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The Earliest Chapel: Archaeology and Discovery at Monterey

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THE EARLIEST CHAPEL
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THE ROYAL PRESIDIO CHAPEL
A Short History
Ruta Casabianca

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Introduction

What do sealed crypts, buried monuments, ancient frescoes, 18th century coins, a King’s ransom in century’s old relics, and the excitement of discovery all have in common? If you answered archaeology, then you are in part correct! For, in this instance, the archaeology of the Royal Presidio Chapel, or San Carlos Cathedrual, would have put you hot on the trail of some of the most important discoveries on the Monterey Bay in recent years. Called upon in 2006 to clarify the disposition of subsurface – read archaeological -- remains and foundation footings of historic significance at the former Presidio Réal de San Carlos de Monterey, I was initially hard pressed to learn all that I could about the archaeology of this bastion by the Bay in anticipation of the impending launch of a 5.5 million dollar conservation program that anxiously awaited my findings. My recommendations were to constitute a mitigation plan for how best to protect the site’s archaeological and historical resources (Mendoza 2007a, 2007b, and 2007c). After successfully negotiating a host of herculean hurdles, including the question of whether or not to remove five 50-year old Redwoods planted adjacent the Royal Presidio Chapel of 1791-95, the mitigation plan was submitted to the City of Monterey. Upon approval of the recommendations in question, the Royal Presidio Chapel Conservation Project was free to commence work on the multi-million dollar conservation effort in question. In May of 2007, an intensive three and a one-half month program of archaeological monitoring was undertaken to document and mitigate the recovery of archaeological features exposed as the result of trenching operations pertaining to the installation of a system of subsurface conduits and French drains. This latter effort required that my 2007 lab and field crew, and I, log some very long days in the trenches mapping archaeological features and recovering a King’s ransom in archaeological specimens for the three month period in question.

Each of the aforementioned archaeological undertakings brought to light a host of discoveries of unprecedented import to interpreting the architectural and cultural heritage of this most ancient of Hispanic Catholic and Spanish colonial church sites. The particularly exhilarating, albeit monumental, commitment in question then came to an end in September 2007, and I then redirected my lab and field crew to wash, process, electronically catalog, and photograph the thousands of speci-
mens recovered. In the summer of 2008, with the excitement of the 2007 program of discovery still fresh in mind, I was then abruptly beset by the welcome challenge of how best to save what I now know to have been California's earliest Christian house of worship. In July of 2008, demolition crews from Devcon Construction inadvertently exposed historically significant architectural materials that led to the discovery of this, the earliest documented Christian house of worship in California. The result of the salvage investigation that followed, when combined with findings from the vertical archaeology and conservation efforts in question, has radically altered our understandings of the Royal Presidio Chapel and its cultural and historical legacy. In an effort to clarify the magnitude of the findings so noted, this treatment serves to address the historic import of said findings for the heritage of early Hispanic California in particular, and the cultural and social implications for Monterey's place in the momentous wake of the Age of Exploration. Ironically, while the carved shale façade of the Royal Presidio Chapel or San Carlos Cathedral has long been designated a National Historic Landmark (1960; NRHP Reference No: 66000216), recognition for this site's overall significance would need to await the efforts of the Royal Presidio Chapel Conservation Project directed by Project Manager Cathy Leiker and the Reverend Peter Crivello of the San Carlos Cathedral parish. Until the seismic retrofit of the Royal Presidio Chapel was completed in 2008, and the Chapel was reopened to the parish and community on January 25th of
2009, this most sacred and historic building was also one of the most endangered early historic structures in California and the West. After some 14 years of planning and fund raising, Project Manager Cathy Leiker and the Diocese of Monterey assembled a cutting-edge conservation team, and an army of contractors, to see through the historic preservation program in question. Since the Chapel has reopened it has drawn a groundswell of critical praise for the unprecedented series of discoveries of incalculable import to interpreting the archaeology, history, conservation, and preservation of the history and heritage of Monterey and its contribution to the settling of California and the West.

