

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 15, 1950

Star Number 31

San Francisco is to be the setting for the principal celebration on September 9, in honor of the anniversary of California's admission as the 31st state in the Union. The celebration is being supported by the California Centennial Commission, with the Native Sons and Native Daughters of the Golden West having charge of the 21 floats depicting the principal events in California history.

One of the largest and most interesting of the floats will picture Colton Hall and the raising of the flag over the Custom House in a 32-foot space. Native Sons and Native Daughters from the parlor of Monterey and San Benito (which was formerly part of Monterey County) will represent the characters prominent in the Constitutional Convention and at the raising of the flag.

Members from these two counties and from Santa Cruz County will march with the float and distribute cascarones (egg shells filled with bright clippings of paper and sealed in with more bright paper). Cascarones were the feature of all early California parties.

Mrs. Clyde Dyke, grand marshal of the Grand Parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, is planning the float which represents Monterey history.

To assure the authenticity of the two events to be depicted upon the float, the history of Colton Hall and the Custom House have been thoroughly gone into by Mrs. Dyke with Mrs. Guy Curtis, the chairman of Monterey's Museum board, and Mrs. Mary Greene, the curator of the Custom House.

In the early days of 1948 when Colton Hall was being restored to its original appearance at the time of the Constitutional Convention in 1849, in preparation for the Centennial celebration in 1949, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. was asked by Ernest K. Bramblett, Representative to Congress, for information concerning the number of stars used on the U.S. flag in 1849. Following is the reply to the letter:

"Mr. Theodore T. Belote, Curator of History, advises me as follows concerning the flag used in 1849 while California was under military control:

The United States National Flag in 1849 had in the field 13 alternate red and white stripes and in the same

union canton 30 stars arranged in five rows of six stars each. We have no data concerning the exact size of any of the United States flags flown in California in 1849."

Another letter dated March 4, 1949, reads: "The Acting Head Curator of History, Mr. Charles Carey, advises me that officially the United States flag had 30 stars from July 4, 1848, to July 3, 1851. It is unlikely, however, that the 30-star flag was used in California immediately after its adoption because of the poor communication which existed at that time between the eastern and western part of this country. As we have been unable to find any records pertaining to the actual flag which flew in Colton Hall, Monterey, we suggest that the Museum Commission use its discretion from the information available to decide upon the size and type of flag.

"We have consulted the Navy Department on this question and they have sent us the enclosed sketches of flags with the following statement:

"The sketch marked No. 1 is the proper flag, according to law, for the period from July 4, 1848, to July 4, 1849. However the flag marked No. 2 was actually in use by a naval garrison in Lower California in 1848. It is the practice to use flags already on hand until the stocks are expended, and besides it is unlikely that the 30-star flag reached that station until many months after its adoption."

The sketch marked No. 1 had 30 stars, six across and five rows down, and No. 2 sketch, July 4, 1847, had 29 stars. The new star for the new state was added on the following July 4.

It is known that the extra star was sewed on in California when she became a member of the union. The four flags now crossed over the two fireplaces in the upper floor in Colton Hall were made by hand by Mrs. Mae Hare, the curator there.

In the fourth row of stars Wisconsin, 1848, is No. 30 and No. 31 is California admitted 1850.