

Carrillo's Flying Artillery

The Battle of San Pedro

By Les Driver

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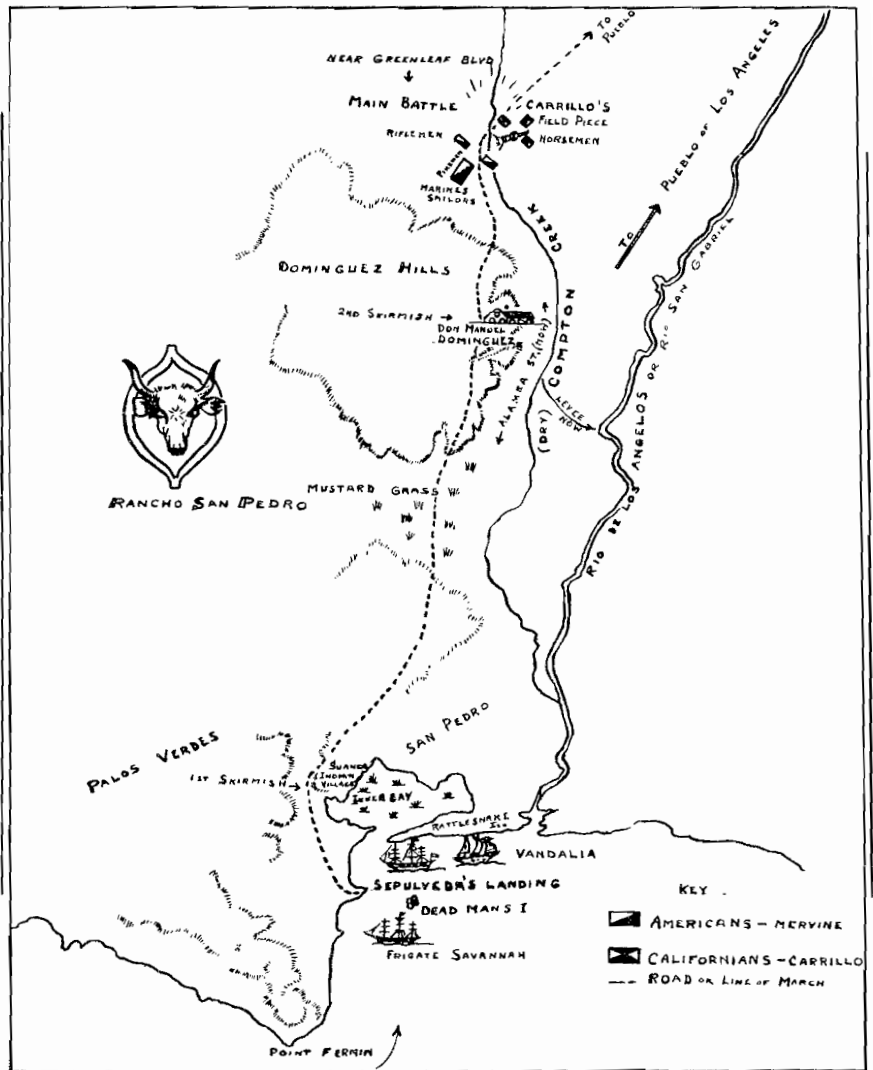
By LES DRIVER

RISING ABRUPTLY from the plains north of the hustling port of San Pedro and the megalopolis of Long Beach is a plateau-like feature known as the Domínguez Hills. The hills are teeming with dipping grasshopper oil pumps, but on the northeastern side on the edge of the city of Compton sequestered in a luxuriant growth of trees lies the 1826 Domínguez ranch home.¹

This distinguished pioneer family home may be reached from the Alameda Street side and is opened to the public, although the property is now owned by the Claretian Junior Seminary of the Roman Catholic Church. The Domínguez homesite is expressive of the ability of the Spanish-Mexican settlers to retain dignity and wealth during the American period. Stretching from the home was the vast pastoral dominion known as the San Pedro Rancho. Here on the San Pedro plains below the famous Domínguez Hills was fought one of the outstanding battles in California history. Notoriety again came to the ranch in 1910 when the Domínguez Hills became the site for the first aviation meet in America. Names like the Wright brothers, Curtis, Willard, and Martin graced its ranks.

