

# SAN FRANCISCO'S ANCIENT CANNON

*An Inquiry Into Their History and Origin Together with Some Notes  
on the Castillo de San Joaquin*

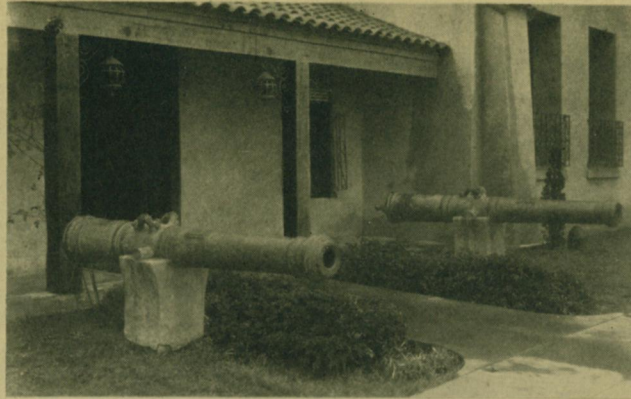
By DOUGLAS S. WATSON

SIX ANCIENT bronze pieces of artillery are curious relics of which San Francisco is the proud but rather ignorant possessor. Each of these old Spanish guns bears a name of its own, such as San Domingo, San Francisco, San Martin; all are dated, and each bears either the name of its maker or a Latin inscription giving a clue to his identity.

Two of these Seventeenth Century cannon, posed upon pedestals, grace the grounds at Fort Mason adjoining the quarters of the commanding general of the Ninth Corps Area of the United States Army. Two others stand guard at the entrance of the Officers' Club at the Presidio, while two more are mounted on the lawn bordering the parade ground which, from the founding of the Presidio by Lieutenant José Joaquin Moraga, of the Spanish Army, on September 17, 1776, until after American occupation of California in 1846, was the site of the adobe-walled enclosure where dwelt the garrison. Today, all that remains of these old presidial buildings is the much remodelled Officers' Club, which once did service as the *comandante's* quarters under the Spanish and Mexican régimes.

The history of these old guns appears to be shrouded by the mists of the past. Even those in command of the military posts, where they are on view today, admit they know little or nothing about them, and the casual visitor stops only long enough to admire their oddity and beauty, if perchance his attention has been called to their existence. Yet these cannon have been the concern of four viceroys of Peru, two viceroys of Mexico, two governors of Spanish California, the botanist of Vancouver's exploring expedition, Captain William D. Phelps, of the American bark *Moscow*, Captain John Charles Frémont and his armed survey crew, in addition to the commander of the United States Naval forces, Commodore Jonathan Drake Sloat, by whose orders the American flag was raised over California at Monterey, July 7, 1846. Nor must Captain John B. Montgomery, of the U. S. S. *Portsmouth*, who took possession of Yerba Buena on July 9, 1846, and his Lieutenant, John S. Missroon, be excluded from the list, for they and Commodore Sloat carried on an extensive correspondence having to do with these identical lethal weapons.

In order to trace the history of San Francisco's cannon, it is necessary to mention the ancient claims of both England and Spain respecting the land



Arms of Don Baltasar de la Cueva Henriquez y Saavedra, 24th Viceroy of Peru

The guns San Pedro and Poder with their inscriptions

Arms of Don Melchor Puertocarrero Laso de la Vega, 27th Viceroy of Peru

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Photographs by B. Gilbertson

bordering on the Pacific. The claim England made to the northwestern coast of North America, including a large part of California, was grounded upon Francis Drake's discovery of 1579, which he called New Albion. Spain, disregarding English pretensions, asserted ownership extending to the far Northwest, and eventually planted a military colony at Nootka Sound in order to substantiate her claim by actual possession. This Nootka controversy was settled by treaty in 1790, by which Spain relinquished her far northern claims, but in order to clear up certain points arising therefrom, the Spanish government named Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra as its commissioner to meet with Captain George Vancouver, the British commissioner, at Nootka in the summer of 1792. Vancouver and Bodega (or Quadra, as Vancouver calls him) were unable to agree and decided to leave the important matter of a boundary between English possessions and those of Spain to be settled by their respective governments, which was later done.

