

NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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A Monterey Expedition Against Rebel Indians

Foreword:

Except for the introductory page necessary to set the stage and give perspective, the following article is a literal translation of the official diary kept by Lieutenant Antonio del Valle of the presidio of Monterey on the march he made to pacify the mission Indian neophytes who had rebelled in 1824.

This document, long believed lost, came into the hands of Thomas Norris, a great collector of Californiana and, at the time of his death in 1952, the president of our association. He allowed the late Leon Rowland, an editor of the Santa Cruz Sentinel, to copy it. Mr. Rowland made a personal gift of his copy to Mrs. Amelie Elkinton, a distinguished local historian, and she has permitted us to translate and publish it for the first time.

Donald M. Craig

Historical articles dealing with the California mission period have an uneasy time of it if they discuss some of its lesser-known aspects. The subject has gathered such a fine patina of legend, romance and nostalgia that mention of mundane problems seems sacrilege.

But an idyllic life at the missions was seldom apparent to anyone living at them. Most often it has been the imaginative viewer of their later ruins or the contemporary foreign traveller who remarked upon the simple pastoral beauties of the system. The padres themselves were generally too concerned with the absorbing religions and economic challenges to loll back and admire their little Arcadias. The rancheros, soldiers and officials were quite frequently at loggerheads with the missionaries and the Indians often did not appreciate or understand the effort on their behalf and resisted, now passively, now actively, the labor and discipline imposed upon them.

For about 20 years from 1769 to 1789 affairs went relatively smoothly at California's famous missions. The mission policy was to convert the heathen or *gentiles* by means of argument or moral suasion backed up by such practical material inducements as food, clothing and security. The missionaries sought to make mission life as

*1- Cook, S. F., *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, Ibero-Americana Series, University of California, Part II, 1943, pgs. 20-21.

attractive as possible and their efforts were notably successful on the Indians of the immediate vicinity. However, once the local Indians had been assimilated and deaths began to outrun birth at the mission, it became necessary to go farther afield for converts.

Since the more distant *gentiles* were reluctant to be baptized or to leave their home grounds and come in under mission control, it became expedient to send out neophytes to proselyte, and when these failed or were rebuffed, to send armed expeditions of soldiers and Christian Indians to collect *gentiles* and to capture runaway Christians. By 1800 the Indians outside the mission environment were becoming hostile. Bloody clashes were frequent between the recruiting expeditions and the pagans who sheltered mission runaways. "By 1810 extensive expeditions in search of fugitives were established policy", prisoners of war were taken, and despite the protests of some missionaries and officials, "expeditions to the interior were frankly for the purpose of military subjugation and forced conversion".*1 Naturally, the more *gentiles* rounded up and brought in to the distant missions by these methods, the higher the rate of runaways. Cook estimates that for the period from 1805 to 1834 there were 10,000 baptisms in the missions north of San Gabriel and 3,500 runaways. *2

Occasionally there was grave trouble at the missions, themselves. The most serious and widespread uprising occurred at the missions of Santa Inez, La Purisima and Santa Barbara in February, 1824. The ostensible reason was the flogging of a neophyte by a soldier at Santa Inez. However, this revolt was apparently premeditated, for the neophytes were well armed and the missions of Santa Inez and La Purisima were attacked almost simultaneously. Unsuccessful at Santa Inez, the rebels set fire to the mission and on the arrival of soldiers from Santa Barbara, fled to La Purisima. At this mission four white men and seven Indians were killed before the garrison ran out of powder and surrendered. The Indians let them go and prepared for a siege. They had to wait almost a month for it, however, for the Santa Barbara presidio was much occupied suppressing its own mission Indians. In the end, after desultory shooting, the Santa Barbara neophytes, with few exceptions, got safely away over the mountains to the *tulares* or tule swamps west of present-day Bakersfield.