Archaeology of the Emerald Crescent

Since establishing myself and my family on the Monterey Bay in 1995, for the purposes of serving as a member of the planning faculty of what was then the newest campus of the California State University system, I have come to think of this most historic bay as the Emerald Crescent. Since the Reverend Edward Fitz-Henry’s invitation to launch a long-term archaeological study at Old Mission San Juan Bautista (1995–Present), my work on behalf of the Diocese of Monterey and the communities of the California central coast has resulted in key collaborations with such noted personalities as the retired former Diocesan Curator Sir Richard Joseph Menn, and my work with both Sir Richard and Father Edward have led to a host of major archaeological undertakings, including those at missions San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo, Nuestra Señora Dolorosísima de la Soledad, and most recently, the Presidio Real de San Carlos de Monterey. Given the inexplicable “obscurity” of the Hispanic Catholic heritage of the region, particularly where American history texts are concerned, I have in addition come to (personally) redefine Monterey as the 14th Colony of the American experience. For some, it is no less than the Boston Harbor of the Hispanic Catholic heritage of North America. Moreover, as a result of those archaeological investigations that I directed at the Royal Presidio of Monterey of late, I now realize in retrospect, and as a result of the most recent findings from this research, how truly momentous and privileged I have been to have participated in one of the most important conservation efforts and archaeological undertakings in California and the West.

Archaeology of the Royal Presidio

The first leg of the archaeological investigation at the Royal Presidio of Monterey was undertaken in the fall of 2006 with an eye to the identification of the overall depth, breadth, and composition of the granite and shale foundation footings of the San Carlos Cathedral proper. This was done for the purpose of projecting anticipated conservation needs, particularly as relative to the proposed seismic retrofit. A host of earlier investigations left open the question of the overall depth and integrity of the foundation features in question. Upon completion of the Phase 1 archaeology report, I was then called upon by Project Manager Cathy Leiker to undertake a large-scale archaeological monitoring effort that ultimately spanned the whole of the summer of 2007, and was by far the most intensive, exciting, and longest-running dimension of the archaeological undertaking by far. Phase 2 targeted the archaeological monitoring and mitigation of a contracted trenching operation that necessitated the excavation of some twenty-four 20-foot long, two-foot wide, and four to eight foot deep, trench spans that ultimately circumvented the whole of the San Carlos Cathedral; and bisected, and in turn proceeded, via a secondary trench, some 75 feet east along Church Street.

This portion of the undertaking recovered critical subsurface archaeological features that ultimately served to locate and identify a host of key historic architectural features, including the Padre’s Quarters of 1778–79, the Soldiers’ Barracks of 1778–79, Terrace 1 (1780–90), the shale-block Baptistry of 1810–11, the adobe Sacristy and Vestry of 1811, and the galería or arcade footings to both the Padre’s Quarters and Soldiers’ Barracks of 1778–79. With only trench-wide samples to work from, bringing closure to the interpretation of the architectural history of the Royal Presidio of Monterey would need to await further discoveries and explorations undertaken in the summer of 2008. A thorough reconsideration
of the findings from the vertical archaeology of the San Carlos Cathedral in turn clarified issues pertaining to the dimensions and composition of the architectural features so identified. In addition, the unanticipated reopening of the Pacheco Crypt that lies beneath the Sanctuary, and at the heart of the Transept of 1858, ultimately confirmed the long held local lore about the Pacheco Crypt having long anticipated the installation of the Transept in 1858 (See Transept detail, Figure 5).

Ironically, despite the belief that the archaeology had run its course during the summer of 2007, a chance discovery during the summer of 2008 (brought to light by the removal of a brick pavement in the forecourt of the San Carlos Cathedral) necessitated the immediate intervention of an archaeologist. As such, on the evening of July 28th of 2008, I was once again called upon to document and mitigate the recovery of yet another subsurface architectural feature. This thereby launched Phase 3, which resulted in the recovery of the earliest, and perhaps the most significant, archaeological discovery to date – mainly, the Missionary’s Quarters of 1770, and the critically significant Chapel of 1771.

