

NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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EL ESTERO OF MONTEREY

Two maps lie before us as we write — one of 1770 and one of 1857. Both include the anchorage and harbor of Monterey, with the land area now occupied by the City of Monterey.

The astounding expanse of the estuary (El Estero) immediately demands our attention. Many a present day resident of Monterey would find his home and business under water should he be transported back in time.

The 1770 map is a copy of the original manuscript in color found in the map section of the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Spain. It was done by Miguel Costansó, Spanish officer and engineer who was part of the first expedition to California. It was he who surveyed the area and chose the site for the original Presidio and the Mission San Carlos as a member of the party under Gaspar de Portola. Probably his field notes for the map were made during the last part of June 1770 and the first week in July. On July 9th he sailed from Monterey in the ship San Antonio and ultimately made his report to Mexico City.

The second map we have is one that was printed in 1857 as part of the Survey of the Coast by the United States government, based on notes taken by the Hydrographic Party under the command of Lieut. James Alden, U.S. Navy in 1852. We reproduce with this article a detail from the large map that encompasses all of Monterey Bay.

Today El Estero is a quiet body of water shaped somewhat like a young moon encircling a children's playground, a picnic area, and the old cemetery. One arm ends at Fremont beside Marsh's oriental store, the other ends also at Fremont at the large traffic intersection below the entrance to the college. This water body is now a haven for water fowl. Small boats float on its waters and children may fish from its banks.

El Estero of the two old maps was a large body of water with long extensions. The Spanish map shows one encircling arm curving inland around and south of the rise occupied by San Carlos Cathedral. Three fingers of this arm, like prongs of a pitchfork, spread water over part of Fremont, and into what is now Sherman Lane, Mesa Road and Via Mirada.



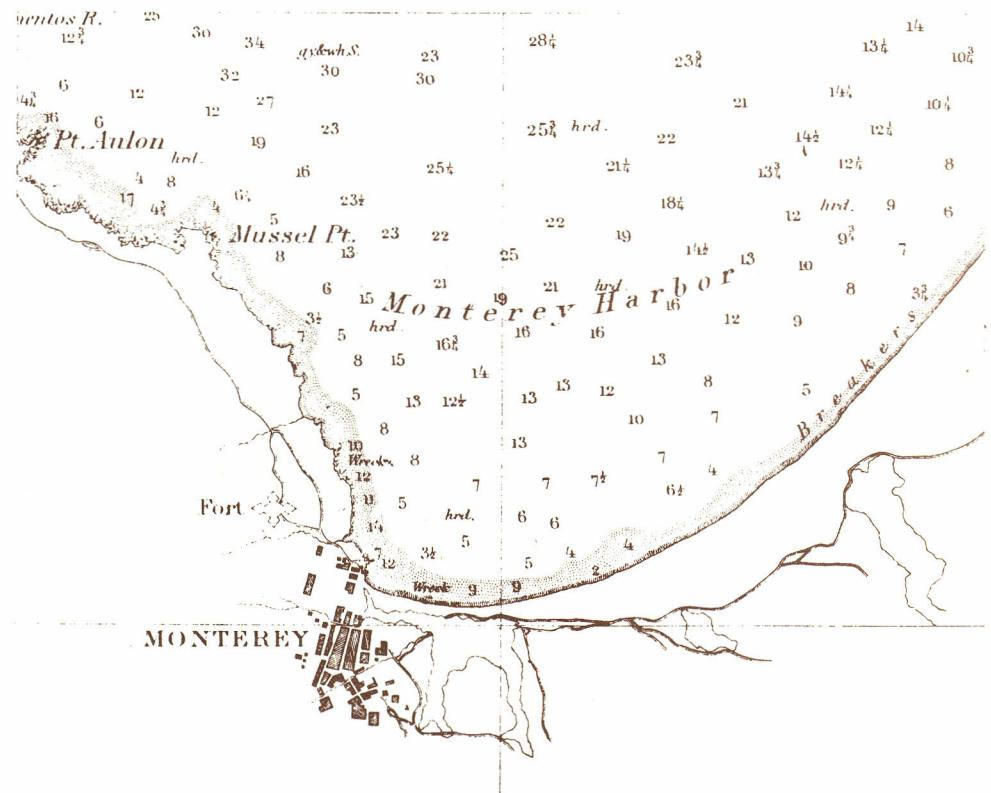
Portion of the 1770 map of the Port and Bay of Monterey by Miguel Costansó. **B** indicates the anchorage. **C** marks location of original Presidio and Mission of San Carlos. **G** shows the 1770 expanse of El Estero.