In the meantime, on March 16th, troops from Monterey under Lieutenant Jose Mariano Estrada had had a pitched battle with the Indians at La Purisima. The Indians surrendered under terms arranged by Padre Rodriguez who had stayed with them. Seven of the ringleaders were shot and eight others sentenced to hard labor. The troops were kept in the vicinity of Santa Barbara for a couple of weeks until unrest at the missions of San Buenaventura and San Gabriel had quieted down, then they were sent back to Monterey.

At the same time, a force of 80 men under Lieutenant Fabregat set out for the tule swamps to force the return of the fugitives. After two indecisive skirmishes with the renegades, the expedition was forced to return "because of a terrible dust storm". Governor Luis Arguello found this difficult to comprehend and immediately organized another expedition to set out at the end of May. This second attempt was more likely to succeed, for the Father President of the missions, Padre Vincente Francisco Sarria and Padre Antonio Ripoll of Santa Barbara Mission insisted on accompanying it to see that no harm came to the runaways. Furthermore, Padre Sarria had persuaded the governor to grant a general pardon for all past rebellion and this pardon, plus a letter of his own reassuring the apprehensive neophytes was sent ahead by Indian runner.

One hundred and thirty men, a veritable army for the time, was projected. Fifty were to descend from Monterey under Lieutenant Antonio del Valle and join the rest

*2- Ibid., Part I, 1943, pgs. 75-76.

under Captain Pablo de la Portilla, commander of the troops, at San Emigdio, near present day Maricopa. San Emigdio was a rancho or *visita* established by Mission Santa Barbara a few years before 1824 in an attempt to convert the Indians resident in the Lake Buenavista tule swamps.

Captain de la Portilla's report states that his route from Santa Barbara led him first to Mission San Buenaaventura, then up the Santa Clara River into the mountains, over them and through Grapevine Canyon onto the floor of the San Joaquin Valley. Lieutenant del Valle's report, made independently to the governor, outlines not only the route he followed from Monterey to Lake Buenvista, but also recounts the whole parley with the suspicious and reluctant fugitives.

Del Valle was commander of the infantry company at the presidio of Monterey. He set out, he says, at 10 o'clock on the morning of May 1st, 1824, with 40 men and a piece of artillery. Although he numbered infantrymen among his troops, they must have been so in name only, for in that country at that time, no one went on foot.

Taking the road that ran along the base of the hills west of the Salinas River, the party arrived at 6 P.M. at Mission La Soledad, characterized in 1829 as "the gloomiest, bleakest and most abject-looking spot in all California" *3 This pace of approximately five miles per hour was rather fast, considering that they were trundling a small cannon behind them.

They stayed over at La Soledad the next day while the infantry weapons were overhauled, the artillery ammunition inspected and a cavalryman sent back to Monterey to bring up a thousand more cartridges for the fusils. On May 3rd they left La Soledad and took the road to Mission San Anonio. This road was not so easily traveled and for a short distance lay among hills so that the encampment was made at Los Ojitos, about five miles south of Jolon, where an adobe had been erected in 1823 for the vaqueros of San Antonio herds. Del Valle left Sergeant Jose Antonio Gaxiola in charge and rode about nine miles to the mission to check on some details of supply. He remained overnight at San Antonio and caught up with the troop the next day as it rested at Pleito on the lower part of the Rio San Antonio. The road was level and good from there to San Miguel and they reached the mission at 5 P.M.: a day's journey of about 29 miles

From May 5th until the 14th, the troop remained at the mission. Padre Sarria came through on his way to join Padre Ripoll at Santa Barbara and accompany the main body of the expedition. He rested there a day until May 17th and then went on. Now let Lieutenant del Valle tell the story in his own words:

'May 18th: I departed for Santa Barbara, leaving the troop at this mission of San Miguel in the charge of Don Ignacio Vallejo, who was serving as First Sergeant of the cavalry company from the presidio of Monterey. My purpose was to confer with Senor de la Portilla on the plans for the expedition. I returned from there to San Miguel on June 1, and I again rejoined my troop to place things in order for my march to the *tulares*, having arranged with the captain the day of my departure and the place of our reunion. June 2nd and 3rd, at San Miguel preparing food supplies and other articles useful for the campaign.