In the Eyes of the Ancestors

Scholarly conjecture and local lore has long dictated that four chapels were established at the Royal Presidio of Monterey. It was thought, until a review of findings from recent archaeology and historic resources deemed otherwise, that two earlier presidio chapels were located at Monterey, and that the Chapel of 1771 was the third of four such chapels; and

Recently revised and updated map plan and architectural history based on the archaeology of the Chapel of 1791-95. Map © Rubén G. Mendoza, 2009.

the second of four to be constructed with substantive materials consisting of granite rock footings, adobe walls, and lime stucco surfaces. The first Chapel structure was thought to have consisted of an enramada or pole and thatch lean-to, which made use of the palisada (or palisade defensive curtain of 1770) to anchor, and thereby comprise its south wall. The location of the 1st and or 2nd Chapel sites of the Royal Presidio of Monterey has long been identified with the southwest corner of the presidio compound; and that based on a proposed presidio map plan prepared by Spanish officer and engineer Miguel Costansó in June of 1770. Subsequent references to said location now appear based on Costansó’s projected plan for the presidio, which was never fully adopted for the actual build-out of the presidio compound. This latter observation remains a point of contention as later observers continue to echo the sentiment that the original, or First Chapel of 1770, was located at the south or southwest perimeter of the presidio compound. In order to address the question of where in fact the First Chapel was sited, we are left to turn to both the ambiguous descriptions of early observers, as well as the particularly exacting early sketches of one José Cardero.
The Sketches of José Cardero

Evidence derived from the observations of the artists and scientists of the Malaspina-Bustamante Expedition of 1789-94 has long provided a visual reference to the architectural characteristics of the site of the Royal Presidio of Monterey as it appeared in 1791-92. It is to the credit of the 25-year-old José Cardero that the impeccable draftsmanship that he produced at that time in his life would long continue to play a key role in the interpretation of the history of science, and the science of history, in New Spain and the Americas more generally. Because José Cardero rendered his sketches of Monterey as a direct result of two landfalls at Monterey – the first from Alessandro Malaspina's corvette, the Descubierta, and subsequently, aboard the goleta (or topsail schooner/brig) Mexicana with Cayetano Valdés y Flores – questions remain as to whether the sketches were produced on the first and or second landfalls at Monterey.11

Despite the many questions that remain, José Cardero's invaluable 1791-92 sketches depict two distinct views of the Chapel of 1771. The first, and perhaps the most famous, Vista del Presidio de Monte Rey, depicts the whole of the presidio compound as viewed from the south, with the vessels Descubierta and Atrevida in the harbor. A third ship, the goleta or schooner, Santa Saturnina, arrived on September 16 of 1791, and joined the ships of the Malaspina Expedition at that time (Cutter 1960: 18). The second key Cardero illustration depicting the presidio presents a perspective looking south across the Presidio's Plaza de Armas (Plaza of Arms) toward the main façade of the thatched-roof Chapel of 1771. By that time, Cardero's sketches depicted an already considerably altered 20-year old adobe sans the massive bell tower that had been reduced to rubble by 1791-92.12 In the Plaza de Armas sketch, titled Plaza del Presidio de Monte Rey,13 Cardero depicts the Padre's Quarters of 1778, and attached timber galería or arcade, with scaffolding for the Chapel of 1791-95 rising from the background. Recent findings pertaining to the Plaza de Armas sketch confirm that the scaffolding depicted to the south and east of the Chapel of 1771 served to facilitate the construction of the espadana or bell wall and tower of the Chapel of 1791-95. The Plaza de Armas sketch also depicts the Sacristy of the Chapel of 1771 – to the west or right of the Chapel -- thought to have been added as a lean-to structure after 1778.14 Not only do recent discoveries confirm the exact location of the granite and shale foundation footings of the Chapel of 1771, and the Sacristy seen in the Cárdero sketch, archaeology serves to confirm the precision with which Cardero rendered his subjects. Surprisingly, recent findings continue to reveal long-hidden “truths” that seemingly fly in the face of a long history of scholarship on the site and region, and thereby serve to dismantle this dimension of a longstanding and long cherished local traditions and lore on the heritage and history of the Pueblo de Monterey.

