

# NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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## December In Monterey, 1602: Viscaino's Diary

A document of primary interest for Californians and particularly for the people of the Monterey area is the *Relacion* of Sebastian Viscaino. He named Monterey Bay, Carmel River and the Santa Lucia Mountains that frame this picturesque locality, his chaplains celebrated the first services in Monterey near the famous Serra Oak (as it was later called because the great missionary priest also chose the same spot for his first mass here), and it was his enthusiastic description of the fine harbor, strategic position and natural resources that led the king to establish Monterey as the frontier capital of California.

The Viscaino expedition of three vessels had sailed from Acapulco May 3, 1602, equipped for a year's voyage to explore the California coast and find a harbor where the weary, pirate-harried Manila galleons might rest in safety after their long Pacific crossing. Headwinds had so delayed Viscaino that by the time he got to San Diego, he had only five months supplies remaining.

In our translation of the journal of the voyage, the adventurers have already arrived at and named San Diego Bay and are working their way northward through the Santa Barbara Channel. The scene now opens with them hearing mass on Santa Catalina Island, surrounded by curious savages:

(Continued from the December issue)

Once the divine offices were at an end, the general went to their huts, where the women took him by the hand, leading him inside and giving him more food of the same type as before. When he returned to his ship, he brought with him six little girls from eight to ten years old whose mothers had trustingly allowed to go with him, and he clothed them in shirts and little skirts and put necklaces on them. He then sent them back to shore, and when this was seen by the rest, they all came out in canoes bringing their daughters. We gave something to each so that none returned without wearing something.

These people wear sea-lion skins for clothing, the women in particular being very careful to cover their nakedness. Their faces show their modesty. They are all, however, very thievish, taking anything that is left unguarded. They are great people for trading and bartering, because in a deal with the soldiers, they gave skins, shells, nets, string, and very well made ropes, the latter in great quantity and resembling linen. Their dogs are like those of Castile.

On Thursday, the 28th of the said month, there was an eclipse of the moon. It began at 10:15 at night and lasted until midnight. At one o'clock it was over. The eclipse began on the eastern edge. On the 29th, the eve of San Andres, we made sail, for the Indians told us by signs that farther up the coast of that same island there was a good port and there they had houses and food. On the day of San Andres, at four in the afternoon we came to the place the Indians had described. They guided us with their canoes. We found the port all that could be desired from the standpoint of safety and ground. There was a town on the beach containing more than 300 men, women and children. Ensign Alarcon went ashore to reconnoiter. The next day the general and many of our people landed.

The Indian men received him well and the women embraced him, leading him to their houses. They are good-looking women. The general, with great ceremony, gave them rosary beads and they gave him cactus fruit, seeds like the cereal seen in the Canary Islands in some very well-made baskets and water in some basketry flasks which were woven inside and covered on the outside with a very strong varnish. (\*9)

The general went inland to see the coast on the other side of the island. On his way he came upon a flat area cleared of brush where the Indians gather to worship an idol which was found there, a kind of demon with horns but no head and a dog at its feet and painted all around with many children. The Indians told the general not to approach it, but he went and inspected it. He made a cross and put the name of Jesus above the head of the demon and told the Indians that what he did was good and a sign from heaven and that the idol was a demon, at which the Indians marvelled. With the greatest goodwill they took the idol down and welcomed (?) our holy faith. By all appearances these Indians are intelligent and eager to be our friends.

The general returned to the town and an Indian woman brought him two pieces of Chinese damask in fragments, telling him by signs that it had belonged to people like us who had come in a ship with negroes during a great storm and that the ship had been driven ashore farther up the coast and had been shattered. (\*10) The captain tried with all diligence to get two or three Indians to go with him so they might show him the place where the vessel was lost, promising to give them clothing. The Indians agreed and came to the *Capitana* with him.

(\*9) The ordinary sealing varnish for California water bottles was pinon pine rosin, but the Indians along the Santa Barbara Channel probably used tar from the petroleum seeps.

(\*10) Almost certainly the Indians were referring to Cermeno's visit seven years before.

