

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Descendants of California Pioneers Visit Landmarks

There have been three distinguished visitors in Monterey in recent days coming here to see for themselves the lasting monuments which their forefathers had built in this, the first state capital and the setting for the Constitutional Convention in 1849. The visitors were William P. Magee of Pala, California, a grandson of Miguel de Pedroena, one of the signers of the constitution; Mr. J. Alegria of Alameda, a descendant of Governor Jose Joaquin Arrillaga; and C.J. Lyman Jr., the great-grandson of Jacinto Rodriguez, another of the signers of the constitution.

William P. Magee visited Colton with his daughter, Mrs. Charles J. Poole (Antonia E. Magee, the great-granddaughter of Miguel de Pedroena) and Mr. Poole. Mr. Magee was delighted to see his grandfather's picture displayed in the City Museum in Colton Hall as one of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention. He told Mrs. Guy S. Curtis, chairman of the Museum board, that his father was 19 years old at the time of the raising of the American flag by Sloat over the Custom House. He came to California with Stevenson's regiment and married Victoriade Pedroena, daughter of Miguel de Pedroena. The jacket cover of the book, "Eagles Fly West," by Edward Ainsworth, shows a view of the Magee home in Pala. The book relates much of early California history.

Miguel de Pedroena was born in Spain. He spent 12 years in California as a merchant. He was an Oxford graduate, and represented the San Diego district at the Constitutional Convention.

C.J. Lyman Jr. was accompanied by Mrs. Lyman on his visit to Monterey and to Colton Hall and other historic buildings. His father, C.J. Lyman, resides in Patterson, California, and is the grandson of Jacinto Rodriguez, one of the delegates and signers of the California Constitution. Senor Don Rodriguez owned much property in Monterey about which we wrote a few days ago.

Mr. Alegria and his young wife were on their honeymoon and came to Monterey to take the tour of the historic route especially to become better acquainted with early California history.

In Bancroft's California Pastoral I find the following note on Don Arrillaga: "Nuestra Senora de la Soledad was placed on the site named by the natives Chuttusgelis, the 9th of October, 1791, by the father president. This mission holds the remains of Colonel Jose Joaquin de Arillaga,

governor and commander of the forces of California, who died there on the 24th of July, 1814, and was buried on the 26th of July, 1814."

Arrillaga was governor of California when the Russian nobleman, Rezanof, arrived in need of food for himself and his men. Rezanof well knew that trading with foreigners was forbidden in California, but he hoped to soften the hearts of the Spanish authorities, and finally did, through the influence of his sweetheart, Concepcion Arguello, and Governor Arrillaga was forced to relent. A complicated plan was devised, by which specie was made to appear as the medium of purchase on both sides, Rezanof's name appearing in the transactions.

Among several historical landmarks which have recently been registered with the director of the Department of Natural Resources is the site of the building of the firm of Mellus and Howard on the southwest corner of Clay and Montgomery street in San Francisco.

The history and description of the new landmark, which is No. 459, states that it is the first brick building in San Francisco and the second in California. The first is in Monterey. It was erected by the mercantile firm in 1848. On Saturday evening, August 31, 1850, a group of men who had arrived in California before the Gold Rush, met in the Mellus and Howard building, and at this meeting they laid the foundation of the Society of California Pioneers, which has functioned continuously in San Francisco since that time. It is the oldest historical organization in the State of California, and numbered among its members the builders of the state.

It was the store of Mellus and Howard that the raffle tickets for the adobe home of Manuel Diaz in Monterey were to be sold, about which we wrote yesterday.

Other landmarks registered in the current report of the California State Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with the State Department of Natural Resources and the State Park Commission, are:

Lucas Turner & Co. Bank (Sherman's Bank) San Francisco; Woodward's Gardens (1850); Don Fernando Pacheco Adobe (1850), Contra Costa County; Shingle Springs (1850), Eldorado County; Indian Wells (1850), Kern County; Forbes Flour Mill (1850), in Santa Clara County on Los Gatos Creek.