

NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

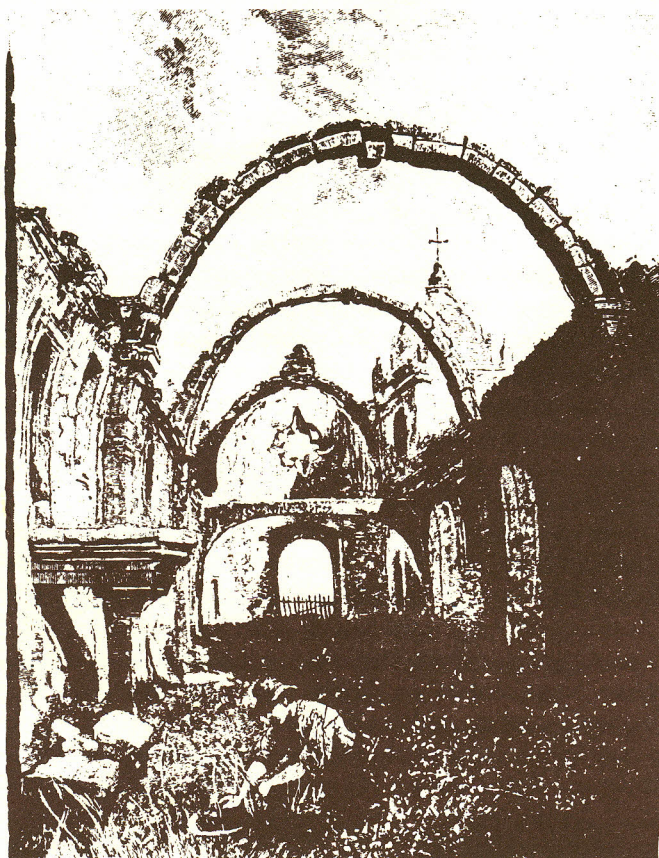
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**Interior of San Carlos Mission, 1882, showing the original spring
of the roof and curve of the walls.**

INSIDE: The Majorca Connection

The Majorca Connection

Brothers from the Golden Isle

On an atlas, Majorca appears as a tiny speck off the coast of Spain. The ancients call it the "Golden Isle" for its beauty. Occupied, first by the Moors, then by the Christians, Majorca drowsed for centuries in the warmth of the Mediterranean. The climate was good, the land fertile and the church provided sufficient spiritual nourishment to make the world seem sweet indeed.

In the first half of the Eighteenth Century, however, the small, provincial locale of Majorca produced a group of men whose vision, eloquence and fortitude were instrumental in profoundly changing a vast expanse of unknown land, half a world away.

The first of these men was born Miguel Jose Serra on November 24, 1713, in Petra, a small town some 25 miles from the capital city of Palma. Of short stature and delicate appearance, Serra showed an early inclination toward the church and at the age of fifteen was taken by his parents to Palma, where he attended classes in philosophy at the monastery of San Francisco. He took his vows two years later, adopting the name Junipero, after Brother Juniper, a lay companion of St. Francis. It was perhaps an odd choice for Serra who was devout and serious, whereas Brother Juniper, sometimes called "The Lord's Jester", was cheerful and outgoing. These attributes, however, apparently appealed to young Serra and the character of one of his closest lifelong companions, Juan Crespi, echoes some of Brother Juniper's traits.

After ordination, Serra's ardent sermons gained him a reputation for eloquence and he was appointed, first as a teacher, and then a professor of theology at the Lullian University in Palma. It was here that he became close friends with two of his pupils, Crespi and Francisco Palou. The three were destined to change the course of history far from the comfortable environment of Majorca. Crespi was eight years Serra's junior and Palou, ten. After ordination, both younger men kept in contact with their former teacher, who was now making a name for himself as a religious educator and spell-binding preacher. It might have been enough to satisfy most men, but Serra felt unfulfilled. One day he confessed to Palou that he had been harboring a secret desire to go to America as a missionary. Palou confided that he had had the same longing and together they applied for permission to be transferred to the College of San Fernando in Mexico City, Franciscan headquarters in the New World. After much delay, their request was granted, and at the age of 36, Serra and his former student departed for Cadiz and transport to Mexico. When they arrived at the port, they found that several other friars had taken their first look at the immensity of the sea and decided to remain on dry land. This left several vacancies to be filled. Serra and Palou asked that Crespi be invited, and he and several other Majorcans were given permission to follow in the next contingent. Official documents of the time describe Serra as being swarthy with black hair and eyes and a scant beard. He and his former student

