

THE BAY OF SAN FRANCISCO.

BY JOHN T. DOYLE.

MENLO PARK, *November 24, 1888.*

COL. J. D. WASHBURN,

Dear Sir:

IN October, 1873, you did me the honor to present to the American Antiquarian Society a memorandum of mine on the discovery of the Bay of San Francisco, wherein I advanced the opinion that the first civilized men who saw it were the members of Portala's expedition, which came up the coast in 1769; and that what the Spaniards had down to that time called the Bay of San Francisco, was what we now term Sir Francis Drake's Bay. These opinions have been since accepted I think, by most persons who have examined the question, and have lately received confirmation such as I think sets it at rest, on contemporary authority. I now have the pleasure of transmitting to you, for the Society's collection, a copy of the document referred to, which comes to me as follows:—

Professor George Davidson, Ph.D., who is at the head of the coast survey, on this side of the continent, had his attention directed to the subject, in connection with the preparation of a new edition of his "Coast Pilot" for publication by the government. He studied it thoroughly and from various sources of information was led to the same opinion I had formed relative to the identity of the Spanish Bay of San Francisco, and our Drake's Bay. On reading Crespi's diary, with the record of Costanzo's observations for latitude at each day's halt (which he found as a general rule

remarkably correct), a professional instinct at once told him that so careful and accurate an observer as Costanzo had not failed to leave a record of his own; and that in all probability he had, on his return, made a map of the coast so far as his observations extended. Acting on this opinion Prof. Davidson set on foot enquiries for such a map, and was rewarded by the discovery that it had not only been prepared and furnished to the Spanish government, but had actually been engraved and printed as early as 1771. It is entitled "Carta reducida, del oceano Asiatico, o mar del sur, que comprehende la costa oriental y occidental de la peninsula de la California, con el golfe de su denominacion, antiguamente con cido por la de mar de Cortez, y de las costas de la America septentrional, desde el isthmo, que une dicha peninsula con el continente hasta el rio de los reyes, y desde el rio Colorado, hasta el cabo de Corrientes. Compuesta del orden del Exmo. Señor Marquis de Croix, Vivey, gobernador y capitán general de la nueva Espana, y de los exercitos de S.M."

Under the title is a note in which Costanzo, under date of Oct. 30, 1770, enumerates the materials from which his chart is compiled, giving prominence to the observations of the commanders of the packet boats which had recently made voyages up the coast, and those of the missionaries, etc., and modestly placing last the information acquired by himself in his journeys by land and sea, and his observations made on the spot. It is as follows:—

