

NOTICIAS
del
PUERTO de MONTEREY
A Quarterly Bulletin of Historic Monterey Issued by
The Monterey History and Art Association
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Member, National Trust for Historic Preservation
California Historical Society • Conference of California
Historical Societies
American Association of Museums

Vol. XLVI No. 4

December 1994



Erica Frank, originator "Monterey Angels"

Watercolor by Rene Flippo

Monterey's Christmas Angel (one of 88) seen in Monterey each December.

Inside: The Angels of Christmas and Two Christmas Tales

Once again the editorial board wishes you a happy holiday season by offering excerpts from past "Noticias". We believe you will enjoy these stories.

Monterey History and Art Association Publications Committee



MONTEREY'S CHRISTMAS ANGELS

An article written by Dorothy Taugher for the December 1980 Noticias,
Volume XXIII, No. 5

For the past 25 years, at Advent, Monterey's Christmas angels have been raised on high above the city streets to prepare the community for La Noce Buena. Their dusky somewhat sad faces raised in wordless song accompanied by lutes and mandolins, their silver-studded bright raiment catching evening lights, these angels might be fancied to be the very angels of the 18th century mission Christmas Eve plays. These plays, based on old Spanish traditions, were used by the early mission Fathers to instruct the Indians. How else to portray to Indians and Spanish alike the love of God, about the little Jesus, His mother, and the angels? In their wisdom the Fathers let the Indians devise and decorate the sets for the play about the Holy Family on this night of nights. Especially the angels! The Indians knew the sign of the Acorn Spirit and symbols of Fertility and Rain from their fathers' fathers' gods, so they painted them in bright colors on the angels' wings, crowns, and petticoats. With a blend of native color and reverence they made the Star, Angles, and a glorious Heaven with a ladder for the angels to use, and then brought gifts of corn, or perhaps a blue jay's feather, or a song, for the Baby. Thus was enacted in mission Nativity plays the triumph of the power of love over the Devil.

It was in the spirit of those customs that, in 1955, a talented young Carmel artist, Erica Franke (now Mrs. Barton of New Jersey) created 88 Monterey angels. Commissioned to design unique Christmas decorations that departed from tinselled stereotypes and were in keeping with Monterey's past, Miss Franke was inspired by early California representations of angels done by Indian students of the mission Fathers. For many, her somewhat primitive angels preserved with integrity the sense of California's early history. Indeed, a naval surgeon, Dr. Richard T. Maxwell, wrote in his *Visit to Monterey in 1842* that paintings he saw in the mission were used to convert Indians. They depicted Heaven with dancing angels, much like Monterey's, playing guitars and tambourines.

Not all of Monterey's townspeople saw their Christmas angels in the same light. As decorations they became the subject of county-wide controversy. For a decade the angels' fate was argued. At times their demise seemed imminent. Newspaper headlines followed the debate: **Monterey Angels Doomed**; **Monterey Angels to Stay This Year**; **Vote of Confidence for Christmas Angels**; **Angels Safe Another Year**. By 1967 they had achieved not only local acceptance but national attention.

After 10 years on high, however, some angels were weatherworn and beyond repair and had to be retired. Newly designed ones were approved in 1971 and in deference to some opinions, given lighter faces. Otherwise their design was in keeping with that of the original "choir". At one critical time for the angels, a community group, "Friends of the Angels", led by Mrs. Virginia Fry, refurbished 13 damaged angels and auctioned them to raise funds. These 13 and several others which the Museum of Art annually displays have become Monterey art treasures.

(NOTE: An exhibit at the Monterey Conference Center entitled "Monterey Angels" is showing until January 31, 1995. Susan Klusmire, Colton Hall Museum and Cultural Coordinator, states in her brochure which accompanies the exhibit, "These spirited images can be seen during the holiday season throughout the City of Monterey. They welcome visitors at each entrance to the City, line the streets downtown and watch over the historic buildings.")



REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON IN OLD MONTEREY

An article excerpted from the December 1981 Noticias, Vol. XXIV, No. 4 which was reprinted through the courtesy of Lee Harbick and the local magazine *What's Doing*, December 1947.

This account of reminiscences was told to Charles H. Kilian by 85 year old Abel Espinosa.

"The autumns seem shorter now, and the winters more severe. I remember when I was a boy - three quarters of a century ago, although it seems much less - the years went by in a more leisurely parade. Today, with automobiles and airplanes and all the changes which people call "advances", everything moves more rapidly, and we rush from the cradle to the grave.