left Spain August 30, 1749, and after a storm-racked passage, arrived in Mexico 99 days later.

It was almost 250 miles from Veracruz to Mexico City. Although most of the new arrivals made the trip on muleback, Serra, either following the strict dictates of the Franciscan order, or because of his active dislike of riding, elected to make the trip on foot with one companion. Palou, who had fallen sick, did not accompany the pair. It was on this initial trip in a strange new land that Serra was bitten on the leg by an insect. The infection and ulceration which followed were to plague him the rest of his life.

Within six months after his arrival, he and Palou were assigned to work among the half-savage Pame Indians in the Sierra Gorda region. Two years later they were joined by Crespi. Together they built missions, taught agriculture and sought souls. Although the work was hard and occasionally dispiriting, Serra was filled with energy and piety. Palou became the trusted administrator and Crespi was their cheerful companion, light of heart and apparently undaunted by the many difficulties they encountered.

Serra worked eight years in the Sierra Gorda and then was called back to Mexico City in 1758 for re-assignment to the Rio Saba Apaches, who were held responsible for the deaths of two missionaries and several soldiers.

The crisis passed, however, and Serra spent the next seven years preaching in Mexico City and making numerous trips to carry the word of God to outlying areas. The delicate Majorcan youth had become a tough-as-leather campaigner, preaching salvation as he walked § sometimes half-dragging his game leg § from the steaming coastal plains of the Gulf of Mexico to the arid elevations of the Central plateau where little grew and the wind never stopped. Palou remained in the Sierra Gorda for several more years and at one point was president of the missions there. Crespi was in charge of the easternmost mission of San Francisco de Tilaco in the same area.

It was probably at this point that Serra's character took final shape and his reputation began. The contrast of the poverty-stricken tribes he encountered with the indolence and self-gratification of the wealthy capital awoke in him the words of Saint Francis, bidding him to "do penance for the sins of the people." The Indians had little of anything, including sin; the rich and powerful of Mexico City had an overabundance of everything, and, in Serra's eyes, sin was the most conspicuous.

Agnes Repplier describes Serra at this time:

All classes of men liked and respected him. The violence of his preaching. . . was not displeasing to those who were capable of religious emotionalism. . . the more self-indulgent they were, the more they esteemed the asceticism of the friar whose business it was to be ascetic. Moreover, Serra's honesty, simplicity, and manliness compelled their admiration. Cavaliers reined in their steeds. . . and sought a blessing or a friendly word. They would have lured him, if they could, into intimacy. They were ready to give him anything he asked for the sick poor. . . in the comparative comfort of San Fernando he felt the urgent need to suffer. Like Saint Francis, he regarded his body as the enemy of his soul. Not content with wearing haircloth and sleeping on boards, he scourged himself cruelly, first in his cell, and later in the pulpit, by way of admonition to sinners.

Eye-witnesses tell of the small friar standing before a Sunday crowd, beating his bare breast with a stone while holding a cross aloft in his other hand, poin-

ting the way toward salvation. There are other reports of him holding lighted tapers next to his body until his skin was scorched to illustrate the agony of Hell or beating his shoulders with a chain until they were bloody. Repplier notes "there was nothing in this medievalism to alienate the crowds who flocked to hear Serra preach. The rich and worldly-minded were awed by the terrible sincerity of the preacher and by his unflinching courage." But Serra had another side, too, Repplier continues:

There were (also) gentle qualities in this stern reformer. They manifested themselves in a sweet reasonableness of behavior to his brother friars, and in a limitless charity to the poor. . .

