María Santísima Nuestra Señora de la Soledad: The Archaeology and Architectural History of the Ex-Misión de la Soledad, 1791-1835

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And of the one who came forward with a present, I asked her name, as I knew that expression in their language. She answered me, as I understood: “Soledad.” I was astonished, and turning to my companions said: “Here, gentlemen, you have María de la Soledad!” And, without more ado, the name stuck to the place.

Junípero Serra, August 24, 1774

The October 9, 1791 founding of Mission Nuestra Señora de la Soledad, or La Misión de María Santísima Nuestra Señora Dolorosísima de la Soledad, by Fray Presidente Fermín Francisco de Lasuén launched the tumultuous beginnings of California’s 13th mission (Miller 1856; Engelhardt 1929; Weber 1985; Mendoza 2014). By December 1824, and again in 1828, major and recurrent flood damage to the church and sacristy signaled the beginnings of a gradual decline that culminated with the 1834 Secularization of the lands and buildings of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad (Engelhardt 1929: 33; Elliot 1956: 22; Jackson 1984; Schuetz-Miller 1994: 173). According to Elliot (1956: 22), Fray Vicente Francisco Sarría (1828-1835) erected a provisional church in 1832, which may as well constitute “the last mission church in California,” or at the very least, an extensive reconstruction of a preexisting structure. From this point forward, Soledad’s fortunes declined, and by 1840, the site administrator was forced to sell 6,000 teja roof tiles from the remaining buildings of the mission casco or quadrangle in order purchase provisions for feeding the last of those California Indians who remained

About the Author
Dr. Rubén G. Mendoza is an archaeologist, writer, photographer and founding faculty member of the California State University, Monterey Bay. Professor Mendoza has directed major investigations at San Juan Bautista, San Carlos Borromeo, San Miguel Arcángel, and La Soledad. His groundbreaking work at the Royal Presidio of Monterey resulted in the discovery of the Serra Chapels of 1770 and 1772. A charter member of the California Missions Foundation, and the California Mission Directors and Curators Conference; he was tagged by the late Jeremy Hass to serve as the charter President of the newly formed Early California Agriculture and Technology Society. He has over one-hundred and twenty-five publications, including those documenting the solar geometry of the California and Southwest missions, and was recently awarded the first-ever National Endowment for the Humanities Landmarks of American History and Culture Workshop devoted to the study of the California missions, and titled The Fourteenth Colony: Native Californians, Missions, Presidios, and Colonists on the Spanish Frontier, 1769-1848.
It was at this time that the lands of the former mission community were deeded to early Californio poblador Feliciano Soberanes (Land Case No. 348 SD), who in 1845 established the 8,900 acre (36 km²) Rancho Ex Mission Soledad, and undertook the rehabilitation of a host of buildings centered on the quadrangle (General Land Office Plat Map 1858, 1859; Hornbeck 1983). Ultimately, the site underwent significant change as a host of buildings were re-tasked for use by the Soberanes family, and as such the architectural history of the site was obscured and rendered more complicated as a result (Tays 1936; Evans 1956; Pesch 1961; Howard 1972; Jackson 1984). Today, only the South Wing or present-day Soledad Mission Museum remain intact, with the west and north room blocks now constituting largely ruined adobe buildings.

A host of archaeological investigations have been undertaken since the 1950s, including the groundbreaking studies of Oliver Pesch in 1961. In 1969, Donald M. Howard (1972) excavated the quadrangle patio or courtyard, as well as the 1834 cemetery, and burials identified with the Church of 1805. Between 1983 and 1986, Paul Farnsworth (1987, 1989) undertook the most extensive and thorough investigation of the West Wing room block documented to date. In the spring of 2007, the CSU Monterey Bay Mission Archaeology Program launched the archaeological and ethnohistorical investigation of this historic California mission under the direction of the author at the invitation of the Soledad Mission Restoration Committee (Mendoza 2008). More recently, Greenwood and Associates led an ancillary investigation in 2011 that further detailed construction features, and provisioned additional exposures of the so-called Women’s Quarters originally documented by Pesch in 1961 (Foster 2012).

Figure 1. Artist Oriana Day’s conjectural reconstruction of the mission casco or quadrangle of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad as it was thought to have appeared in the period prior to the floodwater destruction of the Church in 1828. With the exception of the missing corredor or convento gateway at the midpoint of the West Wing to the left, and the recent confirmation that the four parallel range buildings to the far left did not exist, this image constitutes a reasonable approximation of Soledad’s appearance in circa 1820. After Library of Congress Historic American Buildings Survey.
work was followed in 2012 and 2013 by Greenwood and Associates with additional soundings in the North and West Wing room blocks, and areas immediately west of the Mission Quadrangle (Foster 2012).

The purpose of this paper therefore is to highlight key findings derived from archaeological investigations made possible with the assistance of CSU Monterey Bay archaeology students and program interns for the period spanning the 2007 through 2014 field seasons directed by the author in his capacity as Principal Investigator and Project Archaeologist. The archaeological investigations reported herein were necessarily undertaken with the prime objective of generating that architectural, historical, and archaeological data necessary for assessing projected future mitigation and conservation needs of the North Wing room block, and the proposed restoration of the West Wing of the Mission Quadrangle. As a result of the seven field seasons undertaken to date at Mission Nuestra Señora de la Soledad, this investigation has resulted in the discovery and or rediscovery, and mapping, of a host of buried mission buildings and features, including (a) the Church Sacristy of 1825, (b) Soldier’s Quarters of 1805, (c) Church Narthex of 1805, (d) the Neophyte Plaza of circa 1800, (e) the Women’s Quarters of circa 1800, (f) the Pozolera or Mission Kitchen of circa 1800, (g) the northwest corner North Wing wall buttress of circa 1812, (h) the configuration of the 2.0 meter deep foundation footings of the West Wing, (i) multiple Native Californian lithics reduction workshops, and (j) ancillary features such as the west wall corridor doorway to the church nave, and a Sacristy drainage feature for the cleansing of the sacramental vessels. Finally, this discussion concludes with a reappraisal of recent discoveries that indicate that a host of anomalous features identified with the architectural footprint of the main church in fact serve to demarcate the original foundation footings of the first church of Mission Nuestra Señora de la Soledad.

Figure 2. Recent investigations along the perimeter wall of the north room block at Mission Soledad produced indications for a flintknapping or stone tool production station, the deflated northwest corner pier, as well as evidence for the relative depths of the original grade of that surface fronting the mission era compound. Photograph by the author.
The West Wing

That portion of the convento quadrangle herein identified as the West Wing initially underwent systematic archaeological investigations by Dr. Paul Farnsworth in the period extending from 1983 through 1988 (Farnsworth 1987). Given the extensive treatment of the interior portion of the room blocks of the West Wing in Farnsworth’s (1987) dissertation, I hereby refer the reader to that document. Where appropriate, I reference only the most salient observations by Farnsworth as they pertain to the interior spaces of the room block relevant to this treatment, and or those recommendations projected for the reconstruction of the West Wing.

Unit N44W0: This unit, like those at N59W0 and N61E0 discussed below, was situated in order to ascertain the overall depth of the foundation trench and rock composite constituting the perimeter wall of the West and North Wings of the Quadrangle. In this instance, the unit was situated so as to probe the area immediately beneath the tallest remaining adobe remnant of the west perimeter wall of the West Wing. Said wall remnant stands approximately 17.0 meters south of the northwest corner of the convento Quadrangle. The 1.0 by 2.0 meter north-south trending configuration of Unit N44W0 was subdivided into two 1.0 by 1.0 meter subsections. The north 1.0 by 1.0 meter half section was excavated to a depth of 130.0

Figure 3. The east elevation of the west wall profile and stratigraphic cut of Unit N44W0. The north wall profile may be seen at the left margin, and that of the south wall profile at the right margin of the plan. Note that the stratigraphic cut left of center did not identify the base of the more than 2.0 meter deep foundation footing. Mapping illustration by Jennifer A. Lucido based on original field maps and illustrations prepared by the author.
centimeters beneath the unit datum at N44W0. By contrast, the south 1.0 by 1.0 meter half of the unit was excavated to a depth of 60.0 centimeters.