From Nootka, both Vancouver and Quadra sailed south to California, the former arriving in San Francisco Bay late in the afternoon of November 14, 1792; the latter had reached Monterey, October 9, 1792. Before Vancouver appeared, however, the *comandante* of the San Francisco Presidio, Alferes Hermenegildo Sal, after a conversation with Quadra, wrote under date of October 31, 1792, to the Spanish governor of California, Captain José Joaquín Arrillaga: "I have at present only one cannon and this an old one." He then suggested that ten or twelve guns should be mounted on the Cantil Blanco—Fort Point—adding that he had asked Quadra for five quintals of powder, which had been granted. The startling portion of the letter was its closing paragraph: "According to his [Quadra's] impression the English want the mouth of the port [San Francisco] as the boundary line. He left convinced that two frigates of that nation would be found at Bodega [Bay]."<sup>1</sup>

The location for a fortification suggested by Sal is the same mentioned by Juan Bautista de Anza in his diary of the 1776 expedition, and concerning which Padre Pedro Font wrote in his journal under date of Thursday, March 28, 1776: "This mesa the commander designated as the site for the new settlement and fort which were to be established on this harbor."<sup>2</sup>

Vancouver's arrival was duly noted by Sal in a letter to Governor Arrillaga, dated November 14, 1792. Attention must be called to a difference of one day between Sal's record and that of Vancouver. Wrote Sal: "I desire to advise you that yesterday at sunset there entered the port the frigate of H. B. Majesty named the *Descubierta* [*Discovery*] under command of Captain George Vancouver which anchored something like a league beyond the Presidio and in front of a place we call Yerba Buena. . . ." He added that the soldier Alejo Miranda had acted as pilot to bring the *Discovery* back to the Presidio anchorage, and concluded with the remark that he had but one cannon and that it had been reverted.<sup>3</sup>

Fear of possible British action and the defenseless position of San Fran-

cisco—and in fact, all of California—roused the Viceroy of Mexico, Revilla Gigedo. It was determined to fortify the coastal ports at once. On August 17, 1793, we find Governor Arrillaga writing to the Viceroy: “This is to inform you that I have left the Presidio of Monterey for that of San Francisco where I arrived July 27, and where I found the frigate *Aranzazu*, commanded by Salvador Menendez, who had arrived on the 24.”<sup>4</sup> And in another letter he gives the additional information that: “The *Aranzazu* carried guns and military stores, also a gunner and a master carpenter. When they are through here, they will go to Monterey.”<sup>5</sup>

Again on November 30, 1793, Comandante Sal wrote to Governor Arrillaga, noting this time the arrival in San Francisco Bay of the British barkentine *Chatham*, the consort of the *Discovery*, adding: “I could not salute, having no cannon.”<sup>6</sup> Several months before the *Chatham's* arrival, the gun previously mentioned by Sal had exploded. His cannon is doubtless that spoken of in the next paragraph as being “lashed to a log of wood.”

Archibald Menzies, the botanist of the Vancouver expedition, was on board the *Chatham*. In his journal, the original of which is in the British Museum, he wrote: “. . . these vessels had brought some reinforcements to the Settlement, together with a supply of warlike stores & some Ordnance, for eight long brass four-pounders were laying on the Beach at the landing place & a considerable quantity of Shot of different sizes, so that if we might judge from appearances & the great preparations now going forward, they seem to have taken some alarm at the defenseless state of the Settlement, for in our former visit [November, 1792] we only observed one cannon in the whole place and that simply lashed to a log of wood, but we now observed a number of people employed on the eminence on the South side of the entrance clearing away the ground for the purpose of erecting a Battery for the defense of the Harbour & a more suitable situation could not be fixed on, as it perfectly commanded the entrance.”<sup>7</sup>

The Spanish records disclose that this fortification, called Castillo de San Joaquin, was begun in August, 1793,<sup>8</sup> and that thirty neophytes, drafted from the Mission of Santa Clara, were among the workers. Twenty-three yokes of oxen were employed in the hauling of timber, guns and brick, these latter being both burnt brick and adobes.

