

# **The Plate of Brass White Paper**

**By**

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**2012**

## Is it California or Oregon's History?

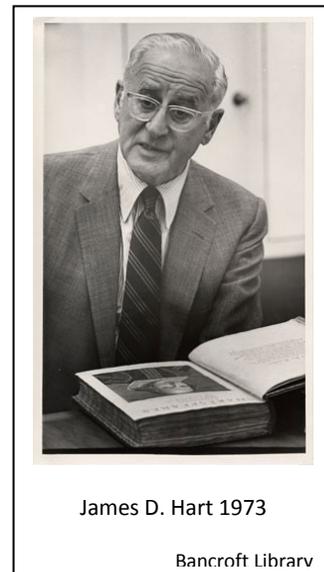
California historians claim that Francis Drake was the first European to land somewhere along the Northern California coast spending some five weeks to repair his ship in June-July, 1579. His stay was described in his chaplain Francis Fletcher's account of the voyage, published in *The World Encompassed*. The purpose of this article is to examine why and how historians of the Golden State have never been able to agree on a specific California locale. The topic of the bay where Drake landed has been at times, a very emotionally-contested discussion among historians, particularly Californians, for more than a century. This year, not being anything in the nature of an anniversary or anything of note since the landing, is a good time to take a look at why the California story doesn't fit, i.e. old ideas, old information, wrong assumptions, the wrong place or in some cases could it be simply be stretching the facts in order to make it appear to somehow fit or could it be Francis Drake never set foot in California?

The most striking example of fact-stretching concerns the "Plate of Brass". Francis Fletcher relates that before Drake left his five week anchorage, on his way to become the first European captain to circumnavigate the globe, he erected a plate of brass<sup>1</sup> as a symbolic act of sovereignty for his claiming lands in the name of England and Queen Elizabeth I. In 1936, a plate of brass was found along the north western shoreline of San Francisco Bay. Proclaimed authentic by historical scholars, anthropologists, archaeologists and amateur enthusiasts and scientifically verified by metallurgists and chemists for the next 41 years. Until 1977, when it was proven to be a fake by James D. Hart, Director of the Bancroft Library, the plate was held up as the poster child as proof that Francis Drake landed in California. As the years passed, Drakes Bay along with the little inlets of Drake's Cove\* or Drakes Estero, surfaced as the popular candidates for Drake's landing site.

\*Drake's Cove contains the apostrophe because it is not on the map while Drakes Bay and Drakes Estero are recognized by being on maps.

Even after it was uncovered as a fake, some scholars and enthusiasts continued their theories based on the authenticity, ignoring the two Bancroft Library (owner of the plate) reports issued by James Hart titled [The Plate of Brass Reexamined 1977, A Report Issued by The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1977](#) and a subsequent 1979 confirming report titled [The Plate of Brass Reexamined, A Supplementary Report, Issued by The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.](#)

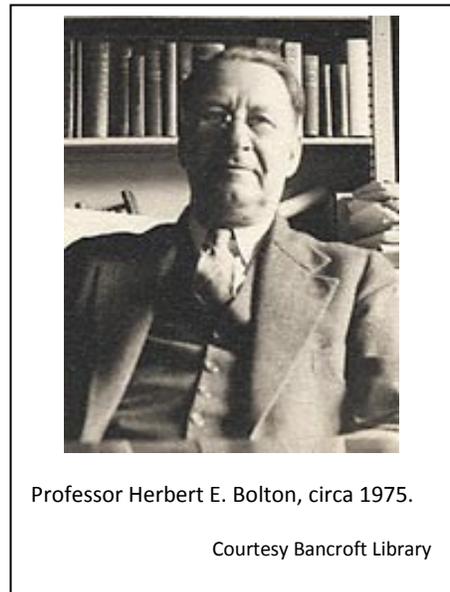
The true history might have been lost had it not been for two Tillamook County, Oregon history enthusiasts; M. Wayne Jensen, Jr., Portland State anthropology student and Donald M. Viles, a former commercial fisherman. In 1971 while searching for the storied treasure of Neahkahnie



Mountain, stumbled upon a 16<sup>th</sup> century land survey<sup>2</sup> and after researching who might have made such a survey developed a compellingly plausible case for Francis Drake as the maker during his circumnavigation of 1577-1580.<sup>3</sup> But for these discoveries, Oregon's history might have been lost forever and the location of Drake's landing site would still be open to speculation.

A few very prominent California scholars and an influential band of amateur historians were lead astray into developing theories of a Drake California landing around the longest running hoax in the annals of modern history? Although there were a number of clues over the years as to who might have made such a plate, they continued on their path of perpetuating; "The greatest hoax since the Piltdown Man or the Kensington Rune Stone."<sup>4</sup>

How did this hoax persuade the minds and hearts of historians around the world into being misled that Drake landed in California? The original authenticator of the brass plate was the highly influential Professor Herbert Eugene Bolton; University of California, Berkeley, chairman of the history department from 1911-1933, the 1932 president of the American Historical Association, a recipient of the Gold Medal from the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco in 1931 for his *Outpost of Empire* on the founding of San Francisco and in 1936 his *Rim of Christendom* was judged by the Literature Medal Jury of the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco as the best book by a Californian. And as Director the Bancroft Library from 1920-1940 Bolton's acquisitions of library materials are credited with making it into one of the most outstanding research centers in the west. On numerous occasions before the plate was found Bolton, "for years I [Bolton] have been telling my students to keep an eye out for the Drake's Plate."<sup>5</sup> Wanting to believe the plate to be real when shop clerk, Beryle Shinn, found the plate on a hill near San Francisco Bay in 1936, Bolton turned a blind eye to any of the discrepancies pointed out by other historians.



Professor Herbert E. Bolton, circa 1975.

Courtesy Bancroft Library

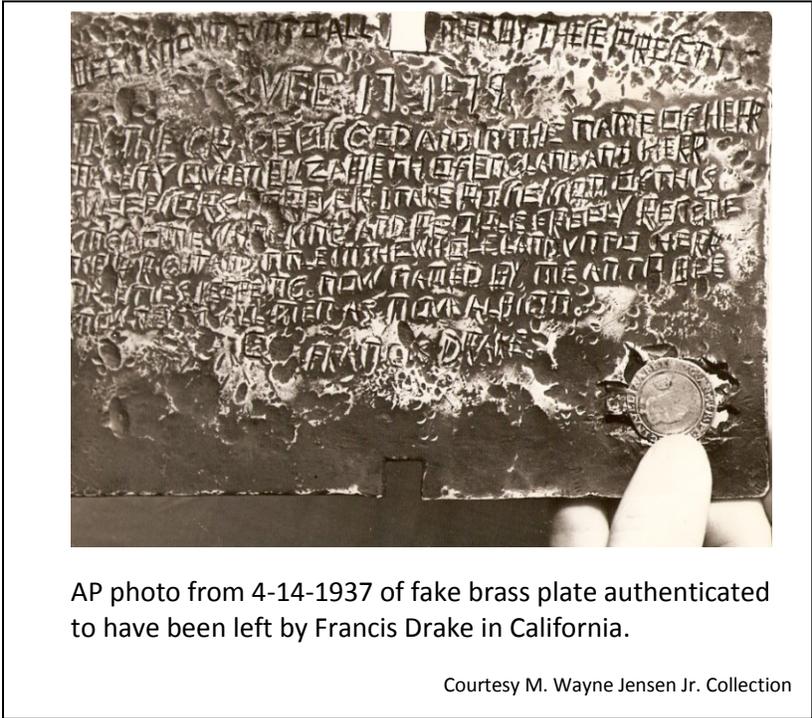
Bolton declared the plate to be genuine after he compared it with the description made by Francis Pretty, a crew member of the famous voyage. After Bolton informed Robert Gordon Sproul, the President of the University of California and Allen L. Chickering, the President of the California Historical Society about the find, Chickering, Bolton and other "Friends of the Society" negotiated to buy the plate for \$2,500. As an appeasement to Shinn, they would not hold him to its legitimacy and they would assume all risk regarding the authenticity of the plate. After making their offer to Shinn buy the plate, Bolton and Chickering did not hear from him for a few days and apparently riddled with anxiety that they might lose the plate to another buyer, Chickering offered \$3,500 after raising additional historical society member donations. Once the purchase was finalized, the plate was then donated to the University's Bancroft Library.<sup>6</sup>

It was now time to announce to the world of the discovery so on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1937 the Associated Press reported: "Famous Drake 'Brasse Plate' Found Near S.F. The "plate of brass", California's greatest lost historical treasure, with which Sir Francis Drake claimed the lands about San Francisco for England 357 year ago, has been found it was revealed by Dr. Herbert E. Bolton, professor of American History at the University of California at Berkeley. Found by an autoist accidently while resting after repairing a punctured tire a year ago, exhaustive tests and research was undergone before the find was pronounced 'authentic without question'. Photo Shows: The 'brasse plate' of Sir Francis Drake. The inscription reads: BEE IT KNOWN VNTO ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS IVNE 17 1579 BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND IN THE NAME OF HERR MAIESTY QVEEN ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND AND HER SVCESSORS FOREVER I TAKE POSSESSION OF THIS KINGDOME WHOSE KING AND PEOPLE FREELY RESIGNE THEIR RIGHT AND TITLE IN THEWHOLE LAND VNTO HERR MAIESTIES KEEPEING NOW NAMED BY ME AND TO BEE KNOWNE VNTO ALL MEN AS NOVA ALBION - FRANCIS DRAKE. One identifying mark was the hole in the lower right corner described in accounts of the day as being the size of a silver sixpence. A silver sixpence is seen fitting in."<sup>7</sup> (See photo)

Two days after the AP release on April 6, 1937, at a meeting of the California Historical Society in the Sir Francis Drake Hotel in San Francisco Bolton announced: "One of the world's long-lost historical treasures apparently has been found! . . . The authenticity of the tablet seems to me beyond all reasonable doubt."<sup>8</sup> Now, having only minimally investigated the plate, Bolton

and Chickering publicly committed themselves, personally and professionally, and their institutions, to the authenticity of the plate. Although the plate had legitimate dissenters, such scholars as R. B. Haselden,<sup>9</sup> W. Hume Rothery,<sup>10</sup> Henry R. Wagner<sup>11</sup> and Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison who doubted its authenticity, the historical societies gentry combined with Bolton's well respected reputation as an historian continued to push for its acceptance.<sup>12</sup>

To sweep away his dissenters' opinions, in 1938 Bolton solicited other professionals to verify its authenticity. He had the plate examined by Dr. Colin G. Fink, Professor of Electro-chemistry at Columbia University, a Perkin Medal winner (considered the highest honor given in the U.S. for a



chemist), accompanied by Dr. E.P. Polushkin, a consulting metallurgical engineer of New York City. They concluded that the plate was "the genuine Drake Plate" just as Bolton and other California Historical Society members had believed. Their report of 1938 Drake's Plate of Brass Authenticated, Report on the Plate of Brass, California Historical Society eventually damaged both Fink and Polushkin's reputation, but not until 1977 when it was proven a fake.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately by then, almost 4 decades of fabricated California Drake landing stories were purveyed to the public based on a bogus authentication which sidetracked legitimate research into uncovering the true history of Drake's Pacific coast landing site.