So as to ascertain the total depth of the rubble-fill foundation deposit at this locality, a 20.0 centimeter-wide stratigraphic cut was excavated through the north half of the unit into the exterior face of the foundation trench corresponding to the east elevation profile of Unit N44W0.

Five particular observations are pertinent to the interpretation of this unit’s significance to the architectural history of Mission Nuestra Señora de la Soledad.

First, while the same clearly defined earthen embankment identified with Unit N59W0 was similarly discerned here at a depth of 30.0 centimeters below the unit datum at N44W0. Said feature was here identified with a 2.0 to 4.0 centimeter-thick layer of slag-laden ash and soil overlying the surface of the embankment in question. Given that Farnsworth (1987 and Personal Communication, 2007) has identified the interior room block area immediately east of this portion of the perimeter wall as a blacksmith’s furnace and workshop, it is therefore reasonable to suppose that a window may have been located immediately over the location of Unit N44W0. This supposition is based on the fact that slag-laden ash and charcoal covered the Mission era earthen embankment at this location.
Second, as no other discernible stratigraphy like that in Unit N59W0 was recovered beneath the aforementioned soils juncture laden with ash and slag, it may be that the lithic reduction workshop identified with Unit N59W0 represents either a pre-Contact or pre-construction living floor of circa 1790s. It is anticipated that additional traces of the native shelter and or flintknapping locality lies beneath the room block occupying the northwest corner of the Mission Quadrangle. If that is the case, then other remaining traces of the indigenous occupation at this location was very likely obliterated during the construction of the foundation trenches and embankment at the northwest corner of the quadrangle at circa 1790-1800. Moreover, it appears that the earthen embankment skirting the exterior face of the West Wing perimeter wall was constructed prior to the use of the West Wing room block as a blacksmith’s workshop, particularly given the fact that the slag-laden ash layer overlies the embankment in question.

Third, a series of thinly stratified layers of adobe-melt and related strata was noted in the south 1.0 meter wide unit elevation profile trending from a depth of 0.0 centimeters at datum to 30.0 centimeters at one meter due west of the unit datum so noted. This fact indicates a succession of erosional episodes coincident with the most intensive periods of rainfall, and thereby erosion, identified with the exterior face of the West Wing perimeter wall.

Fourth, those adobe blocks that constitute the base of the wall that makes contact with the foundation feature at this location are only separated from the cobble foundation stones by a thin layer of adobe clays used to level and seal the wall juncture with the foundation in question. The top of the foundation wall, however, is comprised of larger schist cobbles and boulders more evenly laid above and over the juncture with the 30.0 centimeter-deep slag-laden ash layer cresting the wall of the earthen embankment. This would indicate that at least 30.0 centimeters of the schist cobble foundation was exposed above the embankment. As noted, the substantial and extensive evidence for the earthen embankment leads this investigator to conclude that the earthen embankment in fact represents a formally constituted architectural feature as such, as opposed to adobe-melt or other naturally deposited soils at that location.

Finally, the fifth observation centers on the findings from the exposure of the 20.0 centimeter-wide stratigraphic cut into the east elevation wall profile of that portion of the foundation footing exposed in the north half of Unit N44W0. The stratigraphic cut in question was dropped to a depth of 200.0 centimeters below the unit datum, and even at that depth, the lower-most or basal portion of the rubble-filled foundation trench was not identified. The end of the field season, and the constricted working area
within the trench, precluded further investigation of the total depth of the foundation trench in this instance. As such, at this specific location the rubble-filled foundation feature exhibits in excess of 2.0 meters of vertical displacement or depth. The projected average diameter of boulders constituting the rubble-fill matrix of the foundation feature stands at between 20.0 and 50.0 centimeters. What remains of the perimeter adobe wall of the West Wing rises to an uppermost height of 75.0 centimeters above the unit datum at N44Wo.

Unit N59Wo: This unit consisted of a 1.0 by 2.0 meter north-south trending excavation sounding at the exterior or west margin of the north-south trending West Wing of the Mission Quadrangle (provisional designation). Excavations within this sector were undertaken with an eye to determining the overall depth of the schist cobble foundation walls located at the northwest corner of the Mission Quadrangle proper. Excavations were conducted within arbitrary 10.0 centimeter levels or 10.0 centimeter objectives. All line level measures were determined by measurements obtained from the datum stake located at the juncture of the adobe melt surface and exposed cobble foundation footings at that location.

Whereas the north 1.0 meter half of the 1.0 by 2.0 meter unit was excavated to a depth of 90.0 centimeters, the south 1.0 meter half was excavated to a depth of 110.0 centimeters. So as to ascertain the total depth of the foundation feature at this portion of the Mission Quadrangle, a 20.0 centimeter-wide vertical stratigraphic cut was at the southeast corner of the unit into the west exterior face of the foundation wall of the West Wing perimeter wall. Excavation of the stratigraphic profile followed the contours of the wall foundation to a depth of 140.0 centimeters. At the base of the wall, a dark midden contour clearly delineated the original outline of the construction trench excavated for the build-out of the schist cobble wall footing at this location.

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Figure 5. The east elevation of the west wall profile and stratigraphic cut of Unit N59Wo (provisional designation). The north wall profile may be seen at the left margin, and that of the south wall profile at the right margin of the plan. Mapping illustration by Jennifer A. Lucido based on original field maps and illustrations prepared by the author.
The stratigraphic cut at the southeast corner of the unit made possible identification of both the original Mission era living floor, as well as a secondary accumulation of adobe melt or banked earth, dislodged foundation cobbles, and post-Mission era midden debris. The Mission era living floor was identified at a depth of between 65.0 and 70.0 centimeters as measured from the datum stake at N59W0.

While past and recent rodent disturbance and related environmental impacts served to confuse the interpretation of Unit N59W0 and its depositional history, both the overall depth of the foundation trench at circa 135.0 centimeters, and the presence of lithic debris and stone tools provided clear indications of the original contact-era or circa 1790s living floors within this sector of the site. The recovery of a well-worn hammer stone, less well-defined hammer stones, and a variety of chert and chalcedony lithic specimens resulting from the reduction process make clear this locality’s respective identification as per pre-Contact or Mission era deposits at this location.

Significantly, measurements of the offset from vertical as measured from the westward extension of that portion of the west face of the foundation footing exposed within the stratigraphic cut indicates that the trench, and thereby cobble fill that constitutes the foundation wall at this specific location, tapers inward or narrows from top to bottom. At the surface datum of N59W0, the offset stands at 0.0 centimeters, whereas at the 30.0 centimeter depth a 25.0 centimeter offset was noted. By contrast, the base of the foundation trench at 140.0 centimeters depth is offset to the tune of 40.0 centimeters.

Taken together, the total depth of foundation fill in Unit N59W0 measures 150.0 centimeters with about 15.0 centimeters of this composite rubble fill
foundation extending above the surface at the site of the N59W0 datum stake. Fully 85.0 centimeters of the cobble foundation extends above the earlier living floor identified with the lithics workshop at 65.0 to 70.0 centimeters below datum. By contrast, only 35.0 to 40.0 centimeters of the foundation projects above the earthen embankment identified at a depth of circa 25.0 to 30.0 centimeters below datum. Given the need to protect the foundation from the intense winds and rains that would have battered this north/northwest oriented sector of the perimeter wall, it is more than likely that what was initially thought to constitute adobe melt or rock fall, may well in fact represent an earthen embankment required to serve as a parging layer or pavement for buttressing the west perimeter wall. Nevertheless, excavation and mapping of this unit was completed as of December 2007, and analysis of the material culture from this unit in particular is ongoing, and further analysis may well assist with seeing through resolution of this preliminary interpretation.