Before entering the patio area of the Domínguez ranch home, a State Historical plaque (No. 152) sets a rustic mood, combining information on the adobe and rancho with the cold facts of war concerning the Battle of the Domínguez Ranch. In the adobe building may be found unique furniture, furnishings, mementoes, and paintings of the Spanish-Mexican period of California history. Outside, the contrast between the old and new becomes evident. One looking down on the feverish industrial site on the plains below can still enjoy the quietude of the patio area of the rancho. In this atmosphere one's mind travels back to the feverish military activity

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Courtesy of the author.

Map of the battles of Dominguez Hills.

at the homesite during the Mexican War. United States marines, sailors, pikemen, and riflemen were resting in the same patio area when cannon balls hit the tranquil spot. Where freeways and streets crisscross, and industrial plants spout steam on the plains north of the homesite, the United States force charged into the Mexican-Californian horsemen in the year 1846.

What appeared to be a tranquil conquest of California by Commodore Robert Stockton and Major John Charles Frémont was dispelled in the latter part of 1846. Lieutenant Kit Carson soon had been dispatched to Washington, D.C., from Los Angeles with the glad tidings of the Mexican capitulation in California. Commodore Stockton selected Captain Archibald Gillespie, adept in the Spanish language, to remain in charge of a garrison of fifty men at Los Angeles. Apparently satisfied with the state of affairs, Stockton turned his attention to the possible noble action of landing troops down the coast of Mexico and marching inland to meet with General Zachary Taylor.

In Los Angeles, Captain Gillespie embarked on a stringent policy² of dealing with the Californios. Lacking knowledge of the people's customs and temperament, he resorted to bull-headed tactics, forbidding reunions in homes, requiring the shops to be closed at sundown, and forbidding two persons to walk about the streets together. Admittedly, a lawless element headed by Serbula Varela was actively irritating conditions, but moral and social changes by force was unjustified. Hubert Bancroft, the noted compiler of California history indicates vehement denunciation of Gillespie's policy: "Little account was taken of national habits and peculiarities. In a few weeks many good citizens . . . were prejudiced against Gillespie . . . arrests were freely made. The result was an actual revolt."³ Even the non-Spanish resident element including B. D. Wilson, John Forster, John Temple, and Consul Thomas O. Larkin classified Gillespie's conduct as oppressive.

The situation became precarious for Gillespie at Fort Hill in the City of the Angels. Many paroled Mexican officers were now joining the rebellion. On September 24 John Brown (Juan Flaco) carrying the cigarette package containing Gillespie's seal was sent north for aid from Stockton. After a gruelling trip Juan Flaco contacted the commodore on or about September 30. Stockton had an inkling that

some effort would be made by General José Castro and Mexico to recover the territory, but not rebellion. His fight was to be down at Acapulco not Los Angeles!

Organized California forces under Commander José María Flores, Major General José Antonio Carrillo, and Andrés Pico were gathering up all available shotguns and lances. One fine piece of artillery buried by Ignacia Reyes was dug up from her yard and prepared for action by an English carpenter. Under such overwhelming odds, Gillespie had no alternative but capitulation. José María Flores' generous capitulation terms permitted Gillespie's troops the right of withdrawal to San Pedro. With drums beating, the garrison moved out along the road to the sleepy bay of San Pedro. After eleven nights of attack Gillespie's men finally boarded the merchant ship *Vandalia*. He now waited sanguinely for the remote possibility that the courier Juan Flaco had reached Commodore Stockton's headquarters at Yuerba Buena (San Francisco).

Had Gillespie had insight into Spanish character, the rebellion in the south might have been avoided. The chain of events set in motion the battles of San Pedro, San Pascual, Natividad, and San Gabriel before peace was restored again. Historically, the classic example where failure to understand a custom brings to mind the Sepoy Rebellion when Hindu and Moslem traditions cost the East India Company its power.