With women, Serra's (social) intercourse was a failure. They resented his attitude, which was one of persistent withdrawal. His words were few, sober, and dryly spoken. It is said that, when in their society, he confined his conversation to relating incidents of the lives of saints, to which they listened with pardonable impatience. . .Serra (resented) these fine ladies who rode in coaches "richly beset with precious stones, and lined with cloth of gold"; and whose reprehensible custom of having cups of chocolate served to them in church awoke his utmost ire. . .Happily, six months of every year were spent in traveling to distant monasteries and missions, and in preaching to poor farmer folk and Indians. It is to this period of Serra's life that we can trace the beginnings of the legends that cluster thickly around his name. The chances that he took in his lonely and dangerous wanderings, and his success in overcoming difficulties and escaping disaster made it seem as though he were supernaturally guarded from harm. His reputation for sanctity caused such guardianship to appear as a reasonable and well-merited thing."

It should have been enough for an evangelist approaching his 54th year. He happily suffered to carry the word of the gospel to the heathen on the far outskirts of civilization and threatened certain damnation to the wealthy hedonists who thronged to hear him in the capital. But this was just a prelude for what was to come. In 1767, Carlos III of Spain, fearing the power of the Catholic Jesuits, accused them of plotting against the government, and ordered the expulsion of all members of the order from Mexico. Included were those who had laboriously scratched out a string of 15 missions from the arid soil of the Lower California Peninsula. Palou, who had returned to Mexico City several years before, succeeded in convincing the authorities to grant these missions to the Franciscan order and Serra was named as president. Palou volunteered to accompany him, and Crespi, who had been laboring all these years in the Sierra Gorda, also was summoned. At last the three Majorcans were together again.

The arrival of the Franciscans on the peninsula of Lower California in 1768 was more than a simple changing of order; it was the beginning of a new era, culminating in the exploration and possession of the Pacific Coast as far north as San Francisco Bay. For many years, Spanish navigators, returning from the Far East, had followed the prevailing winds to make landfall at or above mid-California, then turned south to discharge their rich cargoes at San Blas or Acapulco. Many prominent points on the coast were recognized and named, but, incredibly enough, no actual land exploration had been mounted in the 165 years since Sebastian Viscaino landed at Monterey and erroneously described the harbor as well protected. Carlos III and his ministers recognized that although they might hold titular power to this portion of the coast they

would have to occupy it physically to fend off possible claims by the English or Russians.

In addition to removing the Jesuits, he appointed Jose de Galvez as inspector-general to oversee a joint expedition of Franciscan friars and royal soldiers to plant the flag and the cross firmly in the soil of Alta California.

The three Majorcans had scarcely settled in the various missions to which they had been assigned when Galvez arrived and requested a meeting with Serra to coordinate plans. It was decided that joint forces would proceed north on three ships, together with two overland expeditions, planning to join up in San Diego. Crespi was appointed chaplain and diarist of the first arm of the land expedition under the command of Fernando Rivera y Moncada. They left the established missions in February of 1769 and arrived in San Diego on May 14, to find two of their three ships already in port. Sickness, however, had already claimed lives of many of the sailors and the rest were so ill that the vessels could not be properly manned. The third ship, which was carrying most of the supplies, failed to arrive and was finally presumed lost. Crespi with another priest and several soldiers explored the valley of the San Diego River and reported that it was well suited for the establishment of a mission. Crespi's letter, dated June 22, 1769, was the first document executed by a Franciscan in Upper California. Serra, suffering mightily from the pain in his ulcerated leg, arrived shortly after with the second arm of the land force under the command of Gaspar de Portola. Palou was left in Lower California to take over the presidency of the missions there.