In 1942, for the Introduction to *Archaeological Evidence of Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeno's California Visit in 1595*,<sup>14</sup> Professor Alfred Louis Kroeber, considered the Father of California

Anthropology, wrote that several years before the plate was found, Dr. Robert F. Heizer, Professor of Archaeology at the University of California at Berkeley, had envisioned the plate turning up in one of Marin County's shell mounds of California. When the plate was found, he (Heizer) began excavation of 6 shell mounds around the Pt. Reyes Seashore and Drakes Bay looking for "further" Drake landing evidence. In the 6 various mounds, Heizer was only able to find 49 corroded iron ship's spikes and 74 blue-on-white Chinese porcelain sherds.

In discussing the porcelain, Kroeber stated; "The porcelain is definitely identified as of two types: the majority of the specimens being from the 'Wan Li period', and a few fragments from the "Late Ming made for export." The Wan Li period extends from 1573 to 1619 and the Late Ming overlaps from 1550 to 1644. The illustrations from *High-class China, Porcelain, & Glass* by Hanover Pottery Company were used for identification. Most of the sherds were from 1573- 1619 Wan Li period, obvious even to non-experts according to Kroeber.

Kroeber then posed the question; "How and when did these quantities of two kinds of civilized manufactures get into half a dozen Indian shell mounds of the Marin coast?" After proposing a few other unreasonably credible scenarios, he decided the source of the manufactured goods were from Drake's and Cermeno's ships: "Drake was on the coast in 1579 and Cermeno's *San Agustin* was wrecked at Drakes Bay in 1595." Although Kroeber did believe the majority of the artifacts

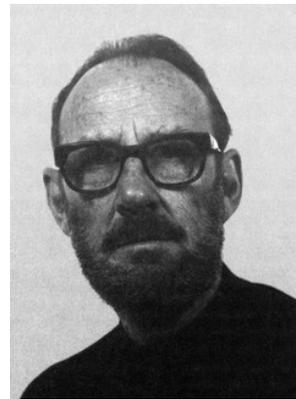
Dr. Clement Meighan of UCLA had been the lead archaeologist on a number of Marin County archaeological sites and had previously published "Excavations in Sixteenth Century Shell mounds at Drakes Bay, Marin County", Berkeley Reports of the University of California Archaeological survey, No. 9, Paper 9, November 20, 1950, which never identified any Drake artifacts at this or any other Marin County or Pt. Reyes area archaeological sites. Although Kroeber and Heizer had identifying the Wan-li-era (1573-1619) Chinese porcelains to be from more than one ship, the Guild's carried the bogus assumption further in their 1981 report *The Drake and Cermeno Expeditions' Chinese Porcelains at Drakes Bay, California 1579 and 1595* by dividing the eras same 16<sup>th</sup> century porcelain sherd pieces into two piles; one pile with smaller pieces of ocean or surf-worn items and the other pile of larger sharp-edged pieces they had dug from Indian sites; then declaring them from two different cargos, one being from Cermeno and the other Drake.

found were from Cermeno, one idea on which Heizer and Kroeber both agreed was that the porcelain was an extremely valuable cargo; worth its weight in gold. While Cermeno crashing into the continent explained the porcelain deposits, they ignored the evidence that Drake would not likely give his valuable cargo to the natives. Woven into Kroeber's agreement for a definite 1595 native contact with Cermeno in the Drake Estero, a little inlet off of Drakes Bay, was: *"The significance of the discovery is multiple. First, the high probability that Dr. Bolton's Plate of Brass is authentically Drake's..."* Unaware it was hoax; Professor Kroeber's belief in the authenticity of the plate influenced many anthropologists, archaeologists, historians and politicians of its legitimacy throughout his career in his writings and reputation.

Heizer co-authored an article with William W. Elmendorf titled *"Francis Drake's California Anchorage in Light of the Indian Language Spoken There* stated: "Linguistic material collected by us in the spring of 1939 and summer of 1940 indicates that the natives at Drake's landing spoke a dialect of Coast Miwok there." And concluded with: "Although we can now state definitely that Drake landed in territory held by Coast Miwok speaking natives. There are several bays within this territory, Bolinas, Drakes, Tomales and Bodega, any one of which theoretically might be the site of Drake's sojourn."<sup>20</sup>

By 1942 Heizer, who had received his doctorate a year earlier, was rapidly becoming one of the preeminent archaeologists of the twentieth century,. Reading a paper to the California Historical Society on December 16, 1941 Heizer had this to say: *"Of Sir Francis Drake's five weeks' sojourn on the California coast in 1579 we have concrete evidence in the form of the plate of brass which he left nailed to a great wooden post"*<sup>15</sup> Believing the plate to be authentic, Heizer went on to describe the Coast Miwok

Indians, those Cermeno observed at Drakes Bay, being entirely naked, with women wearing grass or skin skirts; hair worn long, body painting on the breast and arms. Cermeno and Fletcher's descriptions were very much different. The Cermeno Indians were reported to be naked in December, the month of the year he crashed his ship into the continent while the Indians Fletcher described the natives in the middle of summer were wearing furs. The food, actions, housing, canoes, fishing and basketry were all very much different.<sup>16</sup> In Heizer's attempt to find some coordination between the Cermeno and Fletcher comparisons caused him to eventually included the Pomo, a tribal area living miles above any theorized Northern California bay, and mingled them together with Miwok to build his comparisons; all without factual merit due to the fact there is no archaeological evidence Drake ever set foot in California.



Robert F. Heizer

Heizer's muse was the distinguished Professor Herbert E. Bolton, the original authenticator of the plate.

Courtesy S. Heizer

There are many differences between the primary source descriptions of Cermeno and Fletcher, but they can be explained away with a believable basis, if you believe the plate real as Heizer did. Misled by his belief he chose to answer with fuzzy logic a self-posed question concerning the native cultural inconsistencies of the Drake and Cermeno descriptions with: "Although Fletcher [the Reverend who accompanied Drake on the epoch voyage] describes the attitude of the Indians in different terms...Francis Drake in 1579 observed Indians on the California coast whose culture agrees closely with those seen by Cermeno...California aborigines regarded both the English (1579) and Spanish (1595) with fear and wonderment. This is a point which favors the view that both Drake and Cermeno landed in Drakes Bay... It is not easy to explain this difference, except perhaps on the ground that the Spanish acted very differently toward the Indians than did the English."<sup>17</sup>

Heizer gives credit to George C. Davidson's 1890 *Identification of Sir Francis Drake's Anchorage on the Coast of California in the Year 1579* published by the California Historical Society, not only for being the first in recognizing the Drakes Estero but for identifying the large shell mound as the Indian village "Portus Novae Albionis" shown on the 1589 map of the Jodocus Hondius broadside.<sup>18</sup>

Davidson, in many respects, a most remarkable man for his writing of the "Coast Pilot of California, Oregon and Washington, Washington" (1889) and the practical results of his U.S Pacific Coast Geodesic surveying efforts. Nevertheless he's been subsequently shown to have been politically influenced and biased in the misidentification to all of his proposed California Drake landing sites and for wrongly placing the name of Drakes Bay on official U.S. maps.<sup>19</sup>

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In 1850 Davidson was appointed as surveyor of the first U.S. Geological Survey of the U.S. Pacific coast. The dispute of ownership of the Oregon Territory between the Hudson Bay Company and the United States had been settled by treaty two years earlier.

Librarian to the Library of Congress Robert Greenhow's 1840 *Memoirs, Historical and Political, on the Northwest Coast of North America, and the Adjacent Territories* written and assembled under the direction of John Forsyth, Secretary of State of the United States. Greenhow's Preface relays a letter to the Secretary Forsyth from Senator L.F. Linn, Chairman of the Select Committee on the Territory of Oregon requesting "information relating to the territory of Oregon, its geography, resources, and title of the United States to the same."

Although there were other reports at the time saying Drake had reached 48° N. latitude and other primary sources uncovered after 1840 which stated the same, the limiting of Drake's voyage on the Pacific Coast to 43° N. latitude was first initiated by Greenhow's report. Davidson, as a government survey employee was not about to overturn the U.S. Oregon Territory by stating Drake reached above the 43° N. latitude near the present day Oregon – California border.

natives at Drake's landing spoke a dialect of Coast Miwok there." And concluded with: "Although we can now state definitely that Drake landed in territory held by Coast Miwok speaking natives. There are several bays within this territory, Bolinas, Drakes, Tomales and Bodega, any one of which theoretically might be the site of Drake's sojourn."<sup>20</sup>

This was not the last time Heizer, whose research emphasis was in prehistoric and historic Native American peoples of the western United States, particularly in Nevada and California, continued to promote the plate through his thirty-year teaching career at Berkeley which began in 1945, promoted to an Associate Professor in 1948 and to a full Professorship in 1952.

In 1947, the year before he received his Associate Professorship, the increasingly influential archaeologist wrote his monograph *Francis Drake and the California Indians, 1579*, published by University of California Press; still basing any theory on his belief in the plate of brass being authentic with: "*The ethnographic evidence indicates strongly, indeed almost conclusively, that Drake landed in territory occupied by Coast Miwok Indians. The plate of brass left by Drake and recently found at Drakes Bay may therefore be concluded that Drake had contact mainly with the Coast Miwok. Granted the authenticity of the Drake plate, now does not rank as an isolated find, however spectacular, but rather as good supporting evidence of the conclusion based upon my ethnographic analysis. In June, 1579, then, Drake probably landed in what is now known as Drakes Bay. He remained there for five weeks repairing his ship, and found the Indians the most remarkable objects of interest with which he came in contact. From a comparative analysis of the detailed descriptions of the native ceremonies, artifacts and language I conclude that in the fullest authentic account, The World Encompassed, it is the Coast Miwok Indians that are referred to.*"<sup>21</sup> Due to his overwhelming belief in the fake plate, Heizer wrongly identified the Indians Drake met and where he landed.

