

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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A Tree Grows in Monterey

How many of our readers know which is the officially designated state tree? Apparently no one did until October 26, 1951 when the Attorney General issued an opinion in response to a request from Assemblyman Randal Dickey of Alameda.

Whereas most opinions from the Attorney General settle disputes, it is doubtful that this one will do much more than arouse interested organized groups to solve by legislation the problem once and for all. It seems we now have two official state trees, the Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) and the Big Trees, Giant Sequoia or Sierra Redwood (*Sierra gigantea*).

In 1937, Senate Bill 112 was drafted which stated, "The California Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) is the official state tree." However on March 17, 1937 this bill was amended to eliminate the scientific name. This left a cloud on the legislative intent, and now we have the "California Redwood" as our state tree, which in botanical circles means neither the Coast nor the Sierra Redwood – two very different species.

The attorney general's just interpretation of the statutes is based on the common name of redwood as applied to the Taxodiaceae or Redwood family, which embraces one native California genus, *Sequoia*, to which both controversial species belong.

Some conservation organization should take the lead in sponsoring proper legislation, says the News and News, published by the Division of Beaches and Parks, Department of Natural Resources, State of California.

In the manuscripts and papers existing in the various archives of the state are preserved many names of the Indian tribes and rancherias (Indian villages). For instance the Indian name for San Juan Capistrano was Quanis-Savit; San Gabriel or Torres Canga; Santa Clara, Thamien; Soledad or Taches, and San Carlos Carmelo or Eslenes.

The tribes who inhabited the vicinity of Monterey in 1784 were known as the Rumsenes and Eslenes. These rancherias were known as Ichxenta or Santa Teresa, all Indians within a circle of forty miles of Monterey.

It appears from some of the historic documents above mentioned, that Padre Palou, biographer of Junipero

Serra, was the priest of the Mission Dolores in San Francisco from 1778 to 1785 when he went back to Mexico and became the guardian of the College of San Fernando at the capital. It was Father Palou who gathered much of the written material regarding the Indian tribes of this region.

In the writings in the early issues of the Monterey Sentinel published here in 1855-1856, there is a note saying that 20 or 30 rancherias of the Indians furnished neophytes to the mission of San Carlos de Carmelo. It appears from notes of the Padres that from June 1778 to March 1795, a period of 17 years, "1803 persons were confirmed in the mission church of Carmelo, three miles from Monterey." Of that number not more than 1600 were Indians and the children of Indians, according to the Sentinel article. In 1795 the Indians of this vicinity had become so far domesticated as to serve the Padres.

The writer goes on with the record: "It may therefore be taken as a basis, from these 1600 confirmations, that probably there never existed more than 3,000 Eslenes or Santa Clara, Echellats or San Francisco, Socorrondo or San Miguel."

In the valleys of the Salinas and Pajaro were the Sargentarucas, the Kathlentarucas, the Tebitiyas, the Poytoquis, the Pagchins, the Locoyustas Mutsuns, the Asparniagans, the [?]nigares and many others.

Those Indians living at Santa Barbara, Purisima, San Juan Capistrano, are said to have been of yellow complexion, handsome in features and exceedingly hospitable to the first Spanish explorers.