Fortunately during the siege at Los Angeles, Henry Mellus, agent for the Boston trading firm of Appleton Company, sailed into San Pedro Bay aboard the *Barnstable*. Mellus had kegs of powder transferred to the *Vandalia*, and the *Barnstable* then proceeded north to San Francisco with the latest news on the siege. Gillespie was highly pleased on finding the extra powder aboard ship. The enemy now appeared on the hills surrounding the bay and found Gillespie's artillery spiked on shore in possible contradiction to the capitulation terms.

With Gillespie's forces out of Los Angeles the California leadership concerned themselves with necessary tactics. It was Flores' scheme to engage in guerrilla warfare. The Californians had mobility and lightness with some of the finest horsemen in the world. These men were born and bred in the saddle, having gained experience in the hide and tallow industry. They handled the lance skillfully with

fancy feints and jabs whether it was bear hunting or cattle probing. The reata (lariat) was thrown with equal adroitness. With this native ability, Flores hoped to keep the United States naval forces pinned to the coastline. The interior had to be held with all food, cattle, and horses kept out of reach of the Americans. If this strategy succeeded, Flores felt decided advantages could be gained at the peace conference.

On or about September 30 Juan Flaco contacted Commodore Stockton who proceeded promptly to order out the *Savannah* under Captain William Mervine⁴ to aid Gillespie's beleaguered forces. His exact orders were: "... to go immediately to San Pedro and afford all the aid in her power to our little garrison at the city."⁵ Fighting Bob's orders were somewhat vague as to what the precise course of action would be if the pueblo were no longer held. Mervine received twenty colt rifles and other equipment from the frigates *Portsmouth* and *Congress*. His force aboard the frigate *Savannah* consisted of the marines under the command of Captain Ward Marston, the pikemen under Captain Clark and Goodsell, the Colt riflemen under Lieutenant J. B. Carter and Midshipman R. C. Duvall, the 1st Company under Lieutenant R. F. Pinkney and the 2nd Company under Midshipman R. D. Minor. Other officer groups included Lieutenant W. Reckendorff, Midshipman S. P. Griffin and P. Watmough.⁶ The whole operation was hamstrung for several days by thick fog in the San Francisco area. Finally on Saturday October 3 the frigate *Savannah* set sail with Mervine's relief force.

Coming around Fermín Point of San Pedro on the afternoon of the sixth, the frigate *Savannah* received a two-gun salute and several cheers from the deck of the *Vandalia*. Mervine realized now that Gillespie was safe. Both Captain Gillespie and Dr. Gilchrist came aboard to relate the past episode at the pueblo. Although Mervine was in command of the operation, Gillespie advised him about remaining at San Pedro and making adequate preparation, as the enemy had a four-pound field piece and numerous cavalry. Gillespie offered him two field pieces from the *Vandalia*. Of course these had to be mounted, but no horses were available for transportation. Equally emphatic was Dr. Gilchrist's advice about adequate preparation. He repeated Gillespie's salient point concerning artillery, also adding this acute observation as related by Captain Gillespie: "that by remaining a short time at San Pedro, a good many disaffected

people . . . would have a rallying point and would procure the necessary supply of animals for dragging guns, baggage, etc.”⁷

Meanwhile the California forces had anticipated the situation by driving all horses and cattle from the San Pedro coast area. Only until after the battle on the Domínguez Ranch did they ransack the houses of David Alexander, the collector at the San Pedro port, and of James Johnson. On board ship Captain Mervine contemplated the situation. He was not one for temporizing, however. His official report acknowledges his predicament mentioning the lack of artillery and transportation. One can construe his decision to march on the pueblo as an imagination inflamed with glory. In probing this point Mervine’s own words are examined:

I determined on making demonstration at least upon the enemy believing that I had nothing to fear from his cavalry however numerous . . . and that if we could force our way to the city, there all the necessary means could be procured to enable me to sustain myself.⁸

Captain Mervine fails to elaborate on his statement regarding “all the necessary means.” This line of reasoning appears foolhardy considering Gillespie’s unfortunate experience in the pueblo; moreover, the interior was held by the mobile forces of the enemy.

