island of Cerros [Cedros, below San Diego], reaching it on the 6th of February. So great was our necessity for water and firewood that we anchored there by casting only one small anchor, intending to cut its cable and leave it behind if we could not summon the strength to raise it. The Captain General went ashore with six men. The strongest of these was too weak even to lift a water jar from the ground. With the greatest labor in the world, they collected twelve quarts.

The Indians of said island came down to the beach where the waterhole was, all painted in red, with their bows and arrows, playing flutes and making gestures with their weapons. Although the Captain General called to them and coaxed them, offering biscuits, the Indians refused. Nor would they behave peaceably but instead tried to disturb us and prevent us from getting water. This obliged the Captain General to order some harquebusmen to open fire over their heads in order to frighten them. With this, they fled up into the hills.

The next day, the Captain General commanded Ensign Alarcón to go ashore with the men and make firewood. He did so, and just after midnight on the 8th of February, we hoisted sail with the greatest difficulty in the world, got the anchor up, and continued our voyage with a fresh following wind.



AFTERWORD

Conclusion and Consequences of Vizcaíno's Voyage

Vizcaíno's difficulties were by no means at an end. His men were too incapacitated by scurvy to eat what meager food was available, and so their condition continued to deteriorate. Attaining Cabo San Lucas on February 11th, they were to have headed for the outpost at La Paz to await instructions from the Viceroy. But all parties agreed that once anchored there, they would not have the collective strength to get the ship underway again. They needed to reach a more fully-provisioned port — but which one, and how?

Vizcaíno directed the ship due east across the mouth of the Gulf of California toward the islands off Mazatlán, with "the sick lamenting, and those of us who could still stand or crawl unable to manage the sails." Reaching the Mexican mainland at last, the Captain General went ashore on February 18th with the only five men who were able to walk but, dazed and undernourished, they lost their way. Traveling in circles, the bedraggled little band was fortuitously saved from perishing by the passing of a pack-train enroute from Mexico City to Culiacán. The packers furnished the sailors with mounts and guided them to the nearest

town, where Vizcaíno was able to procure supplies enough to put his ailing crew on the road to recovery at last, thanks in particular to a local fruit that eased their scurvy. After two and a half weeks of nourishment, rest, and fair weather, the crew was fit to set sail once more on March 9th.

On March 21st, they finally reached their home port of Acapulco, where all were delighted to discover that the *Tres Reyes*, which they had feared lost, had arrived three weeks ahead of them. Their relief was mixed with distress when they learned that four of the frigate's men had perished enroute and that the *Almiranta*, sent back earlier from Monterey, had fared even worse, losing the majority of its crew to deprivation and disease. Three men were all who were healthy enough to bring it to port, six others recovered onshore, but 25 perished. Thirteen of the *Capitana*'s own number had been consigned to the deep; it is unclear from the sources whether or not the Captain General's young son was among them. All told, the expedition lost 48 men, one out of every four, to hunger, hardship and illness.

Although some commentators contend that few if any discoveries of value were made, Vizcaíno's costly and trying voyage left a lasting legacy of Alta California place names from San Diego to Point Reyes. Most of these derived from the *santoral* or calendar of saints' names — the prominent exception being Monterey, named in honor of the Viceroy who had sponsored the voyage. The Count of Monterey received the survivors with praise and material rewards, giving Vizcaíno the coveted command of the next Manila galleon.

Vizcaíno and Father Antonio de la Ascensión, author of a 250-page account of the expedition, both lobbied hard for Spanish settlement of California's Pacific coast. Padre Antonio took it upon himself to provide the King with a detailed set of instructions to this end. His plan called for a Spanish colony at Cabo San Lucas. This would serve as the launching point for settlements at Monterey and/or San Diego. (Watch for a future issue of *Noticias* featuring Padre Antonio's recommendations.) Vizcaíno's priority was establishing a settlement at Monterey.

Separate reports and missives from the Captain General and the Carmelite friar, with more conditional support from the Viceroy, managed to win over the King and his Royal Council of the Indies to this settlement plan. In 1607, 20,000 pesos from the Royal Treasury were authorized for the purpose, to be repaid eventually by the settlers.

Unfortunately, at the same juncture, the Count of Monterey was promoted to a new post in Peru, and the Mexican Viceroyalty was filled in quick succession by two other noblemen, the Marqués de Montesclaros, and Luis de Velasco. Both subsequent viceroys actively opposed and effectively obstructed the settlement plan. They feared that any Spanish settlement on the California coast would be a lure to freebooters from England and the Netherlands, and they argued that a harbor for reprovisioning and repair of the Manila galleons was not needed on the eastern rim of the Pacific but rather on the Asian side, where hurricanes tended to drive ships back toward Japan and China.

