

NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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—The Viscaino-Serra Oak. Remnants are preserved at San Carlos Church.

December In Monterey, 1602: Viscaino's Diary

This is the third installment of our translation of the basic document for the history of Monterey: the *Relacion* of Sebastian Viscaino. It is taking us almost as long to tell the tale as it took the Spanish explorer to investigate the coast of California, but relief is in sight; in these pages Viscaino's scribe gives us the first European glimpse of the sites of Monterey and Carmel. The September issue of *Noticias* will terminate the voyage.

The *Relacion* is the official report that was sent to the viceroy and king, but there were other documents by eye-witnesses. Although these come to us either second-hand or as written almost twenty years later where they add anything to our mental picture of the Peninsula as it was 368 years ago, we have sandwiched them in. Some of the observations may seem repetitious, but they supplement and broaden our view.

The description of the snow-covered Santa Lucias and Mount Toro is interesting. Some sixty years before, Cabrillo's expedition noted the same conditions; he called the coastal mountains the *sierra nevadas* because of their icy-white peaks. Viscaino was in Monterey over two weeks and the cold persisted. Has the weather really changed that much?

(Continued from the March issue)

The next day, the 16th of December, the frigate came alongside and the pilot told the general that they had found a good harbor and he brought a sketch of it. The general called a council to determine the proper action; it was agreed to go to the said port and fill the water casks and refresh the company. There were many sick now. We came in the same day and anchored at seven in the evening.

Of The Arrival At The Port Of Monterey And What Was Found In It Which Warranted Dispatching The Almiranta With The News To New Spain And Continuing The Voyage To Cape Mendocino With The Capitana And The Frigate.

As has been said, we arrived at this port of Monterey the 16th of December at 7 P.M. and the next day the general ordered Ensign Alarcon to land bearing a message to build a shelter where mass might be said, and to see if there was drinking water and what the soil was like. At a great live oak next to the beach he found good water and there the hut and enclosure was erected for saying mass. Then the general and the admiral, the commissary, the captains, ensigns and all the rest of the people came ashore.

After mass had been said and the day had cleared up (for it was very foggy), we found ourselves in the best port that one could desire, because, besides being sheltered from all winds, it has many forests of pine suitable for masts and yards, plenty of live oaks and white oaks, water in great abundance: all the above close to the beach.

The land is fertile, in climate and appearance like Castile. Game abounds, -stags like yearling bulls, deer, *sibolas*, (*14) huge bears, rabbits, hares and flying creatures: geese, partridges, quail, cranes, ducks, vultures and many other kinds of birds which, for fear of wearying you, I do not tell of.

The land is heavily populated with Indians beyond number who came in crowds to our encampment at different times. They seem a mild and peaceful

(*14) The word *sibola*, means bison, but the famous buffalo of the Great Plains was unknown to California; Viscaino's men had probably never seen one either but had heard of the shaggy animals. What they probably saw were elk.

people. They said by signs that inland there were many towns. The daily food eaten by these Indians, besides fish and shellfish, are the acorn and another fruit thicker than a chestnut. That is what we were able to find out from them. (*15)

Because we had many men sick and the *Almiranta's* pilot and his assistant were very ill and there were not enough sailors to allow her to go on, and the victuals were almost exhausted because of the long delay in arriving here, it became difficult for the general to investigate everything at this time without reinforcements in personnel and supplies. So a meeting was called with the admiral and the council on what had best be done for His Majesty's service.

It was decided that the *Almiranta* would return to New Spain and carry the information of the discoveries made up to this stopping place to the Lord Viceroy. She would carry back the most desperately sick and request new men and equipment to finish the exploration, once and for all, of what remained of this coast and of the Mouth of the Californias, (*16) and pointing out the time and place where they were to be sent. Other things were discussed in the council and were written to the Lord Viceroy: that we in the *Capitana* and the tri-gate would proceed to Cape Mendocino and beyond, weather permitting.

