

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Father Serra's Birthplace

"The House in Mallorca," by Ernest Ingold has been published for Paul Elder & Company by Taylor and Taylor. It is a limited edition of 950 copies of which this Diary received No. 28.

We have been particularly interested in the publication of this 48 page book, beautifully printed and illustrated with wood blocks designed by Mallette Dean, because it has to do with the discovery of the birthplace of Father Junipero Serra in Petra on the Island of Mallorca, and its gift by the Rotary Club of Petra through the California Historical Society to the City of San Francisco.

In June of 1950 the Diary carried an article about the purchase and its acceptance in the name of San Francisco by Mr. Juan C. Cebrian, a native-born Spaniard who had lived since 1870 in San Francisco. At the time the Serra home was presented, he was living in Spain with his daughter.

In August of this year The Herald had an article written from Spain by Willard W. Wheeler, who had, with his family, visited the old house in Petra. His story was illustrated with a picture of the front of the home.

Now comes a further explanation of the acquiring of Father Serra's birthplace and why there may be some doubt as to who owns the historic building.

Mr. Ingold writes in the preface: "A brief, intriguing note, one that stirred flood of possibilities, came to me near the end of my term as president of the San Francisco Rotary Club. The writer was John Davidson, curator of the Junipero Serra Museum in San Diego since its founding, and a man of rich scholarly attainments, particularly in the field of early California history. The note was drafted on stationery of the San Diego Historical Society and asked this thought-provoking question; "Does your organization hold title to the birthplace of Father Junipero Serra on the Island of Mallorca in Spain?"

About the same time that Mrs. Dina Moore Bowden, a former Californian and now a resident of Mallorca was here in Monterey showing her collection of crafts and products of her adopted land in Colton Hall, this letter came to Mr. Ingold from San Diego. In the exhibit which

she later showed in San Francisco were seven large pictures of an interesting old house built perhaps 700 years ago; some interior and a typed card, "Birthplace of Father Junipero Serra given to the City of San Francisco by the Rotary Club of Mallorca in 1932." Just below in a show case was the beribboned deed bearing the signature and scroll of Asterio Unzue, a notary. Mr. Ingold went to see this exhibit and then and there began his investigation of the story behind the story of ownership.

There are six illustrations from photographs in the book; Entrance to the house; Doorway from Living Room, Stairway to Hayloft, The Kitchen, and The Stable. The wood block illustrations include: Stonehouse in Petra, about 700 years old, birthplace of Serra; Barraca Alta, the street in Petra; the Square in Petra with Junipero Serra's Monument erected in 1913; Typical Native Dances showing costumes which date back centuries; Sanctuary of Bonany, where Father Serra preached his last sermon in Mallorca, and the Bell Tower, Carmel Mission, where Father is buried.

Mr. Ingold writes in the foreword: In its broadest sense this is a Rotary story, yet in implications reach far beyond the bounds of any single group. Rotary has four objectives. These very briefly told are the development of friendship, help to better community life, the elevation of one's vocation as a means of service, and the cultivation of international understanding and goodwill.

The book, the author states aims to interpret one of the most unusual and most unique expressions of this last objective. It tells how a small Rotary Club in Spain acquired and gave the humble little house in which Junipero Serra was born, to the faraway city of San Francisco. The gift was a simple expression of international friendship—it was just that—modestly conceived, lovingly carried out, and with an ending that is tinged with pathetic sadness.

(More Monday)