"A final piece of evidence, this time archaeological, has recently come to light in the plate of brass left by Drake in 1579. This plate was originally found at Laguna Ranch on Drakes bay in 1934, was moved elsewhere, and was rediscovered in 1936. Although some skeptics have questioned the genuineness of the plate of brass, they have not altered the facts establishing the plate's authenticity as shown by the investigations of such scholars as Allen Chickering, Professor Herbert E. Bolton, and Drs. Fink and Polushkin. In the absence of evidence that it was moved early in its history [Drakes Bay to San Francisco Bay], it may not be claiming overmuch to assume that the post with the plate of brass was originally erected in Drakes Bay." (Heizer, 1947, 254-255)

Even his later work "Elizabethan California" (1974), Professor Robert Heizer, the noted Miwok expert and author, continued to mangle Fletcher and Cermeno's ethnographic descriptions based completely on the authenticity of the plate. By then, Heizer had been teaching at the U.C. Berkeley for 30 years wrongly expounding on the plate. Until now, no one has ever questioned the inconsistencies in Heizer's writings, or Kroeber's for that matter, for their assumptions designating Drakes Bay<sup>22</sup> as the site of Drakes landing while Heizer had previously given credit to George

Davidson for identifying Drakes Estero as the landing site<sup>23</sup> and after Heizer and others had excavated the 16 Indian sites along the Point Reyes, Drakes Bay, Drake's Cove and Drakes Estero founding nothing to indicate Drake's visit, Heizer finally settled on: "Drake probably landed in what is now known as San Francisco Bay."<sup>24</sup>

In 1948 the brass plate was displayed throughout the state on the Historical Caravan tour as a feature of the California Centennial celebration. Since then, a great deal of the "proof" to verify Drake's California landing site has been provided by the amateur historian group known as the Drake Navigators Guild. Since the misguided founding of the Drake Navigators Guild in 1949 by two former WW II naval officers, Matthew P. Dillingham and academy graduate F. Richard Brace in which they: "*set a goal to find the place where Drake's stone-walled fortification had stood and the Golden Hind had been repaired*". The Drake Navigators Guild has been a vociferous promoter of building stories around a Francis Drake landing in California based on their belief in the plate of brass as an authentic Drake artifact and their belief in: "*George Davidson, 1884 Assistant U.S. Coast and Geodetic Surveyor for all his careful work*".<sup>25</sup>

Although the plate was found along the coastline overlooking the San Francisco Bay, the Guild fought to lay claim to its having first been found two years earlier at Drakes Bay and then by some unknown turn of events, lost and then found again inside San Francisco Bay overlooking San Quentin under a small rubble of rocks.

One of the Guild's first accomplishments or mis-accomplishments in commemoration of this historic event, with the plate providing the proof

In an attempt to justify his placing Drakes Bay on the map, George Davidson compared the land along the Pacific coast at 38 degree north latitude with the 1589 map *Vera Totius Expeditionis Navticæ* by the Dutch cartographer, Jodocus Hondius. A map Drake is known to have been involved either by providing a drawing or by describing to Hondius the bay Portus Novae Albionis in which he landed in the summer of 1579.



Broadside of Portus Novae Albionis

As the 1850 U.S. Geological surveyor, Davidson is now known to have had preconceived notions and a verifiable political bias (**Gitzen, 2012**) in naming a Drake site to make it fit around the bordering, by-chance, inlets of Point Reyes, California which encompasses Drakes Bay, Drakes Cove and Drakes Estero by saying; "With reference to Portus Novae Albionis in the margin of the Hondius' map; and to this map I have reduced the Coast Survey chart of the vicinity of Drake's Bay to correspond in scale and in orientation, whereby I have identified his bay." (Davidson, 1887) Additionally, until his death in 1911, Davidson discounted that Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeno had crashed his galleon *San Agustin* at Point Reyes in 1595 because The first extended written notice of the Cermeno expedition was published in 1920 by Professor Charles E. Chapman of the University of California in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. Davidson self determined to excluded the Fletcher native descriptions altogether. (Gitzen, 2012)



*Drakes Cove and Drakes Estero* neither fit orientation nor scale because Hondius map has no scale.

to Drake's sojourn in California, was having the governor decree in a 1953 and 1954 a California State Proclamation of a *Francis Drake Day*. The proclamation that Drake discovered California said:

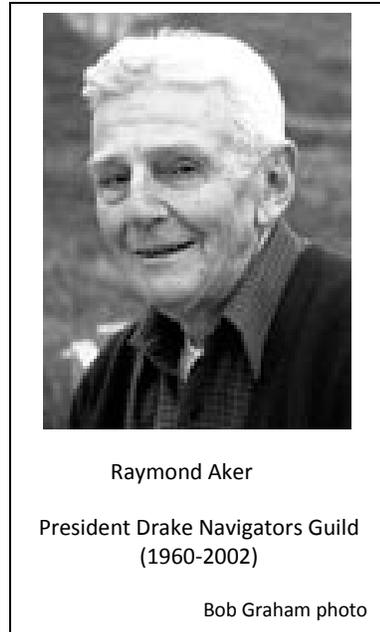
*"Today this plate is a prized relic of our historic past, preserved at our University of California. Authentic reproductions have been presented to her majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, displaying a standing which exist between our Nations. The **California Drake Navigators Guild** has undertaken to conduct research and educational programs based upon this chapter of our State's colorful and picturesque past. This group has already achieved outstanding results and continues to work to bring about a fuller understanding of our marvelous history. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 9<sup>th</sup> day of June, A.D., One Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty-four."* Signed Goodwin J. Knight, Governor of California. Affixed to this Proclamation was the Great Seal of California to "proclaim June 17, 1953, as DRAKE'S DAY in California."<sup>26</sup>

The Guild took issue with anyone who voiced a competing theory not agreeable with theirs, amateur or professional such as Dr. Adan E. Treganza, Director of the Anthropology Museum of San Francisco State University, whose 1960 opinion disputed the Guild's claim of the plate being found at Drakes Bay. The Guild's published response, *A Review of the findings of Dr. Adan E. Treganza Relative to the Site of Drake's Landing in California*, disputed Dr. Treganza's statement that it was no longer accepted that the Drake plate was ever found at Drakes Bay. The Guild passionately argued that: *"Dr. Treganza's statement is a broad generalization and should be considered with caution. Largely those persons who disclaim the original discovery at Drake's Bay are proponents for Drake's landing on San Francisco Bay."* In other words, if you don't agree with us, you're wrong because you believe in a different site. The Guild boasted; "Why is it no longer accepted, when ostensibly amongst those who have accepted the originally discovery at Drakes Bay is Dr. R. F. Heizer. This Plate was originally found at the Laguna Ranch on Drake's Bay in 1934, moved elsewhere, and was rediscovered in 1936. The important point, and all that can probably now, or forevermore, be said, is that it is possible that the Plate of Brass was earlier found at Drakes Bay and that as long as this possibility exists, it must not be ignored."<sup>27</sup> Here again is one of the many times over the years where the self-important Guild constructed their hypotheses with obfuscation or doublespeak to proclaim their Drakes Bay landing story.

In their early years, the Drake Navigators Guild grew quickly; the honorary chairman, active counselor and spokesman was Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, RN commander-in-chief of U.S. naval forces in the Pacific during World War II, who simply believed the Guild's naval member's chosen sites were true. Unfortunately, the admiral could not have been aware at the time of his membership, that the plate of brass was a hoax or of Davidson's politically motivated and biased research. Although some of the others who followed may have known or suspected the plate being a fake, such as the Navigator Guild's first president, Robert D. Marshal, the owner of the property bordering Drakes Bay; or the Guild's Executive Secretary Captain Adolph S. Oko who was told in 1954 that the plate was manufactured by an active person with the California Historical Society and

prominent museum director. Guild President (2003 - ) Edward Von der Porten's report "Who Made Drake's Plate of Brass" states that Guild President Oko believed the plate genuine, so he rejected the story told to him by an Clamper (E Clampus Vitus) historian Al Shumate who had heard the story from fellow Clamper Lorenz Noll (Clampers are a fraternal organization dedicated to the study and preservation of California heritage).<sup>28</sup> Why Oko or any of the other Guild members failed to follow-up on the Lorenzo Noll story until 2000 is unanswered.

Guild President, Raymond Aker, a master mariner who studied sixteenth century ships, seamanship, navigation, cartography and hydrographs is credited with being the leading Drake-in-California proponent and architect of the Drake landing site theories along with Robert W. Allen, Guild secretary (1968-1980) continued to propagating their anecdote of a California Drake landing site against the other competing California bay tales. With a fake plate in hand, along with their selective manipulating of the facts i.e. "white" cliffs and "fully-feathered" baskets, to name two of their favorites, the Guild and a few other Drake enthusiasts continued full speed ahead into stealing Oregon's history for their own..<sup>29</sup>



Raymond Aker

President Drake Navigators Guild  
(1960-2002)

Bob Graham photo

As a group of amateur historians, made up of mostly sailing enthusiasts, the Guild was certainly aware of the 1595 shipwreck of Rodriguez Cermeno's Spanish galleon *San Agustin* at Point Reyes, California and its wreckage having been found at all of the known archaeological sites of the Point Reyes area. The selective picking and choosing of which artifacts were Cermeno's and those they imagined as being Drake's, only fed the fever to fit Drake's landing at one of Point Reyes' little coves along Drakes Bay which is not a bay at all but a gentle crescent shoreline extending for miles; offering little shelter enough to be called a bay. Perhaps it did or didn't occur to the Guild members how unlikely it would be for two sixteenth century ships to be in the same place, in the as yet undiscovered world, in a short sixteen year time span. One was hypothesized to have landed (Drake) while the other (Cermeno) crashed into the continent.

Neither were questions proposed or answered, except by doublespeak of twisting of the factual record as to why there were so many differences between Drake's *Nova Albion* (New England)<sup>30</sup> and Cermeno's Point Reyes geographical and ethnographic Indian descriptions. They never questioned why the natives described by Fletcher and those described by Cermeno were so very different in housing, food and demeanor. After all, Heizer, the authoritarian on California Indians was held in the highest regard by the Guild to support its ethnographic tale until even Heizer eventually fell out of favor with the Guild in 1974 when, still believing the plate authentic, he wrote; "Twenty-seven years ago, having then accepted the now debunked report that [the plate was] earlier found at Drakes Bay. I thought the chief contenders were Bodega and Drakes Bay."<sup>31</sup> I would now rewrite what I then wrote

and say, In June, 1579 then, Drake probably landed in what is now known as San Francisco Bay.”<sup>32</sup> Even now, the Guild promoters pick and choose to use Heizer’s earlier site of Drakes Bay to try and rectify their naive descriptions.<sup>33</sup> At that time he was advocating Drakes Bay in 1947 and then changing to San Francisco Bay in 1974, Heizer was totally convinced that the plate was authentic. Yet the Guild chooses to ignore his ill-advised belief for considering either of them or any bay for that matter.

Fletcher’s *World Encompassed* described the Indians Drake met as wearing furs in the cold summer of June and July while Cermeno’s were naked in November. Fletcher described the raw food as Pet’ah [wapato] being pleasant to taste while Cermeno said the raw acorns they got from the Indians were bitter; Fletcher described Indians as friendly, Cermeno’s were hostile; Fletcher described houses as sub-terrain and round with the entrance at the top, Cermeno said they were like caves entered from the front; Fletcher said the Islands of St. James, now known as Three Arch Rocks National Marine Reserve, where they landed ‘not far’ after they had departed Nehalem Bay as having many seals and birds to last them for a while, while Cermeno described the Farallon Islands off the California coast as barren and even though his men were starving and in need of food, chose to by-passed them on their open boat voyage to Acapulco. Nor did Cermeno see any sign of the Indians ever having had any previous contact with Europeans. The astute historian would ask why have all these discrepancies between the descriptions of the natives, just sixteen years between those met by Drake and those by Cermeno never been addressed by any of the California theorists?