Communication with the naval forces could be cut off by Carrillo’s riders; artillery could rain devastation on Mervine’s forces and eventually starve out the garrison. In spite of this, he had a fierce determination to reach the City of the Angels. Gillespie sums up his view of Captain Mervine with this comment, “indeed! he was without reason.”⁹ One point to consider at this stage however, is the characteristic of both Captain Mervine and Captain Gillespie. Each had an ambitious drive; in fact, this may have strained their relationship and hindered the operation.

From the *Savannah* and *Vandalia* at sunrise of the seventh a force of 299 men disembarked consisting of marines, sailors, Colt riflemen, pikemen, and Gillespie’s volunteer riflemen. A landing was effected at what was possibly known as Sepúlveda’s landing. William A. Smith was the first casualty: he was accidentally killed by a discharge from Lieutenant Henry Queen’s percussion pistol.

The enemy made its appearance on the slopes surrounding the bay but initiated no action. Miscalculating their number, Mervine

buttressed his force by an additional eighty men under Lieutenant R. B. Hitchcock. As the enemy withdrew, Mervine gained in confidence and ordered back the reinforcements. When the solid column moved out, Gillespie's riflemen were thrown out as skirmishers. Each of his men had a rolled blanket of ammunition on his back and sixty rounds of balls and percussion caps. Captain Marston's marines followed with the sailors and their officers next. Protection was afforded the sides by Captain Clark and Goodsell's pikemen along with Lieutenant Carter's and Midshipman Duvall's Colt riflemen.

Meanwhile Flores ordered Major General José Antonio Carrillo with fifty horsemen to the San Pedro coast for the purpose "of observing the operations of the enemy warships."¹⁰ Carrillo's official report indicates the first encounter with Mervine's group about six in the evening near the Domínguez ranch home; however, a California patrol had posted itself on a Palos Verdes' hill opposite the marshland of the inner bay of San Pedro. This was approximately one mile from the landing. When the Americans moved down the slopes, the Californians let loose with the lances and pistols. Thereupon Captain Gillespie's skirmishers charged the enemy's position causing them to scatter. According to Gillespie's account, Mervine appeared irked with what he considered a waste of ammunition. Gillespie retorts in his report that this attitude was "showing an entire want of the knowledge of Skirmishers duties."¹¹

Surreptitiously the Californios kept at long shot, moving along the hills watching the Americans. The column dipped into the lush mustard growth, which in places stood six to eight feet high and extended to the Domínguez Hills. Choking dust clouds and severe thirst made the march an excruciating one. Finally in the afternoon after twelve torturous miles and ascending the hills in a northeasterly direction, the Don Manuel Domínguez ranch home loomed up.

It was an island oasis surrounded by dusty plains. The Domínguez family had fled, but Don Manuel had sent word of Mervine's approach to Flores. In fleeing, the family failed to drive off their cattle at the corral below the main house. Carrillo's forces now on the surrounding higher ground noticed the cattle and rode in. Gillespie's riflemen

Californio rode into the American's camp. The man was harmless, but he provided Mervine with a much needed horse. Its value was realized after the battle.

Besides attempting to drive off the beef cattle, the Californios devised the tactic of harassment. This tactic consisted of sniping at the sentries, and, later in the evening, of firing the cannon at the ranch house. The situation became fraught with danger. After the enemy fired at his sentries, Captain Mervine, according to Gillespie, acted like an insane man. Again Captain Gillespie willingly gave his advice to Mervine concerning the fatiguing of his men. Why send them out into the night after horse-borne snipers? Clearly rankled, Gillespie writes: "It was of no use to talk to him, Capt. Mervine sent out patrols, until one party fired into another."¹² It is interesting to note that although Gillespie's account is full of disparaging remarks about Mervine, the official reports of Mervine are silent on any animosity.