Not long after the expedition was reunited, Portola elected to continue on with a force of 64 persons, including soldiers, priests, muleteers and settlers, to locate and establish the port of Monterey. Again Crespi was appointed diarist for the group and it is through his eyes that we first see the details of what, until then, had been a land completely unknown to the rest of the world. As Portola's little band moved north, Crespi notes the discovery of La Brea tar pits; records the first earthquake experienced by Europeans, and names an Indian settlement in memory of the Portiuncula Indulgence attached to the chapel of Our Lady of the Angels at Assisi, later shortened to Los Angeles. The group moved easily along the Santa Barbara channel, which had a large Indian population, but soon hit the southern fringe of the Santa Lucia mountains and had great difficulty in making their way over the steep terrain. Many members of the expedition became sick and weary. Finally they reached a large stream which Crespi named Rio de San Elzeario, but which almost certainly was the Salinas River. They followed the stream until they were within a few miles of the ocean. The next day, Crespi and several soldiers climbed a small hill, just south of Moss Landing, in the hope that they could spot Monterey, as described by the Spanish navigator Cabrera Bueno, and others. In his diary Crespi reports:

. . . from the summit (we) beheld a grand *ensenada* or open bay, and we conjectured it was the one Bueno puts between Point Ano Nuevo and Point Pinos de Monterey, for we saw the latter covered with tall pines, so that near it must be found the Port of Monterey. We saw not one single Indian around here. We returned to camp and the commander decided that (Captain Rivera) should go the following morning and examine the point. Rivera with eight men set out and marched southward along the shore

of the bay. . .they crossed Point Pinos and on the other side of it discovered a small bight formed between the point and one south of it (Point Lobos) with an arroyo flowing down from the mountains, well wooded, and a slough, into which the said stream (Carmel River) discharges its waters.

Not recognizing the "safe harbor" described by Vizcaino, it was speculated that the harbor must be still further north and although an increasing number of men were scarcely able to walk, they decided to continue. Several days later the explorers were stopped by a huge estuary running inland from the sea, apparently so extensive that it would be impossible to get around, considering the condition of the party. This, of course, was San Francisco Bay, and rather than feeling exhilaration by the discovery, it was treated as an impossible impediment to any further exploration. The party turned back to Monterey. Still hoping their supply ship would appear, they camped on the beach and debated whether to split into two groups, one to remain, the other to return to San Diego. It was finally decided that they should stick together and two large crosses were erected over glass bottles which recorded the events of the expedition to that point. Retracing their steps, and subsisting on mulemeat, they finally staggered into San Diego after an absence of over six months.

Here things were not much better. The supply ship sent back to Mexico had not yet returned and Portola was ready to abandon the mission. He was persuaded by Serra to wait nine more days and on the afternoon of the last day, the ship was sighted.

With adequate provisions, a second attempt was made to locate Monterey. Portola, accompanied again by Crespi, set out overland, camping near Carmel Bay close to one of the crosses that had been erected. A little over a week later, Serra and the rest of the contingent arrived in Monterey by sea. It was soon evident that from a different vantage point, this was indeed the bay described by Viscaino. Serra wrote to Palou:

On May 31 (1770), after a somewhat distressful sea voyage of a month and a half this packet-boat. . .arrived and anchored in this beautiful port of Monterey. It is exactly the same in substance and features as the expedition of Don Sebastian Vizcaino left it. . .In regard to the failure of the first over-land expedition to find this port and their noising it around abroad that it did not exist, I have nothing to say. . .It is enough that it was finally found. . .and the wishes of the Visitor General and all of us who desire this spiritual conquest, were fulfilled, event though somewhat tardily.

On June 3 an altar was erected on the beach; bells were hung; Serra recited Mass, and Portola flung a handful of grass and some stones to the wind, dispossessing all others who might claim the land. The same day, work was begun on a chapel near the Presidio. The little settlement grew, but the following year Serra put some distance (and a steep hill) between his church and the lay authorities, by beginning construction of the Mission of San Carlos de Borromeo in Carmel.