When we were weighing anchor to depart, the Indians said they wanted to go ahead in their canoes and not in the ship, for they feared that we would carry them off. (\*11) The general, in order not to alarm them, told them "Well and good." We hoisted sail and left the port, but the wind blew straight in our faces and did not allow us to go where the Indians pointed. We had to put to sea and the Indians returned to their village. Thus we left this affair, because we did not have the launch, which had gone to explore another island that appeared to be near the mainland, and because the *Almiranta* was missing, having failed to make port. Besides, there was a dense fog, so thick we could not see each other and, seemingly, so many islands, rocks and shallows that our pilots did not dare risk the *Capitana* among them in such weather.

Thus, we proceeded on our voyage, and the next day the *Almiranta* and the frigate came up with us, thanks be to God who united us again. Upon our asking Ensign Melendez what he had found on the island, he said that there were many Indians and that by signs they had told him that on it there were bearded people dressed like ourselves, Believing them to be Spaniards, he sent them a note, and in answer to it, eight bearded Indians clothed in animal skins came in a canoe. They could not find out anything more.

After this, the general ordered that we continue on our way without further delay, (for our people were suddenly falling sick) and that we leave for the return trip any further investigation of what the Indians of Santa Catalina Island had told us by signs for since we did not understand their language, all was confusion and little certainty about what they said.

*Of The Departure From Santa Catalina Island and Our Arrival At The Port Of Monterey*

As has been said, we left the island of Santa Catalina and the port of San Andres on the 1st of December. On that day, as aforesaid, we met up with the *Almiranta* and the frigate, and the general having consulted with the admiral and those of the council on what was to be done, it was agreed to go forward, since the people were sickening, there was neither proper food nor medicine with which to cure them and the cold and winter weather were increasing. If we stopped, the voyage could not be carried out, and so on we went along the coast.

On Monday, the 2nd of the said month, we discovered two more large islands, (\*12) and as we were going between the first of them and the mainland a canoe came out to meet us containing a great quantity of fish and two Indian fishermen who rowed with such speed that they seemed to fairly fly. Coming up alongside, without saying a word they circled the ship twice so fast that it is impossible to describe it. Once this was done, they drew up off the poopdeck quarter, bowing their heads courteously. The general had a cloth full of bread given to them. They took it and sent back the fish they had with them most unselfishly, the which done, they said by signs that they wanted to leave.

(\*11) The Cabrillo expedition in 1543 kidnapped four Channel Indians and two San Diego boys.

(\*12) The Channel Islands of Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa.

Scarcely had they gone when another canoe with five Indians arrived. This canoe was so well designed and made that from Noah's Ark to now there has never been seen among savages one more beautiful and swift, none in which the planks were better fashioned. Four of the Indians rowed and an old man in the middle chanted, very much as in an Indian dance in Mexico. The rest made the responses, and before coming alongside, they stopped and he hailed us three times, going through much ceremony bowing his head and body. Upon his ordering the Indians to paddle, they sped around our ship so quickly that in a moment they had circled us twice. Once they stationed themselves off our quarter, the old man spoke. He told us by hand motions that we should go to his village, that they would give us much food and water, for there was a river there. He passed over a flask of it that he was carrying and a basket of food, a kind of mush made from acorn meal.

This Indian made himself so well understood by signs that the only thing lacking was the sound of our language. He even told us that to prove what he said, one of us should get in his canoe and go to his village while he himself would stay aboard our ship as a hostage. The general, seeing the courageousness of the Indian, ordered a soldier to get into the canoe, and the Indian immediately and very cheerfully boarded us and told his oarsmen to go to the mainland and prepare food for all of us.

In the meantime, since the sun was setting, the *Almiranta* came up to us and a meeting of the general, the admiral, the ensigns and the pilots was called to determine what should be done. The wind was filling our sails for the first time since we had left Acapulco, and with this in mind, it was agreed that the Indians should be sent away with the assurance that we would visit their country some other day. So insistant was the Indian that we go there that in order to tempt us he said he would give each of us ten women to sleep with. This Indian demonstrated such great understanding that it was obvious he was no mere barbarian but a person of great intelligence. We showed him lead and tin and plates of silver. He tapped them with his finger; the silver was good, he said, and the others were not.

