

NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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The Tassajara Stage-Coach, early 1900's

1869 REPORT ON TASSAJARA HOT SPRINGS

W. V. McGarvey, County Assessor of Monterey County in the year 1869, sent his annual report for the previous year to the State Surveyor-General on September 12th. After detailing the number of animals on farms, the trees, farm produce, grapevines, etc., he added a report on the hot springs which we now call Tassajara:

"A discovery has lately been made in regard to the healing qualities of a hot mineral spring which, although known since the early days of the settlement of California, has been until now unappreciated. About forty-five miles southeast from Monterey, in the mountains between the heights of Galiagua [Cachagua, apparently] and San Antonio, there exists a large cave, covered in the inside with Indian hieroglyphics. This cave has, according to tradition, been occupied by Father Junipero Serra, the founder of the first missions in Upper California, when, with his escort, he went on expeditions to the rancherias in quest of proselytes. A Crucifix cut in the walls of the cave is said to be work of Father Junipero himself. Near this cave, and in close proximity to a fine mountain stream abounding in trout, is a sulphurous spring, the temperature of which is one hundred and twenty degrees, Fahrenheit. This spring has lately been resorted to by persons afflicted with rheumatic complaints, and the effects, according to the testimony of those who have visited the locality, have been wonderful. A man afflicted for several years with chronic rheumatism, and who had to take daily four grains of morphine to allay his suffering, was, after five days using the water, greatly relieved. He made a second trip to the spring, and, after four days stay, went away so far cured that he has since resumed his occupations, which, for a period of four years, he had been obliged to abandon, and is at present able to perform manual labor . . . The road from Monterey to the place aforesaid is everything but a good one. There is an indifferent wagon road, terminating twenty miles from the spring; the rest is a rugged mountain trail, but susceptible of improvement with some outlay."—A.E.

ENJOY TITLES?

By John Jernegan

How many know who was King of Spain in 1769-70, when Gaspar de Portolá and Father Junipero Serra established the first European settlements in what is now California? Those who said "Carlos III" may take a bow. But how many of those know how many titles this monarch bore? He wasn't just "King of Spain," not by a long shot, even though he may have simply signed himself "Yo, el rey" ("I, the king") after the fashion of Spanish rulers. Here is the full ensemble:

"The Very Mighty, Very Illustrious Catholic Lord, Don Carlos III (King of Castile, of León, of Aragon, of the Two Sicilies, of Jerusalem, of Navarre, of Granada, of Toledo, of Valencia, of Galicia, of Majorca, of Seville, of Sardinia, of Cordova, of Corsica, of Murcia, of Jaén, of the Algarve, of Algeciras, of Gibraltar, of the Canary Islands, of the East and West Indies, of the islands and mainland of the Ocean Sea; Archduke of Austria; Duke of Burgundy, of Brabant and of Milan; County of Hapsburg, of Flanders, of Tyrol and of Barcelona; Lord of Biscay and of Molina, etc.)"

This mouthful was what Juan Perez, one of California's earliest mariners, was instructed to append to documents claiming in the King's name any territory he might discover in the course of a voyage of exploration he was to undertake north of Monterey in 1774. The instructions, dated December 24, 1773, came from a personage with quite a name and quite some titles himself: "the Most Excellent Lord,

Baillo Frey Don Antonio Bucareli y Ursúa Henestrosa Laso de La Vega Villacís y Córdoba (Knight of the 'Gran Cruz' and Knight Commander of the 'Bóveda de Toro' in the Order of His Majesty with the privilege of entrance; Lieutenant General of the Royal Army, Viceroy, Governor and Captain General of this New Spain; President of the Royal 'Audiencia'; Superintendent General of the Royal Treasury; President of the Board of Tobacco, Judge Conservator of this Branch; and Subdelegate General of the Postal Revenues of his same Kingdom)."

The use of all these titles gives a good indication of the elaborately detailed set of instructions which poor Juan Perez carried off with him. This may have seemed a crushing burden to one who was, after all, only an 'alferez' (ensign) in the Spanish navy, even though he was one of the most experienced navigators in the Pacific area. At any rate, Perez made a reasonably successful voyage up and down the coast in 1774. However, he died aboard ship the next year while on his way from Monterey to San Blas, Mexico.

NOTE: The full text of his instructions, in translation, is to be found in an article by Manuel P. Servin in the "California Historical Society Quarterly" for September 1961.

UPDATE ON THE COOPER ADOBES

The long, complicated task of restoring the complex that Captain Cooper first began building in 1828 is progressing slowly and carefully. Latest visible work is that of protecting the buildings from the ravages of what we all hope will be a drought-breaking winter. Wherever necessary, temporary roofs have been put on, deteriorating outer walls have been sheathed, and harmful drainage channels have been redirected.