At least three, and potentially four, primary cultural and natural events are indicated from data recovered from Unit N59W0.

First, the lithics reduction locality was created atop an existing hard-packed (clay) living floor that corresponds to what is currently thought to constitute a pre-contact, or at the very least pre-Quadrangle (construction) era, native shelter identified within the context of Unit N61E0. The depth of the lithics reduction locality, like that of the floor of the native shelter identified with Unit N61E0, stands at between 65.0 and 70.0 centimeters from the unit datum at N59W0. As measured from the site (as opposed to unit) datum at NoE0 or 0.0 meters, the depth below grade stands at 40.0 centimeters. Given the extent of adobe melt, and the earthen embankment upon which the West Wing rests, the Unit N59W0 datum is situated well above the site datum originally established during that 1980s era archaeological fieldwork undertaken by Farnsworth in the West Wing of the Mission Quadrangle. It should be noted that the 40.0 centimeter depth from existing grade at the site datum corresponds quite well to the average depth of natural and cultural soils deposition in at least three other regional Mission era sites excavated by this investigator (Mendoza 2003, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2012, and 2013, 2014; Mendoza and Lucido 2012). The 40.0 to 50.0 centimeters of accumulated soils deposits would appear to correspond to an average rate of deposition spanning the last 200 years on the California central coast at the sites of San Juan Bautista, San Carlos Borromeo, and the Royal Presidio Chapel of Monterey.

Second, the cutting of a Mission era construction trench and the creation of a 150.0 centimeter-high and deep foundation wall extended through and beneath the native shelter living floor identified with the lithic reduction locality identified at a depth of 65.0 to 70.0 centimeters.
Third, either in an effort to create an earthen embankment against the exposed exterior face of the foundation wall, or as the result of the combined actions and processes of adobe-melt formation and or wall collapse, a rock laden soils horizon was found to undulate along the exterior face of the foundation wall at a depth ranging from 25.0 centimeters at the northeast corner of the unit to 15.0 centimeters at the midpoint of the east profile of unit N59W0 through to 30.0 centimeters at the southeast corner of said unit. Given the relative uniformity of said embankment in two other nearby West Wing unit soundings, it is the contention of this investigator that this in fact constitutes a construction related or architectural feature, and not an adobe-melt soils horizon.

Finally, several seasonal erosional episodes produced a thinly-stratified and superimposed layering of adobe-melt horizons overlying the summit of the earthen embankment noted in the foregoing discussion. Said accumulation constitutes ongoing wall deterioration indicated since the completion of the earthen embankment and a subsequent (partial) wall collapse of the post-Mission era. Whereas the teja shards were identified throughout the soil horizon constituting the third depositional event pertaining to the embankment, little to no such material was noted from the uppermost adobe-melt soils horizon at this locality. Given that early mid-19th century illustrations indicate that the majority of tejas that once protected the range buildings of the quadrangle were already missing, it is likely that these latter erosional episodes constitute the post-abandonment and later 19th century depositional history of that portion of the quadrangle.

Unit N61E0: This unit consists of a 1.0 by 2.0 meter west-east trending unit sounding extending east 2.0 meters from the northwest exterior corner of the Mission Quadrangle. As with Units N44W0 and N59W0, this unit was undertaken so as to determine the depths of the north exterior face of the North Wing perimeter wall. Unlike the aforementioned units, this unit proved a veritable challenge to project excavation crews as per excavation

Figure 7. South wall elevation of Unit N61E0 with stratigraphic cut at center, and east wall elevation at left, and west wall elevation at right. Mapping illustration by Jennifer A. Lucido based on original field maps and illustrations prepared by the author.
and interpretation. As the result of the collapse and scattering of schist cobbles into this unit area at some point in the remote past, excavation activity at this locality was significantly hampered and slowed as the result of our efforts to map and photo document the feature in question. Moreover, extant rodent disturbance made interpretation of otherwise significant soils horizons and strata on the south elevation wall profile a formidable, and largely tentative, undertaking at best. Given that this unit was among the first initiated in the spring of 2007, it was here that a 10.0 centimeter stratigraphic cut was initially undertaken so as to facilitate interpretation of the contours of the foundation trench and schist cobbles rubble-fill matrix. Due to the identification of a hard-packed caliche-like clay floor with mounded floor-related adobe features, it was determined that widening the 10.0 centimeter stratigraphic cut to 20.0 centimeters would facilitate both excavation and mapping, and the interpretation of the stratigraphic features in question.

As with Units N59W0 and N44W0, the Contact-era, or pre-construction phase living floor initially identified with a lithic reduction or flintknapping workshop in Unit N59W0, and the earthen embankment noted in both of the aforementioned units, was confirmed at this locality as well. Whereas the hard-packed adobe floor feature was identified at a depth below provisional unit elevation N61E0 at between 60.0 to 70.0 centimeters – or 55.0 centimeters beneath the deflated original unit datum at N61E0, the heavily disturbed crest of the earthen embankment at this locality was situated at a depth of between 20.0 and 25.0 centimeters beneath the comparable provisional unit elevation at N61E0.

Much of that deposit that overlies the hard-packed floor feature at a depth of between 60.0 and 70.0 centimeters beneath the N61E0 provisional unit elevation consisted of an adobe embankment. Whereas Munsell soils chart readings of the earth and clay embankment varied between 7.5 YR 3/1 (wet) or Very Dark Gray and 7.5 YR 3/2 (dry) or Dark Brown, soils constituting the backfill of rodent burrows in the south wall elevation profile all provided a 10 YR 6/2 (dry) or Light Brownish Gray soils value.

Where the large schist cobbles and granite rock outcrop is concerned, it should be noted that said materials may have originated with rubble-fill foundation materials displaced as the result or relatively recent grading activities. It was initially thought that he materials could well represent a parging layer or jumbled cobble pavement once located at this locality, although one area resident noted that tractor-borne scraping devices were once used to round the northwest corner of the Mission Quadrangle. Subsequently, it was determined that said feature constituted the deflated remains of the northwest corner buttress. Significantly, it should be noted that the hard-packed clay floor lies 40.0 centimeters beneath the crest of the aforementioned

Figure 8. View to the south of the northwest corner of the Mission Quadrangle and West Wing (center), and Units N61E0 (provisional designation, left) and N59W0 (provisional designation, right). Note foundation stone rock scatter identified with the recovery of the northwest buttress identified within Unit N61E0. Photograph by the author.
earthen embankment or paring layer intended to protect the cobble footings along the exterior face of the quadrangle perimeter wall.

Finally, it should be noted that from the upper crest of the earthen embankment at the foundation to just one meter north, the grade drops little more than 10.0 to 15.0 centimeters. The presence of adobe wall features, Esselen or related indigenous material culture – predominantly consisting of shell and glass beads and lithics – necessarily argues for a Contact era origin of the native shelter or other indigenous occupation at this locality. Initially, the lithic scatter and hard-packed adobe clay floor found to span the areas encompassing Units N61E0 and N59W0 was thought to indicate a lithics workshop and or probable lean-to type structure that may have been propped against the exterior northwest corner of the quadrangle. The hard-packed character of the floor composite and the presence of a flintknapper’s tool kit continue to point to the probability of a Mission era lithics workshop and lean-to structure situated just outside core area of the Mission Quadrangle.

**The Women’s Quarters**

According to the early mappings of relict adobe wall sections that once abutted the South Wing of the Convento Quadrangle (Pesch 1961;
Howard; cf. Farnsworth 1987 and Personal Communication, 2007), the existing South Wing once constituted the southern half of a double-barreled range building that included what has been called the Women’s Quarters. Although recent discussions with Larry Gould, formerly of the California Missions Foundation, would suggest that his detailed studies of Spanish colonial documents places the Women's Quarters in the North Wing of the Quadrangle, we presently have no other evidence for the specific placement of the Women's Quarters. Despite this fact, Unit N7E28 (Provisional Designation) produced a 65.0 centimeter-wide cross-wall with probable hearth features; and Unit N4E17 (Provisional Designation) in turn confirmed the existence of the east-west trending north wall of the so-called Women’s Quarters.