Identifying the Earliest Chapel

I have cautiously ventured references in this instance to the 1st through 3rd chapels of the Royal Presidio of Monterey. I should note that this has been done so as to address what I am now convinced constitutes a misinterpretation of the social and architectural history of the Royal Presidio Chapel – Structures 1 through 3. The San Carlos Cathedral, also known as the Chapel of 1791-95, is more often than not referred to as the 4th Chapel of the presidio compound. Recent findings from both the archaeology and history of the site now presuppose that the Chapel of 1771 was actually the 2nd Chapel, and a “Mission” structure to boot, whose construction was initiated while Fray Junípero Serra and Fray Juan Crespi were in residence at Monterey (1770-72). The earliest chapel of the Royal Presidio of Monterey, however, was that of the jacalón or pole, mud, and thatch structure erected in 1770. I hereby contend that the earliest Chapel of 1770 was in effect that subsurface structure identified (archaeologically) during the course of trenching operations undertaken in 2007 and 2008. That structure, which was built as part of a tandem Missionary’s Quarters, Warehouse, and Chapel, was erected along the southern defensive curtain or perimeter palisade of the presidio, and was blessed by Fray Junípero Serra on June 14th of 1770. According to Culleton (1950: 42), because of the particularly windy and inclement weather that befell the expedition on the feast day of Corpus Christi, June 14, 1770, the sailors of the expedition “made a canopy under the warehouse roof with the flags of the various nations” because the “chapel was not finished.” It was from this first, and provisional, sanctuary that both Fray Junípero Serra and Fray Juan Crespi ministered to the soldiers and civilians of the Royal Presidio of Monterey between 1770 and 1771.

View of the Royal Presidio of Monterey as it appeared to José Cardero in circa 1791-92. Courtesy of the Archives of the Diocese of Monterey.
Period of Construction

Archaeological findings from the area immediately north and west of the northwest corner of the San Carlos Cathedral reveal that the conjoined Missionary’s Quarters, Warehouse, and Chapel were little more than a jacal or large pole, thatch, and mud structure some 11 to 15 feet in width. This structure, therefore, constitutes the First Chapel erected at the Royal Presidio of Monterey, whereas the enramada -- or pole, branch, and brush provisional “chapel” -- erected at the Vizcaino Oak on June 3rd 1770 was the first on the Monterey Bay. It is this latter enramada that I believe has led to so much confusion about the architectural history of the Royal Presidio of Monterey proper. Given the facts in question, I have come to conclude that only three chapels comprise the history of religious architecture at the Royal Presidio of Monterey, and that the San Carlos Cathedral in effect constitutes the 3rd Chapel at that site.

The Chapel of 1771 was in turn the first “adobe” chapel on site, and the 2nd Chapel erected within the presidio compound, after that originally conjoined to the Missionary’s Quarters in June of 1770. The first structure on site, it is clear, was only provisional, and made use of the newly installed southern perimeter palisade, or defensive curtain, identified archaeologically as constituting the south or rear wall of the Missionary’s

Quarters of 1770. Regarding the earliest structures of 1770, Fray Francisco Palou noted that “a chapel of poles and mud was erected, to serve as a temporary church. Also living quarters were put up, divided into the necessary rooms for the use of the Padres and for workshops; both of these establishments were enclosed within a stockade to insure their defense” (cf., Watson 1934: 109). The tandem (archaeological) recovery of the Missionary’s Quarters (jacal) and chapels of 1770 and 1771 provides a clear indication that the latter structure was attached to the north wall of the former structure in a manner consonant with the orientation of the original palisade and barracks structures of the 1770, or earliest phase, of the site’s development.

The Chapel of 1771 was first identified in a June 20th 1771 plat map of the Royal Presidio of Monterey prepared by Pedro Fages and sent to the viceroy of New Spain. Commander Fages indicated the location of the Chapel, but left open to question the construction status of the sanctuary at that time. By August of 1771, Fray Junípero Serra was apparently already accustomed to making reference to the Royal Presidio Chapel complex as the “old stand” in his assignment of Fray Crespi to continued religious duties at the fort. Nevertheless, a later account by Fray Francisco Palou dated to December 1773 acknowledges that the Chapel retained its original “flat and mud-covered” roof to that date. According to other early accounts, the Chapel of 1771 incorporated a
flat *terrado*, or wood plank, earth, and lime plastered, roof and ceiling through 1776 when Pedro Font visited the site in that year and described the Chapel as such (Culleton 1950: 60). Fages subsequent accounts of 1773 detail the overall appearance and dimensions of the Chapel of 1771 by noting that its footprint measured some 7 *varas* in width by 15 *varas* in overall length, a fact that conforms quite closely with what we determined archaeologically during the 2008 recovery operations at the Royal Presidio of Monterey.\(^{18}\) Given those dimensions noted by Fages, which translate into English measure as 19.25 feet in width by 41.25 feet in length, one should anticipate that future (archaeological) investigations in that portion of the Church Street road-bed fronting the San Carlos Cathedral will result in the recovery of that portion of the Chapel of 1771 not investigated during the 2008 project effort.\(^{19}\)