Toward sunset, Carrillo's force of fifty men drew up on a hill opposite the Domínguez house. This hill could be the one on which the Claretian Junior Seminary dormitory is located today. In anticipation of some movement, Mervine ordered a charge on Carrillo's position by Captain Marston's marines, Lieutenant Carter's and Duvall's Colt riflemen, and Gillespie's seasoned volunteers. When some of the riflemen hit their targets, the Californians scattered. Carrillo indicated that one of his riders was wounded.¹³ Shots were returned from the heights until about nine o'clock when Flores arrived with sixty men and the valuable Old Woman's Gun (four-pound cannon).¹⁴

In accordance with Flores' orders the fieldpiece was trained on the ranch home area. When a shot hit the patio, where the Americans were resting, Mervine became increasingly angered. Out into the night again was ordered the platoon of trouble-shooters—Marston's, Carter's, Duvall's, and Gillespie's group. It was Mervine's intention that the four-pounder be taken. After pursuing the horse drawn gun for sometime, the party realized the futility of the chase. The inherent danger lay in the Mexican horsemen encircling and cutting off the patrol. Not desiring to be cut to pieces by the lancers, the marines, riflemen, and volunteers returned to camp. Before daybreak Flores pulled out with twenty men for Los Angeles, leaving

Carrillo with ninety horsemen. It appears that Flores moved on to the pueblo to prepare its defenses. His instructions to Carrillo were "not to engage the enemy furiously but only to shoot with the fieldpiece at the places where they were annoying."¹⁵ The strategy was one of evasion — a Fabian tactic.

In spite of the fact that Mervine was aware of the dire consequences of proceeding against artillery, he ordered the troops to commence marching in the early hours of the eighth. Scathing epithets were hurled at Mervine for his action on this particular day — "Mervine's ignoble defeat," "Capt. Mervine's grapes and vintage of 1846."¹⁶ The road which felt the impact of the encounter that became known as the Battle of the Domínguez Ranch (or possibly more appropriately as the Battle of the San Pedro Rancho) follows for the most part the direction of Alameda Street which leads into the Plaza. Up front Gillespie's riflemen were again acting as skirmishers on the right and left flanks. Marston's marines and the sailors followed in the center. The Colt riflemen and pikemen held key positions to guard against attacks from the enemy's horsemen.

Marching rapidly, the column headed north of the Domínguez ranch house towards what is now known as Compton Creek approximately one mile from the house and near Greenleaf Boulevard. As they neared the creek bed the enemy appeared — lined up with lances in battle position. Estimates vary greatly on the American side as to the number of the enemy:¹⁷ Captain Mervine indicates three to four hundred cavalry; Captain Gillespie places the figure at two hundred strong; and Lieutenant Duvall observed one hundred and seventy-five to two hundred strong. One explanation for such exaggeration can be found in the hand-me-down family history of Leo Carrillo, the famed movie star. In reference to his great-uncle José Antonio Carrillo, Leo explains a plan devised by José to confuse the Americans:

He had his cavalry men attach pieces of brush, old cowhides, and all sorts of heavy objects to their reatas. These were dragged across a dusty spot ahead of the oncoming American force. Then the horsemen dashed in and out of this dust cloud so that they appeared as a tremendous force of cavalry . . . It marked one of the first known uses of the "smoke screen".¹⁸

The official reports of the participants mention the dust clouds but not in reference to the battle area. It was Gillespie's skirmishers

on the right and left flank that encountered the Californians first, perched as Gillespie noted "upon the bank of a creek then dry."¹⁹

Not only was the enemy armed with lance and rifle, but in the middle of his ranks according to Lieutenant Duvall's observation was "a field piece (4 pounds) to which were 'hitched' 8 or 10 horses, placed in the road ahead of us."²⁰ Meanwhile on the bank of the creek Carrillo sized up the situation, noting that the closed column made an ideal target for his ten men with the fieldpiece. He then utilized his forty men against the riflemen on his left and right side. When the Americans came within 400 yards of Carrillo's line, the fieldpiece opened up with the first ball flying over the column. Captain Mervine called for a square to form but to no avail. Next he gave the signal to charge the fieldpiece. "Three spirited but unsuccessful charges were made upon this piece,"²¹ replied Mervine in his report.

