

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Portola's Journey

It was during the month of August in 1769 that Don Gaspar de Portola discovered Monterey Bay, started up the coast to accomplish his mission. On July 23rd he was camped on the present site of San Juan Capistrano, which Father Juan Crespi, a member of the expedition, called "the valley of Santa Maria Magdalena."

August 2, 181 years ago today, Portola and his followers were camped in the community which is now known as Los Angeles. In view of the fact that the previous day marked the jubilee of Our Lady of Angels of Porciuncula, Father Crespi so christened it. Though the party had experienced three earthquakes, Crespi recorded that the site "has all the requisites for a large settlement."

August 3, 1769 – Portola camped on the site of the present Brea Pits in Los Angeles, thus being the first white man to discover oil land in California. Father Juan Crespi called the location "the Spring of the Aiders" of San Estevan.

August 14, 1769 – Portola camped on the site of the present City of San Buenaventura, which Father Juan Crespi called "La Asuncion de Nuestra Senora" because it was the eve of the Feast of the Virgin Mary.

August 17, 1769 – Portola camped on the site of the present City of Carpinteria, the soldiers of the party giving it its present name. Father Juan Crespi called it "San Roque". Here, as at La Brea, the party noted oil deposits.

August 24, 1769 – Portola camped at the mouth of the present Gaviota Pass, which the soldiers called "La Gaviota," because they killed a sea gull, according to old records.

September 7, 1769 – Portola camped near the present city of San Luis Obispo at a point which was named "Canada de los Osos" because the soldiers encountered a number of bears. That site still bears that name.

On October 3, 1769 – Portola, seeking the port of Monterey, reached Point of Pines, thus standing on the very rim of Monterey Bay without recognizing it.

October 8, 1769 – Portola crossed the arroyo at the site of the present City of Santa Cruz which he named and which translates "Holy Cross."

December 7, 1769 – a council was held by the Portola expedition at its camp beyond the Carmel River near Point Lobos to determine whether to continue the search for Monterey or return to San Diego. It was determined to retreat, as supplies were running low. The party sailed south on December 10th, retracing their northward path and reached San Diego on January 24, 1770. A cross now marks the spot near Point Lobos and the Carmel River where Portola and his council had the meeting. The Monterey History and Art Association took part in the dedication ceremonies, which were performed by Father Michael O'Connell and the Carmel Mission.

April 16, 1770 – The San Antonio, commanded by Juan Perez and bearing engineer Miguel Costanso and Father Junipero Serra left San Diego to join Gaspar de Portola and his land expedition and to effect the establishment of the Presidio of Monterey. The vessel reached Monterey on May 31. After the establishment of the mission and Presidio, the San Antonio sailed for San Blas.

April 17, 1770 – Gaspar de Portola left San Diego on his second expedition to seek the port of Monterey. He reached it and recognized it, which he had failed to do on his first expedition on May 24th.

May 24, 1770 – Portola, Crespi, and Fages recognized the port of Monterey, which they had seen but likewise failed to recognize during the first expedition in 1769.

June 3, 1770 – Mission San Carlos de Monterey was founded by Father Junipero Serra. The mission was the second to be established in Alta California and was named for Saint Charles Borromeo (1538-1584), Archbishop of Milan and Papal secretary of state under Pius IV. In 1771 the mission was moved to its present site on the banks of the Rio Carmelo and re-named "Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo."

June 3, 1770 – Caspar de Portola, governor of California, assisted by Father Junipero Serra and the soldiers, founded the Presidio of Monterey and took formal possession of the land in the name of Charles III, king of Spain. The formalities consisted of the planting of the royal standard, the uprooting of plants, and the casting of stones, the latter symbolizing the seizing of the territory. The establishment of the Mission of San Carlos de Monterey, which in 1771 was moved to the Carmel River and re-named "San Carlos Borromeo Del Carmelo," was coincidental. The Presidio destined to be

the capital of California was founded on the beach near the oak under which Sebastian Vizcaino had claimed the land in 1603, and named it Monterey in honor of the Count of Monterey (Gaspar de Zuniga y Acevedo) Ninth Viceroy of Mexico (1595-1603).

On June 3 each year the Monterey History and Art Association celebrates the birthday of Monterey with a Merienda in Memory Garden – in 1950 it was the 180th. On June 3rd 1949, the Monterey History and Art Association, with the California Centennial's Commission, placed a boulder and a bronze marker in Serra Park, in commemoration of the landing of Portola on the shores of Monterey Bay.