Even though reprimanded by the King for disparaging Vizcaíno's findings and taking extreme actions against his associates (one of whom was prosecuted and hanged), Montesclaros managed to have the 20,000 pesos diverted to the founding of a commercial outpost on an island off the coast of Japan. Vizcaíno was delegated (banished?) to this remote and eventually unsuccessful assignment. As a consequence, the settlement of the port named for the preceding Viceroy was postponed — though not

Contours of North America, French Academy of Science hemispheric map, 1714.

even the envious Marqués de Montesclaros could have dreamed that the delay would last 167 years!

Context and Implications of the Journal

A brief consideration of the historical context of this document seems appropriate before concluding with some reflections on its more latent content. Most of the men who made this voyage were seasoned sailors. Vizcaíno himself had crossed the Pacific as well as the Atlantic and had lived in the Orient for an extended period before his California expeditions. Magellan had circumnavigated the globe eighty years earlier, yet these various sea routes had been only imperfectly recorded by the chart-makers, and cartography was still a highly conjectural enterprise. No area of the world was more subject to fanciful projection than the northwestern rim of the North American continent, destined to remain a cartographic mystery until the late 18th century, as indicated by the blank area on the 1714 map that appears on the preceding page.

Spain, the first modern nation, had consolidated only 110 years before Vizcaíno's departure, in 1492, the year of Columbus's first transatlantic voyage. Although the invention of moveable metal type was already nearly 150 years old in 1602, printing presses were still very rare in the New World and strictly controlled by the royal regime as a potentially subversive technology. The Renaissance was in full swing throughout Europe when Vizcaíno set sail, but literacy was still rare and Latin was still favored in ecclesiastic circles, further widening the gap between the educated elite and the masses. Medieval attitudes, hierarchies, and institutions lingered and were transplanted to the New World. Even something as basic as the calendar was in transition, with the Gregorian replacing the Julian version in Roman Catholic countries by 1582 but not adapted in England until two centuries later.

When Vizcaíno's ships returned from their explorations in 1603, England was on the verge of supplanting Spain as the world's foremost imperial power. Elizabeth I had founded the British East India Company in 1600, although that organization would not introduce tea to Europe until 1610. The first pilgrims did not reach Cape Cod until 1620. Had Vizcaíno been able to proceed with the settlement of Monterey in a timely manner, it would have coincided with that of Jamestown, the first English settlement on the eastern shore of North America (1607) and

with Quebec City, the first French settlement (1608). The great British explorer of the Pacific, Captain James Cook (1728-1779) — who began his career as a nautical surveyor and became the first sea captain to successfully protect his crews from scurvy through proper diet — was a product of the 18th century, born 180 years, or five generations, after Vizcaíno.

Even this thumbnail review of the historical context underlines the significance of Vizcaíno's achievement. The modern mind can scarcely comprehend the small scale and fragility of the craft, or the degree to which both ship and crew were utterly at the mercy of wind and weather, or the death-defying risks and extreme physical suffering to which the seamen subjected themselves, in full awareness of other ships and crew that had never made it back to port. The amount of sheer physical labor required to duplicate all the recorded data by hand, keel the boat for cleaning and repair, or even fill the water casks can scarcely be imagined in our machine-assisted era.

The relative enormity of the distances traveled and the almost inconceivable slowness of communications often meant stark alternatives, if any, when the situation grew dire, as it almost inevitably did. Vizcaíno and his council must have been acutely aware that it might take the *Almiranta,* the "advice ship" sent back to New Spain for fresh supplies and crew, a full year to return, the time allotted to the entire expedition. Vast distances and limited supplies put the men under intense pressure to accomplish as much as they could within crippling constraints, producing a constant tension between how much they could learn of any one port and its surroundings, and how far they must travel in order to meet their assigned goal. This contradictory time pressure is perhaps the aspect that resonates most with our contemporary lives.

Of the 132 days logged between the arrival at San Diego and the return to Acapulco, only one in four, by the most generous count, were spent ashore. The crews spent 9 days on land at San Diego, 2 on Santa Catalina (with the frigate visiting an island in the Santa Barbara Channel, without landing on the mainland), and 18 days ashore at Monterey (with the *Almiranta* departing after only 13 days). After the Monterey sojourn, fierce weather and widespread illness prohibited further shore exploration (disembarkations on Cedro Island and at Mazatlán were for emergency supplies only), undercutting a major goal of the voyage.