The aforesaid having been agreed upon, it was immediately put into action by providing the *Almiranta* with wood and water and passing in to her the sick-est men. All that had been noted on the voyage: charts, sailing directions and diaries, was copied out, which was no small labor by reason of the illness of the map-maker and scribe, but by doing everything possible with the greatest diligence, in this, as well as in the matter of the wood and water (for the people were very sick), the *Almiranta* departed well provisioned on Sunday, December 29th, at 8 o'clock at night.

Of The Departure From The Port Of Monterey And What Happened After The Almiranta Was Dispatched And Of Our Arrival At Cape Mendocino

Sunday, the 29th of the said month, the *Almiranta* set off with the news, carrying the worst among the sick and provided with wood and water and everything needful for the trip to Acapulco port, the admiral bearing instructions not to stop in any port until he had reached Acapulco, and to take the best care of the sick and the other things that were sent in the said report. The rest of us stayed, getting together what was necessary for our voyage to Cape Mendocino, everybody working especially hard to get in the water and firewood because of the terribly cold weather. This reached such an extreme that on Wednesday, New Year's Day, 1603, dawn broke with all the mountains so covered with snow that they looked like the volcano of Mexico. In the waterhole where we drew our water the ice was a handsbreadth thick and the water-filled containers which had remained out all night were frozen solid. Although they were turned over and rolled, not a drop came out.

(*15) The chestnut-like fruit was our common buckeye. As a food, it needs more preparation than acorns.

(*16) The entrance to the Gulf of California.

In view of the critical state of affairs and the fact that necessity forced us all to set to work vigorously, encouraged by the example of the general who pitched in to load the water-casks and helped with the other chores, and the good care taken by Ensign Alarcon and Captain Peguero (who, although he was sick, came to aid us), and the pilots who did not shirk our business, we were all ready for sea by Friday night, the 3rd of January.

That day, the general, the commissary and ten blunderbussmen went inland toward the southeast side because he had received information that over there there was a rushing river that emptied into the sea there and another good port, and also to see better the character of the land and the people and animals in it. He marched about three leagues and discovered another good harbor, and into it entered a large river that came down from high snowy mountain ranges, covered with pines and white and black sycamores, willows and a great plain made by the said river.

On this strand were many animals as big as cows, apparently stags although they differed from them in their coat. These had pelt that dragged on the ground and they had antlers nine feet wide on each side. Every effort was made to kill one, but no one could get within reach of them. (*17)

Padre Fray Antonio de la Ascencion, one of the Carmelite chaplains with the expedition, added these details eighteen years later when he pleaded with the king to send missionaries to California. He even hinted at Dutch and English heretic competition there, but his proposal for occupation went unheeded:

"Among the animals are large, fierce bears and other animals called elks, from which leather (armor) jackets are made, and others of the size of young bulls, shaped and formed like deer with thick large horns. (*Perhaps antelope*)

There are many Castilian roses here, and pretty ponds of fresh water. (*El Estero, Roberts' Lake, Laguna Grande, Carmel River mouth lagoon?*) The mountains near the port were covered with snow, and that was on Christmas Day. On the beach was a dead whale, and at night some bears came to feed on it.

There are many fish here and a great variety of mollusks among the rocks; among them were certain barnacles or large shells, fastened to the lowest part of the rocks. The Indians hunt for them to extract from them their contents to eat. These shells are very bright, of fine mother-of-pearl. (*This is the first mention of the delectable abalone. "Abalone", by the way, is the only contribution of the local Indians to the English vocabulary.*)

All along this coast there is an abundance of sea-wolves or dogs of the size of a yearling calf. They sleep on the water, and sometimes go ashore to take the

(*17) Obviously elk in winter pelage. Father Palou, in his *Life of . . . Serra* (Father Geiger's translation, (page 186) says these huge animals ranged from Monterey northward in the lush coastal (and interior) valleys. In 1776, on the way to establish the mission at San Francisco, the soldiers killed three in the Santa Clara Valley. One spread of horns measured eleven feet. Our reporter, evidently no eye-witness, was not far out if he had understood the figure to apply **between** the tips.