Unit N4E17: This excavation sounding provided evidence for a granite cobble-stone pavement, the Women’s Quarters north wall footing, a 1950s era granular concrete pour overlying said pavement, and an ash covered hard-packed clay floor at a depth of 30.0 centimeters below the unit datum at N4E17. The unit was originally sited so as to intercept an anticipated cross-wall located just north of the existing Gift Shop located at the west end of the South Wing. The unanticipated granite rock pavement obscured reliable evidence for the cross wall originally anticipated at this location, while at the same time provisioning evidence for what may well have constituted a kitchen area just north of which was recovered a variety of charred bone, ceramics, and related charcoal laden midden deposits.

The exposed floor bore a 1.0 to 2.0 centimeter-thick layer of ash and scorched clay. The overlying granite cobble pavement extended to a depth of 25.0 centimeters below the unit datum at N4E17. In order to ascertain features lying just beneath the 30.0 centimeter-deep living floor, excavation depth at the north half of the unit was dropped to a depth of 90.0 centimeters. Because the rock pavement extended beyond the south balk wall profile it was not possible to discern the overall extent of the feature in question. The same pavement was however found to cover an area of one meter from south to north, and 1.45 meters from east to west; with the east margin of the pavement observed to extend through the east wall profile.

It should be noted that Dr. Lewis Somers' resistivity probe survey of this area provided further indications of the areal extent of said feature. So as to ascertain the overall depth of the pavement in question, a 20.0 centimeter-wide stratigraphic cut was made through the center of the pavement and ash-covered living floor noted at the north half of the unit at a depth of 30.0 centimeters. Said stratigraphic cut extended to a depth of 60.0 centimeters and revealed the precedence of the ash-covered floor, and midden layer superimposed over said floor, as well as the bottom of the overlying granite cobble pavement.
The jumbled and otherwise disturbed nature of the larger granite boulders and cobbles at the southwest corner of the unit indicate a post-abandonment or recent disturbance of the Women’s Quarters cross-wall originally anticipated at this locality on the basis of early mappings by Diocesan Curator Harry Downie and avocational archaeologist Don Howard. In attempting to discern the relationship of a separate, albeit apparently related, granite cobble pavement at the northwest corner of the same unit excavation, a second 20.0 centimeter stratigraphic cut was made at that location. It was thereby determined that while separated by prior disturbance, the granite pavement at the northwest corner of the unit constituted an “extension” of the main pavement dominating the southeast portion of Unit N4E17. The recent discovery of a host of meticulously detailed site maps produced by former Mission Soledad caretaker Oliver Pesch (1961), now reveal that Pesch undertook archaeological investigations of the Women’s Quarters, and other sectors of the site. For the Women’s Quarters in particular, the Pesch maps indicate the existence of a corridor that once separated the South Wing room block from that of the Women’s Quarters. This latter revelation would appear to corroborate this investigator’s belief that the Women’s Quarters antedates or anticipates the construction of the South Wing room block provisionally dated to 1805.

In a resistivity probe survey image titled South Wing Quadrangle (Somers 2008: 19; Figure 9), a substantial north-south trending cross wall is indicated immediately west of the excavation unit at N4E17. The location, as per Somers’ coordinates is approximately 18 meters east, and 7 meters north, of the datum in the lower left-hand corner of the image. That wall in turn appears connected via an east-west trending wall that intersects the cobble pavement from the west; where larger granite cobbles and boulders were recovered. The feature in question would appear to overlie a smaller rectangular room block that could well constitute a kitchen hearth or estufa (oven) or related storage feature thought located within this general area of the overall complex. The detailed survey maps produced by Oliver Pesch in turn corroborate findings from Somers’ resistivity probe in said location.

Unit N2E28: Originally identified as Unit N4E28 under those provisional unit designations initially established in lieu of the precise location of the Farnsworth (1987) site datum, this unit resulted in the recovery of the only complete Women’s Quarters cross wall identified as the result of excavation soundings. The resistivity probe survey completed by Somers (2008) during the summer of 2008 in turn provided preliminary indications for at least three other probable cross walls. Said cross wall resistivity images conform to the Pesch (1961) and Farnsworth (1987; cf. Somers 2008: 11) mappings of the whole of the complex, including subsequent mappings of the Women’s Quarters.
Although initiated in the spring of 2007, Unit N2E28 was left open through the end of the fall 2007 field season. This was done so as to ascertain architectural and contextual relationships with features noted in adjacent Units N7E28 (aka Unit N5E28 under corrected designation) and N4E30 (provisional designation). The latter unit proved to have been significantly disturbed by landscape (irrigation) related trenching back-filled with gravels, very likely the result of the Pesch (1961) investigation. The irregularly formed 55.0 to 65.0 centimeter-wide cross wall in Unit N2E28 consisted of a thinly laid 10.0 centimeter-deep layer of smaller schist cobbles, the top of which lay at depth of 25.0 to 30.0 centimeters from grade at the provisional unit datum of N4E28. Wall width of the Women’s Quarters ranged between 65 and 80 centimeters, and this by contrast with the 90 centimeters wall breadth for the Church of 1805. As per previous investigations by the author at such sites as Mission San Juan Bautista (Mendoza and Lucido 2012; Mendoza 2013), the earliest foundation features recovered archaeologically range between 65.0 to 85.0 centimeters, whereas later structures maintained a standardized wall breadth of 90 centimeters for convento range structures, and 120.0 centimeters or broader foundation footings for church structures, and this depending on wall height and the overall width of the nave of the given church under consideration.
Several observations of particular import to interpreting the so-called Women’s Quarters were obtained from the excavation of Unit N2E28. First, the relatively shallow 10.0 centimeter-deep footprint of the cross wall itself suggests that this interior cross wall feature was added subsequent to the construction of the original room block constituting the Women’s Quarters. Excavation in this unit sought to fully expose both the cross wall and flooring features within this portion of the Women’s Quarters.

Second, excavations in turn revealed that the hard-packed earthen floor lay at a depth of 40.0 centimeters below existing grade as measured from N4E28. Said floor bore evidence of ash and charcoal flecks that reinforced this feature’s identification with a living floor. Atop this living floor a thin 10.0 centimeter layer of sand was laid so as to situate the cobbles used as the foundation for the cross wall feature noted.

Third, excavation in the south third of the unit revealed an east-west trending (elevated) feature of approximately 15.0 centimeters height with a ramped or cantilevered linear array of stones forming the north perimeter of the platform in question. Interestingly, those soils that constituted the core materials of the platform included five 5.0 centimeter-thick layers of what appeared to consist of a darkened, or ash laden, series of soil horizons (7.5 YR 3/2, wet). Though not easily differentiated, it was clear that Layer D (see Fig. 10a) incorporated an ash grey midden replete with flecks of charcoal. Layer E, the 5.0 to 10.0 centimeter-thick layer of sand immediately beneath Layer D, varied significantly from all other soil layers constituting the platform fill. Layer E also appears to constitute a continuation of that bed or band of sand upon which the whole of the cross wall foundation was originally laid. The Munsell Soils reading for Layer E sands was determined to be that of 2.5 YR 5/3 (wet) or Dark Reddish Brown. A second thin layer of sand was in turn identified at the depth of 50.0 centimeters below grade within a 70.0 centimeter-deep stratigraphic cut excavated adjacent the east balk wall of the unit. Unlike the first such layer of sand encountered as bedding for the cobble foundations of the cross wall at a depth of 35.0 centimeters, this second deeper layer bore no evidence of the thin layer of ash associated with the base of the aforementioned Layer D sands, and the top of the Layer F floor feature so noted. Beyond determining the existence of the second layer of sand, the stratigraphic cut produced no additional evidence for cultural deposits, and was thereby determined to constitute a sterile deposit.

