

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC San Francisco Bay Discovery Site

AND/OR COMMON  
Same

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Sweeney Ridge

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN  
Pacifica

VICINITY OF

STATE  
California

CODE  
06

COUNTY  
San Mateo

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Useless

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Mayor, the City of Pacifica

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
Pacifica

VICINITY OF

STATE  
California

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. County Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER  
401 Marshall Street

CITY, TOWN  
Redwood City

STATE  
California

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The site of the "discovery" of San Francisco Bay consists essentially of two knolls from which the members of the expedition acquired the view. No structures are there now nor have likely ever been there. The view of course has changed considerably with the growth of the Bay Area, now including broad industrial and residential building development. It is nevertheless a breath-taking sight to see the tremendous expanse of the Bay Area spread beneath one's feet in one sweep. The 18.15 acre site is identified on the accompanying USGS map by a red line.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1769

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

San Francisco Bay is the most important harbor on the Pacific Coast and one of the greatest anchorages in the world. Its discovery may be referred to as one of the greatest events in the establishment of the Spanish in Alta California. Speculation suggests that had the great harbor not been found, the entire history of California would have been different, and ultimately the whole course of American history.

### History

Captain Gaspar de Portola and his party of sixty men (with a caravan of 200 horses and mules for riding and the pack train) had come from San Diego in search of Monterey Bay, but from their overland approach, they had failed to recognize it. They had come north, climbed over San Pedro Mountain and had made camp in Pedro Valley, now in the city of Pacifica. Though already within today's Bay Area, they were still unaware of the Bay's existence.

The following morning, November 1, 1769, Sergeant Ortega with a squad of scouts began a three-day reconnoitering tour. Somewhere along the five mile stretch between Mussel Rock and the summit (Point Reyes), Ortega saw San Francisco Bay on his first day of scouting. When Ortega returned to camp on November 3, Portola's next move was an attempt to go around this new found "estuary" to examine the vicinity of Point Reyes. From the camp on San Pedro Creek, the Captain and his men followed the beach to the north, then entered the hills and from the summit beheld the great estuary.

Three days of slow travel brought the expedition to the site of Modern Palo Alto where a new base camp was made to await Ortega's probing of the east side of the estuary. Ortega returned in four days with discouraging news. He had encountered aggressively hostile Indians and had observed great stretches of burned-over land leaving no pasture for the expedition's livestock. A council was then called and the decision made to return to San Diego.

The Portola Expedition ultimately accomplished its purpose of finding Monterey Bay. The San Francisco region was further explored by Lieutenant Pedro Pagas in 1772 and by Juan Bautista de Anza in 1776. The importance of the inland bay was further emphasized by the establishment of a presidio and two missions in the environs of the bay.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hubert Bancroft, History of California, (San Francisco, 1884).  
 Herbert Bolton, Fray Juan Crespi, (Berkeley, 1927).  
 Charles Chapman, A History of California: The Spanish Period, (New York, 1921).  
 John Caughey, California, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1957).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 18.15

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	54,78,4,0	4,16,18,8,0	B	1,0	54,80,6,0	4,16,19,6,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,0	54,83,8,0	4,16,16,0,0	D	1,0	54,82,6,0	4,16,14,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY Original form prepared by; James Dillon, Architectural Historian

NAME / TITLE Cecil McKithan, Historian	Historian
ORGANIZATION Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service	DATE June 1978
STREET & NUMBER 1100 L Street, N. W.	TELEPHONE 523-5464
CITY OR TOWN Washington	STATE D. C.

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

*May 23, 1978*  
 Boundary Certificate  
 George J. Emery  
 DATE: MAY 28, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DATE

*11/24/78*

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San Francisco Bay Discovery Site

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Located in the Town of Pacifica, California, the site of the discovery of San Francisco Bay consists of the point at which the Portola Expedition, 1769, crossed over Sweeney Ridge, and for the first time, came to view one of the world's largest sheltered anchorages. From the top of Sweeney Ridge one can see not only inland to the Bay, but north along the ocean coast as far as Point Reyes.

Total acreage is approximately 18.15. No structures are on the site, nor in the immediate vicinity.

Boundary

Beginning at a point on Sweeney Ridge, said point being 3,000 feet, more or less, from the south boundary of the Military Reservation; proceeding thence in a north easterly direction 825 feet, more or less, to a point; continuing thence in a southeasterly direction, 1,700 feet more or less, to a point; continuing thence in a southwesterly direction 825 feet more or less, to a point; continuing thence in a northwesterly direction 2,150 feet, more or less, to the point of beginning.