Into the creek bed Gillespie's men clambered using brush and rocks for protection. Attempting to get the bearing, the Californian's second shot from the four-pounder tore off the pikes. The next shots, however, began to take a bloody toll on the column. Being pressed by the three persistent charges, the flying artillery would withdraw a good distance and fire. Mervine indicated a withdrawal of over one mile each time. The horsemen who had their reatas attached to the cannon easily maneuvered it out of reach. Meanwhile Carrillo's flanks kept up a constant fire. Captain Hensley of Gillespie's riflemen group was pressing hard on the fieldpiece, so much so that the gun was left unattended at one time. Seeing this situation, Ignacio Aguilar rushed in and swooped up the reata attached to the field piece and dragged it to safety.

Under such devastating fire Mervine realized his untenable position and reluctantly sounded retreat after over an hour of fighting. The United States force withdrew to the Domínguez house where a quick officer consultation was held. Several sound reasons were given for not pushing on to the pueblo: the mobility of the enemy around Los Angeles would prevent communication with the *Savannah*; the flying artillery would continue to rain havoc on the forces with the likelihood of more artillery; also the enemy appeared to be gaining in strength.²² All of these points should have been contemplated by Mervine before the debacle. Focus was now made on the means of retreat and of the care of the ten wounded men. Luckily, Gillespie

uncovered near the Domínguez home a cart which was lined with hides. Then the old man's horse was utilized by being attached to the cart by reatas.

Carrillo's horsemen began to maneuver to gain a height overlooking the weary Americans on the road ahead. Gravely threatened by this movement, Captain Marston's marines proceeded to take the hill. With the height secured, the column moved out about nine in the morning. The cart with the wounded was located in the front and center with protection offered by Lieutenant Duvall on the right flank with six shooting riflemen and Lieutenant Carter on the left flank. Captain Gillespie and Captain Mervine with twenty marines were in the center. The rest marched in a solid column.

Still maneuvering for an advantageous position, Carrillo's force set themselves up on the right side of the southerly edge of the Domínguez Hills and waited until Mervine's troops began their descent toward San Pedro. According to Lieutenant Duvall's recollection, in spite of the fieldpiece being on the hill, Mervine addressed his men; "it was his intention to march straight ahead in the same orderly manner . . . and that sooner than he would Surrender to such an Enemy he would sacrifice himself and every other man under his Command."²³

Four shots of ball and grape were hurled at the ranks. One man was fatally wounded. Once on the plains below the group proceeded unmolested to the landing at San Pedro, arriving about three in the afternoon. Lieutenant R. B. Hitchcock and Purser Fauntleroy provided coverage near the landing with two nine-pound cannons taken off the *Vandalia*. Boats had been sent out from the *Savannah* and embarkation proceeded smoothly. In all, the battle had ranged from the Palos Verdes skirmish to the Domínguez house and its three encounters — the main battle on the plains below and then the two encounters on the retreat.

Considering the tactics of Captain Mervine, the losses could have been more severe. His official report²⁴ lists four seamen as fatalities: Michael Hoy, David Johnson, Charles Sommers (a marine), and William Berry. Henry W. Queen, the adjutant, lists four mortally wounded and six severely to slightly.²⁵ In his notes, Lieutenant Duvall lists William A. Smith as accidentally shot. The wounded included a marine, William Condlan, and the seamen — John Tyre, John

Anderson, Henry Loveland, James Smith, and Hiram Rockwell. On a small island near the landing the dead were buried — it earned the name of Dead Man's Island. In 1928 when the island was included in a program to widen the channel, twenty-three skeletons were uncovered near the high point. Found in the search were two seventeenth century Spanish soldiers, a blonde female, and the five Americans.