The California theorists twist the reason for Drake naming the lands Nova Albion for the “white cliffs” of Point Reyes which reminded him of England while Fletcher never used the word “white” in his description. Fletcher’s reference was to “cliffs and white banks” of sand.<sup>34</sup>

The California enthusiasts twisted descriptions offer up “fully feathered baskets”, constructed by Pomo artist William Benson in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as their unequivocal proof to the Pomo and/or Miwok Indians met during Drake’s sojourn while Fletcher never mentioned anything concerning “fully feathered baskets”. How Fletcher did describe the native baskets was: “They (baskets) were fashioned in deep bowl, that the most part would hold water... they were wrought upon with the matted down of red feathers, into diverse works and forms.” In other words they had designs woven into the basket capable of holding water for cooking.

Benson’s artistic fully feathered baskets are meant for display and do not hold water. The same Benson baskets were used as examples of fully feathered baskets by Heizer. (Heizer, 1947, 297 and 1974, plate 2)



FIGURE 7. William Ralganal Benson, circa 1936. Courtesy Phoebe Apperson Hearne Museum of Anthropology and the Regener of the University of California.

Pomo artist, William Ralganal Benson, circa 1936

Some of the answer to the Guild enthusiasts' omissions and concocted stories may lie in the sentiment given by Guild members Aker and Von der Porten in their *Discovering Francis Drake's California Harbor*, published by Drake Navigators Guild 2000, in describing the Guild's amateur committee's research as being looked at from the water: *"The seaman's point of view was always there, testing each idea and each proposed solution against realities of seagoing experience."* The sentimental Guilders go on to say; *"What Drake had seen, the Guild sought to see; what Drake had found, the Guild sought to find – from the sea, for the sea has not changed nor the perception of it."*

<sup>35</sup> Francis Fletcher's chronology of the Drake voyage never described nor mentioned anything pertaining to how the bay looked from the sea; only that they were lucky to get in. While all along the Guild was literally sailing back and forth, in and around Point Reyes and along Drakes Bay, they never chanced to sail over the breakers to enter their favored Drake's Cove (as named by the Guild) or Drakes Estero. Each are fictitious Drake landing sites, nevertheless the Guild theorists continued building their glass slipper tale and then shoe-horn their ideas into their favorite California landing area. Their actions could hardly be described as scientific research with an unbiased view. Yet many people have blindly embraced the Guild's erroneous air of authority and taken their tales for face value, unaware of the primary sources of new historical information which has come to light in the last 40 years.

From the 1950's through the 1970's with a firm belief in the plate's authenticity, the Guild continued to be the principal group for weekend sailing fun, exhorting their California landing site. They expanded the membership with prestigious additions of Robert W. Allen, naturalist and educator of flora and fauna and Clarence Shangraw curator of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Shangraw enlisted a Santa Rosa Junior College crew to excavate the Native American village site at Drakes Bay and, as one would expect, they were without success in finding any Drake artifacts. Few of new members possessed the knowledge of the voyage; blindly following the false historical data gathered by the earlier Guild members that snowballed into layer-upon-layer of a fake historical story presented as if factual. New and impartial sources of historical information were overlooked or ignored completely, allowing the Guild members to frame the writing of history as they imagined it; a Drake plate of brass to confirm a landing in California and then weaving their favorite Point Reyes, Drakes Bay, Drake's Cove and Drakes Estero site into a tidy tale.

Another of the many points the Guild has never been able to refute is the bountiful Pacific Northwest great runs of salmon during summer months which the Point Reyes seashore does not have. The Pacific Northwest and Nehalem Bay Indians were known for the spearing salmon, a staple of their diet which Fletcher describes here when he says on page 78: "One thing we observed in them with admiration: that if at any time, they chanced to see a fish, so near the shore, that they might reach the place without swimming, they would never, or very seldom miss to take it." He's describing the Indians stepping from rock to rock along the bay, river and creek banks to reach an area where they could spear the salmon in June and July; the months of Drake's sojourn. Drake's Cove, Drakes Bay and Drakes Estero do not have runs of salmon because the water system does not support such a fishery while the Nehalem Bay and its tributaries do have such a water system to support great runs of salmon. It would not have been feasible for the California

Miwok/Pomo Indians to stand anywhere along these hypothesized California seashore sites to spear fish, let alone great runs of salmon, without swimming as Fletcher described.

Prior to the 1979 supplementary Bancroft reexamination report being released to once again confirm conclusive proof that the plate was fake, the Guild entertained many visitors to add a mystique of a Drake landing. They included Sir Alex Cumming, curator of Buckland Abbey, Drake's home near Plymouth; Dr. John A. Pope, Director of the Smithsonian Institution's Freer Gallery of Oriental Art and anthropologist Dr. Michael J. Moratto of San Francisco State University. The *National Geographic* sailed with Guild member Captain Alan Villiers as he described the white cliffs and various other imaginary Drake landmarks. At one time or another the guest list included Frank G. Carr, director of Britain's National Maritime Museum and R. A. Skelton, the British museum's senior map scholar, along with Dr. A.L Rowse, an Elizabethan scholar. Honorary Guild members included Admiral of the Fleet Lord Louis Mountbatten of Burma, RN and William Edward Kenelm, the Earl of Mount Edgumbe.<sup>36</sup> Though all of the above mentioned possessed an impressive patina of credentials and honors, none of them could have been considered historical scholars of Drake's Pacific coast landing site.

Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison, dean of American maritime historians, toured the Point Reyes area with Guild members, although he was in total disagreement with the Guild's findings. In a 1975 letter from Admiral Morison to Raymond Aker, Guild President and Sir Francis Drake Commissioner, the Admiral expressed his opinion that the plate was "an old metal upon which the faker had worked and the real test is the forms of the letters, unknown in England at the time." Nevertheless the Drake Navigators Guild continued selling replicas of the plate. In a letter dated September 7, 1977, after the Bancroft report announcing the plate a fake, Aker wryly says; "Offering some 'Plate of Brass' replicas that the Guild has had for sale might not be very popular now!"<sup>37</sup>

The first public crack into the plate's authenticity was a reported by Herbert Hamlin, Editor of a monthly historical newsletter titled *The Pony Express*. Hamlin reported; "If the plate is a fake, whoever made it, was quite familiar with the language, and printing of the times. He, or they, would have to be. *The Pony Express* has in its files testimony as to whom it was – a most 'clever fellow' who died over 10 years ago."<sup>38</sup>

Hamlin had previously written a confidential letter from



George H. Barron - History curator at the de Young Museum until 1934.

Identified as being the instigator of the fake plate of brass by the Clampers (E Clampus Vitus), a fraternal organization dedicated to the study and preservation of California heritage. Although the notification was printed in the 1954 California Historical Society Quarterly, it was ignored by historians.

California Historical Society photo

his office on May 19, 1954 to Henry Wagner, eminent Californian Drake historian, informing him of the signed testimony he had secured from Lorenz Noll, a San Francisco art dealer concerning who had made the plate.<sup>39</sup>

The following testimonial was given by Lorenz Noll to Herbert Hamlin of *The Pony Express* dated May 13, 1954 concerning a conversation he had with George Clark in the fall of 1936.

*“Dear Mr. Hamlin:*

*Several times I have talked to you about this so-called Drake Plate being a phony, but I never have told you very much about the man that made it, George Clark. He made it for George H. Barron, who was the curator of the de Young Museum of Oakland, California.*

*Clark was a genius and an inventor and at one time when he was young had worked in the Edison laboratories. He held patents on parts of the electric typewriter and sold the patent rights to an eastern firm, about 25 years ago. Edwin Fricke, new in the area [Oakland] knew Clark very well. I also knew him and he was capable of making just about anything he set his mind about to do.*

*Both Clark and Barron were very close friends. They used to drink and have parties where Clark lived, across from Joaquin Miller’s home, about a quarter mile down the road. Clark was also a friend of Gertrude Boyle, famous sculptor, who married a Japanese sculptor named Kanno. They both worked with bronze. She made a wonderful life-size statue of Miller that was in Grace Fountain studio. Grace’s studio was across the street from Miller’s home, about three blocks above. Grace and Joaquin used to go on painting trips together to Oregon. She was noted mountain painter.*

*The reason I mention above characters is because they were all friendly and were present at Clark’s home on many occasions. I might mention that William Keith, Charlie Rolla Peters, Will Sparks, R. D. Yelland, M. Valencia, Harry Casset Best, A. W. Best, brother, and sister Alice Best, and Henry Brewer, Thad Welch, etc. were at Grace Fountain’s studio. It was a pretentious affair, and in*



George C. Clark, circa 1935

*George C. Clark was born in Chicago in 1874 and moved to San Francisco in 1904.*

*Clark had a few patents filed with the US Patent office Serial No. 205,253 for a surface Dressing Machine, patented Nov. 19, 1918 and Serial No. 245,724 for a Centrifugal Casting Box, patented Apr. 8, 1919 registered to George C. Clark of Detroit, Michigan, assignor to George C. Clark Metal Last Co., of Mishawaka, Indiana, A Corporation of Indiana.*

[www.bill01a.com/articles/gc%20clark.htm](http://www.bill01a.com/articles/gc%20clark.htm)

*the center stood, Gertrude Boyle's bronze of Joaquin Miller. As they were all artists, painters, and sculptors and had much in common, they fraternized, and gathered at Clark's home for drinks, after an afternoon at Grace's studio. George Barron knew most all of them, and being curator of de Young Museum he was well accepted among the superb gathering of Bohemians.*

*George Clark was a critic on rare 16th, 17th, and 18<sup>th</sup> century paintings. Barron used to use Clark as an appraiser on rare paintings. They became life-long friends after. I used to go to Clark's home, which was above Piedmont, near Joaquin Miller Park, to sell him paintings. For about 20 years I called on him. Through this acquaintance and eventual friendship, is the reason why I was told the story of their implication in the Drake Plate, why they made it, and why they used it as a plant to fool Bolton whom they knew would eventually pass on it.*

*George Barron did not like Bolton. In fact he hated him, probably because Dr. Bolton wanted to get him fired as curator of the Museum, because he drank once in a while. Barron was quite a speaker, made many public addresses, and was highly educated. But he had a failing of drinking once in a while, usually when at Clark's place and Fountain's place both.*

*Barron was the grammarian, and Clark was the designer, and modeler of the plate. On the plate Barron formed the type and wording, which was used in those days. Barron got some brass from relics of an old Spanish Galleon which he had at the museum that came from Europe. Clark said they had to be careful to get the right type of brass, nothing later than that made in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or days of the Golden Hind. \* Clark made the model in his home. The brass was brought over, according to the story that he told me. It was brought over by Barron from the museum. They took the brass, and the model to a ship's chandlery. Here an old Chandler who had tools for punching in brass followed the lettering on the model. They dipped the plate in acid several times after, rubbing it off each time, so it would show wear, and have a genuine appearance. "Now I'll get even with that fellow," Barron said, and took it over and planted it near the Marin shore, on the San Quentin side, near Corte Madera Creek.<sup>40</sup>*

\* It appears that Barron had falsely led Clark into believing the brass was from the 16<sup>th</sup> century which was proven later to be manufactured in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In March 1957 there was a mention of the Clark–Barron forgery in the California Historical Quarterly in this way: "Before leaving the subject of the Plate it should be mentioned that there are those who claim to know that it is a forgery. One story has it that a man named Clark and the late George Barron, one-time curator of the de Young Museum, conspired to produce a forgery and that the plate in question is it. To assert that a forgery has been made is one thing; to identify it with a known object is quite another. No such identification has been made, and this story, like a number of others, fails to qualify as evidence."<sup>41</sup>

And so the forgery continued to be dismissed and gained momentum as the cornerstone to a Drake landing in California until 1976. Although questions had been raised to the authenticity of the plate since its discovery, James Hart, an appointed member of the Sir Francis Drake

Commission, and Director of the Bancroft Library (owners of the "Plate of Brass"), with the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Drake's landing approaching deemed it his responsibility to prove or disprove the plate's authenticity once and for all and so he requested MIT metallurgist Cyril Stanley Smith to examine the plate. Smith's April 27, 1976 report to Hart, originally marked "CONFIDENTIAL" described the plate as a 20<sup>th</sup> century manufacture, began the unraveling of the hoax.<sup>42</sup> The report was subsequently made public 14 months later in July of 1977 "that the Plate of Brass was a forgery. Ironically, once report titled *The Plate of Brass Reexamined 1977, A Report Issued by The Bancroft Library* was released, the California theorists were silent on the subject, as if they had never based their Drake landing site tales on its authenticity.

