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Archaeological Investigation of the Royal Presidio of Monterey

— By DONALD M. HOWARD

The original Presidio of Monterey, center of government in California for seventy years, was virtually lost to historians until this year, when archaeological investigation revealed much information about the structures within its walls and the people who lived there in California's early days.

The original Presidio, a stockade made of mud and pine palings to shelter a small band of soldiers and missionaries from the Indians, was built in June, 1770, under the direction of Miguel Costansó. In the early days the Presidio served as fortification, barracks and governmental center, but in 1792 the battery was moved to El Castillo, overlooking the bay at the place where the Junipero Serra Monument now stands.

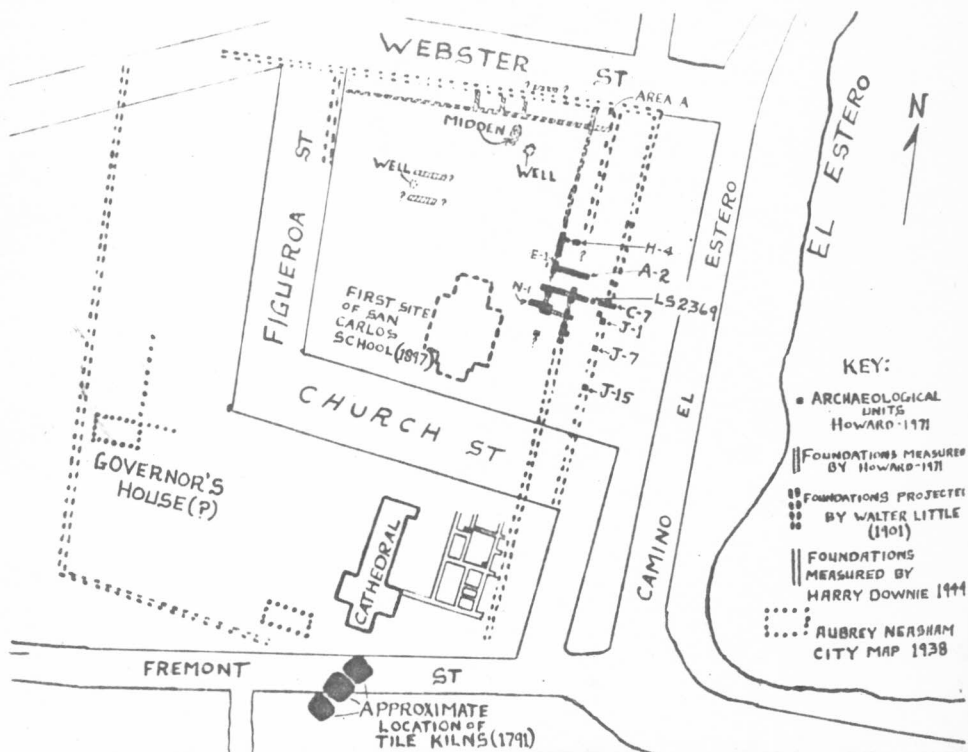
Little knowledge about life at the Presidio survives, as only a few of the participants in that rugged frontier community wrote down their recollections. Several good accounts have been written and preserved, but they are generally cast in the acid mold of the military or political observer, primarily concerned with the fortification aspects of the Presidio.

There is considerable data given by the *habilitados* (quartermasters) on the inventories and soldier lists in the late eighteenth

and early nineteenth centuries. But the most valuable comments to the archaeologist are references to buildings and their measurements. Maps and drawings exist, but many artists seem to have taken scale liberties in their graphic interpretations. The most important measurement descriptions are: Fages (1773), Neve (1778), Vancouver (1792), Carrillo (1800) and Estrada (1816).

Only one detailed plan of the Presidio complex survives—the Miguel Costansó plat of 1770. However, this is only a tentative proposed plan and is not to be relied upon. José Cardero's sketch and watercolor done in 1791 are good. They were drawn from the southeast corner near the present Marsh's shop, and show the east entrance which was found in the archaeological work (units A, B and C).

Perhaps the two most important buildings in the Presidio were the Royal Presidio Chapel and the governor's house. The first two chapels at the Presidio were of pole and brush (*palizada*) construction, like the other original buildings, and were probably used as storerooms as well. The third chapel, built in 1773 of adobe with foundations of stone and lime, remained in use until completion of the last chapel by stonemason



Map showing projected and measured footings, Presidio and later structures, and present streets. Compiled, 1971, by Donald M. Howard. Scale: 1" equals 200'.