Crespi accompanied Serra to the new location and labored side by side with him. It is from Crespi's writings that we learn of the early years of mission life. He describes Serra's quarters as a one-room hut, built of twigs and mud, which held a table and a stool. A few boards made up the bed. By the door stood a tall cross, at which the mission president frequently prayed. The

building in which Crespi lived served also as the church and a storeroom for provisions, tools and farming implements. A leaky roof provided only marginal protection during the rainy season. The kitchen was housed in a separate building because of fire danger and there were barracks for a half-dozen soldiers attached to the mission. A stockade surrounded these modest structures and animals were pastured on the adjacent hillside.

Crespi's lightheartedness earned him the name of El Beato or "The Blessed" and he seemed to fill some need in the Father President's somber piety.

In 1770, Serra wrote to Palou, asking for the assignment of two more priests, saying they would be needed to establish new missions. "I must have one priest with me here," he wrote, "and as long as Fray Juan and I can stand, we will not be separated."

Despite this, he dispatched him in 1772 on an expedition led by Governor Pedro Fages to explore the unknown country surrounding San Francisco Bay. During this reconnaissance, which covered the area from San Jose to Berkeley and beyond, the first written reports were made of the existence of the Sacramento River and the San Joaquin Valley. Two years later Crespi was assigned as chaplain to accompany Captain Juan Perez, another Majorcan, on a maritime exploration of the Northwest Coast of North America. Their ship reached the Queen Charlotte Islands off Canada and the mouth of the Columbia River and many other landmarks were first described in Crespi's diary.

Serra, as president of the Upper California missions, kept up a steady correspondence with Palou, who headed the southern establishments. His letters sometimes impatiently ask for church supplies and eagerly solicit the latest ecclesiastical news. He asks little or nothing for himself.

In another governmental move, the Lower California missions were transferred to the Dominican order in 1773 and although Palou contemplated retiring to Mexico City, he was persuaded to join his old teacher once again in Carmel. Serra wrote him: "If your Reverence decides that we shall live and die together there (Carmel) it will be a great consolation to me; but I only say that your Reverence must do as God may inspire you, and I shall conform to his will." Palou did not regret leaving Lower California, which he sometimes referred to as "that exile" and began his trip north in May of 1773. As he traveled north, Serra was heading south towards Mexico City in an attempt to iron out an increasing number of problems which had arisen between his administration of the missions and government authorities. He was particularly irked by the poor relationship he had with Governor Fages, headquartered closeby in Monterey. Ultimately Serra was successful in pleading his cause and Fages was transferred.

In Serra's absence, Palou became president of the northern missions when he reached San Diego. From there he continued north, stopping at the intervening missions of San Gabriel, San Luis Obispo and San Antonio on his way to Carmel. His reports on these missions were later included in his "Noticias de la Nueva California," one of the great sources of information concerning the period. Just before arriving at his destination, he saw a familiar figure. "About a league before reaching the royal preside of Moneterrey," he wrote, "I met Father Preacher Fray Juan Crespi, who had come from the mission of San Carlos to meet us. The pleasure that I felt was great, for we grew

up together as children, and studied together almost from our A B C's until we finished theology, and now it had been almost five years since we had seen each other." When Serra arrived back from his successful trip to Mexico City, the three islanders were again reunited.

Palou stayed at the mission several months, polishing his writings and tending to the garden, which seemed to flourish under his care. But Serra had other plans for his friend. He longed to extend the chain of missions to the great estuary which lay to the north. The lay authorities had the same desire and two expeditions were sent to explore the area, accompanied by Palou who had orders to select sites for the missions of San Francisco and Santa Clara. After further reconnoitering, Palou, another priest, 16 soldiers and seven colonists set out from Monterey, June 17, 1776, and arrived at the proposed mission site beside Lake Dolores ten days later. A military post was established and on August 1, Palou signed the initial pages of the mission register, a mission that was to form the core of present day San Francisco.