UPDATE ON CASA SOBERANES

If all goes as planned, the lovely Soberanes Adobe will be opened to the public this spring, for three or four days a week. As most of you probably know, it was built in 1841/42 by Jose Guadalupe Rafael Papias Estrada, celador of the Custom House. A couple of years later, Rafael Estrada married one of his second cousins, Concepcion Malarin. Sixteen years later, Rafael sold the house to his cousin Ezequiel Soberanes, who in turn willed it to his son, Ezequiel Soberanes, Jr. The adobe was in the Soberanes family for over sixty years, so bears the name of the second owners rather than of the first. (Incidentally, Rafael Estrada had still another cousin — this one almost his exact same age and also named Rafael Estrada!)

SOME SCHIZOPHRENIC VISITORS

Travelers to California in the 17th and 18th centuries seem to have followed a very similar pattern of reaction to the Spanish-Mexican inhabitants. Almost invariably the residents were damned for indolence and lack of initiative on the one hand and then fulsomely praised for their great courtesy and warm hospitality. The early travel-writers seldom appear to have noticed the obvious relationship of these characteristics. Even among the better educated visitors there seems to have been an odd lack of understanding of the historic background that made the Californians what they were. Perhaps we too need a few gentle reminders.

For instance, in our celebration of Columbus, we are likely to forget that it was during that same great era that Spain expelled both Moors and Jews. She thereby lost practically her whole middle class of merchant and professional men. With the wealth of gold and silver pouring in from the Americas, the mother country faced little economic pressure to produce a new middle class — the sort of rising middle class that was to be such a strength to countries like England and Holland. With a middle class of little or no importance at home, Spanish colonists took their roles instead from the conquistadors. Two hundred years after Cortez, this was rather an outdated role to hold at all. And in areas where there was little gold or silver or Chinese silks, a conquistador type obviously became rather ineffectual. He made a poor tiller of the soil, for example.

Spain threw another stupendous obstacle in the way of her colonists. In the course of a couple of centuries, there had developed under the most absolute of monarchs a most absolute mountain of bureaucracy. The smallest decision in the remotest province had to wait while paperwork went its redtape way, tortuous step by more tortuous step, clear up to the king himself. Those who initiated some excellent proposals, therefore, might well be dead by the time a decision finally crawled its way back down the lengthy ladder.

All these things affected California, of course, and actually delayed its settlement until Spain was nearly on the verge of the Napoleonic Wars. The devastation of those wars naturally meant Spanish neglect of much of her empire and the actual loss of Mexico and South America (as well as her vast territory of Louisiana).

So now we ourselves can view some of the nasty remarks of our early visitors with more amusement than anger . . . especially as it seems these travelers perhaps envied the very things they condemned, which would of course contribute to their schizophrenia!

English Captain George Vancouver, here in 1792 and 1794, lavished this description on the San Francisco Presidio: "The apartment in the commandant's house, into which we were ushered, was about thirty feet long, fourteen feet broad, and twelve feet high; and the other room, or chamber, I judged to be of the same dimension, excepting in its length, which appeared to be somewhat less. The floor was of the native soil raised about three feet from its original level, without being boarded, paved, or even reduced to an even surface; the roof was covered in with flags and rushes, the walls on the inside had once been whitewashed; the furniture consisted of a very sparing assortment of the most indispensable articles, of the rudest fashion, and of the meanest kind; and ill accorded with the ideas we had conceived of the sumptuous manner in which the

Spaniards live on this side of the globe." He goes on to comment, "This sketch will be sufficient, without further comment, to convey some idea of the inactive spirit of the people."

Arrived in "the famous port of Monterey," Vancouver gave slightly better marks to our Presidio because here "the officers apartments are covered with a sort of red tile made in the neighborhood" and the apartments of the commanding officer "are much more extensive than those at San Francisco, as they consist of five or six spacious rooms with boarded floors, but under the same disadvantage of wanting glass, or any substitute for it." But taken all in all, "the whole presents the same lonely, uninteresting appearance, as that already described at San Francisco . . . There were many delightful situations in the immediate neighbourhood of the Presidio, with great diversity in the ground to favour the taste of the ingenious, and a soil that would amply reward the labour of the industrious, in which our Spanish friends might with equal ease have sat themselves down; more comfortable, more convenient, and I should conceive more salutary than their present residence appeared to be."