Writing to Governor Borica, who had succeeded Arrillaga, Alferéz José Fernandez Perez, acting *comandante* at the San Francisco Presidio, under date of December 9, 1794, makes known to his superior that the Castillo de San Joaquin had been blessed with all due ceremony the day before and that since the fort was completed he wanted to know what disposition to make of one Antonio Santos, who had reached the Presidio on board the *Aranzazu*, August 24, 1793, to make tile.<sup>9</sup> Santos, it appeared, had made all the tile and burnt brick that had gone into the construction of the facing of the Castillo. This was not the only quandary confronting Alferéz Perez. He also asked

the governor to advise him what branch of the service should be charged with the cost of the food consumed by the guard and the candles used at the dedication.

A garrison for the new fort was needed, and so we find Governor Borica asking the Viceroy on January 1, 1794, for a captain, a sergeant and eleven men for duty there. At the same time he sent the Viceroy a plan of the Castillo.<sup>10</sup>

The \$6,400 the Castillo de San Joaquin had cost the Spanish treasury had produced neither a stable structure nor one entirely suitable from a military standpoint. Storms damaged the fort and rumors of its inadequacy finally reached the Marquis de Branciforte, the then Viceroy, at his palace in the City of Mexico. He demanded particulars and to obtain them instructed Don Alberto Cordova, lieutenant of engineers, to make a report covering all the California defenses. In September, 1796, Cordova forwarded the results of his investigations. Among the faults he discovered was that part of the Castillo was built on sand; and that but two of its guns, mounted in embrasures, faced the front. The then nameless Golden Gate, he found, was 1600 varas in width at its narrowest point—roughly 1450 yards—and since but two guns commanded it, an enemy ship could pass without molestation. Further, the only defense on the south, or land side, was an adobe wall, and most serious of all, the Castillo was dominated by a hill in the rear but 250 yards away. Concerning the thirteen pieces of artillery with which the stronghold was armed, he noted three iron guns—24-pounders—and two iron 12-pounders. In addition, he counted eight bronze guns of the size he called 8-pounders. He stressed a second time the poor orientation of the work and recorded that the garrison consisted of a corporal, six artillerists and four men. He noted also that if the thirty-eight cavalry soldiers of the Presidio were drawn upon in an emergency—in which they would be of questionable value—this force would provide but three men to a gun. And in summation, Cordova recommended that a new fort should be built.<sup>11</sup>

For fifty long years, the Castillo de San Joaquin and its guns weathered the storms of winter and the summer fogs. Repairs were frequently made. New *comandantes* came and went. In 1822 the Spanish ensign was replaced by the Mexican tricolor, and then in 1835 Lieutenant Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo removed most of the garrison to his new post at Sonoma, leaving Alferz Juan Prado Mesa with a half-dozen artillerymen in charge. Later, all the regular troops were withdrawn. Both the fort and the Presidio fell into decay. One old man, Corporal Joaquin Peña, was left as custodian of government property. January 7, 1837, he made a report covering matters in his charge.<sup>12</sup> Peña listed eight iron guns—three of them useless, eight bronze guns—one useless, some nine hundred-odd balls, four muskets and some unimportant trifles.

It is more than likely that not long after this inventory was made, two of

the eight bronze pieces were taken to Sonoma. Later in this article, the reason for this supposition will be apparent.

We now come to the year 1846. In late June, the Boston bark *Moscow*, belonging to Joseph B. Eaton and others of that city, lay at Sausalito. Her commander was Captain William D. Phelps, who in 1871, under the pen name of Webfoot, published *Fore and Aft, or Leaves from the Life of an Old Sailor*. July 1 saw John Charles Frémont at Sausalito in pursuit of De la Torre, who had escaped him by transporting his men to the Contra Costa shore, whence they marched to join General José Castro at Mission San José. It will be remembered that the Bear Flag revolt at Sonoma had taken place on June 14, and that on June 25, when the success of that undertaking was assured, Frémont had appeared to give the Bear Flaggers the protection of the Stars and Stripes and to take over the command. His chase after De la Torre followed. To Captain Phelps, Frémont made a request: the use of the *Moscow's* long-boat with its crew. The purpose the brevet captain of Topographic Engineers had in view was the spiking of the guns in the ruinous Castillo de San Joaquin, where many of the pieces lay in the dirt because their carriages had rotted away.