The journal is a matter-of-fact document, a baseline record of the trip. Its writer abstains from the ponderous style so typical of the era. The Captain General is referred to in the third person throughout, a convention of the day, but the informing consciousness seems to be the collective "we" of the *Capitana*. The result is a descriptive, non-technical, somewhat intermittent narrative, with a tendency to understatement. Perhaps unexpectedly, poetic imagery manages to creep in here and there. The occasional metaphor is all the more gratifying to the modern reader because of its modesty: a green meadow of kelp; Indian campfires in procession along the coastal bluffs; an old woman's belly as wrinkled as a bellows.

More than two centuries before the Enlightenment disseminated ideas about "the rights of man," attitudes expressed in the journal toward the various native groups seem surprisingly attentive and respectful overall. This portion of the journal only records one firing of the harquebuses, to scare off the restive Cedros Islanders, although prior to reaching San Diego on the outward voyage, four Indians had been shot to death in a skirmish. In fact, the expedition was under strict orders not to provoke the native populations, for fear that the death of a single Spaniard might make them aware of the general vulnerability of the Christians.

The native groups inhabiting the more harsh and arid regions of Baja California seem to have been, understandably, more wary of and hostile to strangers. The journal writer's complaint about the Indians' "thievish[ly] taking anything that is left unguarded" would be constantly echoed during Captain Cook's many voyages throughout the Pacific. It is, after all, hardly plausible to expect semi-migratory peoples, accustomed to sharing among themselves and trading with others, to grasp the concept of theft developed by European cultures based on exclusivity, possessiveness, and monetary exchange. This journal makes it apparent that Vizcaíno and his crew could not have survived without the generosity of the native peoples, who shared food and water, navigational skills, and other forms of local knowledge with the visitors. Occasionally it registers a sense of wonder and even admiration for the local population: in the description of the best native craft since Noah's ark, for example, and in the account the Chumash elder, anxious to host the visitors at his village and savvy enough to offer each crew member a personal harem as enticement.

This common ground of fantasized male sexual prowess may provoke a chuckle in today's readers, as it did among the Spaniards who heard it, regretfully declined, and made a firm collective resolve to investigate this offer on the return trip. (Even Padre Antonio expressed no disapproval of this plan.) But the incident also prompts a question: what about the women? In this passage, they are the unwitting basis of rapport between two male cultures, allowing the "advanced" culture to appreciate the "great intelligence" of the "barbarian." Elsewhere and separately, the journal writer speaks approvingly of the women's modesty and attractiveness, and admires the trust they display when allowing their young daughters to visit the ship for articles of clothing. The account suggests that the men are the first to welcome the outsiders, the ones who actively seek their company, while the women hold back until the contact has been made, then gently (and dutifully?) take the visitors by the hand into the native huts where nourishment awaits them.

Why are the Indian women weeping when they meet the strangers face to face? Do they dread what they foresee as the eventual results of a contact that their men invite with curiosity and perhaps excitement at the prospect of new trading partners? An account written by, about, and for men across such a huge cultural and historical divide cannot be expected to shed much light on the lives of women, but the repeated refrain of their weeping lingers and makes us wonder: Can we ever hope to uncover the cross-cultural perceptions and misperceptions that lie deeply buried between the lines of this account?

This portion of the journal leaves us with another intriguing and probably insoluble mystery: Who were those eight "bearded Indians" who paddled out together to meet Ensign Meléndez? The native informants indicated that the nearby presence of "bearded people dressed like ourselves [Europeans]." Eight men obligingly paddled forth, *in response to a hand-written note*, yet nothing else was learned about them. Why not? Could it have been because, seeing them paddling a native craft in native manner, dressed in skins rather than doublets and breeches, Meléndez thought it best not to linger for conversation, preferring to report instead that he "did not find out anything more?"

This haunting incident brings to mind a well-known passage from Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *True History of the Conquest of Mexico* [c. 1575]: the story of two shipwrecked Spaniards rumored to be living with the natives when Hernán Cortés landed near Veracruz in 1519.

Invited by messenger to rejoin the their countrymen, one man (Gonzalo Guerrero) declined, unwilling to part with his native wife and three children. The other (Jerónimo de Aguilar) accepted, only to confirm Guerrero's prediction that the Spaniards would fail to recognize him as one of their own. In Del Castillo's first-hand account, one soldier after another stared at the arriving Aguilar and inquired, bewildered, of the guard, "So where's the Spaniard?" Though Aguilar repeated again and again "Yo soy," (I am the Spaniard), *he could not be heard or recognized until he had been dressed in a suit of European clothes*, at which point his former compatriots begin at last to find his speech intelligible.