But then the bouquets, as Vancouver tells us "we unexpectedly not only found an asylum, and pleasant retreat from the vicissitudes and labours of our voyage, but the gratification of social intercourse with a set of liberal-minded, generous people, each of whom endeavoured to surpass the other in manifesting an interest for our welfare, and expressing on every occasion the happiness they felt, in relieving our wants or rendering us any kind of service . . . [All] with whom we had the honour of being acquainted, demand from us the highest sentiments of esteem and gratitude. Even the common people were entitled to our good opinion and respect as they uniformly subscribed to the exemplary conduct of their superiors, by a behaviour that was very orderly and obliging."

James Pattie, Faxon Dean Atherton, Richard Henry Dana — whoever and whenever they arrived, they continued to pinch and pet the Californians alternately. Dana, here about 1835, brashly claimed that "nothing but the character of the people prevents Monterey from becoming a great town." On the other hand, "Every rich man looks like a grandee, and every poor scamp like a broken-down gentleman . . . A common bullock-driver, on horseback, delivering a message, seemed to speak like an ambassaodor at an audience."

A few years later Sir George Simpson sounded off heartlessly: "On the score of industry, these folks . . . are perhaps the least promising colonists of a new country in the world . . . Various circumstances have conspired to render these dons so very peculiarly indolent. Independently of innate differences of national taste, the objects of colonization exert an influence over the character of the colonists . . . Spanish America, with its sierras of silver, became the asylum and paradise of idlers, holding out to every adventurer, when leaving the shores of the old country, the prospect of earning his bread without the sweat of his brow.

"But the population of California in particular has been drawn from the most indolent variety of an indolent species, being composed of superannuated troopers and retired office holders and their descendents . . . In a word, they displayed more than the proverbial indolence of a pastoral people, for they did not devote even their idle hours to the tending of their herds. As one might have expected, the children improved on the example of the parents through the influence of a systematic education — an education which gave them the lasso as a toy in

infancy and the horse as a companion in boyhood, which in short, trained them from the cradle to be mounted bullocks-hunters and nothing else. . . .”

The other side of Simpson's coin: “. . . the Californians are a happy people, possessing the means of physical pleasure to the full, and knowing no higher kind of enjoyment . . . the good folks thrive upon it. They live long, warding off the marks of age for a period unusual even in some less trying climates . . . Among the lighthearted and easy tempered Californians, the virtue of hospitality knows no bounds; they literally vie with each other in devoting their time, their homes, and their means to the entertainment of a stranger.”

The last of our traveling examples came with the American conquest. Walter Colton wrote: “To-day I entered on the duties of my office as alcalde of Monterey . . . Here is the reckless Californian, the half-wild Indian, the roving trapper of the West, the lawless Mexican, the licentious Spaniard, the scolding Englishman, the absconding Frenchman, the luckless Irishman, the plodding German, the adventurous Russian, and the discontented Mormon. All have come here with the expectation of finding but little work and less law . . . A foreigner may be reduced to work for money, but not a Californian, so long as he has a pound of beef or a pint of beans left.”

But here our puritan Yankee a little later: “Generous, forbearing people of Monterey! There is more true hospitality in one throb of your heart than circulates for years through the courts and capitals of kings . . . there are no people that I have ever been among who enjoy life so thoroughly as the Californians. Their habits are simple; their wants few; nature rolls almost every thing spontaneously into their lap . . . Their hospitality knows no bounds . . . This is as true of the lady whose hand has only figured her embroidery or swept her guitar, as of the cottage-girl, wringing from her laundry the foam of the mountain stream . . . If I must be cast in sickness or destitution on the care of the stranger, let it be in California; but let it be before American avarice has hardened the heart and made a god of gold.”



Anyone who has ever enjoyed a visit to Tassajara Hot Springs must have been delighted to hear the buildings and immediate land survived the Marble-Cone fire. Thanks to endless, courageous hours of hard work in the middle of the 175,000 acre blaze, Tassajara remained a green oasis throughout. At left you see a much earlier picture of the main building at Tassajara, which was not so fortunate – it burned about forty years ago.

KEEP THE VISITORS COMING!

Winding up of the year seems a good opportunity to remind all our members to be sure to send visitors to see those buildings which our volunteers work so hard to keep open for their benefit. Hours at Casa Serrano and Casa Amesti are Saturdays and Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. The Mayo Hayes O'Donnell Library (First Protestant Church) is open Wednesday and Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. and on Sunday from 1:30 to 4 p.m. May all your guests have happy sightseeing.

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Successful deer hunter photographed at Tassajara, possibly in the 1920's. Can any helpful reader identify her? This and our other Tassajara photos are from Amelie Elington's collection.

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