

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Fr. Serra Writes

On the 28th of August 1784, Father Junipero Serra died at Carmel Mission. So, it is very appropriate that the first article in the newly established Academy Scrapbook should be a translation of a manuscript written by the venerable Father some two months before his death. The Scrapbook is being published monthly by the Academy of California Church History at Fresno, California, the first issue having been received by subscribers and sponsors.

Father Serra's article begins; "On the solemn feast of Pentecost, June 3, 1770, this mission of San Carlos de Monterey was founded to the joy of the sea and land expeditions. In a short time the rejoicing was shared by the entire kingdom and eagerly celebrated in both Mexico and Spain.

"On that day, after imploring the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the sacred standard of the cross was blessed, raised and adored by all. The ground was blessed, an altar set up, and a sort of chapel formed with naval flags. The holy sacrifice of the Mass was sung, a sermon was preached, and at the end, the Te Deum was intoned. With these (ceremonies), possession was duly taken of Monterey for (our) Holy Church and the Crown of Spain. Legal document covering all was drawn up and will be found where it belongs. All this occurred on the beach at the landing place of the said port, and the same spot on which 167 years before, it is written, and the expedition of Don Sebastian Vizcaino had celebrated.

"The following day, after choosing the most likely spot on that plain, the construction of the Presidio was enthusiastically begun by the men of both sea and land forces. By the 14th of the same month, the feast of Corpus (Christi), a chapel had been built, as well as it could be, at the spot of the Presidio which it still occupies, and a high Mass was sung with the Blessed Sacrament exposed in its monstrance. After the Mass there was a procession, in which His Sacramental Majesty passed over the ground that till then had been so heathen and miserable. It was a day of great consolation for all of us who were Christians.

"So the Presidio was begun but the troop was too small to be divided into two bodies. Thus we, the religious,

were forced to establish ourselves in and remain incorporated with this Presidio until further arrangements (could be made), even though we knew that there we could do no sowing or any kind of work. We remained like this for one year, spending the time putting in order our residence and the most necessary storerooms for our supplies. We also made friends with the Indians who were coming to see us and we tried to win some children. In fact, within a short time, we baptized three and when the boat returned at the end of the year (1771), we had already 20 new Christians in Monterey.

"As 10 religious came on this vessel, we were then twelve. We all dressed in rich chasubles and had a most solemn procession for Corpus (Christi). We had here the equipment for (several) future missions, the men from the ship, and those of the land forces etc. Thanks be to God!

"In August 1771, with the express consent of His Excellency, Marquis of Croix, at that time viceroy of New Spain, and of the illustrious Visitor General, Don Jose de Galvez, both of whom officially informed me about this, San Carlos Mission was begun on the site it now occupies. (This is) on the banks of the Carmel River and in view of the sea (from which it is) distant a cannon shot. (Rather it is the distance to) the little bay south of Point Pinos. (The Mission is) a little more than a league from the Royal Presidio, which is to the north in latitude 36° 44". The next place to the south is San Antonio (Mission), about 25 leagues distance. Santa Clara (Mission) is in the opposite direction and a little farther away.

"On the 24th of the said month, the feast of St. Bartholomew the apostle, the old cross was set up at the (new) site and the first mass celebrated under at a temporary arbor. (For the first) four months only one father stayed here with the personnel doing the building. The other priest and two missionaries destined for the future San Luis Obispo Mission, remained at the Presidio until the vesper hour Christmas Eve that same year. After previously transferring everything belonging to the mission, we left the Presidio on foot and arrived here with an escort of eight men; four soldiers, one muleteer, and three servants (who had been) sailors. When we received our share of the stock, after the division, there were great and small 18 head of cattle: namely, nine cows, one bull, two heifers, and six small calves. That is the entire remnant that remained for the

mission after the losses in this category. I will write further about the rest.

“The eight remaining days of the year were spent in holiday exercises and in putting things in order.”