After the Indian left, all night the northeast wind freshened our sails so well that we sailed more than 15 leagues among islands, but not without some care and risk, for we did not know where we were going. The next day dawned with us hemmed in between the islands and the coast and tacking back and forth. On the 4th day of the said month, a northwest gale suddenly swept down upon us with great force and a high sea. We had to take in the bonnets and run with just the lower courses of sails, with the result that each vessel drew away from the others. The *Capitana*, by great good fortune, found herself at daybreak in the lee of an island. A canoe with two Indians and a boy with a small body and blackened areas around his eyes came out to invite us to visit their village, but the sea ran so high and there were so many shoals around the island that we did not dare approach it. Out to sea we veered again, where we found the frigate

and, making her the usual signal, she came up close aboard and it was agreed that she go ahead of us and we would see if there was any place where we might shelter from the wind. She did so, and while going there, the *Almiranta*, which had been following us, appeared.

The launch went ahead between this island and another and we were trailing her when the master-pilot and the other pilots declared it would not be wise to do so, for as there seemed to be many shallows and beds of kelp and night was coming on with the sea and wind still raging, we ran the risk of shipwreck. The general ordered us to tack out again, but the frigate remained deep in between the two islands.

The next day the gale died down and we went along up the coast with heavy hearts, for the frigate was nowhere to be seen and we hoped she had not come to misfortune. We continued our voyage with favorable winds until the 12th of December, and on the eve of Santa Lucia, to our great content, the frigate caught up with us. We were even happier when the ensign and his pilot said that they had been on the said middle island and that there was a town there with more than 200 big huts, in each of which lived more than forty Indians. In the center of the town were two poles sunken in the ground and one on top like a gallows. More than twenty canoes had come out to the frigate, and because they were all alone, they did not dare stay there. At this place there was a great number of Indians and indications that the mainland is heavily populated and fertile, for there are pine forests, oaks and a fine climate. and although it gets cold, it is not enough to trouble one.

On Santa Lucia's day, at four in the morning, a southeast wind, (the first we have had on this trip), blew up and stayed with us until the next day at sunset. We arrived that night at a stopping place at 37 degrees North Latitude. The general sent Ensign Melendez on ahead to explore a great bay (\*13) and see if there was any port, for this location is the best and most suitable for His Majesty's purpose that has been found on this voyage. He did so, and since the bay was so large and night was falling, we kept well out and he went in.

(To be continued next issue)

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## A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY OFFERED TO MONTEREY

The Allen Knight Ship Collection has been offered to our association by Mrs. Adele Knight in memory of her husband who for many years was a director, vice-president, key figure and twice president of it. The collection contains not only many souvenirs of ships wrecked on the Monterey Coast but a fine nautical library which includes ship registers, lists, and descriptions dating back to 1839, clipper ship logs, diaries and books on all phases of sea life, and the most valuable series of photographs of Pacific Ocean ships in America. This

(\*13) Monterey Bay.

unique feature alone has approximately 10,000 pictures and is a gold mine for writers on the sea.

The proposal to set up a maritime and naval museum on the Monterey waterfront has aroused great interest. The sea story is the only facet in the history of Monterey that has been neglected. This is incredible when it is realized that Monterey was discovered from the sea and named by a sailor, that Father Serra first stepped ashore in Monterey from a ship, that the town was the only one in California sacked by sea marauders, and that its capture by the naval squadron of Commodore Sloat in 1846 sealed the fate of the entire west coast. It is time, too, that Monterey should think of commemorating its more recent past when it was one of the most important fishing ports in the world.

Admiral Earl Stone's committee has been working steadily on an investigation of ways and means to establish the Allen Knight Maritime and Naval Museum. They plan to report to the directors of the association in April on their findings.

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## COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

**Committee chairmen and members appointed by Board of Directors on March 1, 1965.**

### STANDING COMMITTEES

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Mr. Myron Oliver, chairman  
Mr. August Pollack  
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—consultant

**Garden:**

Mrs. Horace Dormody, chairman

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### Merienda:

Mr. George Leutzinger, chairman  
Mr. W. W. Durney  
Mr. W. L. Hudson

### Sloat Landing:

Admr. C. T. Singleton, Jr.