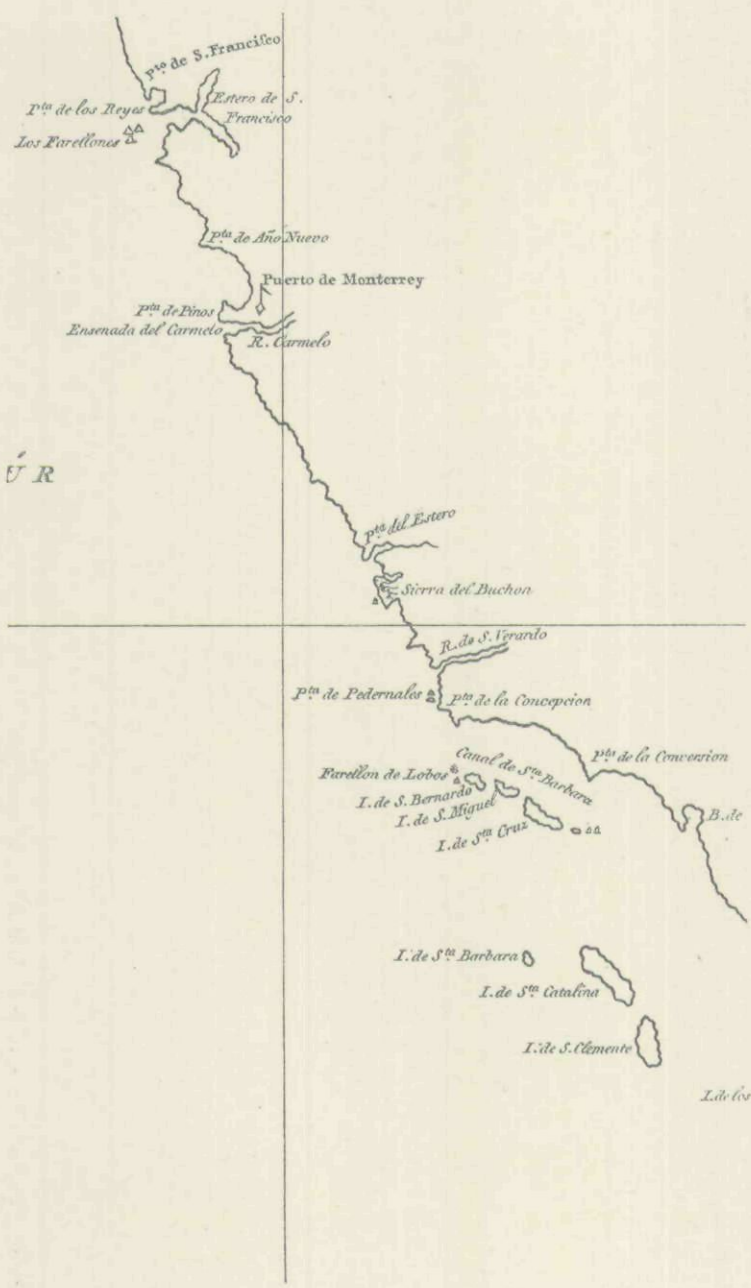
"Los materiales que han servido a la formacion de esta carta son, en primer lugar, los diarios de los pilotos que han navegado en el mar del sur en los ultimos viages hechos a la California, y al norte de ella, a los puertos de S. Diego y Monterey; con especialidad los de D. Vincent Vila, Piloto del numo. de primeros de la real armada, y Comandante de los Paquetbotes de S.M. destinados a la expedicion Maritima, que se dirigio a dichas puertos; y los diarios de navegacion, del 'Paquetbote el S. Antonio' en su viaje hecho en el presente ano de 1770, con el proprio

objeto de dicha expedicion, la qual ha tenido exito tan feliz, que habiendo este mismo paquetbote el S. Antonio llegado de a 31 de Mayo de 1770 al puerto de Monterey y hechado ancoras en el proprio puerto y fondeadero, donde 168 anos estuvo surta la Esquadra del General Sebastian Vizcaino, enbiada al descubrimiento de estas costas por el Conde de Monterey, de orden de Senor Filipe III, y habiendo tambien llegado por tierra el 23 del citado mes y ano la tropa destinada al mismo fin, se ha fundado en Monterey un Presidio y Mision con la advocacion de S. Carlos, y se forman iguales establecimientos en los fertiles paises por donde transito la gente de la expedicion, sin al adamente en el puerto de S. Francisco, ocupado ahora de nuevo por los nuestros. Han contribuido a la mismo algunos fragmentes manuscritos, de la costa interior y exterior de la California, hallados entre los papeles de susantiguos misioneros con explicaciones relativas al asunto y otros documentos, franqueados por algunos particulares, de orden de este superior Gobierero consernientes a la costa de senora; por ultimos las noticias adquiridas por el autor en sus viages de Mar y Tierra rectifiados por varias observaciones hechos en los lugares y terreno que ha corrido.

“Mexico y Octubre 30 de 1770 # Miguel Costanzo, longitud del meridiano de Teneriffe.”

This map Prof. Davidson had carefully traced, and, at my suggestion, he now presents a photograph of the tracing to the Society. On it you will observe, the “Puerto de San Francisco” is laid down as immediately contiguous to the “Punta de los Reyes,” and the sheet of water forming the bays of San Francisco, San Pablo and Suisun (popularly included in the general designation of the Bay of San Francisco), is delineated with considerable accuracy of outline, and designated as the “*Estero de San Francisco*,” a name then for the first time introduced to the Spanish geography of this coast.