The Hart report said: "The most recent, although by no means the most precise, public challenge to it was that made by Samuel Eliot Morison. His conclusion was a firm: Drake's 'Plate of Brass' is as successful a hoax as the Piltdown Man or the Kensington Rune Stone."<sup>43</sup>

The 1977 report knowing there would be dissenters of the report's findings concluded with; "Doubtless at later dates other inquires and further commentary will be forthcoming." In other words, there will still be some who disagree with the original report's findings of a fake. In deed there were those who disagreed with the report, prompting Hart to have additional tests conducted. In 1979, under the auspices of the Bancroft Library, he released the second report titled *The Plate of Brass Reexamined, A Supplement* which was issued as an impartial investigation. The first test of the 1979 reexamination was an X-Ray diffraction and the second being the chemical characteristics of medieval brasses. In summary, the X-Ray diffraction investigation at the Photography Laboratory of Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory by Professors Earl R. Parker, Robert H. Bragg and Paul H. Adler concluded; "That it may be drawn from this work's reexamination is that the results provide convincing evidence that the Drake Plate was produced by a modern rolling process rather than having been made by hammering shape." The chemical characteristics of two medieval brasses of known origin and age were analyzed by neutron activation analysis (NAA), x-ray fluorescence (XRF) and emission spectroscopy (ES) concluded with: "The impurity of additive levels for the 14<sup>th</sup> century French/Spanish and the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century Italian brasses are on the average about 200 times higher than the Plate of Brass" which means the Drake Plate is of "the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries."<sup>44</sup>

The report cited many critical red-flag views, one from as far back as 1937 by Dr. Vincent T. Harlow, then Keeper of the Rhodes House Library at Oxford in which he said: "It is inconceivable that Drake could not have produced a more imposing piece of brass—he had an orchestra on board as well as brass guns and fittings and a cargo of Spanish plunder and they could not find among his ship's company - a black smith was on board -someone capable of producing a better effort than this clumsy botch."

Once the report was issued that the plate was indeed a fake, James Hart began to follow-up on the testimonial located in the Bancroft Archives concerning the Clark & Barron story told by Lorenz Noll. On August 10, 1977 he was able to locate Dolores Scoble, the daughter of George Haviland Barron who was living in Monte Rio, Sonoma County, California just north of Marin County.

The written account of an August 10, 1977 phone conversation between James Hart and Barron's daughter; then marked as CONFIDENTIAL says: "Mrs. Barron-Scoble recalls walking in on a conversation her father was having with one of his acquaintances whom she had seen several times before but whom she did not characterize as a friend of Mr. Barron. She is certain that the date was 1919 or 1920 since she also insists," despite Hart's repeated questioning, "that this conversation occurred when she and her family were living in the Fruitvale area of Oakland. She insisted that it occurred about a decade before she was married in 1930. She does not recall how old the man was but she says that he was younger than her father who was about 45 at the time. She believes the prankster, the man whom her father was talking, hoped that the Plate would be found pretty quickly. She said her father laughed about the joke at the time that the Plate was found 16 or 17 years later but that he never to her knowledge spoke of the persons responsible for it. Nevertheless, he evidently spoke of it enough to be identified with it to some degree In addition, Mrs. Scoble told Hart that her father died in 1942 and a lot of his papers were destroyed by her mother, but she has no impression that there were any papers concerning the Plate. She has never seen anything on the subject among his effects." <sup>45</sup>

James Hart and Mrs. Harry Scoble met in his office at the Bancroft Library on August 24, 1977 concerning her recollections of the time when she accompanied her father, George Haviland Barron, on a visit that turned out to involve discussions of a fraudulent plate of brass. "She was positive that it could have occurred only during the year that her family lived in the Fruitvale section of Oakland, California which was in 1918."<sup>46</sup> Barron had been fired from the de Young Museum in 1917 and rehired in 1923. "She thought that the visit occurred in the summer of the year she was then 13 years old and accompanied her mother and father to a house in Berkeley that she believed to have been in the hills but not necessarily close to the University campus. It was the home of a man, aged perhaps 45 years old, who taught history, but not at the University. There, this gentleman whose name she couldn't recall, took her father and another man, a newspaper reporter, Mrs. Scoble recalled, having some conversation in a workshop or garage area. Mrs. Scoble was 13 years old left to entertain herself with the two younger children, aged three or four, of the gentleman whose house she had visited. She didn't find this very appealing so she wandered away from the youngsters and joined her father and the two other men who perhaps didn't even know that she was present. The three men were laughing over a joke which she discovered pertained to a plate, presumably of brass, that had been concocted that dealt with the landing of Drake in California and his taking of that land for the Queen. She recalled her father reading a text and laughing about it a good deal. She could not remember whether he was reading from a plate of brass or from a piece of paper. She thought she may have seen a plate of brass but could not recall. She later occasioned in the day to tell her mother who thought that what was being done was wrong. However, she did remember hearing her father say in the company of the two men; This [plate] would never convince anybody and that people would detect that this was not an honest effort and was ridiculous."

Hart knew from other sources that Barron had occasion to laugh about the plate at later dates and times and to say that he knew it to be a fake. Mrs. Scoble, however: "Never had occasion to

talk to her mother or father about it again and by the time it was discovered in 1936 she was married and living elsewhere where the subject was never brought again up with her father.” Nevertheless, her father was sufficiently identified with having called the plate fraudulent that even in the 1950’s, well after Barron’s death (Barron died June 24, 1942) when the subject arose again in the newspapers, on the twentieth anniversary of the discovery a reporter from the San Francisco Examiner contacted Mrs. Scoble and asked what she knew about the plate for the reporter had sufficient reason to ask Mrs. Scoble about Barron’s joking concerning the plate’s origination. Hart indicated that; “Mrs. Scoble’s recollection was the total of her knowledge which is more than she had ever previously had occasion to put together in a sequential fashion to tell anybody else.”

When Hart asked Mrs. Scoble, who was sitting beside him, if this was a good account of what she could remember, her response in August 1977 was; “It’s pretty good and I think is all right.”

The following day on August 25<sup>th</sup> 1977 Hart received another confidential phone call at his office from a Mrs. Gordon White of Walnut Creek, California who had been reading newspaper stories on the recent reexamination of the Plate of Brass. She told Hart that her two uncles, Raynesford “Ray” Taylor and his brother Will Taylor, both knew that the Plate of Brass was a fake and they knew who made it. Ray Taylor was a political reporter for the San Francisco Examiner and Will Taylor was a neighbor in the Fruitvale area of Oakland and a close friend of George Clark, a very prominent electrician or electrical contractor who was known for having done all the wiring in the Oakland Auditorium built in 1914 [renamed to the Kaiser Convention Center in 1984]. Ray Taylor knew Clark through his brother Will. Will and Clark used to go on hikes in Marin County and elsewhere. So did Clark’s good friend, George de Haviland Barron. Mrs. White said she did not know Clark or Barron but her uncle described them as pranksters.

According to Mrs. White, Clark and Barron concocted the idea of making a plate of brass and did so in Clark’s workshop. Mrs. Clark told Will Taylor of the making of the plate in Clark’s home machine shop. She also said that Barron brought some objects from San Francisco to help in giving authenticity in the fabrication of the plate. She did not think he brought a book to suggest the text, but some artifact to suggest how the plate should be created or how it should appear. Will Taylor in turn told his brother Ray of all this and Mrs. White learned of it from her uncle.

Mrs. White indicated, but did not flatly state, that the creation of the plate was to be a kind of friendly joke, presumably on Bolton. Hart presumed correctly that perhaps Barron, a student of California history and the creator of the California Pioneers gallery at the de Young, knew Bolton.

Hart was told by White that her Uncle Ray Taylor, knowing the plate to be fake, attempted to tell somebody at the University of California, possibly Bolton, but Mrs. White thinks it was some different name and she believes it began with “H”, possibly Herbert Bolton, and that the man was either in the Department of History, as Bolton was, or the School of Law. But the person to whom Taylor communicated this information directly after the discovery would not put any credence in Ray Taylor’s contentions.

White thinks the only person living, in 1977, who might have known about this matter firsthand was the married daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Clark who was in her twenties at the time the plate was found and who then knew of its fabrication. When Ray Taylor attempted to interview her but she refused to talk to him. Although White has no idea of the daughter's married name, Hart believed it might have been possible to discover it through an obituary for George Clark, since he was a prominent figure in Oakland. White could not suggest when he died, but she said that he was in his 60's in 1936 when the plate was found.<sup>47</sup>

On September 22, 1977 Mrs. Erma Culin-White went to the Bancroft Library where Peter Hanff and James Hart spoke with her for about an hour concerning her story about the fabrication of the plate of brass. White reiterated everything that she had told Hart previously on August 25<sup>th</sup> which Hart had documented four days later in a Memorandum on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August. A major point that White repeated was that Ray Taylor definitely wrote out the text about the falsity of the Plate and tried to have it accepted by somebody at the University which was "high-up in the Library or an important professor" to persuade that person not to make announcements about the authenticity of the Plate. She was absolutely certain that Taylor's written message was delivered in 1936.

Hart came up empty from a search of Bolton's files looking for such a letter and intended to search the files of Eleanor Bancroft. A search for a Taylor article which might have ran in the Examiner was also initiated. The results of Hart's further investigations are unknown and nothing further has turned up to date.

White said she frequently went for hikes with her Uncle Will Taylor, a dentist who practiced in Oakland and later in Berkeley, in the Fruitvale area of Oakland. She did not mention going on any hikes with him in Marin County, but she said that he and George Clark did hike in Marin County near San Quentin where the plate was found by Shinn.

She described George Clark as tall and athletic looking with light hair. She thought he might have been in his 50's in 1936. However; she admitted that as a young woman in 1936 she was not very good at or much interested in estimating ages of older men. She said he liked to play practical jokes and had wired his house so that doors opened and shut by his remote control. This gave that effect of a haunted house which she remembers him showing great enjoyment. She said that the house was located in Fruitvale off Hopkins Street and that Mrs. Clark was active in the Christian Science Church of the area.

