

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Who has the Oldest Brand?**

Today we will go back into the lore of the branding iron. By their brands ye shall know them! That's scripture in the cattle country and just as sacred in a way.

In "The Salt of the Earth," published by The King City Rustler-Herald, there appeared the fact that the oldest brand in the state has originated in Monterey County on the ranch of Alberto Trescony in 1846. That brand is now registered to Julius Trescony, the present owner of Rancho San Lucas.

Today that claim of the oldest brand is disputed, Roy E. Meadows Jr, writes to the Diary. "We do not know if our brand is the oldest in California but we believe it antedates the one mentioned in the article. Ours, the Meadows brand was registered in 1845 and we have in the possession of our family, the original registration papers written in Spanish and issued at New Helveta. The original is signed by both Sutter and John Bidwell.

"It was issued to Sanitago (James) Meadows, my great-great grandfather and has been used by our family for over a hundred years. Today the brand is used by my father, Roy E. Meadows of the Carmel Valley, on a portion of the original James Meadows Ranch.

"The brand is in the form of an anchor and the ear mark is a cross on one ear and a nick out of the other. I am not too familiar with the terminology of describing such things.

"The original certificate is now in the possession of Ernest Meadows and through his generosity the Meadow family in the Valley have a photostatic copy."

When Sergeant Josiah S. Vincent, Company I, First New York Infantry Volunteers in the War with Mexico, 1846-1848, wrote in his diary of the first July 4th celebration in Monterey at least one notation cleared up a point long under discussion. He noted the salute of 28 guns at noon on July 4, 1847. The point cleared, namely the number of stars in the flag which was flown over California by the invading Americans. The new stars were added to the flag on July 4th, following admission of a new state to the Union.

The curator of the San Diego Historical Society, who sent a copy of the diary to the old Custom House, added that Texas was added in 1846, but Iowa which made the

29th state was not added until the Fourth of July, 1847, California admitted on September 9, 1850, did not add a star until Jul 1, 1851.

Company F, 3rd Artillery, embarked on the U.S. Supply Ship Lexington at New York, July 14, 1846, and arrived at Monterey on January 28, 1847. The ship's flag doubtless had 28 stars, and if Company F colors were not "starred" up to date, no doubt the vessel's sailmaker did an adequate alteration job on route. Thus the flags at Monterey on July 4th, 1847, would be the 28 star variety, although the star of Iowa was due to be added on that date.

But in 1846, when the California ports were sized, the flags on the West coast could not have borne more than 26, or at the most, 27 stars. It is hardly creditable that Commodore Sloat on the memorable dash from Mazatlán to Monterey, would have had Texas star placed in the flag which he raised at Monterey on July 7th, nor that the other flag-raisers up and down the coast would have taken the rather meticulous assumption that the new 4th of July Texas star ought to be placed in the American Flag before it took possession.

In Santa Barbara Sergeant Vincent did not find a flag pole when he arrived with the volunteers. A member of the group told this story: "We had a fine garrison flag but no flag pole one which to float it. I told Captain Lippitt I knew where there were several find spars, part of the wreck of a ship that had gone ashore. I got a number of Spaniards with their horses and riatas, and we snaked the two spars, dressed and spliced them and then made a pole that stood ninety feet over ground. Then we floated our flag, with a salute, and it was the first time the American flag waved in Santa Barbara."

In San Diego on July 4th, 1847, Mrs. Bandini, one of the most prominent ladies of the town, in an address, requested that the company take the American flag with them, as there would be no one left to defend it. The flag she referred to is doubtless the famous "Bandini Flag" which the Bandini daughters made for the Americans, and which, according to tradition, was given to Col. Cooke, who took it to Washington.