The other encircling arm of El Estero reaches across present day Fremont past the traffic intersection and up the canyon that is now filled with the freeway sweeping past the County Court House hill.

There was then, also, a third arm of El Estero that meandered along the present day route of Del Monte from the estuary to about Tyler. There it turned slightly northward and when overflowing probably could empty into the Bay of Monterey between the present railroad station and the Custom House.

The map of 1857, some eighty years later than the Spanish map, shows El Estero still had the three arms or extensions. The two that today encircle the cemetery area had shrunk and their elongated "tails" were gone. The third extension reaching to Tyler had shortened.

Examination of these two maps brought to mind conversations we had some thirty to forty years ago with older residents of Monterey. We were told of how full El Estero became with high tides; of how it was possible before the railroad to pole a small skiff from about Franklin north on Tyler towards the Custom House; of the hunters who shot the wildfowl on the lake by the hundreds; and how it was necessary to use much fill, whalebones, and even the street sweepings of fertilizer to bring the level of lower Scott Street up high enough above flood water when Scott was cut through from Alvarado to Tyler. This last area is now part of the Custom House Plaza next to the railroad tracks.



Section from the Preliminary Chart of Monterey Bay published 1857 as part of the Survey of the Coast of the United States. The Fort indicated was built in 1847. The road leading north west from the Fort went to the Point Pinos Lighthouse which had been built in 1857.

The tales told us are now substantiated by the old maps. The index of the Spanish Map says the El Estero is one that fills (or overflows) with the "Mareas Vivas" (Spring Tides).

Over the years since 1857 all the extensions of El Estero have shrunk. Large culverts were installed by the city to carry the drainage waters from the hills down past the High school through the small canyon past the Stokes adobe, the Cooper adobe, under Alvarado after that was filled to eliminate a bridge, and on under Tyler, Houston, and near Washington turning to take the waters out to the Bay. Then, in the last part of the 1800s there was the large fill made to carry the railroad past the Custom House to Pacific Grove. Thus the third arm of El Estero has vanished from the map of today.

A few observations about the anchorage are also of interest. The Spanish map indicates the anchorage with the letter **B**, and the index states it was sheltered from the winds of the sea, **except** for a North Northeaster. The U.S. map warns of possible trouble in anchoring a sailing vessel. The text reads — "In entering the Bay give a good berth in order to clear Pt. Pinos. Avoid getting too near the shore to the Northward of the Anchorage, as the prevailing wind (North West) does not generally blow home, and there is danger of getting becalmed with a heavy swell setting on to the beach." Grim evidence of some sailor's mistakes shows in the marks on the map indicating wrecks along the shore.

Before leaving the Spanish map we draw our readers' attention to the original route of the Camino del Rey — the Kings Highway — the first trail along which the expedition came up from San Diego, out from Salinas valley, and on to the Carmel river. A curve had to be made to avoid the elongated arms of El Estero, and the actual road into the Presidio site was from the south and slightly west — a branch leading off from the Camino del Rey. The site of the Presidio of 1770 (now occupied in part by San Carlos Cathedral) is marked as C on the map.

ED. NOTE: Our sincere thanks to young Eric Beerman who is now doing research in Madrid on the Galvez family. It was Eric who found the old map, and through the courtesy of his mother in Dinuba, California was able to forward this xerox copy.

STOLEN — TWO COWS

Yellowed and faded, an old paper of 1857 has survived to be read with interest. Some years ago Judge E. Michaels, Justice of the Peace in Monterey, died leaving a mass of papers, books, etc. A few of these were given to the family of the Judge's old friend, Joseph Leppert, and of them, this paper was kept by Joseph Leppert's grandson, Henry Krolfifer.

The legal paper is a complaint made by one Soberanes that two of his valued cows had been stolen by one Juan, an Indian. The paper is folded as they then were, for filing in ribbon bound groups. It is entitled "Affadavit of Complaint". In the lower corner are the names of the witnesses called in the case; Felis Buelna, E. Soberanes, and George (????) (the last name faded away).