White commonly called Barron, 'The Baron', whom she thought was about the same age as George Clark. She described Barron as being German, tall and heavy-set. However, she indicated he was amply athletic to go hiking.

One of the most telling items to the hoax came in a phone conversation Erma Culin-White had with Hart on June 20, 1979. White mentioned having conversations about the plate with Marcy Kates of the *Berkeley Gazette* which she had refused to give any further information. This caused White to remember something she then told Hart that there had been a conversation between

Mrs. Clark and Mr. Clark, relayed to her by her Uncle Raynesford, in which Mrs. Clark berated him for having created a forgery and he answered by saying that it was only a practical joke and that anybody would discern it as a forgery immediately because he had ensured that the plate would be recognized as a facsimile since he had actually signed it.

This led Hart to examine the plate and mysterious letters to the left and slightly above the name of Francis Drake that Robert Power had long interpreted as a “C” containing a smaller “G” standing for Captain General; whereas these letters were indeed the initials of George Clark.<sup>48</sup>

After Hart had spoken with Warren Hanna, a Sir Francis Drake Commissioner member (1973-1980) and author of the 459 - page *Lost Harbor: The Controversy over Drake's California Anchorage*, Hanna made a number of significant points in a confidential Bancroft Library memo to James Hart which pointed to a fake plate. According to Warren Hanna's *Internal Evidence of Forgery* memo of June 26, 1979 he said:

1. The suspicious position of the letters, i.e., an undue distance from the words “Francis Drake”, almost though unrelated to them; also misaligned horizontally, as though merely an afterthought. Mirroring much what had been said in 1936 that it was a poorly crafted plaque for Drake to have made.
2. The mysterious positioning of the G inside the C finds no rational explanation from a Drake standpoint, nor does the linkage between them.
3. The early accounts do not refer to Drake as Captain General; it was either Captain or General but not both in the same salutation. There is neither any evidence to support the use of Captain General in reference to Drake, nor of such an abbreviation for it.



George Clarks' "GC" to the left of Francis Drake.

And finally,  
the most

damaging to the plate's authenticity is the inexplicably scribed use of Nova Albion on the plate. According to *The World Encompassed* based on Francis Fletcher's original manuscript, Drake named the country “Albion”. The Nova Albion was first used, after Drake returned, by Hakluyt in his account of the *Famous Voyage* and the name stuck according to Hanna. Hanna contended that this was a fact of which a forger would not have been aware, he would have used the Hakluytized version of the name and that there is no other way to reconcile the variation between the two early accounts. The true plate would have read Albion, not Nova Albion, and the use of the latter represents a dead giveaway of this lack of knowledge on the part of the plate-maker.<sup>48</sup>

It was, however, actually first recorded Nova Albion on the Nicola van Sype map of 1581, a year after Drake's return. The map's inscription beneath the Drake medallion portrait reads: "Map seen and corrected by the aforesaid Sir Drake."

### **George H. Barron's Shady Past**

George Haviland Barron (1869-1942) is a somewhat mysterious man. Little history of his life remains for his personal papers appear to have been destroyed upon his death. The de Young Museum, where he worked a total of 18 years, so far has been unable to locate his photo or his life-size bronze bust made by Natalie Wolf and dedicated on January 18, 1913 by the Pioneer Mothers and Daughters of California as reported in a January 9, 1913 San Francisco Call article "Life Sized Bust By Local Artist". The California Historical Society Quarterly obituary of Barron contained some conflicting points such as: Rita Arguello, Mr. Barron's first wife, was the granddaughter of Don Luis Antonio Arguello, commandant of the Presidio of San Francisco and first native governor of Alta California from 1822 to 1825. Following her death, Barron was married on February 3, 1904 to Florence Yates Davis, daughter of Thomas Davis, a pioneer of the Mother Lode country, in the Cathedral at Sacramento.

Barron's past first appeared in the *San Francisco Call* on Thursday, June 13, 1895 with the headline:

*"George Barron Wanted. Rita Arguello Swears Out a Warrant for His Arrest for Felony. The Complainant of the Prominent Santa Clara Capitalist".* The article reads; "George Barron, an accountant of the Monitor, is wanted on a charge of felony embezzlement preferred by Rita Arguello. Judge Joachimsen issued a warrant yesterday, and the police are now looking for the man. According to the complaint, Barron has left for parts unknown with \$330 in gold and a diamond ring belonging to Rita Arguello. Behind the complaint is a story of broken promises and a record of divorce. There is also a deeper money consideration than is set forth in the complaint.

*Rita Arguello is a daughter of Luis A. Arguello, the Santa Clara capitalist, and the divorced wife of M. Noriega. According to the story of "Mrs. Barron," as Miss Arguello is known at the Miramar Hotel, Barron is a base deceiver whom everyone should shun.*

*Barron became acquainted with Mrs. Noriega some years ago and it is said by friends of both parties that it was on his account that Noriega suddenly took his departure one day in the early part of 1893 and never came back. As soon as the statutory time had passed Mrs. Noriega applied for divorce and on May 24, 1894, Judge Hunt issued the decree on the ground of desertion and Mrs. Noriega became Miss Rita Arguello once more. Shortly after the bonds of matrimony had been severed Miss Arguello was introduced as "Mrs. Barron" by the man who had induced her to get the divorce. Everything went on swimmingly. It was understood among their acquaintances that a contract marriage had been entered into. The fact was never recorded, but as Barron frequently introduced her as his wife it was taken for granted such was the case.*

*"I will not say anything about this, case unless my attorney authorizes me." Said Mrs. Arguello-Barron yesterday. "There is a big sensation back of this, but I won't say anything about it until I get in court. That man was the cause of my leaving home when I had everything any one could want. I was my father's favorite, but this is an outcome of being with him (Barron)." A clipping from the Call of June 9 was taken from her pocket-book and held up for inspection. It was a telegram from San Jose stating that gift deeds for valuable property in San Jose had that day been filed whereby James S. Margaret F. and Louisa L. Arguello were presented in consideration of "love and affection" with the property described by their father.*

*"My father has given the other children this property, but I get nothing."*

*"When did Barron leave you?" was asked. "I don't remember. I won't say anything about this case, as I don't want my name in the papers. We were to have gone to San Jose June 4 or 5, and my brother and sister were to meet us there, but he (Barron) went away on May 28 and did not come back. But I won't say anything about the case until he is arrested and in court – then I will talk. He (Barron) has done things no one would think of. If I had a brother who would do as he has done I would never speak to him again.*

*"Were you married by contract?" "My attorney can answer that. He has got to do the right thing by me, now that he has taken advantage of me."*

*From other sources it was learned that her father had been making remittances regularly, and the Barron had been getting the bulk of them. In May she received \$500, and after paying a few bills had \$339 in gold left. Barron suggested that she let him have it for a short time. As she had done so before she gave him the coin, and also loaned him a diamond ring. A few days later she asked Barron for some money, but was put off. The next night he was gone.*

*From the fact that both families are well connected, it is said an effort will be made to compromise by prevailing upon Barron to make amends for his acts in other than a financial way. If he refuses to do so, the criminal charge will be pressed."*

Another report in the *Call* of Wednesday of September 25, 1895 contained:

*"George Barron Arrested on a Warrant Issued in June. George Barron, secretary and bookkeeper for the Irish-American, was arrested yesterday morning on a warrant charging him with felony embezzlement and was immediately released on \$2000 bonds. The warrant was issued by Rita Arguello. Miss Arguello is a member of the wealthy family of that name in Santa Clara Valley. Barron and she were on terms of friendship and she intimated that when the case was heard in court she would tell more than she cared to tell until that time."*

Barron's inconsistent past came to light in the instance of the Barron's obituary when the California Historical Society Quarterly reported he had remarried in Sacramento on February 3, 1904 after his first wife, Rita Arguello's death but according to the *San Francisco Call* on Friday, April 7, 1905 report Rita was still alive. The report said:

*"Barron's' Woes Are At An End – Wife Asks Court to Set Aside Interlocutory Decree Granted Nearly Year Ago – Manifests Displeasure When Judge Orders Him to Pay His Wife \$1000 at Once - Rita A. Barron, a member of the prominent Arguello family, has forgiven her husband, George H. Barron, from whom she procured a divorce a little less than a year ago, and yesterday she signed a petition in the Superior Court asking that the interlocutory decree of divorce granted her be set aside. Her husband, she said, made no answer to the suit and it was upon her testimony and that of Louise Arguello that the decree was granted. She said there is no legal reason why, the decree should not be vacated and she asked that it be done and the relationship between her and George H. Barron re-established. Her prayer was granted by Judge Graham."*

The true story of Barron's marriages of when, where and to whom, may never be unraveled.

### **Why Make a Plate**

It's been said by some historians that Barron had the plate made as a practical joke on Herbert Bolton. Bolton and Barron had careers which touched upon each other during the same time period they were in the San Francisco Bay area. Herbert Bolton had earned his reputation by 1912 where he found important original Spanish documents in the archives of Mexico and by 1936, the year the plate was found, Bolton had been the Director of The Bancroft Library since 1920. In 1910, George Barron was curator of history at the de Young and considered an expert of Spanish papers as well. This appears to have created a professional jealousy between the two of them; or at least on the part of Barron.

The rationale for the Barron's continued deception of the plate being an authentic artifact after it was found in 1936, if we agree with Barron's daughter that the plate was made in about 1920 and then planted near the San Quentin location, may have had its beginning in 1917.

In early 1910, George H. Benson was hired as the history curator at the Golden Gate Park Museum (renamed later the de Young Museum) and on April 5, 1917 Barron was dismissed as the museum curator by the Curtis H. Lindley, President of the Board of Park Commissioners, on charges of "absenting himself while on duty and neglecting the affairs of the museum".<sup>49</sup> However, he was subsequently rehired for the position of history curator five years later on October 8, 1922.<sup>50</sup> It is reasonable to trust the circa 1920 date his daughter said the plate was made because between April 1917 – October 1922 Barron was not connected with the de Young when the fake plate was manufactured.

By the time the plate was found in 1936, Barron had retired from the de Young museum and his daughter said he had expected the plate to be found much earlier and didn't care about the museum or plate any longer. The following year he resigned from the California Historical Society Board of Directors. Barron's daughter said he hated Bolton so much that he never exposed the joke and carried the first-hand account of the plate's manufacture to his death in 1942.

Barron created a fake plate - to deceive. No matter what his reasons, the fake relic until 1977 was used as the center piece in affirming Drake's sojourn in California.

### **1977 Reactions of California Historians**

The Sir Francis Drake Commission, established by the California Legislature Bill 350 (Assembly Bill 252) and signed into law September 17, 1973 by Governor Ronald Regan, came into being to promote the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Francis Drake's sojourn in California for each of the years from 1975 through 1980 highlighting the circumnavigation (1577-1580). The 24 members of the Commission were appointed by the California State Assembly (6), Speaker of the House (6) and Governor (12). The text of the California legislation establishing the Sir Francis Drake Commission was written primarily by the Drake Navigator Guild's Dr. Benjamin P. Draper and Guild President Raymond Aker. Both would eventually become influential members of the Commission.

