

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Monterey Pine Is Truly "Local"

The Monterey Peninsula was formerly almost covered with Monterey pine, and it still is the principal tree in its forests. This pine is only found in nativity there and in small numbers up and down the coast, a whole distance of 150 miles, or less, according to Harry A. Greene's article printed in the Monterey Cypress in 1909.

On the islands off the coast of Southern California there is a pine resembling the radiata. Professor J.G. Lemmon, who was a great authority on the pines of California, identified three varieties of the Monterey pine and named them, but, since the only difference is in the size of the cones and the length of the needles, there is little likelihood of more than the original name being retained.

La Perouse's botanist, Colligon, before mentioned, sent cones and probably seeds of this pine back to France. At any rate, in 1787, the Museum of Natural History of Paris, received a cone of the Monterey pine from La Perouse, according to the latter's diary. This is a most excellent tree for use in wind breaks, shelter belts, for covering bare hills and for fuel, besides being one of the most beautiful and the fastest grower of all the pines. It grows to a height of nearly ninety feet and its life is about 135 years. It withstands drought near the coast, but in the interior its life is considerably shortened.

In the early days of San Francisco many of the streets and sidewalks were planted with Monterey pine, and while it stood wear well, it soon rotted.

The prickly-cone, or Bishop's pine, is found about two miles back from the shore on the Monterey Peninsula; also in a few other places in California. In the damp places in Sonoma County there are specimens nearly 150 feet tall. The tree was described by Dr. Coulter at Monterey in 1832, at which time he wrote of the radiata, but again Professor Hartweg named the species (from the top like form of the cones with their sharp prickles) and has the honor of discovery. Like a few of the classified pines, the cones of the muricata rarely release their seeds without the aid of artificial heat.

In the early 1800's a forest law was obtained; permission was required to fell trees, the exportation of timber was forbidden, and the transport from port to port required a permit from the alcalde who should

keep an account of the quantity. Penalty was to be equivalent to the value of the timber estimated by two experts, and to be paid to the municipal fund of the defrauded place, according to Bancroft's "California Pastoral". Captains of the vessels carrying the lumber were the responsible parties. All vessels might take needful supplies of timber for repairs, after consulting the captain of the port and the alcalde.

On the 13th of May, 1834, a dispatch from San Francisco was read in the assembly at Monterey stating that a number of foreigners were occupied within the jurisdiction destroying the forests. The jefe recommended measures to preserve the woods, and a change of the regiamento of August 17, 1830, imposing a tax on lumber.

Figueroa in his report in 1834 to the secretary of the fomento says that many public works are needed. At the capital and elsewhere casas consistoriales are of absolute necessity, and the plans and estimates he has ordered made are in an advanced state. On account of the swampy condition of the road to the landing at Monterey, it is necessary to construct a paved street. As Monterey is the principal port for the daily increasing foreign commerce, a wharf is needed. The cost would not be great. He confided to his secretary, Captain Zamorano, the making of a topographical plan of Monterey which at that date in 1834, was approaching completion.

About the middle of 1845 a pier was constructed at Monterey, contracted for by the authorities with Larkin. Estevan de la Torre furnished 1,500 cart-loads of stone at \$1 a load; the stone was quarried by some military deserters and Indians, who were given their food and \$1 each daily. The piles were furnished by Garner at \$4 each daily, laid down near the pier. The cost of the pier was \$8,000, more or less, according to Bancroft's report and was made a preference charge on the Custom House.