The body of the complaint reads as follows:

State of California
County of Monterey

SS

Justice Court
Monterey Township

On this 17th day of November AD 1857 before me Salvador Osio a Justice of Peace in and for the County of Monterey Ezekiel Soberanes who being by me sworn says that the crime of Grand ~~Petit~~ Larceny has been committed in said County, and upon oath accuses one Juan an Indian with the commission thereof as follows, to wit, That on or about the 9th day of November AD 1857 at the County aforesaid the said Juan did feloniously take steal carry and drive away two Sixty cows of the value of Forty Dollars then and there being the property of this deponent, the said Ezekiel Soberanes. And this Deponent upon oath says that the said Juan is guilty of the crime Grand ~~Petit~~ Larceny committed at the time and place and in the manner and form as aforesaid.

Sworn to & subscribed to
before me on this 17th day
of November AD 1857
(signed) J. Salvador Osio
Justice of Peace

(signature)
Esequiel Soberanes

Poor Juan! The cows at first were valued at forty dollars but increased in value as the complaint was being written to sixty dollars. Thus the charge could change from Petit Larceny to Grand Larceny, the costs would rise, and in all probability the period of labor allotted as punishment to Juan could be extended. We are assuming, of course, that with the three named witnesses giving their testimony Juan was found guilty. And the usual punishment for Indians was so many days, or weeks, or even months, as a laborer for some local resident — with the wages being paid into court to pay first the Court costs, and then the injured party.

The Monterey History and Art Association owns several of the actual record volumes kept by the early Justices of Peace. These were all hand written and across each case the various officials signed their names in receipt of fees levied, etc.

We know that Salvador Osio was Justice of the Peace for Monterey Township for several years, and have some of his recorded cases in 1858-9, but unfortunately the volume of November 1857 is missing — so we do not know exactly what happened to Juan the Indian.

Salvador Osio was one of the few young men of Monterey to receive a broader education than average during the first years of the American period. Son of the wealthy Antonio Maria Osio from the Loreto, Baja California pearl fishery family, and of the Arguello family, Salvador was sent east for schooling, including some time at Harvard. He returned to Monterey to become Justice of the Peace by 1857, and then assessor of Monterey County at the time of his early death in 1862. His widow lived on for many years, into the 1900s. She moved from the old Osio home on the east side of Alvarado to the home of her sister which she purchased. This final home is now one of the surviving adobes on Alvarado — termed the Rodriguez-Osio adobe.

Esequiel Soberanes, the complainant in the above case, was a grandson of one of the first Spanish soldiers to come to Monterey - Jose Maria Soberanes. We note that spelling was according to who wrote. Salvador writes Ezekiel Soberanes, but the signature on the complaint is **Esequiel** Soberanes.

The Soberanes family received several large land grants during the Mexican period, thus the two cows stolen could have been taken from ranch lands in the Salinas valley or from land along the present Monterey Salinas road. Indians had to eat, if not employed on a ranch, or in a home, and the wandering cattle on the hills were temptation indeed.

We thank Henry Krolfifer for allowing us to share with our readers the old complaint of Soberanes vs Juan the Indian. Henry and his wife have carried on the family interest in the history of Monterey. His grandfather, Joseph Leppert, had one of the first bakeries in Monterey. Today Henry and his wife have their interest in a fine gourmet shop, the Et Cetera.

NOTES

We received this past month a scholarly paper first written in 1955. It was published in Tome IV, No. 2, of ORBIS, the Bulletin International de Documentation Linguistique, in Louvain Belgium.

Nicholas Timiras of Berkeley came to Monterey in the early 1950s to spend some time interviewing the Monterey Italian fishermen, particularly the older residents, obtaining tapes and records from some twenty. He found that the Sicilians of Monterey generally had preserved their native fishing terminology. Special geographical, historical, social and cultural circumstances had kept their speaking language much as that they had had when arriving in the United States. The American influence in their Italian was mostly noted in words with circulation outside of the fishing area.

Students of the development and changes in dialects and idioms will find this small bulletin of value. The ending of the great fishing period of Monterey is fast sweeping away the distinctions found previously in the conversations of the local fishermen.

It has been some forty years since we first started to study the history of Monterey. At that time it was necessary to go east to obtain a professional degree as Curator of a history museum. Through the years a few western colleges have developed professional training in related fields, but the broad aspects of historic preservation have been neglected. Students still have to go east for some courses to fine centers such as Williamsburg.

