

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **A Day for Playing Pranks**

On Dec. 31, 1814, Lieutenant Colonel Pablo Vincente Sola was appointed governor of California to succeed Capt. Jose Arguello, who had functioned acting governor since Arrillaga's death on July 24, 1814. Sola did not arrive in Monterey, however, until August 30, of 1815.

Captain Arguello was later commandante at the Presidio of San Francisco, and it was at that time that the Russian Nicholas Resanov, obtained his permission to marry his daughter, Dona Maria Concepcion Arguello. The story of their romance and his failure to return from Russia, where he was to have procured the consent of his superiors to marry a Californian, is now a famous legend. Concepcion, when she heard of his death became a nun in St. Catherine's convent, built the year California became a state, the first convent in California. It stood where the San Carlos Garage now stands. She was its first novice—Sister Mary Dominica. When the convent moved to Benicia three years later, she accompanied the small band of sisters and three years later passed away. She is buried in the church plot there.

On Jan. 1, 1782 Father Juan Crespi, companion of Father Juniper Serra and Father Francisco Palou, died at Mission San Carlos Borromeo, where his body was buried in the Mission Church on the gospel side of the presbytery. Father Palou was California's first and foremost extensive keeper of a diary and so it is to him that credit is due for much of the early history of the Roman Catholic Church in California that has been recorded.

Crespi was born in 1721 on the Island of Mallorca, also the birthplace of Father Serra. He had been a school mate of Father Palou. Following his education for the priesthood, he was assigned to the College of San Fernando in Mexico in 1749, and in 1751 went to the missions of the Sierra Gorda. He arrived in Baja, California in 1768 and in 1769 accompanied the first land expedition into Alta California.

Father Crespi accompanied Portola's two expeditions to Monterey, and Fages to the San Joaquin. He was one of the founders of Mission San Carlos, later attached to the San Diego Mission, and served as chaplain of the

Santiago. He is regarded as "an excellent diarist and an irreproachable priest," according to his record in "California through Four Centuries," by Phil Townsend Hanna.

Yesterday, Dec. 28, was a festival day of the Santos Innocentes, and is devoted by the lovers of fun to every kind of harmless imposition on the simplicity of others. According to Walter Colton, the first American alcalde of Monterey, the utmost ingenuity is exercised in borrowing on that day, for every article lent has to be redeemed. Although away of this still, in a moment of forgetfulness, one succeeded in borrowing Colton's spurs. He also relates in his diary that one borrowed money of a broker, and the other a rosary from the priest.

While these incredible rumors were afloat, according to Colton, the public ear was startled with the intelligence that a large ship had been driven on the rocks near Point Pinos, but the ship proved to be the "Flying Dutchman," with phantom hull and masts, and sails through whose gossamer the settling sun poured "its effulgent beam." Thus ended the day of the Santos Innocentes in Monterey in 1848.

A letter has arrived addressed to the Monterey History and Art association from Richard Hunt Simpson, a Los Angeles attorney, who would appreciate knowing the source and historical significance of Sampson Peak, which is located in San Benito County. Anyone having an idea as to why this peak was named "Sampson." Is asked to communicate with the Peninsula Diary.