The elevated feature in question may well have served as the basal portions of a hearth or fireplace of the type that may have graced each of those rooms on each side of the wall to the east and west within the Women’s Quarters. The sandy soils were likely integrated into the wall footings so as to both level, and anchor, the otherwise irregular surface of the existing living floor within that portion of the room block. The sands may also have served as
a moisture barrier for the cross wall in question. Moreover, it should be noted that the resistivity probe survey similarly identified the full extent of this otherwise buried cross wall feature (Somers 2008).

At the east end of the former arcade corridor identified with the so-called Women’s Quarters, excavation of a portion of the adobe wall comprising the west wall of the church nave produced two singularly interesting and revealing indications pertaining to construction methods and points of access into the mission church.

Figure 11. View northwest across former portion of west adobe wall of church nave at Unit N5E50. The thin east-west trending adobe pedestal just right of center contains the remains of two thin lime-plaster door-jamb veneers previously identified with a doorway leading from the Women’s Quarters arcade through the west wall of the church into the nave. Note that the teja tile pavement was apparently used to level the schist cobble foundation footing at this location, and at the same time hamper rodent incursions into the overlying adobe wall. Photograph by the author.
The North Wing

What is here termed the North Wing consists of an east-west trending multi-room adobe brick range building one span or room block wide. The north wing is connected to the West Wing at the northwest corner of the Quadrangle. It is this portion of the ruined Quadrangle that is so often pictured in recent publications about the California Missions that feature a chapter on Mission Nuestra Señora de la Dolorisima Soledad. While the North Wing has been largely overlooked in earlier archaeological investigations or avocational explorations, during the course of the 1950s soldiers were recruited to probe the area with metal detectors, and during that effort some minimalist probing of subsurface features was undertaken. By contrast, Farnsworth (Personal Communication, 2007) learned after extensive investigations along the entire course of the West Wing that Downie, perhaps in concert with Pesch's efforts, cleared much of the in situ matrix and archaeological contents of the northernmost portion of that range building. So as to determine the depth of the original living floors, and in turn probe the extent of disturbance in said structure, archaeological investigations were undertaken at the mid-point of the North Wing. A series of shallow 1.0 by 2.0 meter east-west, and north-south, trending excavation units were established in this sector. As much of the area was covered by adobe-melt, and as such largely devoid of cultural materials, it was determined that only Unit N57E28 would be dropped to bedrock, or for that matter, excavated through a sterile soils horizon. Only this latter excavation area is summarized here as this was the only one of some six individual 1.0 by 2.0 meter units to achieve objective during the course of the 2007 field season.

Unit N57E29: Located within the North Wing room block, excavations in this sector were undertaken so as to determine the depth of the original living floors located within this workshop-related sector of the convento Quadrangle. While three north-south trending 1.0 by 2.0 meter excavation units were situated along the east interior face of the west wall of the central room in this portion of the North Wing, only the south half of Unit N57E29 was sufficiently completed so as to provide critical stratigraphic, contextual, and architectural data pertinent to the interpretation of this room block. As the end of the fall 2007 field season closed, work on the south half of Unit N57E29 probed the unit to a depth of 70.0 centimeters. Excavations revealed that the original living floor lay at a depth of 30.0 centimeters beneath the provisional unit datum anchored at N58E29. At the same depth, exposure of the east face of the west wall produced indications for a cobble-stone parging layer, stone shelf or ledge that protruded eastward into the room block some 10.0 to 15.0 centimeters. At a depth of 30.0 centimeters below the provisional unit datum, a thinly stratified layer of broken tejas and charcoal flecks was noted extending
across the south, east, and north wall elevations. This thinly stratified layering of teja shards and charcoal flecks corresponds identically to the relative depth of the top of the stone shelf or ledge so noted. Soil deposits beneath the 30.0 centimeter-deep floor proved largely devoid of cultural materials, thereby indicating that the thinly stratified layer of tejas and charcoal flecks constitutes the remains of an earthen floor for which no evidence of a ladrillo tiled floor was noted. The presence of teja roof tile shards within the floor layer in turn indicates that this portion of the Mission Quadrangle was once roofed with fired clay tiles removed at some point shortly after the abandonment of the convento complex. Given that many of the earliest Mission era structures on any given California mission site were initially thatched as opposed to tiled, and at times remained as such through the course of the Mission era, the evidence in this instance makes clear that the so-called Indian Workshop locality was in fact tiled prior to its abandonment.

Recovery of the Neophyte Plaza

An 1834 inventory that references the Neophyte Plaza at Soledad has produced indications for the spatial dimensions of several teja tile-covered adobe room blocks or range buildings identified with the “neophyte” plaza or rancheria at said mission. Among those structures noted from the 1834 inventory, measurements were as follows: a) one room with one small quarters with a door which serves as a carpenter’s shop and a place for keeping tools, appraised at 20 pesos; b) one wing of 79 varas (66.819 meters; 219.225 feet) with ten dwelling units (habitaciones) for the Indians (indígenas), appraised at 200 pesos; c) one wing of 135 varas (114.185 meters; 374.625 feet) and seventeen dwelling units for the Indians, appraised at 300 pesos; d) one wing of 100 varas (84.5 meters; 277.5 feet) and seventeen dwelling units for the Indians, appraised at 160 pesos; e) one wing of 27 varas (22.837 meters; 74.925 feet) and 3 dwelling units for the Indians, appraised...
at 40 pesos; f) one small warehouse, one living quarters for the corporal of
the guard and one room that serves as a guardhouse, appraised at 100 pesos.
By this accounting, the average dwelling for the neophytes housed in the
range structures so noted would average approximately 6.7 meters (22.0
feet) in length by 4.9 meters (16.3 feet) in width. This measure accords well
with those dimensions recorded in the South Convento room block.3

If 3.5 to 6.0 persons per room are projected for the population for each
of the room blocks identified with the Neophyte Plaza in question,
the first room block so noted would have housed an estimated 35 to 60
persons, the second and third room blocks between 59.5 to 102 persons,
and the fourth room block very likely housed between 10.5 and 21 persons.
These figures document a projected resident (neophyte) population of
some 165.5 to 285 persons; a figure approximating the resident neophyte
population of Chalon, Esselen, Yokut, and Salinan peoples that graced the
census records of the mission, but whose numbers nevertheless fluctuated
between 512 in 1800, to a low of 339 in 1832. Nevertheless, the highest
recorded population for Mission Soledad stands at 598 for the year of 1810
(McLaughlin and Mendoza, 2009: cf., Mission Statistics), but that for the
period noted, circa 339 persons. As such, it would appear that the majority
of those Native Californians still resident at Mission Soledad in the years
immediately preceding the secularization and decline of the Soledad
Mission community may be accounted for from the census of 1834, and
those numbers projected from the Neophyte Plaza alone.

In our efforts to confirm the precise locations and dimensions of the
Neophyte Plaza so noted, in the spring of 2010 the CSU Monterey Bay
archaeology team launched an investigation that made use of steel probes,

Figure 13. CSU Monterey Bay student
project participants pictured directing
the March 5, 2010 field survey of that
area located just south of the Mission
quadrangle or casco since identified with
the Neophyte Plaza. Photograph by the
author.
archaeological soundings, and a preliminary magnetic field gradient survey undertaken by Somers in 2008 (Somers 2008). Because the magnetic field gradient survey proved inconclusive, and the area under consideration is located within an active agricultural parcel, permission was granted to undertake “plow zone archaeology” by way of the excavation of archaeological soundings set out in one-by-one meter units in those locations where steel probes produced initial indications for subsurface features. In this way, CSU Monterey Bay field crews identified both the South and North walls of what is presently interpreted to constitute the mid-section of the longest of the aforementioned structures noted above; mainly, that identified with a building measuring 114.185 meters (374.625 ft.) in length with 17 rooms (see Figure 14).

