

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

June 2, 1950

Serra Statue Unveiled in 1891

On June 3rd, 1891 the statue in memory of Father Junipero Serra which stands in the hillside within the Presidio Reservation overlooking the bay of Monterey, was unveiled at elaborate ceremonies. The statue was the gift of Mrs. Jane Stanford, the founder of Stanford University.

On the face of the pedestal which holds the figure of the priest stepping from the bow of a boat, there appears this inscription telling of the founding of the nine missions (the remainder of the missions were founded after Father Serra's death):

"Here, June 3rd, 1770, landed Very Reverend Father Junipero Serra, O.S.F. who founded the following Missions: San Diego, July 16, 1769; San Carlos, Monterey, June 3, 1770; San Antonio de Padua, July 14, 1771; San Gabriel, September 8, 1771; San Luis Obispo, September 1, 1772; San Francisco de los Dolores, Oct. 9, 1776; San Juan Capistrano, Nov. 1, 1776; Santa Clara, Jan. 18, 1777; San Buenaventura, March 21, 1782. And died August 28, 1784 in San Carlos Mission, Carmelo Valley. 'As the Lord liveth even what my God saith that will I speak'."

An account written at the time continues as follows:

"This monument erected by Jane L. Stanford in the year 1891, in memory of Father Junipero Serra, a philanthropist seeking the welfare of the humblest; a hero, daring and ready to sacrifice himself for the good of his fellow beings; a faithful servant of his Master."

"Reverend Clementine Daymann delivered an oration, telling the story of the life of this great and holy man and giving a graphic picture of the trials, sufferings, heroism and perseverance in his work in California over a century ago. In conclusion Father Clementine paid a warm tribute to Father Casanova, who, he said, had done so much to keep fresh the memory of Junipero Serra.

"Next Alanson Hosmer Phelps read a poem of his own composition:

In the misty days of a century and two-fifths ago

Four Franciscan friars – Serra, Crespi, Verger and Palou

Sailed from Cadis, in old Spain, over the ocean lone and drear

They came filled with proselyting zeal and ignorant of fear,

To plant the cross, to teach the heathen to love and to revere

The name of Christ – to kneel at the shrine of Mary, Mother, Saint,

And in low monotones daily told their beads in calm restraint.'

"This was followed by the reading of a poem, the composition of Miss Betty Tisdale of the College of Notre Dame, San Jose, by Miss Alice McQuade (later Miss McQuade became the wife of Peter E. Zabala, Salinas attorney and grandson of W.E.P. Hartnell, founder of the first boys' school in California at El Alisal near Salinas).

"The civic oration was delivered by Judge Webb, followed by the playing of the 'Star Spangled Banner' by the band, and the simple services were over.

"About five thousand people watched the unveiling, among them a number of Catholic clergymen from all over California."

Father Serra is buried in the sanctuary of Mission Carmelo and his cause for canonization has been started.

Mrs. Jane Stanford, donor of the monument, was the wife of Governor Leland Stanford, and co-founder with him of the university in memory of their son.

In the Daily Review published in Pacific Grove on November 16, 1906, we came across this item: "The new granite cross which is to mark the landing place of Father Junipero Serra at Monterey has arrived.

It will be unloaded from the car at the depot in the Old Capital city in a few days. The cross is donated by James Murray, the multi-millionaire, who some years ago purchased the Tevis Hacienda. The foundation for the cross was made several months ago and during the past few days workmen have been engaged in preparing it for the reception of the cross. The cross is of granite and is ten feet in length. The base is also of granite and is four feet in height. The inscription on the base reads: 'Junipero Serra, 1770.' The letters are chiseled out in bold relief and are polished.

“The old wooden cross which marked the landing place of the Franciscan Fathers was removed several months ago.”

Under a large type headline in the Daily Review, published in Pacific Grove on January 3, 1907, there is a story concerning the eviction of squatters from the Cuartel, a large two-story adobe building which once stood where the Standard Oil station now is at the intersection of Munras and Pearl streets.

The article reads:

“The old Cuartel property, almost in the heart of the business district of Monterey, which was settled by squatters many years ago has been turned over to the city by the United States government. It comprises about four acres. The property was formerly owned by the Mexican government and was used by them until California was acquired. City Attorney Willey notified the city trustees last evening that the proper procedure was to give the squatters notice to vacate.”