"June 4th: I began my march toward my destination, leaving the mission of San Miguel at 8 o'clock in the morning and arriving at Agua Dulce at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. I camped there for the night. (*Agua Dulce is unidentified, but was probably in the direction of Creston, some 22 miles from San Miguel. He was making good time, but there was no road and he still had to drag the cannon. This is an early halt, but apparently water was to be scarce until they reached La Panza, some 25 miles farther on at the eastern base of the Pine Mountains.*)

*3-Robinson, Alfred, *Life in California* . . . (1829-42) Boston, 1846, pg. 108.

"June 5th: I left the said camp at 6 A.M. and at 2 P.M. I got to the place the Indians call Panza. Nothing unusual to report. (*Panza is still there, about eight miles from the northern entrance to the huge elevated basin known as the Carrizo Plain. This valley, 1600 feet above the sea, is fifty miles long and from eight to twenty miles wide. All drainage is to the center, where there is a reedy swamp that gave the trough its name. A semi-desert at that time, it is now a prosperous stock-raising area.*)

"June 6th: I left that place at 5 o'clock in the morning and at noon I reached two little springs with scant water where I stayed an hour and then continued on my way until we got to the Ortiga. I arrived there at 6 P.M. ("*Ortiga*" means "nettle" in Spanish; *he was probably near the swampy area in the center of the Carrizo Plain close to Painted Rock ranch. In 12 hours they had made 32 miles, poco mas o menos*)

"June 7th: I left at the same hour as on the previous day, heading toward the Rancho San Emigdio, the place where, according to our agreement, I was to join up with Captain de la Portilla. A 11:30 in the morning I came out on the point overlooking Buenavista Lake, and seeing a tule raft *balsa* put out from the shore and someone throw himself into the water and swim after it, for they were going out to the island,—and noting besides that there were people in the tules, although they could not be seen, I ordered a halt. Dividing the scanty number of troops that I had into small sections so I might be able to provide guards for the cannon, the ammunition, rations and spare horses, I placed Sebastian Rodriguez, corporal of the Monterey cavalry, in the van and the similarly titled Nicolas Alviso at the rearguard, while I took the center in case they attacked either the van or rear. In this order I went ahead, keeping within pistol shot of the tule swamp until I got to where I had to quarter-wheel the troop to go up to the aforesaid ranch. I got there about 6 o'clock in the afternoon. This day's journey, however, can only be made with the greatest effort and difficulty because the ground is so boggy,—not only for wheeled vehicles but even for cavalry. On this same day, as soon as I was seen, they began to send up smoke signals all around the lake and the islands. (*Lake Buenavista, first discovered in 1772, was a vast shallow lake dotted with islands and surrounded, and in parts overgrown, with a jungle of tule reeds. Myriads of water-fowl rested there on their migrations and its freshwater mussels were an Indian delicacy. The lake has now been largely drained and the land given over to agricultur. The island mentioned in the diary was probably Pelican Island, then about two miles from shore. This day's ride was about 36 miles in 13 hours.*)

"June 8th: At San Emigdio I sent a patrol under Corporal Nicolas Alviso outside the canyon to see if the division commanded by Captain Don Pablo de la Portilla was approaching, and in fact it arrived at 7 o'clock in the afternoon and camped at Gonzalez, Corporal of the Dragoons of the Santa Barbara company, to scout inside the entrance to the box canyon. On this same day I sent another party, under Rafael the canyon to discover if there were any people or horse herds there. Four men of this party who had separated from the rest, came upon three Indians slaughtering cattle, and the Indians told them that five vaqueros had gone to round up cattle and that they would return about 6 or 7 o'clock in the afternoon. I immediately sent eight men under Corporal Sebastian Rodriguez to spy upon them, but the vaqueros had certainly seen our first patrol and they did not come in. The patrol, however, took 16 horses away from the three Indians.

"June 9th: On this day I went alone to the encampment of Captain Portilla and from there an Indian, one of those I had captured the previous day, was sent as a messenger to the island where the neophytes from Santa Barbara were. About 4 P.M. I went back to my own camp, having concerted with the captain to meet him the next day.