Manuel Ruiz in 1794. The fourth chapel is the only Presidio structure still standing today.

In a post-1856 daguerreotype showing the view southeast from Abrego and Pearl Streets, one can see the governor's house just east and south of the Casa Madriaga on Abrego Street. Grace Brune, of the Espinosa family, passed on the tradition that the large adobe back of the Casa Madriaga was the governor's house. It was here, according to tradition, that the fateful cannonball fired by Isaac Graham and José Abrego fell through a tile roof, causing the surrender of Lieutenant Colonel Nicolás Gutiérrez.

On September 22, 1822, Mexico became independent of Spain, ending the greatest period for the old Presidio as the center of political and cultural life in Monterey. During the Mexican period, Monterey was to witness gradual building outside the Presidio walls. Adobes such as the Casas Munrás, Boronda and Armenta initiated the

urbanization. The adobe bricks and rocks of the old Presidio were taken by soldiers and residents to construct their own adobes.

Final abandonment of the Presidio came in 1840 with the construction of El Cuartel as the center of government.

The 1826 watercolor by Richard Beechey shows the east wall in ruinous condition; the Alfred Robinson sketch of 1829 shows large hunks of the north wall missing; the Charles Gildemeister lithograph of 1842 shows all four walls nearly to the ground, and the Jacques Moerenhout 1846 sketch shows total demise.

The last written reference to Presidio structures found by the author was a deed dated July 7, 1870, in which Maria Lionsia German and Pedro and Gregoria Valenzuela sold their property to Thaddeus Amat, Bishop of Monterey. The deed describes one of the boundaries as the place "... where the second vined wall of the Presidio stood on the western side of the church ..."

Beads

By JUNE PAYNE

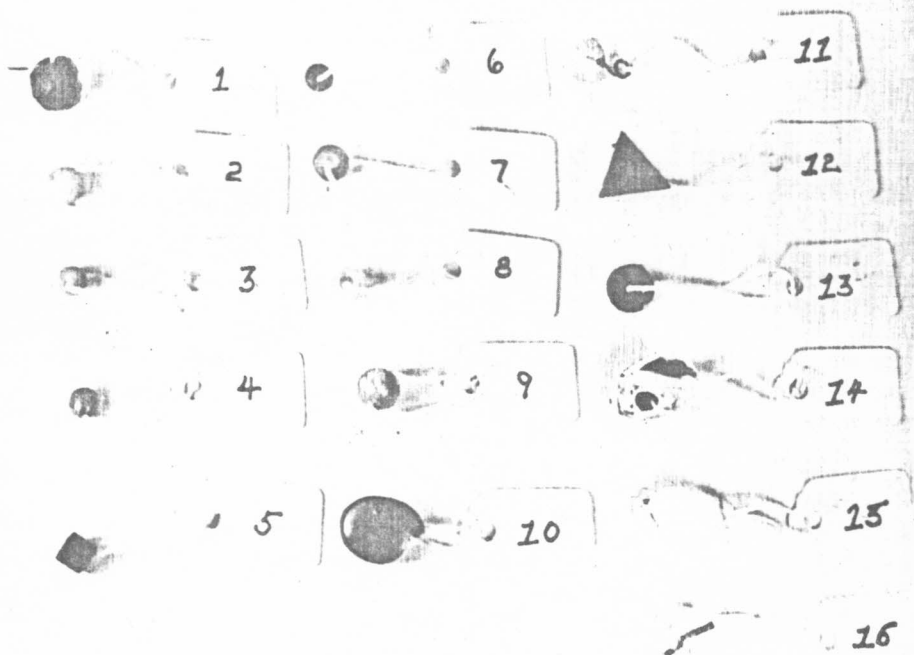
A total of sixteen beads were recovered during excavations at the Royal Presidio of Monterey. Eight of these have been identified as glass trade beads which the Europeans brought to the New World during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The glass bead was the most common trade item used by the Europeans during the age of exploration and colonization. All indications point toward Murano, a small island off the coast of Venice, Italy, as the main manufacturing center of glass trade beads until the first half of the nineteenth century. The island was one gigantic glass factory. Indeed, the Venetians guarded their glass-making processes so zealously that the immediate family of a defecting craftsman was punished by imprisonment.