Fluent in both Maya and Spanish, Aguilar became the first link in a human chain of translation that included the legendary Doña Marina, also known as La Malinche, intimate companion to Cortés for the period of the conquest. She was fluent in both Maya and Nahuatl, the language spoken in Central Mexico, where the Aztecs had their splendid imperial capital. Without native interpreters, Cortés would not have succeeded in winning over the enemies of Aztecs to his own campaign. Until very recently, Mexican national history and myth preferred to ignore European-born Gonzalo Guerrero's voluntary assimilation to indigenous ways while reviling the indigenous Malinche for "betraying" her people to the white man.

The image of the eight bearded oarsman in the Vizcaíno journal is haunting in its implications. Could these men have been survivors of a shipwreck? Why did they respond to the written message, yet not make the contact? Could they have felt, at the moment that canoe and frigate drew together, as hesitant to converse with the Ensign as he with them? Were they too successfully assimilated into their new existence to want to return to the hardships of a sailor's life? Were they, like Gonzalo Guerrero a century earlier, too fondly attached to families they were forging in this new land? Are these eight bearded oarsmen perhaps a long-lost link between the "mild and peaceful" (and beardless) peoples who once so gently inhabited the Central California coast, generously giving succor to strangers, and the Spanish missionaries who would insist on abolishing the old ways when they later colonized the same terrain? This was not the only report of "bearded ones" on this voyage.

It is one of the ironies of history that, nearly 250 years after Vizcaíno's ships returned to port, the Spanish-heritage Californios — a people of intricately blended European, Middle Eastern, African, and

Amerindian stock — would also, just as unsuspectingly, open their doors to another host of uninvited strangers. Repeating the pattern set in motion so long before, those English-speaking visitors would feel entitled to transform and eventually destroy the way of life that preceded them. But in their rush to make their claims on the land, they would often pause to praise one exemplary trait of the people they were displacing: their incomparable hospitality.

About the translator: Donald Monro Craig edited and wrote the preface for *Letters from California, 1846-1847*, the collected correspondence of William Robert Garner, secretary to Walter Colton, first American *alcalde* (magistrate) of Monterey. Longtime Spanish teacher at Carmel High School, Craig was a founding editor and significant contributor to ***Noticias.***

About the adapter/reviewer: Julianne Burton-Carvajal, member of the current ***Noticias*** editorial committee, has taught Spanish and Latin American literature and culture at the University of California at Santa Cruz for over 25 years. She is the author-editor of several books and more than 100 articles on Latin American film. Her most recent publication, *The Monterey Mesa: Oldest Neighborhood in California* (City of Monterey, 2002).

About the illustrations: Three images are reproduced from Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, eds., *Lands of Promise and Despair* (reviewed in this issue) with the permission of Heyday Books: the engravings on the cover (detail) and page 7, and the map inside the front cover (adapted for this issue). Original sources of all illustrations are:

Cover and engraving on page 7: from George Shelvock, *A Voyage Around the World* (1726) based on descriptions of Pericú men and women from Cabo San Lucas, Baja California that appeared in Shelvock and Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712). Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Page 15: from 1965 *Noticias*.

Page 21: Guillame Delisle's hemispheric map for the French Academy of Sciences, 1714 (fragment). Lauros-Giraudon/Art Resource, New York.

Page 35: Indian woman of Monterey by José Cardero, 1791. Smithsonian Institution.