The Commission's 1975 celebration event was the visit by the *Golden Hinde II* to San Francisco Bay. During that year the ¾ replica of Francis Drake's ship was seen in person by about 250,000 spectators and by many more on television. The arrival of the *Golden Hinde II* in San Francisco and the subsequent images broadcast over television added to the impression that Drake actually landed in California. Commissioners were also instrumental in having special postage stamps, postcards and commemorative medallions issued in various places of the British Commonwealth memorializing his supposed California sojourn.

Because of the debate and controversy around Drake's precise landing site, the enabling legislative statute forbade the Sir Francis Drake Commission from designating a specific location; nevertheless, its members did place bronze plaques commemorating the event at the Golden Gate Bridge Vista Point in Marin County, at Drakes Bay in Marin County, at the base of Drake's statue in Plymouth, England<sup>51</sup> and surprisingly two erroneous plaques in Oregon evoking a Drake landing in California.<sup>52</sup>

When informed of the hoax, Dr. Norman Thrower, President of the Sir Francis Drake Commission, responded to Dr. James D. Hart, Director, the Bancroft Library, on September 15, 1977 with a dismissive, "Thank you for sending me a copy of the report on the results of the recent tests on the "Plate of Brass". This reached me in Plymouth during the recent Commission tour of the city. Personally the report came as no surprise; I was never a believer in the Plate of Brass. Fortunately the Sir Francis Drake Commission does not concern itself with such matters for as I read the enabling legislation we are charged only to make a fitting celebration of Drake's circumnavigation. We did this in a most remarkable way in London and Plymouth. Again, thank you for favoring me with a copy of the report. Best regards, Norman J.W. Thrower."<sup>53</sup>

Although the brass plate was in integral part of the “proof” that Drake landed in Marin County, California, neither Thrower, nor any of the other twenty-three Commissioners brought up the subject of a fake plate during any of the Commission’s agendas, minutes or correspondence throughout their time in promoting Drake’s sojourn in California. Commissioners Robert Power believed Drake landed in San Francisco Bay, Dr. Aubrey Neasham voted for Bolinas Bay, and Raymond Aker of the Drake Navigators Guild placed his bet on the Point Reyes area which encompassed the Drakes Bay, Drakes Cove, Drakes Estero areas. Once it became irrevocably proven to be a fake, it’s as if the plate never existed being an integral part of the story to Drake being in California’s history. It’s as if the 1953 and 1954 Governor Goodwin J. Knight’s proclamations declaring “Drake claimed the land he had discovered for England and named it New Albion. Before departing he posted a “plate of brass” as evidence of his claim, and that original plate... is one of the treasures of California history” never happened. In fairness to Professor Thrower, during a February 2011 phone conversation he said; “You must understand, the Sir Francis Drake Commission was set up by the legislation to celebrate Drake in California, if he really was. It was the Drake Navigators Guild who wanted to put him into Drakes Bay and the others in their bays.”<sup>55</sup>

The offering-up a fake brass plate as proof to a false landing site in California’s history, essentially was an attempt to nullify Oregon’s history of a Drake landing. In 2010 Norman Thrower was asked if any of the Commissioners recanted their California landing stories, he said; “There wasn’t any recantation by those, Aker or Power or Neasham promoting their Drake theories when the plate was proven a fake. There was no need to recant, we were to promote Drake in California and that’s what we did.”<sup>54</sup> Dr. Thrower’s latest publication in 2009 *Maps and Civilization Revisited* published by California Map Society, San Francisco includes a biographical section titled “Appointments, Occasions, and Honors Summary” which states his involvement with the SFDC in the following way: “Appointed by California Governor Ronald Regan, as President of the California Sir Francis Drake Commission in 1975, until the official termination of the Commission in January 1980. The Commission honored the first English presence in what became the United States; and the first circumnavigating of the globe by the original captain/commander, Drake.” Dr. Thrower’s exclusion of the word “California” in the brief biography - other than his saying “what became the United States”, on his part at the very least casts a non-vote for a California landing location.

Robert Vosper, Director of Library Science and Director of the Clark Library expressed surprise in his November 7, 1977 letter to James Hart at the Bancroft when he says; “Among the fascinating bits of mail I found here after returning from England was your thoroughgoing reexamination of the Drake Plate. Just a few weeks earlier we had thoroughly admired Helen Wallis’s [British Map Librarian] brilliant Drake exhibit in the British Library [where Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip viewed a replica of the Plate]. Now I fully realize why you were rather circumspect about my proposal to bring the Plate to the Clark Library for some time during the summer of 1979 when Norman Thrower and Helen Wallis helped pay proper respect to the Drake experience. Beyond this I must say as a teacher that I will enjoy using your thoroughgoing report when next I am involved in teaching our course in research methods, at the point where I must say something in an amateur way about historical evidence. With all the best personal greetings, I am, yours faithfully, Robert Vosper, Director of the Clark Library. CC: Professor Norman Thrower.” **(Hart, 1977)**

In a 1975 letter from Samuel E. Morison, Rear Admiral USNR (Ret) to Guild President and Sir Francis Drake Commissioner Raymond Aker, the Admiral expressed his opinion that the plate was “an old metal upon which the faker had worked and the real test is the forms of the letters, unknown in England at the time.” Nevertheless the Drake Navigators Guild continued selling replicas of the plate for some time after 1975. In a letter dated September 7, 1977 while a member of the SFDC, Ray Aker wryly refers to; “Offering some help from the Guild by offering some “Plate of Brass replicas that the Guild has had for sale, but that might not be very popular now!”

A year after the hoax was revealed in a 1978 a letter from Thrower to Mr. Aker, normally addressed to “Ray” Aker, Thrower is commenting upon the interviewing of the exchange student finalists of England and California in the Commission’s Drake in California Essay Contest. Thrower says: “Thank you and the Guild for providing the handsome reproductions of the Plate of Brass for the fifteen young people in that category. I know that this gift was much appreciated.”<sup>56</sup> “Appreciated” by 15 young people who were unaware of the fake plate’s lack of authenticity and its unsubstantiated proof of a Drake landing in California. Yet the Guild and the other Drake in California proponents disgracefully continued to use the plate as their proof whenever it was convenient to promote their special theories.

Drake historian Robert Power, past president of the Board of Trustees of California Historical Society, a respected Commission member, successful restaurant owner and past president of the Restaurant Owners Association, also believed in the plate. The plate was “found” near his theorized site in San Francisco Bay. Power was one of the three historians quizzed in: “Drake’s Landing in California: A Case for San Francisco Bay” that appeared in the special Fall 1974 issue of California Historical Society Quarterly in which Power along with the Guild’s Aker and Aubrey Neasham, explored the Drake’s landing site controversy in the form of a debate. As late as May 1979 Robert Powers, in a letter to Professor Robert Anderson of Palo Alto, California encouraged him to “consider delivering a paper on the Plate of Brass.” The paper was to include a thorough critical review of the various scientific tests that had been made on the plate over the previous 30 years and equally important would be the identification of tests that would shed light on the plate’s mysterious past. These tests were to show that the plate, proven to be a hoax by this time, was indeed authentic. Power was trying to repeat the same practice as Professor Bolton, who had been taken in and who had solicited Dr. Colin G. Fink, and Dr. E.P. Polushkin to conclude that the forgery was indeed genuine.

The well respected and connected Power offered Anderson, in exchange for presenting a paper at the June 15, 1979 Drake International Conference, as a “Conference participant be entitled to per diem expenses, reasonable recovery of expenses for photography, and an invitation to attend the other sessions of the Conference.” Power, to protect his self interests, concluded his communication as a member of the SFDC of May 1979 with: “For discussion purposes, I am proposing the title “The Plate of Brass: A Review of the Scientific Evidence.” In the *California Historical Quarterly* (1978), Power along with editorial assistance by Donald C. Pike wrote a twelve page report oddly titled “By Me ... C.G. Francis Drake” which dissected the plate, letter by letter trying to cast some doubt that the plate was not a hoax and a fake. Although well done, it was dismissed for obvious reasons and completely failed in its intended purpose. In fact, the opposite result occurred in that Power’s San Francisco Bay theory lost all credibility. Unfortunately, Power’s fall left a void leaving the Guild theorists as cheerleaders for a California landing site.

To a large degree, the plate's mental patina of *quondam auctorizo* (at one time authentic) has not been rubbed off as shown by the fact that Drake is still being promoted in California; for without the plate their entire theory dissolves into conjecture and half truths without foundation. As example: As late as 1983, a gold and silver-plated copy of the plate was presented to Queen Elizabeth II in celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her reign by the then Mayor of San Francisco, Dianne Feinstein. After the Queen Elizabeth's visit to San Francisco, James D. Hart of the Bancroft wrote to the British Consulate General John Beaven to say that; "Through ignorance, Mayor Feinstein presented to the Queen a silver box bearing a gold facsimile of the so-called Plate of Brass that was once thought to have been deposited in California by Francis Drake in 1579. As is commonly known, and as the attached documents exhibit, this object has been scientifically shown to be a modern fabrication. Although Prince Philip is aware of this, having said, "It's a fraud, isn't it?", I fear that others at the Palace will not know that. As a result the box with the gold facsimile of the brazen plate might be given to a museum in England and create the misapprehension that it a copy of a genuine sixteenth century object. Only recently did the museum at Buckland Abbey decide to remove another, plainer facsimile of the plate that had come to it many years ago from Queen Elizabeth, to whom it had been originally presented [by Robert Power of the Sir Francis Drake Commission in 1974 of which James Hart was also a member].

I (James Hart) hope therefore that you can make the substance of this letter of mine and the enclosures known to the appropriate persons so that there may not be a repetition of the embarrassing situation in which Buckland Abbey had to withdraw from display an object donated to it by the Queen." <sup>57</sup>

On three different occasions, various Commission members pleaded their case to gain official California Drake landing site recognition; not before anti-Californians, but before the California State Historical Resources Commission, the body of historians responsible for the designation of California Historical Registered Landmarks. The first hearing on April 26<sup>th</sup> 1973 resulted with the application being tabled. <sup>58</sup> The second attempt was October 21-23, 1978 and after some deliberation, the Resources Commission denied designation of a Drake landing site. <sup>59</sup> By March 2, 1979, the third attempt for an official recognition, the assembled theories of a Drake landing in California were no longer considered reliable. <sup>60</sup> Reason why most history books say that Drake is suspected to have landed in a California bay, but never state it as fact.

In 2000, the Drake Navigators Guild book *Discovering Francis Drake's California Harbor* implies duplicity in trying to keep the imaginary story alive, under the heading "Different Viewpoints"<sup>61</sup> of the plate of brass; as if it's something other than fake, fraud and a hoax which as the years go by takes on the veil of a charlatan's scheme.