Meanwhile, Serra continued to handle the vexatious problems of mission administration from Carmel with frequent trips to visit and support his friars. When the Indians surrounding the mission of San Diego rose up and killed Fray Luis Jayme, another priest born on Majorca, Serra was said to exclaim: "Thank God, the blood of a martyr has fertilized the soil, and the conversion of the Gentiles (Indians) is made sure." He pleaded with military authorities not to punish the perpetrators and asked that the mission be rebuilt as soon as possible. Under his guidance, three more missions were added to the chain: San Juan Capistrano, 1776, Santa Clara, 1777, and the final one at San Buenaventura in 1782, bringing the total number to nine.

Serra was now approaching 70 and the years of toil and suffering began to take their toll. His days were further darkened by the death of his sweet-natured friend, Crespi. At Palou's invitation, Crespi had visited his friend in San Francisco where they spent some time together. When they parted, Crespi is reported to have said, "Farewell forever; you will see me no more."

On his return, he complained of chest pains and although he was given available remedies, he died on New Year's Day, 1782. Serra gave him the last sacraments, and buried him in the sanctuary on the gospel side of the main altar, recording these facts on the death register. Palou wrote of his lifelong friend:

He was adorned with merits and exercised the virtues which he had practiced from his youth. . . Among his companions, he was known by the name of "Blessed" or "Mystic". He persevered in this manner for the rest of his life, in dovelike simplicity. He was so humble in fact that when he was a student cleric, if at any time he thought he had irked any of his fellow students, he would go to his cell, fall on his knees and ask for pardon. . . All of us who knew him and had dealings with him piously believe he went directly to enjoy God.

Professor Herbert Bolton, who edited Crespi's writings, commented on the gentle friar:

Among all the great diarists who recorded explorations in the New World, Juan Crespi occupied a conspicuous place. . . Of the men (of his time) Crespi alone participated in all the major path-breaking expeditions. . . In distance, he out-traveled Cor-

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Año 1774

Diario que yo Fr. Juan Crespi Missionero del R^{mo} Colégio de Propaganda Fide de Sn. Fernando de Mexico, como del viaje de la Fragata de su Magest. nombrada Santa Fe, alias la nueva Galicia, mandada por su Capitan y Alférez de Fragata Sn. Juan Peria, que por orden del Ex^{cmo}. Sr. D. Raymundo Fr. Dn. Antonio Maria Bucareli y Vexca Virrey de la Nueva España va a hacer de la Costa del Norte de Monte-Rey, que se halla en la Altura de 36 grados, y medio del Norte, hasta los 60 grados al menos.

Hallandome ocupado de Minutis de esta Mission de San Carlos de Monte-Rey, y habiendo llegado a ella en 11 de Mayo del Corriente año de buelta de su viaje de nuestro Colégio, y Ciudad de Mexico el P. Presidente de estas nuevas Misiones Fr. Junípero Serra, nos

First page of Crespi's diary kept while on a maritime exploration of the Northwest, conducted between June and August of 1774. Original document is in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain.

onado. . . The archives of California, of Mexico and of Spain are enriched by his correspondence with officials and friends. In his precious diaries the human toils, the adventures, the thrills, the hopes, and the fears of these historic journeys on the Pacific Coast are embalmed.

Serra apparently now felt his days were numbered. The year after Crespi's death, although very lame and in poor health generally, he journeyed on foot from San Diego to Monterey, visiting every mission and turning aside into all the Indian settlements on the way. He reached San Carlos in January of 1784, never to leave again. In August, Serra asked friars from several of the nearby missions to come to Carmel. Palou hurried down from San Francisco to find his old mentor looking tired and frail, but his indomitable spirit refused to let

him bow to age or pain. Palou reports that he saw Serra walking in a procession and heard him singing. Palou turned to a nearby soldier and commented that "The 'presidente' is, thank God, much stronger than I thought to find him." To which the soldier replied: "He is always strong when he sings or prays. Nevertheless, he is dying."

The day before his death, Serra insisted on walking alone to the church to receive the last sacrament. The building was crowded with both Indians and whites, many weeping. Serra knelt before the altar with great fervor of manner, while Palou read the services for the dying, gave him absolution and administered the Holy Viaticum. Palou says that the congregation took up the strains to a grand hymn and "Father Junipero's voice, 'high and strong,' as ever joined in. One by one, the other voices broke down, stifled by sobs, until the dying man's voice, alone, finished the hymn."