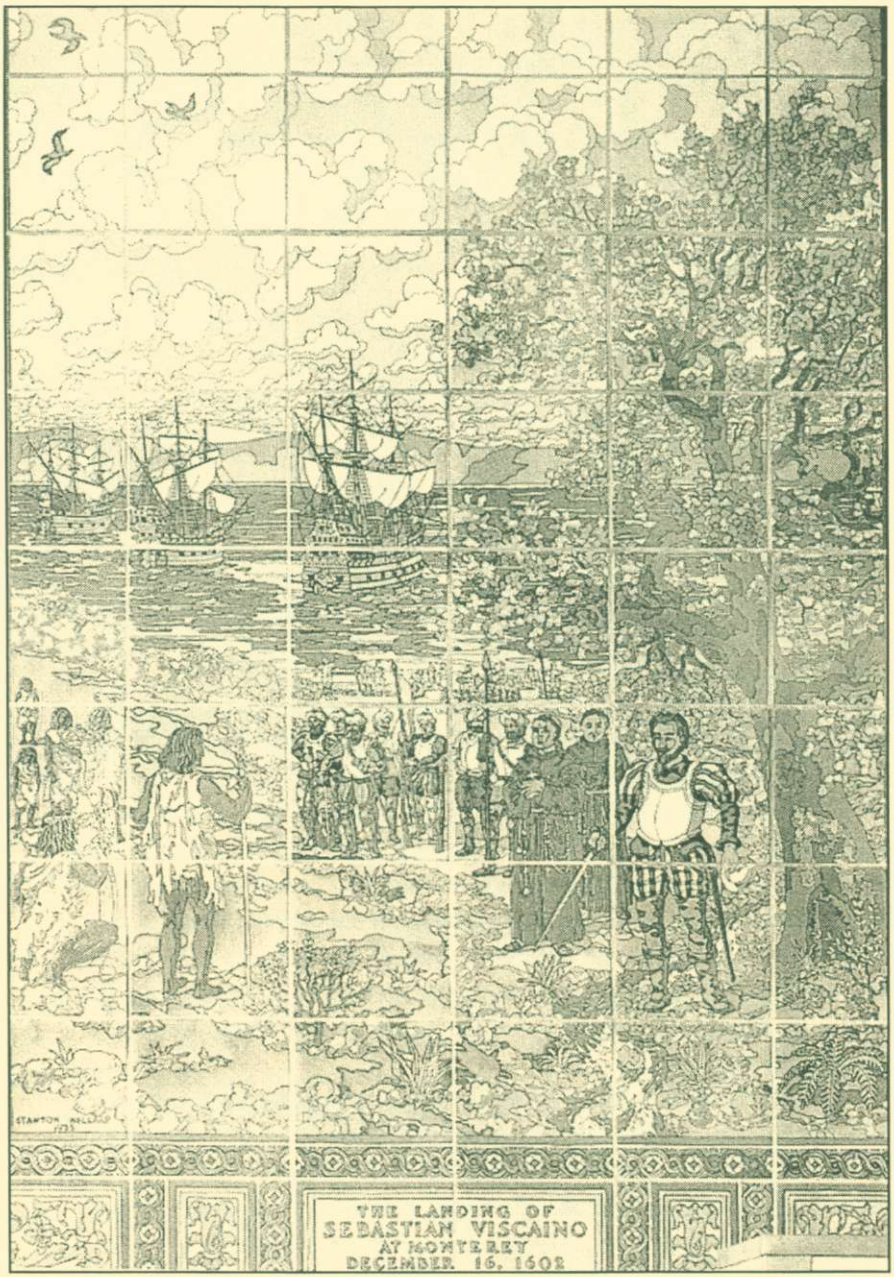
Page 27 and back cover: 1933 ceramic tiled mural by Stanton Willard at the entrance to the Monterey Post Office; photograph by John Castagna.

FURTHER READING

Fray Antonio de la Ascención. *Relación de la jornada que hizo el General Sevastian Vizcayno al descubrimiento de las Californias el eño de 1602 por mandado del Señor Excelentísimo Conde de Monterey, Virrey dela Nueva España.* Written before 1607. Original manuscript in the Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.

W. Michael Mathes. *Vizcaíno and Spanish Expansion in the Pacific Ocean, 1580-1630.* San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1968.

Henry R. Wagner. *Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America in the Sixteenth Century.* San Francisco: California Historical Society Special Publication #4, 1929.



Tile mural by Stanton Willard, Monterey Post Office Building, 1933.

BOOK REVIEW

Antonio María Osio, ***The History of Alta California: A Memoir of Mexican California***. Translated, edited and annotated by Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996. 388 pages.

Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, editors and translators. ***Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California, 1535-1846***. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2001. 506 pages.

Reviewed by Julianne Burton-Carvajal

I

At the foot of Alvarado Street and Calle Principal in Monterey, a mini-multiplex movie theater was inaugurated in 1999. The "Osio" shares its name with the new, mixed-use building it anchors. *Ocio* is the Spanish word for leisure, an apt name for a movie theater. Though it doesn't change the pronunciation, the substitution of "s" for "c" adds a layer of history, turning the noun into a surname.

Antonio María Osio (1800-1871) collected duties at the Custom House from 1837 to 1842; his overlapping appointment to the *tribunal superior* (superior court) convened at Monterey lasted until 1845. On Alvarado Street near the new complex that bears his name is the Rodríguez-Osio adobe, once home to Señora de Osio, later converted into Hermann's restaurant (a popular gathering place that won mention in John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*), and current site of the Monterey Chamber of Commerce.