"The time of which I want to tell you is a time when life was slow and gentle; when we were not in such haste to get each day over with; when we had time for more gracious living and the greater enjoyment of each other's society. In the holiday season we gathered together for a good dinner, told stories, gave the children little presents so that they should know that they were loved and wanted. In those days each family lived in a large and comfortable adobe with plenty of room for entertaining. It was the custom each year for one family to entertain one or two other families with a big dinner and a party. We had tamales and enchiladas made with beef, chili con carne y frijoles, salsa, corn pudding, suckling pig and baby lamb and for sweets, conserve, which was made from pumpkin rind cooked until it was crisp and sugary and bunuelos - tortillas with a sauce made of brown sugar and water.

"After the feast would come the dancing which might go on all night. And the celebrations of the holidays would sometimes last for a week or even more. We would have cascarones, which are brightly colored egg shells filled with confetti or

perfume or gold dust or some other favor. These were crushed above the head of the girl you wished to compliment, showering her with the contents. This favor was supposed to be returned.

"It might happen that a group of wandering serenaders would play and sing outside the window. If we wanted them to come in, we would place a lamp in the window, and they would join the party, but if we wished to be undisturbed, we would light no lamp and soon they would go away singing as they went.

"The women wore shawls, which were of the best materials and workmanship. They also wore mantillas and elaborate combs and their dresses were of the finest heavy, rich silk. They wore their hair upswept or tied in back so that their elaborate earrings could be seen and admired. Completing their costume were the flat Spanish shoes made of fine imported leathers or new glossy patent leather.

"It often seems to me that in those days in Monterey when we lived simply we got more from life than you young fellows of the present generation. But then, I am an old man, and I presume that the days of our youth are dear to all of us and are more attractive as we look back on them."

Following are authentic recipes for some of the holiday foods that Abel Espinosa remembered reprinted from various sources including Early California Hospitality by Ana Beque Packman.

BUNUELOS

(Fried sweet tortillas)

3 Cups flour	1 egg
1 Tablespoon sugar	1/2 Cup milk
1/2 teaspoon salt	2 Cups fat
1 teaspoon baking powder	

Sift flour, salt, baking powder and sugar into a bowl. Ad well-beaten egg and milk a little at a time. Knead until elastic. Divide dough into two inch balls and roll into thin five-inch round cakes. Prick with a fork. Deep fry one at a time. They should be a golden color.

Bring 1 cup water and 2 teaspoons aniseed to a boil. Add 1 cup sugar and make a syrup to pour over hot bunuelos.

DULCE DE CALABAZA

(Candied or conserved pumpkin)

3 pounds pumpkins cut into finger sized strips. Drop into a mixture of 1 gallon of water and 2 heaping tablespoons of unslacked lime which has been allowed to settle. (Use only clear lime water.) Let pumpkin strips stand in the clear lime water overnight. Drain and wash well to remove the lime taste.

Boil 2 quarts water and 1 cup sugar. Add one sliced lemon and two teaspoons aniseed. Boil ten minutes.

Add drained pumpkin slices and cook briskly until they are transparent but firm.

Drain and chill.

Add 1 cup of sugar to the syrup and cook for five minutes. When the pumpkin slices are chilled put them in the boiling syrup and cook slowly for one hour. When done it should be firm and brittle. For candied pumpkin drain the slices, pat dry and roll in granulated sugar. Spread on a tray and place in an airy spot to season. Pack and seal in a box. Will last for several weeks. (For conserve remove the pumpkin slices from the hot syrup and seal in hot jars with about two tablespoons of the syrup in each jar.)

RED CHILI SAUCE

3 Tablespoons vegetable oil	1 clove garlic peeled and chopped
1 Tablespoon flour	2 Cups water
6 Tablespoons ground red Chimayo chili	1/2 teaspoon salt or more to taste

Heat oil over medium low heat. Add flour and cook stirring frequently until brown. Add chili and garlic and cook for about 1 minute stirring frequently.