In my memorandum of 1873 above referred to, it is stated that Portala's expedition, keeping close to the ocean shore, advanced as far up the coast as Half Moon Bay, and designated the headland which shelters that roadstead from the



north as "Point Guardian Angel." The author of Vol. XIII. of Bancroft's History of the Pacific States, at pages 155 and 156, expresses the opinion that the expedition reached what we now call Point San Pedro, giving his reasons. The difference is not important, but as accuracy is never objectionable, I may be permitted to point out here, that this map of Costanzo confirms my conjecture that Half Moon Bay was the northern limit of their explorations. You will observe that up to and including that point the coast line is traced on it with remarkable accuracy, the headland which shuts in Half Moon Bay on the north being perfectly recognizable by its outline and direction, but all to the northward of this is evidently "sketched in," and the accuracy of the outline gradually diminishes with the increasing distance. No notice is taken of Point San Pedro, three only of the Farallones are laid down, and when Point Reyes is reached, all claim to accuracy has disappeared. In fact the outline is just such as it would appear through our hazy autumnal atmosphere, to one looking down from the summit of the hills overlooking Half Moon Bay, which are at the point where I suppose the explorers to have ascended them, from 1000 to 1200 feet high. The fact that the traditional "Puerto de San Francisco" of the Spanish voyagers wherein the *San Augustin* was wrecked in 1595, and which was visited by Vizcaino in 1603, and was for a century and a half thereafter lost sight of, was a different place from that known by the same name at the present day, explains and accounts for all the confusion referred to by the author of Bancroft's Vol. XIII., in his note, p. 157. When I first called public attention to Crespi's diary, in August, 1870, I was under the same erroneous impression as Dwinelle, Randolph, Oak and others, that the Spanish Bay of San Francisco and the present bay of that name were identical. It was only after carefully studying the various documents brought to light in Palou's Noticias, and some contained in our archives, that I was led to the opinion—

now reduced to certainty—that they were different; that what they called the “Puerto de San Francisco,” was Drake’s bay, and that the present bay of San Francisco was absolutely unknown to them until discovered by Portala’s expedition in October, 1769.

The author of Bancroft’s Vol. XIII., says at p. 157 :

“There has been much perplexity in the minds of modern writers respecting the Port of San Francisco, resulting from want of familiarity with the original records, and the later transfer of the name to another bay. These writers have failed to clear away the difficulties that seemed to surround the subject.” In a note he adds, “Certain exceptions should be noted. My assistant, in the *Overland Monthly*, made known for the first time to the English reading public, the statements of Cabrera Bueno and Crespi, and in a few brief notes put the subject in its true light. Doyle, in notes to his reprint of Palou, subsequently gave a correct version and several writers since have partially utilized the information thus presented.”

This statement, so far as it relates to Cabrera Bueno’s book, may pass as true; but so far as regards Crespi’s diary, it is (I regret, for the honor of our Pacific Coast “historian” to say it) quite the reverse. I called the attention of English *speaking* people, including Mr. Bancroft and the members of the “History Company,” to Crespi’s diary, and quoted its statements as to the discovery of this bay of San Francisco, in August, 1870, in a public address delivered at the commencement of Santa Clara college, which was printed and circulated at the time. A copy was sent to Mr. Bancroft, and is referred to in his Vol. XIII., at pp. 141 and 156. Again in October, 1873, it was referred to in the “Memorandum” read by you before our Society, printed in its published proceedings, and thus laid before the English *reading* public. Mr. Bancroft having from the former of these sources learned the existence of Crespi’s diary, and having thereafter procured a copy of the work

containing it, his assistant, Mr. H. L. Oak, published an account of it and of Cabrera Bueno's book, in the *Overland Monthly* for June, 1874, eight months after the publication of this Society's proceedings above referred to. These are the facts, as shown by the printed publications in their order. A writer of history should be truthful and accurate about matters resting in his own knowledge, else confidence can not be placed in his compilations.

May I trouble you so much as to be the medium of presenting Prof. Davidson's gift to the Society, and laying this note before them?

I am, dear sir,

Yours, very respectfully,

JOHN T. DOYLE.

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