These findings and observations thereby acknowledge that the Chapel of 1771 was not only the earliest adobe church in California, but also the first “mission” chapel on record in California; after the *enramada*, or temporary (and not particularly weatherproof) pole and thatch, structures installed at the Vizcaino Oak, and at the Mission/Presidio sites of Monterey and San Diego de Alcalá, by Fray Junípero Serra and his compatriots in 1769-70. Significantly, the Chapel of 1771 was consecrated as

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*View of the archaeologically exposed granite foundation footings, boulder pavements, and Roman mortar flooring of the Chapel of 1771 as seen from the espadaña or bell wall of the San Carlos Cathedral. Photograph © Rubén G. Mendoza, 2008.*

*The archaeology field crew pictured standing in the main doorway of the San Carlos Cathedral at the end of another long day in the summer of 2008. Photograph © Rubén G. Mendoza, 2008.*
the *Capilla de San José*, after its spiritual patron, Saint Joseph, and not *San Carlos* — a name adopted early in the American period so as to acknowledge the second patron of the Mission District in question.

**Summary of Findings**

Given the evidence now available, I must therefore conclude that much of that information reported to date with respect to the Chapel of 1771 is largely conjectural or misinformed. I would contend, therefore, that the following facts and statistics are necessarily essential to the fundamental identity and historic status of the Chapel of 1771 in so far as California’s earliest Christian missionary foundations are concerned:

(a) The Chapel of 1771 was in reality the 2nd Chapel of the Royal Presidio of Monterey, which thereby dictates that the San Carlos Cathedral was the 3rd Chapel erected on the same site;

(b) The 2nd Chapel, or *Capilla de San José*, thereby constitutes the first adobe “mission” chapel in California, and its construction is documented to date to 1771;

(c) The 2nd Chapel was originally installed as a “mission” chapel by Fray Serra and Fray Crespi, was subsequently deactivated as a “mission” chapel, and was then formally converted over to use as a *presidio* or military chapel in 1772;

(d) Fray Serra and Fray Crespi ministered in the 2nd Chapel until such time that Serra relocated the “mission” to Carmel and left Crespi to minister to the military and civilian population from the confines of the 2nd Chapel in 1771-72;

(e) During the 18 month sojourn of Serra and his compatriots at Monterey, the 1st and 2nd Chapel sites served as the spiritual headquarters for the missionaries of Alta California, and Serra in particular, for a period of no less than 14 months before their complete transfer to San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo in February - March of 1772;

(f) The first solemn high mass (Corpus Christi) at Monterey was celebrated on 30 May 1771, and may have been celebrated in the shadows of the as yet unfinished 2nd Chapel by Serra during the landfall of the frigate *San Antonio* in that year;

(g) On or about August 1st of 1771 Fray Serra assigned Fray Crespi to maintain and minister at the “old stand,” or 1st and 2nd Chapel sites, while he (Serra) launched the founding of San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo;

(h) Sometime after February or March of 1772 Crespi transferred the last of the “mission’s” goods to Carmel, and assigned Friars Domingo Juncosa (1740-?) and Jose Cavaller (1740-1789), both of the archdiocese of Tarragona, Catalonia, Spain, to serve as the “first priests” or *presidio* chaplains in care of the 2nd Chapel at Monterey;

And finally,

(i) The abandoned “mission” house of worship (i.e., 2nd Chapel) thereby became the first *presidio* chapel to serve the spiritual needs of the military and civilian populations of Monterey in its guise as the *Capilla de San José*, now the site of the San Carlos Cathedral.