A report by Justin Pritchard in the Seattle Times, Feb 16, 2003 titled "Historical Hoax" exposing the Guild's continuing efforts of trying to fit Drakes Bay into the glass slipper while the true history is cloaked by a fake plate of brass lightly dismissed with a matter of fact; "There's no evidence that they intended to create a hoax that would last, said Ed Von der Porten, President of the amateur historian

group called the California Drake Navigators Guild, the previously major supporters and believers group". But lasted it has, and what has resulted is a so called practical joke, for whatever the reason, quickly losing its humor when carried out over such a long period of time to mislead the public from school aged children to scholars alike.

Many people, even now, continue to believe the plate of brass authentic, thirty-five years after the hoax was proven and exposed in 1977. An authentic plate of brass (which would be lead) has yet to be found. The fake plate is still at the entrance of The Bancroft Library at Berkeley displaying its most prized possession for school children and scholars alike to view when entering. One half of the case contains the authentic gold Wimmer Nugget believed to be the original nugget whose discovery launched the California gold rush found in 1848. The other half of the case is the Plate with an E Clampus Vitus (ECV) cartoon from the newsletter of this fraternal organization dedicated to the history of gold mining, saying: "And let me show you my moon rocks." Meant to be a tongue-in-cheek joke, it is nevertheless a shameful episode in history to be highlighted at the entrance (which may be mistaken to be an authentic plate by the unknowing) of such an institution.

Of the various factions within the California historians, each with its own pet theories as to where Drake landed exactly, no consensus was or has ever been reached, officially or unofficially as to a landing site in California. On three different occasions, the California Historical Resources Commission, the official California advisory board hearings would not recognize a specific Drake landing site. This is the reason why most history books say that Drake is believed to have landed in this bay or that bay in California but never stating it as fact.

In early 2012, the Drake Navigators Guild initiated a request to the National Park Service for an official landmark designation of the Point Reyes Seashore honoring Francis Drake and Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeno's first contact with California Indians. This now sits on the desk of Robert Salazar, Director of the Interior, awaiting his signature. Although an Oregon contingent of the Oregon Archaeological Society and Thomas Vaughan, Oregon's Historian Laureate has asked the National Park Service not to recognize Point Reyes as a Drake cultural site...; so goes another chapter of Oregon's Stolen History.<sup>62</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Fletcher, Master Francis Preacher, THE WORLD Encompassed by SIR FRANCIS DRAKE, Being his next voyage to that to *Nombre de Dios* formerly imprinted; Carefully collected out of the notes of Master Francis Fletcher Preacher in his employment, and divers others his followers in the same: Offered now at last to public view, both for the honor of the actor, but especially for the stirring up of heroic spirit, to benefit their Country, and eternalize their names by like noble attempts, Printed for Nicholas Bourne and are able to be sold at his shop at the Royal Exchange, London, 1628, 80
2. Gitzen, Garry, *Jensen and Viles, Discoverers of Francis Drake's 1579 Land Claim on Neahkahnie Mountain, Oregon*, Fort Nehalem Publishing, Oregon, 2012
3. Gitzen, Garry D., *Francis Drake in Nehalem Bay 1579, Setting the Historical Record Straight*, Fort Nehalem Publishing, Oregon, 2008
4. *The Plate of Brass Reexamined 1977, A Report Issued by The Bancroft Library*, Berkeley, 1977, 24
5. *ibid*, 1
6. Starr, Walter A., *Drake Landed in San Francisco Bay in 1579, The Testimony of the Plate of Brass*, Reprinted from the California Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. XLI, No. 3, September, 1962, 3
7. Associated Press Photo and caption, April 4<sup>th</sup> 1937, Jensen Collection
8. Bolton E. Herbert, *Francis Drake's Plate of Brass*, CHQ, Vol. 16, 1937, 1-16
9. Haselden, R. B., *Is the Drake Plate of Brass Genuine?*, CHQ, XVI, 1937, 271-274
10. Rothery, W. Hume, *Drake's Plate of Brass Authenticated*, Geographical Journal, 1939, 54-55. Rothery pointed out that the letters engraved on the plate, B, N, and M were not paralleled by other sixteenth-century inscriptions and that the form of the numeral 5 is suspect.
11. Wagner, Henry R., *Creation of Rights of Sovereignty through Symbolic Acts*, Pacific Historical Review, 1938, 297-326. Wagner was skeptical of the date on the plate and that the fact that the plate was brass instead of lead; what lead was called in the sixteenth century.
12. wikipedia.org, *Drake's\_Plate\_of\_Brass*
13. Fink, Colin G. & Polushkin, E.P., *Drake's Plate of Brass Authenticated, The Report on the Plate of Brass*, CHQ, S. F., MCMXXXVIII
14. Heizer, Robert Fleming, *Archaeological Evidence of Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeno's California Visit in 1595*, CHQ, 1942, 1-3
15. *ibid*, 5
16. Gitzen, Francis Drake in Nehalem Bay, 2008, 72-96. Cermeno and Fletcher's descriptions were very much different. The Cermeno Indians were reported to be naked in December, the month of the year he crashed his ship into the continent while the Indians Fletcher described in the middle of summer were wearing furs. The food, actions, housing, canoes, fishing and basketry were all very different. In Heizer's attempt to find some coordination between the Cermeno and Fletcher

comparisons he eventually included the Pomo, a tribal area living miles above any theorized Northern California bay, and mingled them together with Miwok to build his comparisons; all without factual merit due to the fact Drake never set foot in California.

17. Heizer, *Archaeological Evidence*, 1942, 19, n5, n7

18. *ibid*, 19, n 12

19. Gitzen, Garry David, *Oregon's Stolen History*, Fort Nehalem Publishing, 2012, 185-187. In 1850 Davidson was appointed as surveyor of the first U.S. Geological Survey of the U.S. Pacific coast. The dispute of ownership of the Oregon Territory between the Hudson Bay Company and the United States had been settled by treaty two years earlier. The ownership of the territory was determined by Library of Congress Librarian Robert Greenhow's 1840 *Memoirs, Historical and Political, on the Northwest Coast of North America, and the Adjacent Territories*. Written and assembled under the direction of John Forsyth, Secretary of State of the United States, Greenhow's Preface relays a letter to Secretary Forsyth from Senator L.F. Linn, Chairman of the Select Committee on the Territory of Oregon requesting "information relating to the territory of Oregon, its geography, resources, and title of the United States to the same." Although there were other reports at the time saying Drake had reached 48° N. latitude and other primary sources uncovered after 1840 which stated the same, the limiting of Drake's voyage on the Pacific Coast to 43° N. latitude was first initiated by Greenhow's report. Davidson, as a government survey employee was not about to overturn the U.S. Oregon Territory by stating Drake reached above the 43° N. latitude near the present day Oregon – California border.

20. Heizer, Robert and Elmendorf, William W., *Francis Drake's California anchorage in Light of the Indian Language Spoken There*, *Pacific Historical Review*, 1942, 313-217

21. Heizer, *Francis Drake and the California Indians 1579*, 1947, 278-279

22. *ibid*

23. Heizer, *Archaeological Evidence*, 19, n12

24. Heizer, Robert F., *Elizabethan California*, Ballena Press, Ramona, CA, 1974, 22

25. Aker, Raymond and Von der Porten, Edward, *Discovering Francis Drake's California Harbor*, Drake Navigators Guild, 2000, 13

26. CA, SFDC, Collection number: R348, 1973-1984, Proclamation

27. Dillingham, Matthew P. and Aker, Raymond, *A Review of the Findings of Dr. Adan E. Treganza Relative to the Site of Drake's Landing in California*, Drake Navigators Guild, Pt. Reyes, 1960, 2, 9-10, 26, n1.

28. Von der Porten, Edward, and Aker, Raymond and Allen, Robert W. and Spitz, James M., *Who Made Drake's Plate of Brass?*, *CHQ* Vol. 81, No. 2, 2002, 116-133

29. Gitzen, *Oregon's Stolen History*, 21, 181-184, 205 and 227. The California enthusiasts twisted descriptions offer up "fully feathered baskets", constructed by Pomo artist William Benson in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as their unequivocal proof to the Pomo and/or Miwok Indians met during Drake's sojourn; Fletcher never mentioned anything concerning "fully feathered baskets". Fletcher did describe the native baskets as: "*They (baskets) were fashioned in deep bowl, that the most part would hold water... they were wrought upon with the matted down of red feathers, into diverse works and forms.*" In other words they had designs woven into the basket capable of holding water for cooking. Benson's artistic fully feathered baskets are meant for display and can't hold water. The same Benson baskets were used as examples of fully feathered baskets by Heizer. (Heizer, 1974, plate 2 and 1947, plate 19, 297)

30. The Oxford dictionary describes Albion as a noun meaning a literary term for Britain or England, often used when referring to ancient or historical times.

31. Heizer, *Francis Drake Indians*, 1947, 277-279

32. Heizer, *Elizabethan California*, 1974, 22

33. Aker, Raymond and Von der Porten, Edward, *Discovering Francis Drake's California Harbor*, Drake Navigators Guild, Palo Alto, 2000, 11

34. Fletcher, *World Encompassed*, 1628, 80

35. Aker, *Discovering Francis Drake's California*, 2000, 14

36. *ibid*, 61-63

37. CA, SFDC, Aker, 1973-1984, September 7, 1977

38. Von der Porten, *Who Made Drake's Plate*, 2002, 116-133

39. Bancroft Library MSS 2002/68 c, folder marked confidential, Letter Herbert Hamlin to Henry Wagner, May 19, 1954

40. Bancroft MSS 2002/68 c, Lorenz Noll

41. CHQ, Vol. 36, No. 1, March 1957, 28

42. *The Plate of Brass Reexamined 1977, A Report Issued by The Bancroft Library*, UC Berkeley, 1977, 69-75

43. *Ibid*, 24

44. *The Plate of Brass Reexamined, A Supplementary Report, Issued by The Bancroft Library*, UC Berkeley, 1979

45. Bancroft MSS 2002/68 c, Scoble

46. Bancroft Library, James Hart Papers, August 25, 1977
47. Bancroft MSS 2002/68 c, August, 29, September 23, 1977
48. Ibid, June 26, 1979
49. The San Francisco Call April 12, 1917)
50. Golden Gate Park Board of Park Commissioners Minutes 1917- 1922
51. [www.oac.cdlib.org/data/13030/3j/kt5j49q63j/files/kt5j49q63j.pdf](http://www.oac.cdlib.org/data/13030/3j/kt5j49q63j/files/kt5j49q63j.pdf)
52. Gitzen, Stolen History, 76
53. CA, SFDC, Thrower, September 15, 1977
54. Thrower, Norman J. W., Telephone Conversation with author, November 9, 2010
55. ibid, February 16, 2011
56. CA, SFDC, Thrower, April 14, 1978
57. Hart papers Bancroft
58. CA, SFDC, Thrower, May 15, 1973
59. Minutes of the State Historical Resources Commission, Special Meeting, October 21-22-23, 1978, Subject: Presentations on Possible Landings of Sir Francis Drake, 4
60. CA, SFDC, State Historical Resources Commission, March 2, 1979 and CA, SFDC, Minutes, March 3, 1979 and CA, SFDC, SHRC, May 4, 1979
61. Aker, 2000, 11
62. Gitzen, Garry D., Oregon's Stolen History, Fort Nehalem Publishing, 2012