Those investigations that ultimately culminated in the discovery of the southeast corner of the original Neophyte Plaza range building (measuring 135 varas) was initiated in April 2010, and continued through the spring 2011. Ultimately, Unit N5W0 (Unit Datum 3 – South Field) produced evidence for the east end wall of the 135 vara range structure. Other units deemed central to the recovery of the Neophyte Plaza include those identified with Unit Datum 3 – South Field (anchored to the southeast control point at the property corner located on the north edge of the agricultural road in that sector) 1x1 meter soundings at Units N6W46, N1W50, N5W50, N25W60, N7E6, and N36W63. Units N5W50, N6W50, and N7W50 and its accompanying Trench 1 (South Field) produced both the north and south cross walls indicated in Figure 14. The relative depth of the tops of those foundations identified with the 135 vara range structure measured 188.5 centimeters in depth, at a point measuring 35-35 meters (116.0 feet) from the southeast corner of the range building and parcel control point so noted.

Unit N5W50 produced evidence for the south perimeter wall of the Neophyte Plaza range building. Unit N5W50 resulted in the recovery of a schist cobble foundation, whereas N6W50 and N7W50 produced evidence for a clay floor with scattered teja tile shards, and a single Olivella bead at a depth of 40 centimeters below grade. These discoveries prompted the initiation of the Trench 1 (South Field) sounding consisting of an 8.0 meter long test trench that resulted in the recovery of a) the south wall at Unit N5W50; b) a clay floor and associated hearth located on the west half of Unit N8W49; and c) a north wall schist cobble foundation footing located at N10W49. The archaeological trench in question ultimately revealed (a) the south schist-cobble foundation wall, (b) a hard packed earthen floor overlain with teja shards and ceramic debris, (c) a hearth indicated by way of burnt cobbles, reddened and blackened earth, and charred artifacts; and to the north, the recovery of a (d) second thinly-laid adobe wall foundation consisting of schist-cobbles constituting the north wall of the 4.572 meter
(15-foot) wide room block. Interestingly, the aforementioned rock-lined hearth was recovered at the midpoint of the room-block; and thereby, produced indications that smoke from the hearth would have wafted into rafters of the room and escaped through the interstices of a roof and superstructure consisting of redwood beams over lain by tule reeds and fired tejas. In this instance, the indigenous residents of the community (consisting of adobe room blocks with fired-tile roofs) maintained those floor plan considerations that necessarily applied to preexisting uses of interior (living) spaces in both pre-contact and rancheria village structures of the region. Moreover, the recovery of some one-half-dozen Mexican-origin basalt stone manos, and Mexican-origin ground stone metate grinding slab fragments used in the processing of maize flour, insinuates in part the identification of the site with a Mexicanized or Mesoamerican household economy and related forms of agricultural and domestic production (Flenniken, Jeffrey, Markos, and Ozbun 1993; Mendoza and Torres 1994).

In addition, the recovery of Mexican Indian, majolica, and British transfer print earthenware of circa 1810-1834, in addition to a Haitian Phoenix button, all provide indications for both the Mexicanization of the resident population at mission Solesad; as well as their growing access to imported wares and Indian trade items such as that embodied in those metal tokens and buttons recovered to date (Sprague 1998; Cohen-Williams and Williams 2004). The recovery of significant quantities of worked in situ Monterey cherts and other lithic debris associated with the few (intact) living surfaces identified to date similarly appears to affirm continuity in traditional indigenous technologies and life ways as demonstrated...
In addition to the preliminary recovery of those schist cobble foundations identified with both the North and South walls of the largest of the Neophyte Plaza room blocks; the transect-based probe of a 75 x 75 m area located just north of the existing agricultural road south of the mission produced a predominantly indigenous material culture. Within the context of two such areas were recovered evidence for hearths thought to constitute the presence of traditional tule reed or brush and pole structures replete with indigenous trade beads, ground stone mortars, lithics reduction areas and projectile point fragments, and worked shell. Said materials were recovered from the midst of an area specifically identified with the plaza fronting the U-shaped configuration of the Neophyte Plaza. This plaza was, in turn, separated from the mission quadrangle, cloister, and church by the original zanja or aqueduct found by this investigator to have paralleled that elsewhere (Clemmer 1961; Farris 1991; Farnsworth 1989; Allen 1998; Cobb 2003; Silliman 2003; Sampson and Bradeen 2006; Allen and Blount 2009; Panich 2010).

Figure 15. Map plan depicting recent findings pertaining to the Neophyte Plaza and main plaza located to the southwest of the mission quadrangle or casco. Note projected dimensions and numbers of room blocks in each housing unit and location of the zanja or aqueduct relative to El Camino Real. Illustration by Emily Nisbet after the original map plan by Mendoza 2010.
portion of the El Camino Real that once bisected the site (see Figure 15 and 16). In this instance, the *zanja*, originally identified by way of pedestrian survey spurred by the recollections of an elderly informant, was found to have originated from a distant location to the southeast, and in line with Arroyo Seco Creek. Given the southeast to northwest trajectory of the *zanja*, the inference was made that the *zanja* would have paralleled the circuit of the El Camino Real from the south and east, and traversed the mission compound at the north perimeter of the Neophyte Plaza, thereby separating the resident indigenous population from the path of the El Camino Real. Given the recurrence of epidemics among tribal and mission neophyte populations, the separation of the Neophyte quarters from passersby would have been critical to safeguarding the health of the resident population; and thereby, it would appear that the friars actively sought to limit Mission Indian or neophyte interactions and direct engagements with the European settlers of that time (Valle 1973: 73-77).

As to the fate of the Neophyte Plaza that now underlies the agricultural parcel in question, the 1859 Black plat map of the site indicates only the presence of an east-west trending adobe wall identified with “Indian ruins” that follows the course of that area since identified with the longest of the adobe room blocks in question. As noted, our efforts in that area identified with the Neophyte Plaza and its associated, and particularly large, *plaza* resulted in the recovery of extensive evidence for lithic reduction of coastal and locally available Monterey area chert and quartzite resources (Farnsworth 1989; Silliman 2003; Mendoza 2008). In addition, Olivella (*Olivella biplicata*) spire-lopped and Abalone (*Haliotis rufescens*) shell beads and pendants, and reutilized European earthenware and Majolica shards were recovered in association with plaza-centered, rock-lined hearths. Given Spanish control over shell resources once exploited freely by coastal peoples, the presence of shell beads and related resources indicates ongoing access to said resources by the neophyte populations of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad. Whether by virtue of trade or other exchange with coastal villages, such access would have necessitated an on-going negotiation with Spanish authorities at the *Real Presidio de San Carlos de Monterey*. As such, it is clear from the archaeological resources of the Neophyte Plaza, that access to traditional, albeit, Spanish controlled, resources was maintained well into the Mission era at Soledad. Such access was similarly granted to the non-Mission Indians of Santa Clara and vicinity whose “chief” or *cacique* negotiated labor contracts with the Spanish commander at the Royal Presidio of Monterey (Mendoza 2012). In this latter instance, upwards of one-hundred laborers were dispatched from Santa Clara to Monterey to participate in the *presidio* construction projects of circa 1810, and this in exchange for blankets, shell, and other amenities made available to the non-Mission Indians of the communities in question.
Recovery of the Narthex

During the course of the spring 2010 field program, student crews were directed to excavate 1.0 x 1.0 and 2.0 x 2.0 meter soundings at the southernmost portion of those foundation footings identified with the Church of 1805. This portion of the investigation was conducted in tandem with the testing of that area identified with the Soldiers’ Quarters, and the juncture or interface separating the two structures for the purpose of mapping. As such, Unit N1E6 (Datum 2) was initiated in the area six meters east of the southeast corner of the convento cloister, which constitutes the present-day Mission museum. Foundation footings exposed in this instance make apparent that the precise location of the footings of the front façade of the Church of 1805 originally extended beyond the south face or plane of the adjacent convento wing or cloister. Preliminary analysis of findings from the area have since produced indications that the façade or portal of the Church of 1805 originally extended 3.0 meters south of the plane of south face of the adobe wall of the adjacent convento cloister. This finding is in accord with Oriana Day’s late 19th century (conjectural) depiction of the church façade extending well beyond the south face of the cloister (Figure 18).