**Concluding Remarks**

In the final analysis, it is clear that recent studies from the archaeology of the Royal Presidio of Monterey now pose many more questions than can possibly be answered at this juncture. Contrary to prevailing views that hold that the original Missionary’s Quarters, and Fray Serra’s 1st and 2nd Chapels of 1770 and 1771 were located outside the *presidio* compound, this study has exposed the revelation that the Blessed Junipero Serra and his compatriots were housed within, and not beyond, the walls of the Royal Presidio of Monterey in the period from 1770 through 1772. Significantly, during the exhaustive trenching operations of the summer 2007, substantive fragments of a carved block of slate, and an elevated platform comprised of finely dressed shale-block were in turn identified just beneath the northwest corner of the San Carlos Cathedral. The features in question are now thought to constitute remains of the altar platform of the First Chapel of 1770, and may well constitute all that remains of the earliest Christian religious structure on the Pacific Coast of Alta California. In the final analysis, on the very day in 2008 that I was tasked with seeing through the reburial of the foundation footings and Roman mortar pavements of the Chapel of 1771, I discretely positioned myself over what would have constituted the *sancta sanctorum*, or altar, of the 2nd Chapel and dropped to my knees and made the sign of the Cross; and in that way paid tribute to the many ancestors, and centuries of sacrifice, that lie in the sandy deposits of this most sacred place — a fact that continues to strike a scholarly chord, and give spiritual pause, to this descendant of the earliest Hispanic Catholic pobladores of California and the West.

**Postscript**

One final point of interest and irony regarding recent discoveries at the Royal Presidio Chapel of Monterey concerns Mission San Diego de Alcalá. While preparing research for what presently promises to be a productive CSU Monterey Bay sabbatical leave scheduled for the fall of 2009, I have already recovered the makings of an overwhelming body of evidence that clearly confirms that the Royal Presidio of Monterey
has recurrently been slighted by scholars and boosters of other historic sites in California. Though seemingly peripheral to the broader implications of this study, recent claims from Mission San Diego de Alcalá are symptomatic of what such claims have to say about the extent to which Monterey’s place in the history of North America has been underestimated. Ironically, both recent scholarship and popular lore continue to tout the notion that Presidio Hill, the site of the first “mission” chapel in San Diego, was in effect the site of the first Christian burial in California in 1773. As it turns out, the Royal Presidio of Monterey necessarily stands to benefit from this, the unraveling of yet another cherished myth about the missions of California. For in point of fact, any thoroughgoing study of the chronicles of Fray Junípero Serra makes clear that the first Christian burial in California took place at the foot of the cross planted by the soldiers of the Serra-Portolá Expedition at the Vizcaino Oak (and first provisional “chapel”) of Monterey. It was there that *Alexo Niño* was buried on June 3rd of 1770.22 Subsequent burials at the Royal Presidio of Monterey were in turn made on July 26, 1770, thereby anticipating the San Diego interment by some three years. In point of fact, the second of the *pobladores*, or Hispanic Catholic colonists, to die at Monterey (under the care of expedition surgeon Don Pedro Prat) was an African American (former slave) by the name of Ignacio Ramirez. Four others soon followed, and were buried in rapid succession in the *presidio* cemetery that was first blessed on July 26th of that year. As such, the Royal Presidio of Monterey not only holds title to the claim for the first Christian burial in California, but the first six to boot.

To add to the mythic and monumental slight of the Royal Presidio of Monterey’s place in the history of California, boosters continue to claim that Mission San Diego de Alcalá holds title to the first (mission) baptism in California in 1773, and this despite the fact that Fray Serra himself notes that “Bernardino de Jesús Fages (is) the first Christian among the natives of this Upper California” (Culleton 1950: 46). Bernardino de Jesús Fages was baptized in Monterey on December 26, 1770, again anticipating the claims from San Diego de Alcalá by three years (Watson 1934: 111). Both of these “Firsts,” among many others that remain generally unacknowledged in the history of California, truly belong to the Mission/Presidio of the Royal Presidio of Monterey. As investigators continue to interrogate the meanings of the treasure trove of findings and discoveries from the Royal Presidio of Monterey, it is patently clear that the face of history in California and the West will ultimately come to look ever more like the archaeology and history of the Emerald Crescent.

**Acknowledgements**

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Williams, Jack, and Anita Cohen-Williams
Endnotes

1 See Mardith Schuetz-Miller (1994) for a detailed summary of the architectural significance, and rich social history, of the Royal Presidio of Monterey.


3 The trees were felled, but not without significant resistance from the arborist of the City of Monterey. The archaeology ultimately made plain the extent of the damages born of tree root intrusion (Mendoza 2007a), and the trees have since been recycled into redwood planks for use in area mission projects.

4 The 2007 crew consisted of Adrian Lopez, Gerald Jones, and Cori Finley on the field detail, and Esther Kenner and Shari Harder on both lab and field assignments. All are current or former students of CSU Monterey Bay trained by this investigator.

