

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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They Danced the Old Dances

The name Ord is always fascinating and of special interest to residents of the Monterey Peninsula and members of the armed forces which have been stationed here. Fort Ord was named for Lt. Edward O. C. Ord, a West Point graduate who arrived in Monterey in 1847, with his brother Dr. James Ord, an Army surgeon with Company F of the Third United States Artillery, under contract and not with the regular Army. During his Monterey residence he married the widow of Don Manuel Jimeno, who also was the daughter of Don Jose de la Guerra of Santa Barbara. To them one daughter was born, Rebecca, who lived with her mother in Salinas in the late 1870's.

A reader of the Diary — J. William MacLennan of Carmel, has supplied us with further information regarding Rebecca Ord and we are most thankful to him for the addition to the history of this pioneer family of Monterey and California.

Mr. MacLennan writes: "I knew Rebecca Ord quite well, and Mrs. MacLennan and I visited her a short time before her sudden death. She had married a Major Peshine, who later became minister to Spain. Following their return to California they built a beautiful home on San Andres street in Santa Barbara, and near it a fine chapel—both in the best Spanish style. In the home were many treasures, including furniture from the *Natalie*, sunk in Monterey harbor, and according to some historians, the ship on which Napoleon escaped from St. Helena.

"In 1924, at the time of the Old Spanish Days Fiesta in Santa Barbara she rode in the parade with Major Peshine, dressed in beautiful clothes she had purchased in Spain. And at the reception in the de la Guerra house that year, she wore a gown that had belonged to her mother and jewelry her mother had worn at the time of the wedding ceremonies and fandango Dana wrote about in 'Two Years Before the Mast.' She danced with Doctor Park—the waltz, at the request of the guests, which her mother had 'danced so divinely' with Bandini. On that occasion (1924) there were present over 100 guests, whose ancestors had attended the affair Dana wrote about—the wedding of one of the de la Guerra daughters to Alfred Robinson. Together they had

danced the old dances and sang the old songs of Spanish California."

Mrs. Peshine had the grace and kindness of the old Spanish people. She loved to think of the old days, and Mr. MacLennan had many opportunities, he reports, of discussing them with her and her cousins, Mrs. Francesca Dibble and Miss Delfina de la Guerra.

Her last days were rather lonely, according to Mr. MacLennan. She had a beautiful home with very little money to keep it up and was attended only by a faithful Mexican woman who adored her. Her home was large and not well heated, and a little over a week after the MacLennan's visited with her, she passed away after a severe attack of pneumonia.

From Mrs. Peshine's mother, Mrs. James Ord, Bancroft received by dictation, at Santa Barbara in 1878, her "Occurrences de California," a manuscript of 156 pages, which is beyond a doubt, wrote Bancroft, "one of the most reliable and fascinating narratives in my collection, treating as it does not only of the political affairs, about which she was fully informed, but of the social and the missions."

The founder of the de la Guerra family in California, Jose Antonio de la Guerra y Noriega, was a native of Spain, of gentle parentage, and of high family connections. He came to California as a cadet in 1801. He rose to the rank of captain in 1818, and commanded several posts, that of Santa Barbara being the last. He retired from the service in 1842.

In Santa Barbara, de la Guerra was always called the patriarch, to whom the people generally applied to settle controversies. His charities, and those of his wife, nee Maria Antonia Carrillo, were almost unbounded.

Don Jose de la Guerra died in 1858, leaving several sons and daughters. His two daughters, Mrs. W. E. P. Hartnell and Mrs. Ord. lived in Monterey.