At noon the next day, the captain and chaplain of a bark which had just arrived in Monterey came to visit. Serra embraced the chaplain, saying: "You have come just in time to cast earth upon my body." After they left, he asked Palou to read to him again "Recommendations of the Soul." At the conclusion, he thanked his former student, saying he was now without fear, and asked that he be buried next to his friend Crespi. Palou reports that a little later he walked with a firm step to the kitchen for a cup of broth. When he finished it, he said "I feel better now; I will rest," and lay down on the bare boards of his bed. Without another word or sign of struggle, he ceased to breathe. The man some called more a force than a person, was dead.

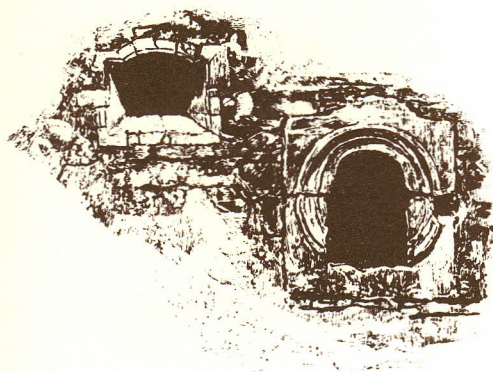
As soon as the death-bell tolled, crowds of people gathered breathless, weeping and lamenting. Many clamoured for a piece of the dead man's clothing. Vessels in the port of Monterey fired a salute of 101 guns, answered by the same from the Presidio. According to his wishes he was buried beside Juan Crespi. Palou, the last of three Majorcan friends, officially recorded the death on the church register. Although he was now anxious to return to the College of San Fernando in Mexico City, Palou was prevailed upon to stay as presidente of the Upper California missions until the next year, when he handed this office over to Father Fermin Francisco de Lasuen, who continued to expand the mission chain.

When he left California, Palou took with him the material for his "Noticias", which had become a compilation of historical notes, reports, diaries and journals, including some by Crespi. Even more important, at the time, was the outline of "The Life of Padre Fray Junipero Serra," which was published in Mexico City in 1787 to great acclaim. The Noticias was not published until the middle of the Nineteenth Century.

Over his protests, Palou was elected guardian at the Dominican headquarters in Mexico City. His final years were profoundly disturbed by the presence there of what one writer has referred to as "two psychopaths from Spain," which nobody could control. Fray Tomas de Pangua wrote the viceroy that it was "unfortunate that the guidance of the community fell to a superior, who was not only advanced in age, but who had already arrived at his second childhood and who could do nothing but cry like a child and lock himself in his cell." This is thought to have referred to Palou. He died in office on April 6, 1789, the last of the three Majorcans who set out from their small island "to do God's work" and succeeded in profoundly changing a vast expanse of the

New World by their words and deeds. Two of the three, along with Father Lasuen, are buried at Mission San Carlos. A Nineteenth Century writer who visited the church in 1882, before its restoration, wrote:

Father Junipero sleeps on the spot where he labored and died. His grave is under the ruins of the beautiful stone church of his mission & the church which he saw only in his ardent and longing fancy. . . The fine yellow tint of the stone, the grand and unique contour of the arches, the beautiful star-shaped window in front, the simple, yet effective lines of carving. . . the symmetrical Moorish tower and dome, the worn stairs leading up to the belfry, & all make a picture whose beauty. . . is enough to hold one spell-bound. . . Nature has rebuilt with grass and blossoms even the crumbling window-sills, across which the wind blows free from the blue ocean just beyond. . . On the day we saw the place, golden wheat, fresh reaped, was piled in loose mounds on the south slope, below the church wall. It reminded me. . . of a beautiful custom the Indians had of scattering their choicest grains on the ground. . . as a token of homage.



Some of the windows of San Carlos.

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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