We have long maintained that "our California" developed a way of life distinct from that of the eastern area. Graduates of eastern schools so often lack an understanding of the full westward expansion and its mingling with the Spanish Colonial heritage of the southwest. Therefore we welcome the announcement of the establishment of a Center of Historic Preservation at Claremont Graduate School. A pilot project is being developed to design educational programs in historic preservation for secondary schools, colleges and universities. The Center aims at expanding career opportunities in historic preservation as well as developing public sensitivity to the cause of historic Preservation.

COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

GIFTS RECEIVED: Bi-Centennial medal from estate of Miss Violet Marshall; old tapestry that formerly hung in Casa Pacheco from estate of Mrs. Charlotte Neville Wight; silver pieces and cut glass creamer and sugar from Col. & Mrs. Howard Helliesen; fine oriental sewing table from Mr. & Mrs. Al Frey; bust of Emory Curtis Singletary by Jo and Domingo Mora - gift of Mr. & Mrs. Byron C. Singletary; watercolor painted by W. Stanley Pearce of Sherman Headquarters from Mr. & Mrs. Pearce; rare Chinese skirt from Mr. & Mrs. H. Royce Greatwood; and old copies of the Declaration of Independence and the 1801 speech of Thomas Jefferson from Fanchon Freeman collection - gift of Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art.

Gifts designated for the Captain Cooper Workshop: a book on Modern Machine Shop Practices printed in the 1890s from Mr. & Mrs. Olaf Dahlstrand; and an old Sheffield saw from Mrs. C.H. Soule.

VICE-PRESIDENT: As allowed by our By-Laws, the Board has elected a Second Vice President to assist in directing the many activities of the Association. Raymond Smith was elected unanimously.

NEW BOARD MEMBER: Welcome to Mrs. George Dietterle. She has had an active interest in the aims of the Association, and now replaces Peter Coniglio who had to resign due to civic duties.

CASA SERRANO: Remember when you have guests visiting that our beautiful Casa Serrano on Pacific Street is open on Saturdays and Sundays from one to four P.M. Hostesses from the membership are there to welcome you. Learn more of the activities of your association!

MAYO HAYES O'DONNELL LIBRARY: Remember to also take your guests to our own library (one block up from the First Theatre on Van Buren Street, turn left). Our beloved Mayo O'Donnell has given her collection of Californiana, and many other members and friends have added their gifts. From the old windows at the back of the building the view of Monterey and the Bay is a sweep of beauty. Learn of how this former first protestant church building was saved.

SLOAT LANDING: R. Adm. Edward J. O'Donnell, U.S.N. Ret. has accepted the Chairmanship for the annual Sloat Landing ceremony in July.

NEW MEMBERS: Dr. Juan de La Guerra Barrett, Mrs. Andrew Bennett, Miss Ruth Blanchard, Mr. & Mrs. Donald F. Bovee, Mrs. Owen Butler, Dr. & Mrs. J. Jerrold Applegarth, Mrs. Kathleen Doud, Mr. & Mrs. Chester Dudley, Mr. William Hague, Miss Lori Haines, Capt. & Mrs. Weston M. Johnson, Miss Claire M. Kennedy, Mrs. Francis Kilpatrick, Miss G. Nancy Larsen, Mrs. M.S. Lester, Mr. & Mrs. McKee Mhoon, William B. Moore Jr., Mike Minnis, Betsy Pollock, Brigid Radford, Mr. & Mrs. John T. Ralph, Col. & Mrs. Robert R. Robertson, Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd G. Speer, Mr. & Mrs. Elmer Stall, Mr. & Mrs. Malcolm Steel, Mrs. Charles H. Wait, Lorri L. Ware, Edward Broome, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Babcock, Miss Gloria Brown, Mr. Roger Brown, Mr. & Mrs. Owen J. Butler, Miss Mary A. Cerrito, John Kimsey Cohan, Mr. & Mrs. John Conne, Suzette Conne, Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Carlin, Mrs. William Harrington, Mr. & Mrs. George S. Lockwood, Jr., Mr. & Mrs. Leo Nieto, RAdm. & Mrs. Edward J. O'Donnell, Mrs. William Raymond, Dr. & Mrs. M.J. Steckler, Mr. Chester A. Storas, Mr. James L. Van Vorhis.

Editors note: For those who may file our issues by volume and number, this past year has been one of only three issues, Nos. 2 & 3 were combined in September. Also, to correct an error of several years past, we changed the Vol. number from roman numerals to Vol. 17 for 1973. So you have a Vol. XVII in 1972 and a Vol. 17 in 1973.

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