Osio's most active period in Monterey spanned the last years of Mexican rule and the first American takeover attempt, Commodore Thomas Ap Catesby Jones's premature naval occupation of 1842. Many fellow Californios viewed the American conquest with ambivalence. Osio was not among them. Instead, he remained "emphatically and completely hostile to it" in the words of his translators, who explain that "Osio's manuscript reflects the raw passions and closely experienced bitterness of watching one's own country taken over by foreigners."

History may finally be assuaging some of that bitterness. The 1990s were a banner decade for Osio, now more than 130 years in his grave. Not only did he have a building and movie complex of pseudo-colonial design named after him, but his memoir of life in California as it passed from Spanish to Mexican to Californio and finally to American rule came into print for the first time, nearly 150 years after he penned it. Osio's *History of Alta California: A Memoir of Mexican California* is the only sustained, contemporaneous account of those tumultuous transitional years as seen through the eyes of a Californio. Writing at the behest of Father Suárez del Real of Mission Santa Clara, Osio's mandate was to compile a collective rather than purely personal chronicle.

Years later, Osio declined to turn his manuscript over to Herbert Howe Bancroft's California history project. Bancroft eventually obtained an incomplete copy and incorporated some of the material into one of his volumes without acknowledging the source, a liberty that indirectly warrants the original's intact publication in English at long last. At more than 200 pages of text, plus the equivalent in scholarly apparatus [introductions, footnotes, biographical sketches, glossary, bibliography, genealogy, index], the translation and editing of Osio's memoir was hardly a casual undertaking. This long-deferred challenge was met through the collaboration of two faculty members at the University of Santa Clara: Spanish-language professor Rose Marie Beebe and historian Robert Senkewicz.

Part I of the Osio chronicle revisits three key moments in the history of Alta California prior to his own arrival on the scene in 1825: efforts in 1810 to improve the San Francisco presidio, attacks by Franco-Argentine privateer Hippolyte de Bouchard in 1818, and the Chumash uprising of 1824. Osio uses these instances as the basis for making three assertions that countered prevailing views: that the Californios made earnest endeavors to develop local resources, that remote colonial powers persistently failed to provision their Alta California forces adequately, and that the mission system was chronically ineffective.

Part II narrates the tumultuous succession of eleven governors between 1825 and 1846. Osio here writes of events that coincided with his personal relocation from Baja to Alta California, incorporating second-hand the experiences and impressions of contemporaries from other parts of the region. These intricate and ineffectual political machinations can make for tedious reading. Osio's genial, tongue-in-

cheek humor lightens his narrative and provides a telling demonstration of the celebrated congeniality of the Californios. Cumulatively, his chronicle sounds a poignant lament for Californio culture and ethos, so abruptly displaced, and for the future that might have been "if only..."

Osio suffered devastating personal losses at the hands of incoming Americans: the Bear Flag revolt of 1846 deprived him of his Point Reyes land holdings and, that same year, U.S. naval forces occupying Angel Island slaughtered his entire herd of cattle. The reluctant historian completed his manuscript in 1851 with a weary bow to the Franciscan father who had encouraged him to undertake the task: "As one who has experienced the sufferings of the *californio* landowners which the political change has caused, I would ask that you please allow me to conclude the present letter here." His account was finished, but his personal tribulations were not. The editors' epilogue recounts how Osio's undisputed claim to Angel Island, granted to him in 1839, was lost to American agents and speculators in 1852. Like many of his compatriots, Antonio María Osio chose Mexican over American rule, opting to relocate with his family to Baja California rather than continue to live in the shadow of overwhelming material and cultural loss.

II

Five years after bringing Osio's unique memoir to light, the same felicitous pairing of talents has produced a vastly more ambitious collaboration. Filling another gaping void in California historiography, Beebe and Senkewicz have culled and assembled three centuries of eye-witness testimony. Their 500 page compendium — *Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California, 1535-1846* — features seventy chronologically ordered selections divided into four parts: Exploration, Colonization, Settlements, and Mexican California. In addition to providing a brief general introduction and prefacing the four sections, the editors illuminate each selection with 1-3 pages of contextual commentary, masterfully weaving the disparate fragments of ancient declarations, letters and reports into a coherent whole.