As such, the late 19th century depiction of Mission Soledad by Oriana Day (1864-1933) which has often been touted as “imaginative” would in effect appear more accurate than originally presumed or anticipated. During the course of the preparation of a report concerned with the architectural history of Old Mission San Juan Bautista, it was noted from Engelhardt (1931) that the 1812 installation of a wooden screen adjacent the baptistery was intended to partition-off an area to be used as a narthex needed to accommodate naturales, or non-Christian Indians wishing to view Catholic services despite their non-convert religious standing and social networks beyond the church. The descriptions so noted accords well with the configuration of Soledad’s Church of 1805 and its entryway enclosure;

Figure 16. Conjectural reconstruction of the mission church and quadrangle relative to its association with the Neophyte Housing Area depicted in the foreground. After original painting by Oriana Day, based on the recollections of Don Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, and archaeological investigations and map plans by the author. Illustration by Emily Nisbet after the original map plan by Mendoza, 2010.
in turn noted from the Pesch survey maps of 1961 (BANC MSS 72/229c). Given the configuration in question, the extended envelope of the Church of 1805 is here identified as the narthex of the so-called Open Entrance feature identified by Pesch (1961). CSU Monterey Bay excavation of the narthex feature has since determined that the church forecourt and façade extend 3.0 meters south of the plane of the South Convento façade.

With the recovery of the narthex, it has since been determined that the Church of 1805 measured 42.15 meters in length; and this not including the basal platform element identified with those neoclassical elements (Roman columns) thought to have once framed the main entrance to the original church (Figure 1; Oriana Day, 1877–1884). In effect, the basal platform serves to corroborate the existence of that feature noted in the painting by Oriana Day. The addition of the basal platform so noted thereby extends this measure of the church an additional 50.0 centimeters in length, thereby extending the overall footprint of the church foundation to 42.65 meters in length. Interior breadth dimensions of the Church of

Figure 17 (above). Map plan depicting the nave and narthex of the Church of 1805, and a portion of the east end of the so-called Women's Quarters recovered during the course of the spring 2008 recovery operations in that portion of the site. Mapping illustration by Jennifer A. Lucido based on original field maps and illustrations prepared by the author.
1805 stand at 5.1 meters, whereas the exterior dimensions measure 6.8 meters in breadth. Additional testing of that area identified with the church interior determined that the sanctuary platform measures 7.55 meters from the interior back wall of the Church of 1805 to the south end of said feature. Finally it should be noted that archaeological investigation of those adobe blocks identified with the sole remaining portion of the southwest wall of the Church of 1805 each measured 55.0 x 30.0 x 9.0 centimeters, and a circa 3.0 centimeter-thick layer of adobe mortar was used to cement the adobes into place at that portion of the Church of 1805.

The Soldiers’ Quarters

The spring 2010 field season at Soledad brought the identification and recovery of the granite foundation footings of the original Soldiers’ Quarters of circa 1805. Despite years of speculation and conjecture regarding the precise location of the Soldiers’ Quarters, the deployment of a non-invasive field strategy predicated on the use of steel probes presented yet another opportunity to reinvestigate those areas previously suggested to have housed the structure so noted. Archaeological investigations within that area noted in the Black Plat of 1854 produced indications for the remains of both granite and schist foundation footings extending 5.6 meters (18.5') into the agricultural parcel just east of the east exterior face of the Church of 1805 (Elliot 1956: 21, Fig. 2). At a depth of 30.0 centimeters, excavations revealed a stratum of architectural debris consisting of teja tile shards, whereas the use of steel probes in turn produced evidence for a hard-packed floor-like surface at a depth of 30.0 to 40.0 centimeters extending well into the adjacent agricultural field some 15.0 meters (47.5 feet).

Archaeological investigations initiated in the spring of 2013 included 1x2 meter and 2x2 meter soundings identified with Units S64E3, S66E4, S68E3, and S70E4. Though those foundation footings identified with the Soldiers’ Quarters were ultimately found to have been compromised by virtue of agricultural activity, and equally likely, flood damage; said investigations nevertheless permitted identification and documentation of the western extension of the structure so noted. Significantly, that area extending beyond the 5.6 meter foundation footings was found to abruptly terminate...
at a sandy loamy soil; thereby producing indications that may serve as one additional line of evidence for corroborating flood damage in that area identified with the Church of 1805. The overall architectural footprint of the Soldiers’ Quarters was thereby determined to span a 7.0 meter (23.0 foot-wide measure from corner to corner, thereby indicating a 16.0 foot-wide or 5.88 meter interior room block width for the structure in question. This conforms closely to both the 95.0 centimeter-wide foundation footings and wall width measures, and interior breadth dimensions, of the corresponding South Convento room block; thereby suggesting some degree of contemporaneity in the construction history for the two circa 1805 buildings.

Though the correspondence of foundation footing measures and building dimensions and alignments suggest some degree of contemporaneity, the buildings were ultimately determined not to have been part of a contiguous construction episode. Excavations identified a one to two meter gap separating the Soldiers’ Quarters from the east exterior face of the Church of 1805, which served to separate each structure one from the other. Excavation units initiated in July and August of 2012 at S64E0 and S64E2 in turn produced what has been determined to have constituted a schist-cobble parging layer extending one meter east of the east exterior face of the Church of 1805 foundation footing. A 1.0 meter wide gap or separation between said parging layer and the west wall of the Soldiers’ Quarters in turn provides indications of a separation between the east wall of the Church of 1805 and the west wall of the Soldiers’ Quarters. Given the separation so noted, it is likely that the structures were not contiguous, and that either a gateway, or canal once separated the two areas during the course of the Mission era. Given the location of the Fulling Mill on the east

Figure 19. Recovery of the Soldiers’ Quarters by the spring 2010 CSU Monterey Bay mission archaeology field crew. Note granite boulder footings of the west end of the Soldiers’ Quarters range building. Photograph by the author.
face of the granary (*granero*) or warehouse (*almacén*), existence of a canal is likely.

**Recovery of the Sacristy**

The spring 2013 field season at Soledad resulted in the discovery, recovery, and interpretation of the circa 1805 Sacristy structure located adjacent the original east wall of the church sanctuary. Archaeological investigations in Units S32E3, S40E3, S30E5, and S32E7 (northeast quadrangle provisional datum) produced indications for an early *jacal* (wood stake, pole and mud wall) in Unit S40E3, the northeast corner of the Sacristy foundation footing in Unit S30E5, and the east foundation footing in S32E7. Investigations in Unit S40E0 resulted in the recovery of the Sacristy floor drain likely used for the cleansing of the sacramental vessels, and units S35E1, S29E1, and S31E1 served to delineate the north Sacristy wall footing. The 2x2 meter sounding at Unit S41E5 resulted in the recovery of the southeast interior corner of the Sacristy. One additional sounding at the north end of the church sanctuary at Unit S31W2 served to define the breadth of the north or apse wall of the Church of 1805, which was found to measure 85.0 centimeters in breadth. Ultimately, findings from the Sacristy structure investigation produced evidence for defining the overall dimensions of Figure 20. This depiction of Indian gaming near Mission San Francisco de Asís in 1822 (by expeditionary artist Louis Choris) provides a vantage point for interpreting the architecture and lifestyles had within the Neophyte Plaza at Mission Soledad. Courtesy the Library of Congress.
this significant building, whose interior dimensions it was determined measured 5.5 meters (18.0’ wide) by 9.75 meters (32.0’ long). Exterior dimensions for the east-west width of the Sacristy were determined to measure 6.9 meters from the point of the east exterior face of the church foundation footing to the east exterior face of Sacristy wall. Wall breadth was thereby projected at 80.0 centimeters. The overall exterior dimensions of the Sacristy were determined to measure 23.0 feet in width by 37.0 feet in length. Investigations in this sector as yet remain incomplete, and subject to future study.