Phelps writes in his book: "From my trade room such tools were selected as would be necessary—such as crowbars, axes and round files to spike the guns with."<sup>13</sup>

The spiking party consisted of Kit Carson, Frémont, Lieutenant Archibald Gillespie of the Marines, the mysterious messenger from Washington, the purport of whose mission Professor Josiah Royce so cleverly unravelled, twenty of the armed survey crew which included Frémont's Delaware Indian bodyguard, besides Captain Phelps himself and the necessary number of his men to man the boat. Phelps quotes Kit Carson as saying at the time: "Cap., I'd rather ride on the back of a grizzly bear than in this boat."

About a quarter of a mile inside Fort Point the boat was beached. The Presidio was deserted. The Castillo was empty. Nothing hindered the successful accomplishment of the spiking party's purpose. Says Phelps:

There were in the fort three brass and seven iron heavy fortification guns; and that they were effectually spiked could be attested by the officers of the *Portsmouth*; for a few weeks afterward, on removing the guns to a new fort on Telegraph Hill, they had much trouble in withdrawing the files from the brass pieces, which was only accomplished by cutting around them and inserting a copper screw bolt with a touch hole bored in it. The party was landed at their camp at "Sausalito" after an absence of about two hours. This was July 1st.

But Captain Phelps neglected to narrate the aftermath of this spiking excursion. Therefore we must turn to his statement of the services he rendered on that momentous occasion:

The United States

To Wm. D. Phelps, Dr.

For services of himself, crew and boats of the barque *Moscow*, of Boston, of which he

was part owner and in command, and being agent of all other owners, and for the risk and hazard incident to such service, in transporting Captain J. C. Frémont and a detachment of men under his command to a fort on the opposite side of the bay and entrance to the port of San Francisco in Upper California in July, 1846, and aiding him in capturing and dismantling the said fort, and spiking the guns thereof, consisting of three brass and seven iron cannon, of heavy calibre, and part of which were afterwards taken on board the United States ship *Portsmouth*, by order of Captain J. B. Montgomery, U. S. Navy—

§10,000

William D. Phelps<sup>14</sup>

This combination bill and recital was certified to by Frémont at Washington City, August 5, 1853, with the comment that he had “always considered his [Phelps’s] services on that occasion to have been very valuable to the United States.”

By an Act of Congress, passed in 1852, three commissioners were appointed to settle claims arising out of the seizure and occupation of California. Phelps’s bill was referred to them, and by them to Archibald H. Gillespie, who, it will be remembered, was present when the *very valuable services* were rendered. The conclusions of the officer of the Marine Corps are incorporated in the following:

I hereby certify that in July 1846, Captain W. D. Phelps did transport a party of men under the command of John C. Frémont from Sausalito across the bay of San Francisco (seven miles) to the fort at Yerba Buena, commanding the entrance to the harbor, for the purpose of spiking the guns of the fort, which was in a very dismantled condition and could not have been occupied without having been almost entirely rebuilt. There was no enemy present, and the sole object Captain Frémont had in view was to prevent the Californians from using the guns at some future time. There was no risk or personal danger incurred, and *the service would be well paid for at fifty dollars.*

ARCHI. H. GILLESPIE  
Bvt. Major U. S. M. Corps

Washington, September 19, 1853.

By unanimous action of the board, the sum of fifty dollars was accordingly paid.

Less than a week after Frémont’s spiking expedition, the following letter in code was dispatched from Monterey to Captain John B. Montgomery, commanding the sloop-of-war *Portsmouth* anchored in San Francisco Bay:

Flagship Savannah  
July 7, 1846

Sir:

Your launch left yesterday. I enclose you two document by which you will see what I have done. I hoisted the American flag here today at 9 A. M. You will immediately take possession of Yerba Buena and hoist the American flag within range of your guns; post up the proclamation in both languages; notify Captain Frémont and others; *put the fort and guns in order.* . . .