"June 10th: At reveille the next day I put my party in motion and set out on the march, joining the so-often-mentioned captain at the mouth of the canyon where he was camped. From there we went toward the lagoon which was about 15 miles away. We had covered about half this distance when we met a runner with a note from Chief Jaime in which he said that he was awaiting us. We kept on, and about 3 miles before getting to the lake another messenger handed us a note which said the same thing. Finally, at 9 A.M. we got there. Leaving the troops at a short distance, the captain, the Father President, Padre Antonio Ripoll and I proceeded to the edge of the tules where quite a few fully armed Indians were to be seen, but not the chiefs, who knew they were there. After a great deal of coaxing, Jaime appeared, carrying his gun having his cartridge belt fastened around him. A rifleman guarded his back. The conference dragged on for more than two hours, and finally nothing came of it. As for the items he mentioned, I shall present them orally to the governor if he so requests.

He withdrew to his camp and we to ours. About 4 P.M. he came out again at the same spot, and raised a white flag as he had done from the beginning. The same group of persons went out to talk to him. We discussed getting Chief Andres to attend the parley, but no matter how many messages were sent to him, we could not get him to come until Jaime himself went for him. (They said it was because he was afraid.) Once he had come out, we dealt with the two headmen concerning the general pardon. They accepted it and said that they would surrender, but that they could not set a definite day because there were a great many people and they had to arrange for their departure. They went back to their island and we returned to our camp.

"June 11th: At 7 o'clock this morning Jaime, Andres and all their people came again. We went there, continued our talk from where it had left off the previous day,—and they accepted the pardon. They got all their people together and there it was read to them and thoroughly explained until they understood it. Afterward the Father President made them an exhortation in the name of the Church, and at its conclusion they unstrung their bows and discharged their firearms, that is, all except Jaime and his bodyguard. Upon orders from the captain, I fired off my cannon, but later I re-loaded it again on the sly.

They went off to their island without surrendering their weapons, and we retired to our camp. At 4 P.M. Jaime came back and we discussed the surrender of the families and how that all the people should come to mass on Sunday. He returned to the island to tell Andres to come the following day.

"June 12th: This morning construction of a brush shelter was begun so that the padres might say mass. At 10 o'clock Jaime came over, saying that Andres had misgivings but that he, Jaime, was going to surrender with all his people. The senior captain told him to go and get all his people and any of the rest who wanted to come out, for he was going to declare war on those who did not appreciate the governor's pardon, adding to the reverend padres that up until that day every effort had been made to use gentle means but that from now on their reverences had no longer anything to do with the affair, absolutely nothing, once the shooting started.

Seeing this course of events, Jaime went away and talked to Andres, who came at once, then went back and brought out all his band, except for some 50 or 60 who refused to give up. All this happened on that same afternoon.

"June 13th: Sunday and San Antonio's day. Today a mass was sung and at its conclusion alcaides were named and immediately afterward those men who remained with Cavalry Corporal Nicolas Alviso, under orders of Lieutenant Juan Maria Ibarra, plus 25 infantry were made ready to go and rout out those Indians who did not want

to surrender. They reconnoitered the greater part of the first lagoon, entering all the settlements of the heathen Indians and catching some Christians. At one of the rancherias a show of resistance was made, but seeing the determination of the soldiers, they raised a white flag. It was respected and they soon gave up their weapons. Their chiefs were told to report the next day to our camp so that it might be impressed upon them the evil that they had done in harboring the Christians.

"June 14th: The Indians' firearms, sabers, machetes and lances were taken from them, and in a little while the chiefs of the wild Indians arrived. They were made to understand that the Senor Governor would be very angry if they did not hand over all the Christians, and that he would send troops to wipe out all the pagans. They said that they were not to blame; that all (the neophytes) had gone back to their (native?) rancherias by now. It was arranged that a party of the pardoned Christians would go with the aforesaid pagans to see if they could collect some more neophytes, and with this object in mind, their arms were returned to them.