sun; and there they place their sentinel in order to be secure from enemies. (*These are the sea lions for whom Point Lobos is named.*) The Indians clothe themselves in the skins of these animals, which are healthful, fine, beautiful and convenient." (*18)

In the *Monarquía Indiana*, written by Padre Fray Juan de Torquemada and printed in Seville in 1615, more extensive information is given. Apparently the author had access not only to a copy of Viscaino's *Relacion*, but also to either written or oral reports made by the survivors of the voyage. There is a free and informal air about his story that leads one to believe it was given to him in conversational style, possibly by one of Viscaino's chaplains, for there is meticulous reference to the religious services and actions of the friars. For natural history, too, this is the fullest account. Our translation has been made from Miguel de Venegas' *Noticias de la California* which reprinted part of Torquemada's work in 1739.

"A favorable wind, which swept away some of the fog and lasted until December 14th, came up and the ships found themselves near a very high snow-covered mountain range, all red on its slopes (*land-slides?*) and heavily forested. This *sierra* was named for Santa Lucia, and this is the one that is a regular landmark for the ships coming from China.

"Four leagues farther on, a river, coming down from high, snowy mountains, enters the sea between some craggy rocks, and all along its banks are black and white sycamores, willows and brambles and other trees as in Spain. This river is called the *Carmelo*. Two leagues beyond is a famous port, and between it and the said river there is a pine-forested hill two leagues wide and the land comes to a point at the entrance to the bay and is called *Punta de Pinos*...

"On the following day, (December 17th), the general ordered a shelter built where Padre Fray Andres de la Asuncion, Commissary, and Padre Fray Antonio de la Ascencion might say mass during their stay there. The church was built in the shadow of a huge oak, some of whose branches dipped in the sea, and near it, in a little ravine, about twenty paces away, were some pools in which there was very good sweet water. There was enough drinking water there for all the needs of the people of the squadron the whole time it remained at that place." (*Here follows a recitation of the decision of the council to send back the Almiranta and the desperately sick.*)

(To be concluded in the next issue)

(*18) Report of Father Ascencion, in Bolton, H. E., *Spanish Explorations in the Southwest* (1916), pages 119-120.

COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

Gifts to the Association

There have been several important gifts presented to the Association and now in Casa Serrano. Miss Edythe Foster of San Rafael has given an oil painting of Carmel Mission, handsomely framed in gold leaf. The picture was painted in 1860 by Mrs. Lee Tichnor. Mrs. Tichnor later married Henry Schnarble and lived in Bertchesgarten. Miss Foster also sent a book of great interest "**The People of the Pueblo**" by Celest G. Murphy. It is autographed and was given to her by the author. The context of the book is mostly about Sonoma but by mysterious ways Monterey seems to be often mentioned.

Mrs. H. C. Jung of San Jose has presented two books, **History of the State of California and Biographical Record of Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties** by Prof. J. M. Guinn, A.M. These books, once known as 'mug books' are now quite valuable collectors' items.

Mrs. Winifred Wolf of Gonzales has sent to the association a number of articles of wearing apparel once worn by her late mother, Mrs. L. Gonzales. The town of Gonzales in Monterey County was named for Mrs. Wolf's father and his family. Someday they will make a background for an historic exhibit at Casa Serrano. Mrs. Raymond Stangler also has given a number of valuable pieces of clothing to the costume collection.

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The pool in the garden is now in place and has been greatly admired. It was placed there by many memory gifts from the late Prof. Frank La Cauza's friends from all over the United States. We thank Charles Frost for his contribution in the construction of the brick work and Mrs. Mary L. Greene for the gift of tile from her home in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

Social Events

The annual Adobe House Tour, The Merienda, the Symphony Tea and other events at Casa Serrano were all enjoyable and successful. Mrs. Tod Singleton is the house chairman this year and is carrying on admirably; Mrs. Charles Bentley is the hospitality chairman and Mrs. Horace Dormody bosses the garden and the garden-er.

