

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Presentation of House in Mallorca

There were just four of the founders of the Mallorca Rotary Club present on the historical day that the announcement was made that the birthplace of Father Junipero Serra had been established without a doubt. There were Francisco Sancho Sagez, a physician in the Provincial Hospital, who had brought to the island the new science of radiology; Guillermo Roco Waring, owner of a distillery and a lawyer; Jaime Ensenat Alemany, a mercantile attorney and Rafael Ramis Togores, "a particularly peaceful character" and editor in chief of El Dia. He was the secretary of the club. The members gathered for luncheon, quite satisfied with their past work and the work ahead. They had recently placed a plaque on the Guasp Press, the oldest continuously operated press in all of Europe, founded in 1629. It was later made a museum in which its press and 1,500 wood blocks, most of them more than 200 years old, would be kept intact. It is the good fortune of the writer of this column to possess a print of one of these wood blocks, presented by Mrs. Moore Bowden during her visit to the Peninsula a few years ago, which illustrated Friday's Diary.

Quoting from the "House in Mallorca": The President spoke first "My beloved companions, the search is ended. The old house now almost in ruins, where Miguel Jose Serra, later to be immortalized as Father Serra was born, has been found without a doubt. It is known as Barraca Alto 6 and it measures 23 meters 70 centimeters in length by nine meters ten centimeters in width..." Without a doubt this was the house; the records were clear enough.

It was announced at the meeting that the house had been purchased in the name of two of the members of the Rotary Club who desired by so doing, not only to honor Father Serra, but to erect an imperishable bridge of friendship between Spain and California.

It is interesting to note that those citizens who restored the Serra home in Petra had this to say: "This house should not be a cold mansion without life. We aspire to inject into it a vitality and to give it a soul; It should be converted into a museum, that is our hope. But not a personal museum of Junipero Serra; rather a museum of his missionary and civilizing work; one in memory of his resultful labors in California. For this reason we have

requested, and we are sure they will not fail us, a meeting of minds with those of our friends in California."

The San Francisco Rotary Club, after due conference, decided that the California Historical Society was the organization which should be the intermediary in the transaction. This decision was accepted by the City of San Francisco and the City of Petra and Juan Cervera Cebrian was chosen to represent the city, the Rotary Club and the Historical Society at the presentation.

A few years later a memorial stone was set in the house in Petra with the Rotary emblem above it. It was placed in the care of Miguel Ramis and was visited by many from far and wide.

Then Spain became the scene of civil war and the Rotary Club was considered to have ceased in existence in Spain. The stone and the emblem of Rotary was chiseled away and a new inscription was cut and it read: "The Ancient Home of Father Junipero Serra, Apostle of California 1713, 1784, The Guild Hall of the People of Petra."

Mr. Ingold credits friends who have helped to make this fascinating book, "Harold Lewis Mack of Carmel, who tramped the Island of Mallorca for months"; Sidney Myer Ehrman, and Anson Blake, president and secretary of the California Historical Society in 1932-33; and its present managing director, Mrs. Edna Martin Parratt; who also owns a home at Carmel Highlands. He also gives a special paragraph of thanks to Lady Maria Antonio Field whose knowledge of Spanish traditions, events and history, particularly of their influence on the early settlement of California was drawn upon.

The Peninsula Diary is presenting "The House in Mallorca" to the Monterey Public Library in memory of another publisher and a Rotarian and in appreciation of the excellence of the library and its staff.