Beads were made by three principal methods. The first method produced the most

common bead, often called the pound bead because it was sold by the pound. It was produced by drawing out a bubble of molten or viscid glass into a long slender tube. After drawing and cooling, the tube was cut into small cylinders and these were placed in a mixture of sand and wood ashes and stirred until the tiny cylinders assumed smooth, rounded forms. The beads were then removed and the holes cleaned out. The second method involved winding threads of the molton material around a wire which was withdrawn after cooling. Molded beads were produced by pressing together two molds filled with molten glass. Generally, before heating, iron, copper, manganese or cobalt was added to color the glass.

Another type of bead is represented in the Presidio collection. Dr. Roderick Sprague of the University of Idaho has identified



PRESIDIO BEADS: 1. Molded, faceted round, transparent red. 2. Molded, round, opaque robin's egg blue. 3. Molded, round, opaque robin's egg blue. 4. molded, elongated round, opaque light blue. 5. Molded, cylindrical (tile), opaque brick. 6. Drawn, torus, transparent dark blue. 7. Wound, torus, transparent amber. 8. Wound, torus, clear transparent. 9. Blown (!), round, pearl tan. 10. Turquoise, tear drop shaped, translucent. 11. Amber, heart-shaped, translucent, probably an earring ornament. 12. Metal, triangular. 13. Metal, disc-shaped with hole in middle. 14. *Olivella* spire-lopped, also hole on side. 15. *Olivella* spire-lopped. 16. Shell, disc-shaped, one half missing.

one of the beads as a blown bead. Dr. Sprague knows of the existence of only two other beads of this type.

Beads were carried to their destination packaged in different ways. Some were sold in bulk and sent in casks, barrels or boxes. Others, usually the smaller varieties, were strung. It was said of the women of Venice that they were so skilled in threading beads that with needle and silk a woman worker could thread as many as two million beads a day! Strung beads were sold by the mass, a mass of beads containing about a dozen strands.

Ceramics

By DONALD M. HOWARD

The Monterey Presidio site turned out to be a ceramic potpourri, with five primary ceramic types: Mexican folk pottery, English Staffordshires, Neophyte Plainwares, Chinese and Japanese. Additionally, stem fragments from eighteenth century Kaolin clay pipes, made in Glasgow Scotland, were found.

The Mexican folk pottery may be divided into two major types, both of which represent prolific pottery factories: Talavera-Puebla earthenwares and Tláuquepaque-Tonalá earthenwares. The earliest maiolica made at Puebla was made under the direction of Dominican friars from the maiolica center of Talavera, Spain. This period was approximately 1600-1780. The Spanish influence shows in the early pieces in which human, bird and animal forms predominate. These designs appear more often in the better class of wares such as jardineres, apothecary jars and flower jars. The more common utility types had only floral designs. Toward the middle of the seventeenth century yellow, green, brown and black were introduced.

The Manilla Galleon trade from 1650 to 1800 introduced the imitation of Chinese colors and designs, and these were poorly imitated by Pueblans in flat colors, blue and white, which are common at the Presidio. The true Pueblan period ran from 1800 to 1860, and most of the Presidio shards fall within this period. According to Dr. Brinkerhoff, some of the shards seem to have affinities with polychrome maiolicas from the

Trade began on the west coast of North America in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Active trading was carried on by the ships of Spain, France, England and Russia. In turn, the Indians traded with other tribes up and down the coast of California, Oregon and Washington. One coveted trade item used by the Northwest Coast Indians as ornaments was the abalone shell gathered from the rocks along Monterey Bay and near the mouth of the Carmel River.

The Indians also produced their own beads by grinding off or breaking off the spire of the marine snail *Olivella biplicata*.

Presidio of San Agustín de Tucson (1775 to 1856).

In 1780 at Tonalá, Jalisco, a ware for table use, was made. It was characterized by a cream colored glaze with green and light brown decorations. This type was found commonly at the Monterey Presidio along with an orange glaze ware which resembles Tláuquepaque pottery. Some of the Tláuquepaque types have a greenish glaze, and were apparently olive oil jars which have relationships to wares found at Arizona sites Santa Cruz (1775-1780) and Terrenate (1745-1775).

It may be safely said that the bulk of Mexican wares were brought to the Monterey Presidio in years 1770-1810 and 1823-1846. The Hidalgo Revolution in the years 1810-1821 prevented supply ships from coming to



PRESIDIO CERAMICS: First row: Tláuquepaque. Second row: Neophyte Plainware (first three) and Cantonese (last three). Bottom row: Pueblan Maiolicas.