J. D. S[LOAT].<sup>15</sup>

Montgomery carried out his orders to take possession of Yerba Buena. A force of marines and sailors was landed at 9 A. M. on July 9, 1846, and the

American flag was raised, with all pomp and ceremony, on the pole in the Plaza, later known as Portsmouth Square in honor of Montgomery's ship.

That same evening, Montgomery wrote to Commodore Sloat:

... before the arrival of Mr. Die, your second courier, at 10 o'clock p. m., Lieutenant Missroon, with an armed party of the volunteer guard, were on their way to the presidio and fort, four or five miles distant, to ascertain and report to me their condition, and take inventories of public property. &c. The fort is in a dilapidated condition, but may be repaired and rendered serviceable. For particulars, I have respectfully to refer you to the accompanying report of Lieutenant Missroon. . . . There are two fine 18-pound brass pieces at Sonoma, which might be advantageously planted upon an eminence for the defence of this harbor. . . . I think it advisable, therefore, to remove the two 18's, which can be done with my launch in a very short time; and, in the hope of receiving your order to that effect, I shall commence at once preparing a gallery and platform for their accommodation. . . .<sup>16</sup>

Lieutenant John S. Missroon's report to Commander John B. Montgomery is dated Yerba Buena, July 9, 1846:

Sir:

I have the honor to report that, in obedience to your order, I proceeded to the fort at the entrance of the harbor, about four miles distant from the town, accompanied by Purser Watmough, the late Vice-consul Leidesdorff, and several volunteers, and displayed the flag of the United States upon its ramparts, calling on our way at the Presidio, where I had understood that one or more cannon were mounted; no cannon, however, were found there, and it is certain that they have been lately removed; nor were there any of the usual residents there.

The walls of the fort are badly rent in several places, yet they are capable of sustaining and rendering good service. It would be an improvement to dig a ditch in the rear, and to build a wall connecting the two terminating ends of the work. But to render the fort tenable in case of approach to it by land, it is *indispensable* that a work be thrown up on the eminence which commands it, about four or five hundred yards immediately in its rear, otherwise it is at the mercy of an enemy on the land side. [See ante; Cordova's report.] The platform is decayed and should be removed entirely. The barracks in the centre is in a dilapidated state.

There are three brass guns (12's and 18's) old Spanish pieces, made in 1623 [?—should be 1673], 1628 and 1693, besides three long iron 42's and four smaller iron guns. All of these iron guns have been lately spiked by Captain Frémont, except two unserviceable and dismantled iron pieces. New vents may be drilled in the brass pieces. . . .<sup>17</sup>

July 11, two days later, Montgomery, in a letter to Sloat which Missroon signed for his superior, who was ill, says:

I am endeavoring to clear the vents of the brass guns of the fort, and hope to succeed. Tomorrow I hope to recover the brass 12-pounder, which I learn was buried in the sand at the Presidio; and also an iron 6-pounder, said to have been buried at the mission Dolores. . . .

Yesterday I sent a summons to the military commandant of this district, Don Francisco Sanchez, to deliver up the arms and other public property in his charge, and gave him an invitation to come in today, which he accordingly did. He stated that he possessed no property of a public description, except his knowledge of where several guns were buried. One of his attendants will point out the places of burial. . . .<sup>18</sup>

Again Montgomery wrote to Sloat:



U. S. Ship Portsmouth  
Yerba Buena, July 17, 1846

Sir:

Your telegraphic despatch [meaning simply that the message was written in a number code, use being made of the Naval Telegraphic Dictionary] of the 12th instant, concerning the 18-pounders, &c. . . . Your instructions shall be carried out. It will require three trips of the launch to transport the heavy articles, occupying ten or eleven days in all in the execution of the duty. . . . We are digging a gallery for the long brass pieces at a point commanding the anchorage of this place; but, with a very reduced crew, including sick and prisoners, upwards of thirty short, marines on shore, and boats absent frequently on distant duty, we cannot progress as I could desire. . . .<sup>19</sup>