"June 15th: At 8 o'clock this morning Jaime came back from his expedition with the majority of those who had been reluctant to come out, and seeing that those missing were so few and that all the rest were getting ready to leave (for the missions), Captain Portilla and I prepared to break camp and retire. I left immediately thereafter and the captain remained until afternoon, staying at the camp with the padres while some more of the families came out (of the tules). I, as I said, took my departure and at Buenavista Point I captured a Christian, one of those from San Miguel, who had been on the dodge for many years. I reached the Ortega at 4 P.M. and spent the night there."

On the road back del Valle made camp each day at the same places he had selected on the way down. At Mission San Miguel he stayed from June 18th to 20th dividing up the horses, mules, tools and other loaned articles so that they might be returned to the missions that had supplied them. Nearing Jolon, Artilleryman Joaquin Pina reported that an underpiece on the gun-carriage had broken. It was temporarily repaired until they got to La Soledad where, by good fortune, the carriage maker and artisan Francisco Perez Pacheco had put up the night. It must have been a difficult job, for del Valle did not get away until June 26th. After passing the night at the Rancho de la Nacion just north of present-day Spreckles, he finally reported in at the Monterey Presidio at 11 A.M. on June 27th.

The expedition had been gone almost two months, had ridden over 500 miles, faced danger and privation and accomplished its objective efficiently and humanely. As a reward the troops were awarded double pay for a month, "a graceful compliment which cost nothing," says Bancroft, "for the soldiers never received their original pay, not to mention the double allowance." *4

*4- Bancroft, H. H., *History of California*, San Francisco, 1885, Vol. II, pg. 536.

COSAC DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

We now have 851 members. Have you paid your dues?

NEW MEMBERS:

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Heckenlaible, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Chelew, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Taaffee, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth C. Pfarrer, Carter Keane, Major General and Mrs. C. V. Hayes, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Evans, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Rafferty, General and Mrs. C. P. Weyland, Mrs. Leone G. Chamberlin, Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. Watson, Mrs. Anna Krause, Mrs. Paul E. Messier, Mr. and Mrs. Harold C. Green, Mr. and Mrs. John W. Logan, Mr. and Mrs. Louis C. Moore, Lieut.-Cmdr. and Mrs. S. Clanzel, John and Leo Marihart, Mrs. Ann Hamilton, Mr. and Mrs. David Muir, Mrs. Mary S. Decker, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. C. Boggess, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Knapp, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick C. Glover, Mrs. Myrtle Solliman, Reverend and Mrs. Peter Farmer, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fratessa, Mrs. Miriam E. Connell, Mrs. Earl Dewer, Mrs. Elverda Camp-

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bell, Mr. and Mrs. Julian Graham, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Hall, Col. and Mrs. Van Court Warren, Mrs. Mildred Hall, Mrs. Jean T. Fuller, Mrs. Virginia Lucas, Mr. and Mrs. Olaf P. Jenkins, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Carver, Mr. and Mrs. James G. Town

New Junior Members: John Chelew, Lynn Tomlinson, Sheni Wilson, Jr., Louis and Patrick Church, Peter, Marguerite, John and Susan Sewald, Damon, Christopher and Jamie Campbell.

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Sustaining Members: Jesse A. Coe, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Fletcher, Thomas Ehrman, Mr. and Mrs. George V. Yates, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fratessa, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Jones, Mr. and Mrs. S. F. B. Morse, Mr. and Mrs. Robert McKeever, Mrs. C. Parker Holt, Mrs. Louise M. Hatton, Mrs. H. Dalzell Wilson, Mrs. Edith C. Bayley, Mrs. W. M. O'Donnell, Mrs. Wesley Heard, Mrs. Frances Pratt, Miss Alexandra Pratt, Miss Rosemary M. Hardy.

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IN MEMORIUM: Miss Margaret Jacks, Mrs. Maria Antonia Bach Thompson, Mr. C. L. Slusher, Mr. Howard L. Reed, and Mrs. Louis Smith.