In the hour of defeat, Captain Mervine belittles his opposition in his official report to Commodore Stockton by saying that “had he [José Carrillo] made use of the advantages he possessed over us, not a man could have escaped: by his cowardice [*sic*] alone were we saved.”²⁶ On the other hand Carrillo attributes his failure to follow up on the disordered American retreat to the lack of lances and ammunition. This became evident when the Californians were firing their fourth cannon shot as the Americans retreated down the southerly side of the Domínguez Hills. Apparently the fourth shot fell far short of its mark and the report of the gun sounded weak. Actually very little powder was being manufactured at the San Gabriel Mission. Carrillo, however, managed to pick up a few prizes of victory from the battle area; namely, baggage, food, tobacco, and a very valuable battle flag. This flag undertook a long journey. In sending it on to Flores, Carrillo requested “that if it be convenient to send it to the supreme government in proof of our triumph.”²⁷

By sending the flag with the Don Antonio Coronel party to Sonora, Mexico, Flores hoped to receive the necessary soldiers, ammunition, and guns to hold off the American movements. Coronel's party consisted of two soldiers, three servants, one hundred horses, and Felipe Castillo, who was familiar with the road to Sonora. Felipe Castillo had hidden in his empty wine bottles information on the rebellion, a detailed, elated account of the victory at San Pedro, and letters addressed to General José Castro at Altar and Antonio Castro in Sonora.²⁸ Near Yuma Coronel was informed by the Indians that a large United States force was in the vicinity of the Colorado River. In spite of the bad news, Castillo was sent on to elude the Americans.

While reconnoitering along the Gila-Colorado rivers, Lieutenant William Emory's American patrol came upon the well-mounted Mexican Felipe Castillo, who apparently pretended he was hunting for horses. The Mexican rebuffed each request by Emory for him to come into General Stephen W. Kearny's camp. His shifty appearance

though prompted Emory to bring him on to Kearny. At this time, General Kearny's dragoons were being guided by Kit Carson into California after a successful conquest of New Mexico. While bringing him in, the wine bottles, in particular, caught Emory's attention and the contents proved most valuable. General Kearny was now apprised of the rebellion and subsequent victory of the Californians at San Pedro. His own hopes picked up as his unit was looking for action. Kit Carson's news back in October at Socorro, New Mexico, concerning the early California capitulation had dampened the dragoons' enthusiasm. To the consternation of Felipe Castillo, he received the resealed letters back from Captain Henry Turner of the First Dragoons and was told to be on his way.

The morale factor loomed large after the battle on the San Pedro Rancho. With the news being bruited about that ninety California horsemen and the Old Woman's gun had defeated a force of 299 American marines and seamen, the Mexican populace became jubilant. No longer did they suffer an incubus of inferiority in battle. Commanding General Flores' tactic of guerrilla warfare was working. Even in Mexico, the guerrilla armed with the lance, reata, and *escopeta* struck greater fear in the American's mind than the Mexican soldier. The California horsemen became more daring in battle, so much so that Commodore Stockton remarked in his report to Secretary of War George Bancroft: "In truth, nothing short of a locomotive engine can catch those well-mounted fellows . . . they collected in large bodies on all the adjacent hills, and would not permit a hoof except their own horses to be within fifty miles of San Pedro."²⁹

From the successful rebellion in Los Angeles, and the clear-cut victory at San Pedro, the Californios were propelled to success at Natividad, and a tactical victory at San Pascual. Their initial successes can be traced to Captain Gillespie being unacquainted with the California culture and Captain Mervine underestimating the Californios' fighting ability.

In spite of the native Californian salvaging some glory for the distant Mexican government, the *Encyclopedia Americana* omits the battle operations in California by this sweeping statement: "Everywhere success attended the arms of the United States. Perhaps it was the first war in history, lasting two years, in which no defeat was sustained by one party, and no victory won by the other."³⁰ As related

the California theatre proved otherwise. Both sides came to appreciate the military ability of the other. The San Pedro military action pitted mobility and lightness against weight and mass and frontal infantry attacks against movable positions. Here cavalry played the decisive role, acting like a vise by keeping the infantry packed in for the deadly fire of the Old Woman's Gun. This encounter reinforced the view that rapidity is the essence of war.

NOTES

1. For one of the most comprehensive histories of the Domínguez family see Robert C. Gillingham. *The Rancho San Pedro* (Los Angeles, 1961). The Del Amo branch of the Domínguez family granted the Claretian Missionary Fathers seventeen acres, including the homesite in 1922.

2. Werner Marti in his *Messenger of Destiny* (San Francisco, 1960) suggests the view that Gillespie felt security depended upon strict enforcement of martial law because of the rumors of reinforcements from the south.

3. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of the North Mexican States and Texas* (San Francisco, 1889), XXII, 306.

4. William Mervine was born in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in 1791. In 1809 he received an appointment as midshipman, later serving aboard the U. S. S. *John Adams* during the War of 1812. By 1815 his rank increased to lieutenant. Before his appointment as captain in 1841, he served aboard the U. S. S. *Cyane*, *Natchez*, *Experiment*, and *Warren*. In 1845 he was placed in command of the U. S. S. *Cyane* and in 1846 the U. S. S. *Savannah*. Between 1852-53 he commanded the U. S. S. *Powhatan* and *Independence*. The Naval Station at San Francisco was his next undertaking in 1854. Later with the Civil War conflict underway his career in the Navy ended with his promotion to commodore on the retired list. Finally, in 1866 he was elevated to rear admiral. He died in 1868 at Utica, New York. Firsthand observations concerning Mervine's personality may be found in William H. Davis' *Seventy-Five Years in California* (San Francisco, 1929), pp. 267-271. Davis writes "Mervine was outspoken and frank. . . . He was impatient at Commodore's slowness and vacillation."

5. Samuel J. Bayard, *A Sketch of the Life of Commodore Robert F. Stockton* (New York, 1856), Appendix A, p. 5.

6. Robert C. Duvall, "Log of Midshipman R. C. Duvall of the U. S. Frigate *Savannah*," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, III (1924), 118.

7. Archibald H. Gillespie to Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft, February 16, 1847, published in "Gillespie and the Conquest of California," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, XVII (1938), 334-39. Refer also to *Gillespie Papers*, UCLA.

8. William Mervine to Robert F. Stockton, October 25, 1846, N.A., R.G. 45; R. W. Young, Chief Clerk, National Archives, Record Group 45.
9. Gillespie, *loc. cit.*, 335.
10. José Antonio Carrillo to José M. Flores, October 8, 1846. Document known as *Acción de San Pedro contra los Americanos*, Bancroft Library.
11. Gillespie, *loc. cit.*, 335.
12. *Ibid.*, 336.
13. Carrillo, *loc. cit.*
14. The Old Woman's Gun endured a varied itinerary when it was on exhibit at the 1885 New Orleans Exposition, the placard disclosed: "Trophy 53, No. 63, Class 7. Used by Mexico against the United States at the battle of Domínguez Ranch, Oct. 9, 1846; at San Gabriel and Mesa; Jan. 8 and 9, 1847; used by U. S. forces against Mexico at Mazatlan Nov. 11, 1847; Urias (crew all killed or wounded); Palos Prietos, Dec. 13, 1847 and at San Jose, Feb. 15, 1848."
15. Carrillo, *loc. cit.*
16. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, 320, fn. Although highly critical at first, a notable newspaper, *The California*, 13 February 1847, retracts its attack on Captain Mervine.
17. William Mervine to Robert F. Stockton, October 9, 1846, N.A., R.G. 45; Duvall, *loc. cit.*, 117; Gillespie, *loc. cit.*, 337.
18. Leo Carrillo, *The California I Love* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1961), pp. 18-19.
19. Gillespie, *loc. cit.*, 337.
20. Duvall, *loc. cit.*, 117.
21. Mervine to Stockton, October 25, 1846, N.A., R.G. 45.
22. Duvall, *loc. cit.*, 117.
23. *Ibid*
24. Mervine, October 25, 1846, N.A., R.G. 45.
25. Henry W. Queen, *Adjutant's Report*, October 7th and 8th, 1846, N.A., R.G. 45.
26. Mervine, October 9, 1846, N.A., R.G. 45.
27. Carrillo, *loc. cit.* For another short Mexican account of the battle see Luis Ibarra, "Memoirs," 1910, History Division, The Los Angeles County Museum of History and Science.
28. William H. Emory, *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance from Fort Leavenworth in Missouri to San Diego in California* (Washington, D.C., 1848).
29. Bayard, *op. cit.*
30. Howard W. Caldwell, "Mexican War" *The Encyclopedia Americana* XVIII, (New York, 1964), 738.