5 The incredible diversity of ceramics, particularly Spanish and Mexican majolicas, recovered by this most recent undertaking at the Royal Presidio of Monterey will have a key role to play in future studies of ceramics and their production in early California (e.g., Williams and Cohen-Williams, 2003).


7 The conservation team consisted of Anthony Crosby (Architectural Conservator), Fred Webster (Engineer), John Griswold (Art Conservator), Brett Brenkwitz, Charles Franks, and Mike Beautz (Architects), Michael Tornabene (Art Conservator), and myself, Rubén G. Mendoza (Project Archaeologist), among a host of others. The construction crew was in turn supervised by engineer and San Carlos parishioner Brian Kelly, and Project Manager Earl Baker (2007) and Lou Thelin (2008) of Devcon Construction. Project Engineer Lisa Fitz of Devcon provided meticulously detailed weekly reports of all contract-related activities pertaining to the retrofit and conservation efforts for the course of the project.

8 See Mendoza (2002) for thoughts and reflections on archaeology and the Hispanic Catholic heritage of California and the West.

9 While only a single excavation unit was undertaken by Charlotte A. Simpson-Smith and Rob Edwards of Cabrillo College in 1994, these investigators were primarily contracted to monitor excavations on Church Street (Reports on File at the Cabrillo College Archaeological Technologies Program archive). The work of Donald M. Howard (1978a, 1978b) contributed significantly to the identification of the northern and western perimeter defensive curtains or walls.

10 While the Figure 5 map plan indicates that the Pacheco Crypt is provisionally dated to 1855, I now believe that this may in effect be the cemetery indicated for the earliest burials at the Royal Presidio of Monterey in 1770; burials that in effect constitute the earliest Christian burials in California. In fact, given that early accounts and plat maps depict that site as the location of the Campo Santo or cemetery, as early as 1816, it is not unlikely that the Pacheco Crypt constituted a free-standing structure at that site as early as 1816, if not before. See Donald M. Howard (1978a) for further documentation pertaining to the Campo Santo and its location relative to the Chapel of 1791-95.


12 Interestingly, Cardero’s 1791 sketch of the Chapel from the perspective of the Plaza de Armas clearly shows a large pile of what appear to be ladrillo or fired-tile of the type that would have composed the espandana or bell wall portion of the tower in question. As such, I would contend that given the paucity of references to precisely when said tower was dismantled, it may well be that the Chapel of 1771 lost its tower during the initial phase of construction identified with the Chapel of 1791-95. The location of construction materials, or debris as the case may be, may well serve to confirm Pedro Fages’ 1774 description of the tower and its location at the northeast corner of said Chapel.

13 Cited from Cutter (1960: 19).

14 I have come to conclude that in order to build the Padre’s Quarters of 1778, it would have been necessary to dismantle the eight-year-old conjoined Missionary’s Quarters, Warehouse, and retired First Chapel of 1770. Therefore, the loss of the attached former housing and storage areas would have necessitated the construction of a vestry or Sacristy where the devotional materials from the Chapel of 1771 might be housed. As such, the date of 1778 presents the earliest such date that the addition was likely added.

15 See Mendoza and Cruz (1994) for further discussion regarding the role of jacales, jaca len, and other provisional pole and thatch structures in the settlement of New Spain.

16 Fray Francisco Palou’s own account make clear that the earliest missionary complex at Monterey was established within the Presidio compound; which clearly contradicts a longstanding local lore that would have the mission and Presidio set apart as separate and distinct entities.

17 The Spanish general and vicerey of New Spain, Carlos Francisco de Croix, marqués de Croix, 1766-1771.

18 The Spanish colonial era unit of linear measure was the vara, that varied somewhat through time. In California, the vara approximates 33 inches. Therefore, the Chapel of 1771 was said by Fages to measure 19.25 feet in width by 41.25 feet in overall length.

19 I should note that I would strongly recommend the closure of Church Street so as to mitigate, and thereby minimize, the deleterious effects of automobile traffic transiting so close to the historic San Carlos Cathedral. To that end, some discussion has already been had with the City of Monterey about the prospects of transforming Church Street into the San Carlos Presidio Park.

20 I should note that at the outset of this project, I too attempted to accommodate the available architectural histories into a framework that identified a 4th Chapel — that being the Chapel of 1791-95.