And on the next day—July 18, 1846—Captain Montgomery addressed a communication to Captain John Grigsby, then in command of the armed force occupying Sonoma:

“ . . . Being directed by Commodore Sloat to remove the two brass 18-pounders from Sonoma, and two 6-pounders to this place, I shall send my launch up on the first trip for that purpose on Monday, the 20th instant. . . .”<sup>20</sup>

And on the 20th, Montgomery wrote again to Commodore Sloat:

“ . . . We are progressing very well with the new fort, for the number of hands we are enabled to employ on it, and I have in view to erect a block house also, in a position to overlook the fort and command the town and hills in its rear. The estimated expenses of both, \$148. My launch started this morning on her first trip to Sonoma, for the guns. . . .”<sup>21</sup>

Zoeth Eldredge, in his *Beginnings of San Francisco*, says:

Lieutenant Missroon landed a party of blue jackets from the *Portsmouth* and constructed a battery at Punta del Embarcadero (Clark's Point). The work was begun about July 17th. High on the steep bluff facing the bay Missroon excavated a terrace whereon he mounted a battery of five guns. [In a footnote these five pieces are inventoried as two brass guns from the old Spanish fort; two from Sonoma, and one brass twelve-pounder dug up at the Presidio where it had been buried.] This was called “the battery” and gave its name to Battery Street, whose lines intersect it at Broadway. It was later called Fort Montgomery. The battery was in existence as late as the fall of 1849.<sup>22</sup>

At page 685 of the fifth volume of his *History of California*, Bancroft says: “The battery, or Fort Montgomery, of 1846, which gave a name to Battery St., was in the next block north [i.e. between Vallejo and Green sts.], between Battery St. and the water, at the foot of the hill.” John Henry Brown, proprietor of the Portsmouth House, San Francisco's first hotel, and author of *Reminiscences and Incidents of Early Days of San Francisco*, a work without parallel for interest and oddity, remarks: “They also cut a road and built a Fort, some distance below Clark's Point, which is now known as the lower end of Battery Street, from which it took its name. In this Fort there were five mounted cannons, brought from the old Mexican Fort.”<sup>23</sup>

How these ancient guns found their way back to the Presidio after 1849, we have no means of knowing, but in 1870 Major George H. Elliot, writing in the April number of the *Overland Monthly* under the title of “The Presidio of San Francisco,” says:

At Fort Point nothing remains of Fort San Joaquin, save a few ruins of one of its exterior *adobe* houses. We have in our possession a plan of the old fort. Its form is that of a horseshoe: about one hundred and twenty feet long by one hundred feet wide; the parapet, ten feet thick. The site has been excavated away for the present casemated fort; and the summit of the bluff on which it stood was about the level of the top of the present unnamed fort at Fort Point.

Four of the old Spanish guns now serve as "fender posts" at the sally-port—curious old guns, of the date of 1673.

The destruction of the remains of the old Castillo de San Joaquin was incident to the building in 1853-54 of the brick fortification, which the authors of the *Annals of San Francisco* describe as "The fortress at Fort Point . . . [which] will present one hundred and fifteen guns of eight and ten inch calibre, in four tiers."<sup>24</sup> Today, this immense work in which San Francisco once gloried is not only abandoned as obsolete, but its once majestic proportions are dwarfed by the awe-inspiring dimensions of the Golden Gate Bridge, whose approaches rise above it.

To the San Francisco *Call* of Sunday, September 12, 1897, John E. Bennett contributed an article concerning San Francisco's ancient cannon. In it, sketches of the bronze pieces show their condition at that date. Three are mounted on wooden carriages, one lies on the ground, while two serve as fender posts at the entrance to the commanding general's quarters at Fort Mason. The writer states that Major General Irwin McDowell brought these ancient relics together at Fort Mason in order to preserve them, having found them scattered at different posts about the bay: the Presidio, Fort Point, and Fort Mason. This must have taken place during the General's last tour of duty in San Francisco, which extended from 1876 to 1882.

Having traced the history of these ancient cannon from the time of their appearance in San Francisco to the present, we may now examine the guns themselves and let them reveal their identity and origin. In order to do this, the schedule here presented, showing location, distinguishing marks, etc., will be of assistance.