Ancillary Findings

In the spring of 2007, that information obtained from Mr. Ernest Binsacca, a long-time resident of Arroyo Seco Road in Soledad, ultimately permitted this investigator to resolve questions regarding the location and trajectory of the original zanja or aqueduct that once provisioned sorely needed water resources for the agricultural fields that once supported the mission population. In this instance, it was determined that the zanja extended some 7.39 miles as the crow flies from the mouth of the Arroyo Seco Canyon to the Neophyte Plaza. Given that the elevation of the mouth of the Arroyo Seco canyon stands at 389.0 feet above sea level (N36° 18.28’ – W121° 18.7’), whereas the Neophyte Plaza is situated at an elevation of 181.0 feet above sea level (N36° 24.30’ – W121° 21.45’), the relative elevation difference stands at 208 feet between the two geographic points, thereby constituting a 0.005 percent drop which translates as a point 0.5 foot drop per 100 feet linear measure required to maintain a gravity flow adequate to provisioning Mission Soledad. Upon conducting a field survey of the area noted by Mr. Binsacca to correspond with that feature identified by his grandfather with the former “aqueducto,” archaeologist Paul Farnsworth was contacted, and our joint GPS-based survey served to confirm the existence of a linear earthen embankment commensurate with period descriptions of the feature so noted. Subsequent mapping efforts by this investigator to document those range buildings framing the Neophyte Plaza projected a hypothetical pathway for the zanja that followed the course of the El Camino Real through the site of Soledad. Given efforts to shield mission neophytes from non-native passersby, said projection detailed a course for the zanja that paralleled the camino on its south flank (see Figure 15). This hypothetical projection was later confirmed by way of the finding of an historic Soberanes family mapping of the site dated to the late 19th century, in which that mapping so noted was subsequently corroborated (Kusz 2011).
Concluding Observations

During the course of the past seven years of archaeological and ethnohistorical investigations undertaken by this investigator under the auspices of the CSU Monterey Bay Mission Archaeology Program at Mission Nuestra Señora de la Soledad; a host of notable discoveries have served to expand upon the interpretation and correction of the architectural history of this thirteenth in the chain of California Spanish and Indian missions. In addition to those exploratory investigations and field surveys that resulted in the clarification and correction of the site’s architectural history, CSU Monterey Bay field program findings spanning the period from 2007 through 2014 served to elucidate (a) those architectonic and structural principles and approaches undertaken in the construction of extant buildings, (b) the identification of probable room function of a host of room blocks, including that identified with the South Wing or Women’s Quarters kitchen area and a host of flintknapping localities, and (c) the discovery and documentation of those sizeable range buildings framing the Neophyte Plaza, and those constituting the Soldiers’ Quarters, Sacristy, Women’s Quarters, and the remains of the earliest jacal structures yet identified at Soledad.

This investigator’s now 20-year experience leading archaeological investigations into the architectural histories of the California Spanish and Indian missions has proven most instructive to the interpretation of those Colonial era architectural principles and precepts that once served to guide construction in Alta California and beyond (Mendoza and Lucido, 2015). Observations of such from the sites of Missions San Juan Bautista, San Carlos Borromeo, San Miguel Arcángel, and the Real Presidio de San Carlos de Monterey serve to delineate several predictable conditions. First, period construction methods generally confirm the deployment of wall height to foundation depth ratios of 1:3 to 1:5, and this depending on overall wall height and foundation breadth. Second, the quality and or abundance of native or locally-available construction materials served to mediate architectonic applications and stylistic variation in a given setting. Third, while the earliest mission structures were generally situated on foundation footings spanning 65.0 to 80.0 centimeter cross sections, subsequent construction generally depended on an average foundation span of 90.0 centimeters, or 120.0 centimeters in church and granary construction. Finally, as with the three churches of the Real Presidio de San Carlos de Monterey that span the period from 1770 through 1794, the delineation of sacred space and the locational anchoring of first church sanctuaries often served as a focal point upon which subsequent church and sanctuary construction was situated. Given these conditions, as well as the recovery of an early jacal wall adjacent to the sanctuary of the Church of 1805, and the identification of 120.0 centimeters foundation footing paralleling the
west wall of the nave of the Church of 1805, I hereby contend that the 120.0 centimeter footing in question constitutes the west perimeter foundation footprint for the Church of 1791, or the original Church of 1805. According to Foster (2012: 39), “the westernmost footing begins on the north side of the South Wing and continues for 26.6 m, where it attaches to an east-west foundation in the East Wing. The configuration of the two western footings indicates that a 50 cm wide space was present on the west side of the church.” The survival of the remains of the 90.0 centimeters wide west adobe wall of the Church of 1805, and the total obliteration of the 120.0 centimeter-wide foundation footing to the west proves disconcerting to the investigators in question. Foster speculates that the massive 120.0 centimeter-wide parallel wall footing constitutes a buttressing element, although, one whose configuration is unknown and unusual in the history of California and Southwest mission architecture. Clearly, much more in the way of archaeological and ethnohistorical studies will need to be undertaken before the architectural history of Mission Nuestra Señora de la Soledad is fully understood.
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Endnotes


2. Where Unit numbers are concerned, the original site datum designated in Farnsworth’s (1987) was lost, and required re-integration. As a result, this project made use of Provisional Designations by way of reference to the projected location of the original datum. As a result, Provisional Designation indicates that whereas specimens were labeled under the provisional numbering system, the individual unit datum varies by one to two meters in some instances. The Farnsworth datum was used to account for all measures within the West and North Wing room blocks. Where the East Wing room block, Soldiers’ Quarters, and Church of 1805 were concerned, a second datum was established at the exterior northeast corner of the Mission Quadrangle. Finally, where the South Field measures identified with the Neophyte Plaza are concerned, unit designations were based on the southeast property control point located on the north margin of the agricultural road in the field south of the Mission Quadrangle. Our use of the site name of El Real Presidio de Monterey, or more aptly, *El Real Presidio de San Carlos de Monterrey*, is drawn quite specifically from period documents penned by Portolá, Fages, and Serra. Fray Junípero Serra in fact maintained the use of the name as *La Misión de San Carlos de Monterey* through the course of his life at the “new stand” at the mouth of the Río Carmelo.

3. The count and dimensions of the Neophyte Plaza room blocks was originally cited by Lawrence Gould in correspondence between Carlene Bell of the Soledad Restoration Committee and Gould in the spring of 2010.

4. This accords well with what is known of both pre-Contact indigenous, and neophyte, housing in the region. The Neophyte Plaza of Mission San Juan Bautista (Farris 1991), and that of Santa Cruz, produced similar indications.

5. USGS data indicates that the projected discharge rate for water flowing through the Arroyo Seco Creek spikes to circa 160.0 cubic feet per second on or about the first week of March, and stands at a median of 240 CFS, and a mean of 545 CFS. As measured over the course of the past 110 years, the minimum discharge value stands at 12 CFS (1977) to a maximum of 10,000 CFS (1911) as measured for the past 110 years. The most recent projected value as of this writing was 42 CFS for March 6, 2012. Said values provide some basis for projecting flood stage events that ultimately destroyed portions of the Soledad mission quadrangle and church in the late 1820s.
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