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The Monterey History and Art Association maintains a beautiful Book of Remembrance on view in Casa Serrano. In this volume are inscribed the names of members in whose memory bequests have been made. The Memorial Garden at the Casa Serrano is now being planned for landscaping by Mrs. W. E. Oberholtzer with the funds collected through the Book of Remembrance. At the rate that this energetic member works, our headquarters will be in its proper setting in time for the Annual Adobe House Tour on September 29th.

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The recent death of Miss Margaret Jacks, for many years a director and recently an honorary director of our association and the generous donor of valuable historic adobes to the people of California, and those of Mrs. Smith, a long-time member, and of Mrs. Thompson, and Mr. Slusher, recently directors of this body, have filled us with sadness. Mr. Howard Reed, a most highly regarded and competent director, was also our treasurer and accountant. We shall miss him very much. Our sympathy is extended to the families of these members.

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Mr. B. L. Heckenlaible has been appointed acting treasurer of the association to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Reed.

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Expressions of appreciation are due Mrs. W. E. Oberholtzer and her committee of Allen Knight, Mrs. George Dietterle and Mrs. Chappell for their outstanding work on the garden at the Fremont Adobe. The garden is a joy to behold and we thank Watson's Nursery for their generosity. The Monterey Realty Board, the tenants, has put up an attractive sign and the small redwood tree at the front has been removed. (It was in the process of up-rooting the adobe.) Now it would be most appropriate if a small iron bench were placed in the bricked patio, similar to the one that is in the Frances Elkins Memorial Garden at the Monterey County Building. Anyone wish to give one?

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Mrs. Tod Singleton, hospitality chairman for the Casa Serrano, is compiling a list of hostesses for the Casa. We hope to have it open at least one afternoon a week soon. She has a goodly number already, but others are needed.

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Mrs. Herbert Tolfree has given us three fine Spanish shawls, four very handsome black dresses, one cream lace wedding gown, an ivory locket, an antique ring, a calling card case of tortoise shell and an iron Sewing Bird. Mrs. Frances Huggins has presented a series of pictures and documents to be used as display material.

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The annual re-enactment of the landing of Commodore John Drake Sloat and the raising of the United States flag on July 7, 1846, has been cancelled for this 116th anniversary because of the Navy's inability to send ships, marines and the band here for the celebration. The reason: world affairs.

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On July 30 until August 4th, Monterey will be host to a conference held by the legislators, judges, lawyers, and professors of law of several states to discuss uniform state laws. Mrs. Singleton, working with our members who are wives or mothers of lawyers, is planning a tea at the Casa Serrano for the feminine contingent at the conference either on July 31st or August 2nd.

(Continued on Page Eight)

THE EDITORS
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CASAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

The Merienda: "The best ever", was the comment heard all over Memory Garden on June 2nd when over 500 association members and guests met to eat, drink and enjoy the colorful celebration of Monterey's 192nd birthday party. Ted Durein was an unequalled master of ceremonies, Miss Pamela Merihart was a beautiful Favorita, flanked by her **damas de honor**, Miss Donna Durein and Miss Angela Robertson. Mrs. Margaret Hudson acted as the duena and Henry Jones as usual, was responsible for the juicy steaks.

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At the May meeting of the Board of Directors Allen Knight reported that the Merritt Adobe, whose sale and possible demolition had been of concern to the association, had been sold but that the policy of the new owners would be to preserve the appearance and character of the charming old building. Plans for its future use are not yet complete, but the advice and cooperation of the association would be sought before they are finally adopted. Mrs. O'Donnell reported that Miss Jacks willed several pieces of early Monterey furniture to the association and that a rocking chair used by General John Fremont had been given to us by Mr. and Mrs. Couchner and placed in the Conference Room at the Fremont Adobe.

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A letter was received from Miss Margart Bruton in which she affirmed her willingness to donate her services in the design and execution of the planned Monterey Harbor memorial plaque and described her preliminary plans with sketches. It was moved, and carried unanimously that Miss Bruton be thanked and asked to carry on with the project. The necessary materials were ordered purchased.