<i>Location and Number</i>	<i>Maker's Name</i>	<i>Coat of Arms</i>	<i>Date of Casting</i>	<i>Name of Gun</i>
Fort Mason, lawn in front of General's Quarters. No. 1	D. Jose H D Cubas Me FCID	Don Melchor de Navarra y Rocafal, Duke of Palata, Prince of Masa, 26th Viceroy of Peru.	1684	San Martin
Fort Mason, driveway of General's Quarters. No. 2	Alexo De Texeda	Don Diego Fernandez de Cordoba, Marquis of Guadalcasar, Conde de las Posadas, 17th Viceroy of Peru.	1628	San Domingo

<i>Location and Number</i>	<i>Maker's Name</i>	<i>Coat of Arms</i>	<i>Date of Casting</i>	<i>Name of Gun</i>
Presidio, north gun on lawn, S. W. cor. parade ground. No. 3	Cubas Me Fecit	Don Baltasar de la Cueva Henriquez y Saavedra, Count of Castellar, Marquis of Malagon, 24th Viceroy of Peru.	1679	San Francisco
Presidio, south gun on lawn, S. W. cor. parade ground. No. 4	Cubas Me Fescit	Don Melchor Puertocarrero Laso de la Vega, Count of Monclova, 27th Viceroy of Peru.	1693	La Birgen de Barbaneda
Presidio, west gun, Officers' Club entrance. No. 5	S S Cubas Me Fecit	Inscription to Royal Audience in place of coat of arms.	1673	Poder
Presidio, east gun, Officers' Club entrance. No. 6	Antonio de Riva	Inscription to Royal Audience in place of coat of arms.	1673	San Pedro

In addition to the name, date, coat of arms or inscription, each of the six guns bears a large coat of arms of Spain near the breech. While the identity of the armorial bearings of the various Peruvian viceroys is given in the schedule, it was only after diligent search that their identification was possible. The clue to this bit of intensive investigation was contained in the inscriptions which appear on guns No. 5 and No. 6, and which read as follows:

GOVERNAN  
DOLOSSENO  
RESEDLARE  
ALAUDIEN  
CIADELIMA

When these letters are divided into words, we have the sentence in Spanish: *Governando los Señores de la Real Audiencia de Lima*, which in English is, "The gentlemen of the Royal Audience of Lima, governing."

It was this mixture of letters which amused the late Major Elliot, and which, in his article in the *Overland Monthly*, cited above, he thought might engage an evening of the reader's family in an endeavor to unravel.

It will be noted that gun No. 5, one of the two carrying this wording, was made by Cubas, as were likewise the guns we have numbered 1, 3 and 4. All of these bear coats of arms in addition to the arms of Spain. It was therefore apparent that Cubas, the gun founder, might have conducted his business at Lima, and if such were the case, the history of Peru might disclose the reason for substituting an inscription for a coat of arms, especially when the wording given above was taken into consideration. A reference to Colonel Don Antonio de Alcedo's *Geographical Dictionary*, the English translation of which was published in London in 1812-14 in five volumes, disclosed several important facts. Between the years 1672 and 1674, Peru had no viceroy. The 23rd viceroy, Don Pedro Fernandez de Castro y Andrade, had died in 1672, and it was not until 1674 that his successor, Don Baltasar de la Cueva Henriquez y Saavedra, assumed the reins of office. During the interregnum, the Real Audiencia, or Royal Audience, a sort of Council of State, was the governing body, and it was at this time—1673—that Cubas cast the gun we have numbered 5.

This problem then presented itself. Could these coats of arms on guns 1 to 4 be those of Peruvian viceroys? Alcedo, in his comprehensive article on Peru, had set forth a complete list of the viceroys of Peru. The guns were all dated. It was easy therefore, to pick those viceroys from the list whose duration of office coincided with these dates. Nothing remained but to compare their armorial bearings with those on the guns in question. Then followed a long and tiresome search among works on Spanish heraldry in the libraries of the University of California. Happily, the guess was correct, and the poring over the ancient volumes just mentioned resulted in confirmation. San Francisco's ancient cannon were cast in Peru. Concerning how or when they were sent northward to the arsenal at San Blas, Mexico, from which the frigate *Aranzazu* brought them to California in 1793, we may forever remain ignorant.

