

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Laying the Stones In Sloat Memorial

Forty years ago, on March 21, 1910, the regimental stone was laid in the Sloat Monument at the Presidio of Monterey. Major E.A. Sherman of Oakland, secretary of the Sloat Monument Association, was present at the setting of the stone. Major Sherman was one of only three remaining members of the 8th Infantry who fought during the Mexican War. On that date this year, we recalled the dedication ceremonies. Since then we have found an old copy of the Pacific Grove Review, published on December 5th, 1903, in which is reported the program of the laying of three stones in the structure.

"On Monday and Tuesday the 23rd and 24th inst., the stone of the California Federation of Women's Clubs, and of San Benito and Santa Barbara Counties, were duly laid with brief Masonic ceremonies, by Captain Thomas G. Lambert, P.M.; Jonathan Wright and J.W. Bagby of Monterey Lodge No. 217, F. & A.M.; W.H. Larkin of Sacramento Lodge and Major E.A. Sherman of Oakland Lodge, and all, but one, members of the Masonic Veterans' Association of the Pacific Coast, using the trowel, square, plumb and level, sent by Santa Barbara Lodge, to be used in the laying of the Santa Barbara and other stones on that occasion. The stone of that county was donated by Mr. John K. Harrington, a past master.

"Mr. Jonathan Wright is one, if not the last, of the survivors of Fremont's Battalion and was mustered out in 1847 at Los Angeles after the surrender of Col. Andreas Pico and his men."

The article goes on to tell of the laying of the "beautiful granite stone of the California Federation of Women's Clubs, which bears, besides the title, the appropriate motto above it, "Loyalty Progress, Reciprocity." No representative of the state organization was present so the following ladies were invited to act as proxies and did so: Mrs. Daisy Culp (nee Wright) of Pacific Grove, the daughter of Jonathan Wright (she was born in the Custom House); Miss Ruth Wright, her sister, who was born in the First Brick House, and later became Mrs. Frank Darling; Mrs. Millie Birks, a half sister of the two Wright sisters and a niece of Capt. Lambert. She lived with Captain and Mrs. Lambert in the Custom House; Miss Evelyn McCormick, "the genial lady artist and

landscape painter whose studio was for a considerable length of time in the historic Old Custom House". These, representing Ceres, Pomona, etc. from beautiful pearly shells of Neptune's choicest storehouse, poured the "coin of nourishment" and the "oil of joy" assisted by Mrs. W.H. Larkin of Sacramento, upon the stones duly consecrating them for the patriotic object to which they are devoted.

These three last stones laid made thirty-two stones laid in all up to that date. The Los Angeles County stone, mainly furnished by the Ladies Societies of Los Angeles and already ordered with that of the U.S. Army stone, was to be laid on or before the eighth of January of the following year, according to the report. With the latter two, there was to then be thirty-four stones laid, or one more than half of the sixty-six required for the base of the monument.

The last paragraph of the old Cypress reads: "It is said that the 'Stone of Ingratitude' is to be laid in the base of the monument to bear the names of the delinquent counties which failed to respond to the requests of the Veteran of the Mexican war represented by the Sloat Monument Association to furnish county stones and appropriations for the monument to their lasting shame and disgrace by their ingratitude. They will have to hurry up and get in line with the rest or suffer the penalty."

California's gift to the Washington Monument which was erected in the nation's capital, was a block of gold-bearing quartz weighing 125 pounds, which was shipped from San Francisco on June 1st, 1850, on the steamer Oregon.

The rock, taken from Mariposa Diggins near Fremont's mines, was delivered to the Washington Monument Society for placement in the structure when it was commenced.

John Bidwell and H.A. Schoolcraft were appointed by Governor Peter H. Burnett to accompany the block to Washington and make the presentation.