Readers will spot many celebrated figures in a chorus filled out by previously unheard voices. Featured explorers include Columbus, Cortés, Cabrillo and Vizcaíno as well as novelist Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo, first to imagine "the island called California, on the right

hand of the Indies," and anonymous Aztec poets lamenting the Spanish conquest of their homeland. The colonization section includes the familiar figures of Serra, Crespí, Portolá and Palóu along with lesser known colonizers associated with Baja California, considered by the editors an integral, indeed essential part of the historical record.

The section dealing with settlements features a number of Franciscan priests, governors representing various regimes, one governor's defiant wife and another unruly female contemporary, the insurgent Toypurina, as well as a lone Russian. The final section documents daily life in Mexican California, including the introduction of liberal ideas and the assimilation and rebellion of the native population. Luis Antonio Argüello and Mariano Vallejo record their impressions of trappers and wagon trains, harbingers of American interest(s). Pío Pico, Juan Bautista Alvarado and Juan Bandini also weigh in here, along with a score of less familiar names. The dated selections conclude with a "Rehearsal for Invasion" that pairs our friend Antonio María Osio with the impetuous Commodore Ap Catesby Jones. In a concluding section called "Retrospective," the editors give the last word to "Julio César," one of half a dozen Native Americans whose occasional interventions provide crucial counterpoint in this collection of predominantly Spanish-language sources articulating predominantly Eurocentric perspectives.

The book's handsome design features unusual illustrations culled from far and wide (two of the engravings are reproduced in this issue), as well as a fascinating cartographical chronology and an eight-page insert with full-color renderings of flora and fauna from the new frontier. The illustrations richly complement the editors' judicious selections, adroit chain of introductions, and graceful translations by Beebe and numerous others. All these elements combine to place *Lands of Promise and Despair* in a class by itself: herculean effort matched by monumental achievement. Our understanding of the cultural, sociopolitical and material dimensions of California from the first European yearnings to the eve of American takeover has been immeasurably enhanced.

The 2002-2003 quadricentennial of Sebastián Vizcaíno's charting of the Pacific coast marks 400 years of recorded California history. English has been the language of record for less than half that period. With these two volumes, Beebe and Senkewicz open California's Spanish-language era to an English-speaking readership at last. Their archival harvest, a cornucopia set off to best advantage by meticulous

scholarship, makes these volumes eminently worthwhile for bi-lingual readers as well. Publication of these two benchmark books challenges all Californians to cultivate a more nuanced understanding of our region's *novo-hispano* heritage in all its multicultural, multi ethnic, multinational variety and interpersonal complexity.

Neither *Lands of Promise and Despair* nor Osio's *Memoir of Mexican California* are casual reading. Both volumes presuppose a generous quotient of motivation as well as *ocio,* but they richly reward the time and effort invested.

Noticias del Puerto de Monterey, a quarterly journal devoted to the history of Monterey and the Monterey region, has been published by the Monterey History and Art Association since 1957. ***Noticias*** welcomes submissions on any aspect of the history, art, and architecture of the greater Monterey area from prehistory to the recent past. Writers are invited to send manuscripts, books for review, or queries to the attention of the Editorial Committee, c/o Shelley McCabe, Monterey History and Art Association, 5 Custom House Plaza, Monterey, CA 93940.

shelley@mntmh.org [831] 372-2608 ext. 13.

Indian woman of Monterey

José Cardero's firshand depiction, 1791.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE
MONTEREY HISTORY AND ART ASSOCIATION, LTD.

OFFICERS

President: Ed Bradford
Vice-President: Faye Messinger
Secretary: Diane Kajikuri
Treasurer: Roy Robbins
Member at Large: Jack Holt

DIRECTORS

Ed Bradford, Rich Briscoe, Shelley Claudel, Gloria Costa, Wayne Cruzan, William D. Curtis, Tina Del Piero, Daniel Devlin, Jane Holmes, Jack Holt, D. Dale Howard, Diane Kajikuri, William McCrone, Faye Messinger, Roy Robbins, Eric Sand, John Sewald, Bill Stone, Carol Todd, Jennefer Wineman

HONORARY LIFETIME DIRECTORS

Edwin Bliss, Jack Holt, Gordon Paul Smith, Ramona Smith, Carol Todd

Noticias *is made possible by the generous support of the members Of the Monterey History and Art Association, who wish to thank* ***John Castagna*** *for the layout of this issue.*

MHAA Membership benefits…

If you would like to receive this quarterly publication by mail, along with many other benefits, please consider becoming a member of MHAA. In addition to *Noticias*, you will receive invitations to many special events and your donations will support the preservation of local history.