Mrs. Margaret Hanna Lang resigned as curator last month and now we are going back to the volunteer hostesses Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Mrs. Lang's resignation was accepted with regret. She is busy going to college and creating her charming pottery.

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Miss Eleanor Ziel has taken over the distribution of postcards and their sale from the curators of the Pacific Building, First Theatre, Custom House and Stevenson House, and is delivering the financial returns to the association treasurer. Miss Ziel recently retired from the Monterey school department.

The Merienda

Monterey's 195th birthday party on June 5th was, according to all 600 guests, the best ever. Particularly grateful for the soft, foggy overcast were the volunteer chefs at the glowing barbecue pits and those of us thin-haired caballeros who have been scorched on top at sunnier fiestas.

At the head table were Governor and Mrs. Edmund (Pat) Brown, our president Robert Stanton, Monterey's mayor Mrs. Minnie Coyle, Don Adolfo Dominguez, Con-

sul-General of Mexico in San Francisco, Spanish Consul-General Don Antonio Vidal Gabas, State Senator Fred Farr, Assemblyman Alan Pattee, Maj. General Edwin H. J. Carns, Rear Admiral E. J. O'Donnell, Charles DeTurk, Chief of the State Division of Beaches and Parks and other notables.

There too, was lovely Julie Campbell, the Favorita, daughter of Judge and Mrs. Gordon Campbell, and her attendants, Patricia Porter and Nancy Hilby; Julie's duena was Monterey's favorite daughter, Mrs. Thomas (Josephine) Fussell, who remembers Robert Louis Stevenson when he was the friend of her father Jules Simo-neau in 1879.

Gay Mexican tunes from the mariachi band of Manuel Campos provided a lively background for the singing of Mrs. Douglas Graham and Aldo Romano and the dancing of charming little Mireya Tamez Dominguez, granddaughter of Don Adolfo.

The highlight of the day however, was the surprise reserved for those fine and well-loved pillars of our Association: Mrs. William (Mayo) O'Donnell, Myron Oliver and Col. Allen Griffin. Governor Brown, on behalf of the Association, presented them with framed testimonials for their outstanding service to the community through long years of preserving the best of Monterey's past and furthering the ideals of our organization. Mrs. George Applegarth, daughter of Laura Bride Powers, first curator of the Customs House, author and originator of the Monterey History and Art Association, donated the beautiful awards (printed by Lawton Kennedy in San Francisco) and has provided for similar memorials for the next fifty years.

Ted Durein was at his inimitable Bavarian-Spanish best as master-of-ceremonies, George Leutzinger was general chairman for the event, Father Lawrence Farrell gave the blessing in mellifluous Spanish and Latin, Sal Cerrito presided over the abundant good food, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ross' committee of hostesses made each table a flower-decked feast for the eyes.

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The Allen Knight Maritime Museum Committee, under the direction of Admiral Earl Stone, has been working steadily toward its objective: fact-finding, feasibility and ways-and-means. Admirals Stone, Hobbs and Singleton reported to the directors at the June meeting and presented sketches of the proposed museum at the recommended site off Lighthouse Avenue adjoining the city yard. Gordon Hall's drawings fit beautifully into the long-range city plans for the area development and the completion of the harbor complex. The directors were highly pleased at the presentation of the report and gave the go-ahead signal for further work to bring the museum into being.

Admiral Ira Hobbs, Captain R. C. Jensen, Col. George Baxter and Donald Craig have been inventorying and photographing the Allen Knight Ship Collection at the Knight home so that a complete record may be had for cataloging and filing each of the hundreds of items.

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Speaking of the sea, on July 4th, the City of Monterey, the Monterey History and Art Association and the Navy League of the United States will celebrate at the Custom House the birthday of our nation and of the capture of Monterey by Commodore John Drake Sloat in 1846. Admiral Tod Singleton is in charge of the commemoration and the Navy has sent the U.S.S. Gridley to take part in the ceremonies. All are cordially invited to attend this historic and patriotic event.

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Deceased Members

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