

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 17, 1951

### **Delicacies of the Province**

Capt. Jose Arguello commandante of Santa Barbara, by his seniority of rank, became acting governor on Arriaga's death, without any formal appointment or recognition, so far as the archives show and according to the research done by Hubert Howe Bancroft when he wrote his History of California.

Instead of coming to Monterey, the capital, Arguello remained at his post in Santa Barbara. He was in Santa Barbara as late as June 17, 1815 the year he wrote to Guerra to come and take command. He was named governor of Lower California on the same day that a proprietary governor was appointed; but he remained in charge until his successor arrived.

The new ruler of the Californians, appointed by Viceroy Calleja on December 31, 1814, was Lt. Col. Pablo Vicente de Sola, a Spaniard, an officer of the royal army, who took the oath, and in a sense formal possession of his office before Gen. Jose de la Cruz on March 31, 1815. He had a brother who was a friar in the College of San Fernando, and he had served as *habilitado general* of the Californias in Mexico.

Sola arrived at Monterey on board the Paz y Religion (Peace and Religion), after a voyage of 75 or 80 days, the 30<sup>th</sup> of August.

In the archives there are documents and letters written by Juan Bautista Alvarado in which he narrates in great detail the ceremonies and festivities of the next day or two in which the new ruler was welcomed. Friars, settlers and Indians, he states, came to Monterey from all the country round. President Senan, with 20 *padres* and 30 native musicians and singers, led by "Jose el Cantor" (Jose the singer) marched in procession to the Presidio chapel to chant the *a te deum*, and were soon joined by Sola with the officers and soldiers, whose advance was amid salutes of artillery. After mass the President made a speech and then there was a review of the troops in the plaza (situated where the Munras, Pearl and Tyler streets now meet), followed by a discourse by the new governor, received as history relates, with loud *vivas*.

In the executive mansion, Sola was waited upon by a delegation of 20 young girls, who through Dona Magdalena Estudilio, delivered an address of welcome.

All the girls kissed his hand and received gifts of bonbons. A feast followed, the tables being laden with the delicacies of the province, game and other meats, the olive of San Diego, the orange of San Gabriel, the wines of San Fernando, and the "oven-fruits" of the famous San Antonio flour.

The dishes were decorated with flowers from the garden of Felipe Garcia, whose daughters waited upon the table. After the repast soldiers in *vaquero* costume gave exhibitions of horsemanship; the inevitable bull and bear fight took place, and in the evening a grand ball was given by the ladies of Monterey at the commandant's house, which lasted until dawn.

Two days later Sola was entertained with much ceremony at San Carlos, within the Presidio walls, by the missionaries and neophytes.

Alvarado was probably a young school boy when Sola was so well entertained at Monterey, but in addition to his own memory, his parents had probably told of the happening over and over again in their household – the occasion was so grand and so important.

It is interesting to note that history repeats itself, for in the year 1817 Sola made a general report on the conditions in California, with particular reference to its capabilities for defense. While urging the impossibilities of dislodging the Russian intruders without further large enforcements, he explained that the presidal cavalry companies not only were barely sufficient for the protection of the missions, but that by their long experience in the peculiar tactics of the Indian warfare, the troops were unfitted for effective service against a foreign foe armed with weapons more deadly than bows and arrows.

Sola wrote, "That their purpose was not as pretended merely to obtain supplies, was well known, and it was feared that smuggling even was not their only aim. They came well armed, kept away from the presidios, frequented smaller bays, landed with impunity, and came in contact with the people.