Annual Membership Rate

Individual	$45
Family	$60
Education/Nonprofit Partners	$15

Name_____ Phone_____

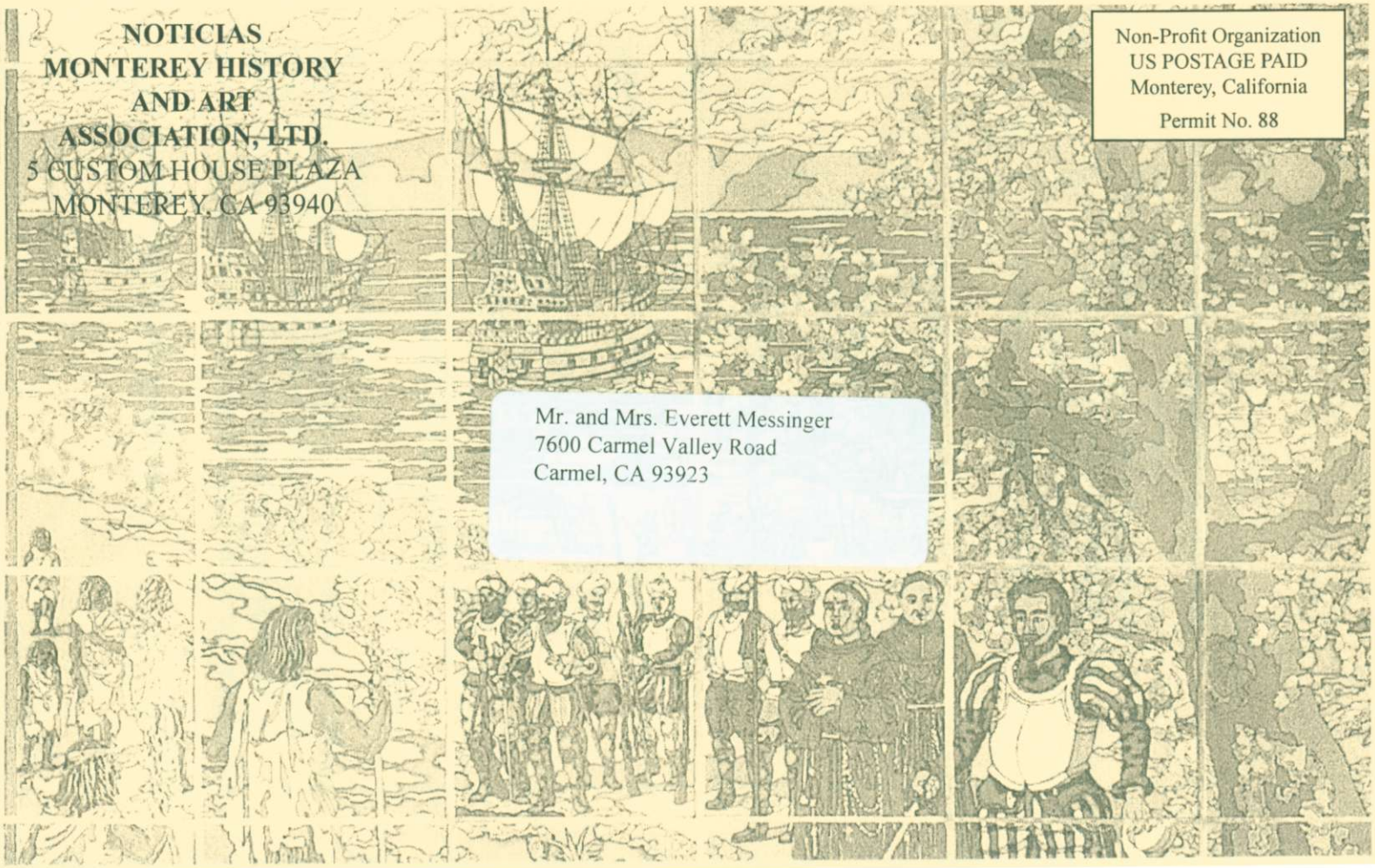
Address_____

Please tear off and mail with a check to:

MHAA
5 Custom House Plaza,
Monterey, CA 93940

Inquiries: (831) 372-2608, Ext. 13

Member: National Trust for Historic Preservation
California Historical Society
Conference of California Historical Societies
American Association of Museums



NOTICIAS
MONTEREY HISTORY
AND ART
ASSOCIATION, LTD.
5 CUSTOM HOUSE PLAZA
MONTEREY, CA 93940

Non-Profit Organization
US POSTAGE PAID
Monterey, California
Permit No. 88

Mr. and Mrs. Everett Messinger
7600 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923