Several other facts are made plain by close examination of these lethal weapons. Latin scholars will conclude that Senor Cubas lacked a grounding in that tongue, for he not only misspells "fecit" on guns No. 1 and No. 4, but he uses a singular verb with a plural subject in his inscription on gun No. 5. And gun No. 6 still has the remains of one of Captain Phelps's files in its vent, mute evidence of Frémont's spiking.

It also appears possible to determine the identity of the guns which Lieutenant Missroon mounted in 1846 in the battery, sometimes known as Fort Montgomery, overlooking the anchorage in Yerba Buena cove. When gun No. 6, which is still spiked, is discarded, we have five cannon, the exact number which made up Missroon's fortification. Of these five, three should bear

no evidence of spiking, for two of them must have come from Sonoma, and the third should be the smaller gun, the 12-pounder, whose burial place in the Presidio was revealed to Missroon by Francisco Sanchez. Gun No. 1, San Martin, is certainly the buried cannon.

In his report to Captain Montgomery, Missroon listed three brass guns, all spiked, that he found at the Castillo de San Joaquin. These, he said, were dated 1623, 1628 and 1693. This was an error; doubtless he mistook a "7" for a "2." His 1623 should have been 1673, which is the date of gun No. 6 on our list, which we find still spiked with one of Captain Phelps's files. Both the 1628 and 1693 guns, numbers 2 and 4 on our list, bear evidence of reventing. Therefore, the Sonoma guns must be those named San Francisco and Poder, numbered 3 and 5 in the schedule.

Some speculation has been had regarding the name of gun No. 4: La Birgen de Barbaneda. With the Spanish, "B" and "V" are interchangeable; hence the name becomes La Virgen de Barbaneda, or the Virgin of Barbaneda.

This brief history of San Francisco's ancient cannon through the centuries should enable us to realize that they are priceless possessions which link us to a romantic and picturesque past.

#### NOTES

1. St. Pap. Sac. MS., Bancroft Library, Vol. I, 119.
2. Bolton, Herbert E., *Anza's California Expedition*, Vol. I, 394.
3. St. Pap. Sac. MS., Bancroft Library, Vol. I, 116; Vancouver's *Voyage de Découvertes*, Vol. II, 9 *et seq.*, and 500 *et seq.*
4. Prov. St. Pap. MS., Bancroft Library, Vol. XXI, 109.
5. *Ibid.*, 113.
6. St. Pap. Sac. MS., Bancroft Library, Vol. I, 119.
7. "Menzies' California Journal," California Historical Society *Quarterly*, Vol. 2, 306.
8. Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol. I, 698 *et seq.*
9. Prov. St. Pap. MS., Bancroft Library, Vol. XII, 26.
10. Prov. Records, MS., Bancroft Library, Vol. VI, 35.
11. Prov. St. Pap. MS., Bancroft Library, Vol. XIV, 81-83.
12. Eldredge, Zoeth, *The Beginnings of San Francisco*, Vol. II, 722.
13. Phelps, Capt. Wm. D., *Fore and Aft, or Leaves from the Life of an Old Sailor*, Nichols & Hall, Boston, 1871, 290 *et seq.*
14. Eldredge, Zoeth, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 712-13.
15. *30th Congress, 2nd Session, Ex. Doc. 1*, 1015.
16. *Ibid.*, 1016.
17. *Ibid.*, 1018.
18. *Ibid.*, 1019.
19. *Ibid.*, 1027.
20. *Ibid.*, 1031.
21. *Ibid.*, 1030.
22. Eldredge, Zoeth, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 542-43.
23. Brown, John Henry, *Reminiscences and Incidents of Early Days of San Francisco*, reprint, Grabhorn Press, S. F., 1933, ed. Douglas S. Watson, 35.
24. Soulé, etc., *The Annals of San Francisco*, 545.