Add 2 or more cups of water and stir thoroughly (should be thick enough to coat the spoon). Bring to a boil and simmer for about 5 minutes stirring frequently and scraping the bottom of the pot, until sauce tastes cooked. Add salt to taste



THE STAGECOACH SANTA CLAUS OF JOLON

An article written by Mayo Hayes O'Donnell, attributed to Hal McClure and Victor Mossop, published in the December, 1982 Noticias, Volume XXV, No. 4

Moonlight trickled slowly through the low-hanging clouds along the Santa Lucia mountains and plummeted into the ancient valley of the Mission San Antonio, and finally up the small gullies and ravines along the old stagecoach road to the east of Jolon.

One telltale shaft of light from this brilliant December moon outlined the figure of a small boy crouched behind some rocks and hidden by undergrowth. Once he left his hiding place and went to the middle of the road, which was nothing more than two wagon ruts squirming off into the night. He seemed to be waiting for something, for somebody. It was Christmas Eve, 1881, and Carl Edward Browne, age 8, was waiting for Santa Claus to come in on the south-bound stage from Soledad.

Carl Edward remembered it had been only that morning when his father said, rather exasperatingly, "I've told you time and again, son, that Santa Claus will be here tonight because he will come in by the stagecoach."

"Well," said Carl Edward, "I know he can't come in by sled. We ain't got no snow here like we had in Ohio."

"When you wake up tomorrow morning," his father said, "you'll find your Christmas stocking will be filled and you will have a fine time with all your presents, wait and see, son. Wait and see."

The youngster had been worried about Santa's arrival ever since the family moved out to the 160 acre ranch near the stagecoach stop at Jolon. And his father repeatedly told him that Santa would arrive by coach.

So there he was waiting beside there road for the night coach to come in. He would see Santa probably riding with Charlie Moran, the grizzled old driver who waved at him from his perch high atop the stage. Not that he believed Santa would not arrive, but maybe Charlie would not recognize him. Maybe Charlie would not stop at the Browne's ranch a few hundred feet from the road. Carl Edward crawled out of his bedroom window just to make sure everything was going to be all right for his first Christmas in California.

Suddenly from down the road he could hear the horses. Out of the flickering shadows which skitted and pranced nervously in the valley meadow the boy saw the team moving in the moonlight. And he heard the long wail of the horn which Charlie always blew to warn the hostlers at the inn to get ready.

Carl Edward shivered with excitement as the hooves drummed nearer. He edged back into the brush, as if the driver could see him. He heard someone yell, "come on Prancer, you lop-eared no good, flea-bitten varmit! You, too, Blitzen! Keep moving!"

High atop the coach perched a big fat man with a conical shaped hat which fell down over one eye. His long whiskers floated behind him, as if trying to keep up with their reckless owner. "Why it's Santa himself driving," Carl Edward thought. And they weren't horses, they were reindeer. He could see their antlers silhouetted in the flitting moonlight. It was Santa, not coming as a passenger but driving his own reindeer.

When Santa did not stop at the Browne ranch, Carl Edward, only 8, began to cry. He walked slowly back to the sprawling ranch house and let himself in a bedroom window and back to bed.

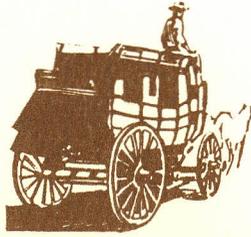
When his mother woke him in the morning with the announcement he had better come quick to see what Santa had left for him, Carl Edward was startled and said, "But how could he? He went on by, I saw him, I saw him." He was amazed when he beheld the sparkling Christmas tree and all the presents in his stocking and under the tree.

Later that day Jack Browne walked into the inn at Jolon. Near the stove sat the driver, Charlie Moran, munching on a fist-sized chew of tobacco.

"Charlie, you old rascal, that was a wonderful stunt. My kid sneaked out last night and saw you ride by. He told us all about it. He swears it was Santa Claus and his reindeer instead of you and the team. Did you tie deer antlers on them horses?"

Charlie looked long and speculatively out of the window toward the green hills and sighed. "Funny thing about that, Jack, you're the third person that's said they'd seen Santa Claus last night.

"You see, what makes it funny is the fact that there ain't been a stagecoach out of Soledad for three days."



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Noticias del Puerto de Monterey is a quarterly publication
issued by the Monterey History and Art Association every
March, June, September and December.

ISSN No. 0886-7151

Change of address should be directed to the Association
Office: 5 Custom House Plaza, Monterey, CA 93940

**MONTEREY HISTORY
AND ART ASSOCIATION, LTD.
5 CUSTOM HOUSE PLAZA
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA 93940**

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