### Allen Knight Maritime and Naval Museum:

Admr. Earl Stone, chairman  
Mrs. Adele Knight  
Mrs. L. J. Hudson  
Admr. Ira Hobbs  
Admr. C. T. Singleton, Jr.  
Mr. Donald Craig  
Mr. Gordon Hall  
Mr. George Leutzinger

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### Gifts

There have been several gifts presented to Casa Serrano recently. Mrs. Frank Ringland has given 2 dozen antique punch cups; Mrs. Talbert Josselyn sent a large group of pictures of Old Monterey taken by Louis Josselyn in the days before many of the adobe buildings had been destroyed or restored. These pictures and others from the Association's collection are now on display at Casa Serrano. The building is open to visitors from 1 until 4 o'clock every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Mrs. Margaret Hanna Lang is the hostess and curator.

### Book of Remembrance

The Association's Book of Remembrance was instituted a couple of years ago for recording the names of deceased members or friends who are interested in California history. The names are inscribed in the book by a master calligrapher, and the handsomely bound volume is always on display in Casa Serrano.

Names to be inscribed since the last issue of the Noticias are: Carmel Martin Sr., Mrs. Fred Farr, Mrs. Mary Steinbeck Dekker, Miss Audrey Walton, R. Daniel Hull, Mrs. Marshall Bond, Mrs. Kathryn Edwards.

### A Memorial

In memory of the late Professor Frank Elilio La Cauza a small, attractive pool has been added to the garden at Casa Serrano. Our president, Robert Stanton, drew the plan for the pool which fits in beautifully with the St. Francis shrine, the lattice arch and the planting on the south wall of the adobe. Charles Frost has been the master artist in constructing the memorial. Others who have helped were Harry Downie of Carmel Mission and Myron Oliver. We hope you like it. Many of Frank La Cauza's friends contributed to the memorial fund for which Mrs. La Cauza and the Association give heartfelt thanks.

A suitable memorial to Mr. Carmel Martin Sr. has not yet been chosen.

### Coming Events

May 1 — Adobe House Tour — 10 P.M. to 6 P.M.

May 8 — Visit of California Railroad Club with tour of adobe houses.

June 5 — Merienda — Mr. George Leutzinger, chairman

July 4th — Sloat Landing celebration — Rear Admiral C. T. Singleton, chairman

THE EDITORS  
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**Guests at Casa Serrano**

Since January 1st the following organizations have enjoyed the privilege of meeting at Casa Serrano: Visiting Nurses Association, Daughters of the American Revolution and Wellesley College Alumnae many of the members of these groups are also members of this Association.

**New Members**

Dr. and Mrs. John Pasmore, Stuart Haldorn, Mr. and Mrs. M. P. Davison, Major and Mrs. Charles O'Neal, Miss Genevieve M. Gehres, Mrs. Walter Tittle, Commander and Mrs. William Arnold, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Dormody, Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Russell, Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Hughsen, Mrs. Amy Farley Larsen, Mrs. Thomas Roper, Mrs. Mabel Van Vorise, Miss Giovanna Cusenza, Miss Edie Donahoe, Miss Mary Jane Donahoe, Miss V. Newell Drown, Miss Elizabeth Pringle, Mrs. William Pettijohn.

**Life Members**

Wilfred Page van Loben Sels, Miss V. Newell Drown, Mrs. Frank La Cauza, Mr. and Mrs. Werner Sewald, Marguerite J. Sewald, Peter K. Sewald, Susan E. Sewald, John W. Sewald, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Kutschera, Mr. and Mrs. William A. Burkett, Mr. S. F. B. Morse.

**Sustaining Member**

Miss Nadine Shelton.

**Junior Members**

Mike Dougherty, Kathy Donahoe, Deborah Whittlesey, Eleanor Hubbard, Karen Thomas, Tracy Capen, Carol Lynn Boore, Thomson Jay Hudson Jr., Dan Hudson, Sally Hudson, Michael Hudson, Margaret Hudson, Elizabeth Hudson, Alexander Hudson, Sarah Hudson.