

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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All This...And Monterey Too

The developments in the capture of the Port of Monterey by Commodore ap Catesby Jones in 1846, came thick and fast in the form of wordy documents from the Mexican general who said: 1—He was not afraid of the American force; 2—The American force was afraid of him even though he had approached no nearer than 150 leagues; 3—There was no war between the two countries' and 4—the American had better give back Monterey, and bit more to boot.

Commodore T. ap Catesby Jones was in no position to disagree, so a meeting was agreed upon, the Mexican colors were paraded before the American forces, the commodore outfitted almost the entire Mexican army in surplus he had aboard his fleet, and the United States eventually paid \$15,000 in reparations.

Monterey remained in the possession of Mexico until 1846 when it was finally taken, officially, by Commodore Sloat, and the Stars and Stripes were raised over the Custom House, the one hundredth anniversary of which was celebrated in 1946.

Jones was an American naval officer from 1789-1858. He spent the years from 1808 to 1812 on the Gulf of Mexico, suppressing piracy, smuggling and slave trade. Near the end of the war of 1812, he tired in a desperate engagement to prevent the British fleet carrying Pakenham's army to New Orleans from crossing Lake Borgne. In 1826 while commanding in the Pacific, he visited Hawaii to settle claims of certain American citizens, a visit which considerably increased the prestige of the United States in the Islands. After taking Monterey by mistake, he was removed from his command to satisfy the Mexican government, but in 1855 was restored to his rank.

When the portrait of Commodore Jones and the valuable documents concerning the taking of Monterey, were presented to the Monterey History and Art Association by the commodore's grand-nephew, T. Catesby Jones, the directors of the association and Parks Commission of the State of California and City of Monterey, all joined hands at a real old Monterey party at the Custom House.

Spanish music, dances of old Monterey and fitting refreshments were enjoyed by all who accepted the invitation to attend.

Jones, a prominent New York attorney decided to make the gift to the Custom House and the Association, after a visit to the museum with a friend Farnham P Griffith, a San Francisco attorney. They both noted that here was little at that time of information about the earliest capture of Monterey. At the presentation in 1939, Mr. Griffith represented the donor.

Ted K. Clark, the president of the Association in 1939, presided at the presentation party, Carmel Martin, the vice president, accepted the gift in the name of the Association and Emmett McMenamin, the Mayor of Monterey, spoke for the city. More than 100 persons attended the old-fashioned party in the Custom House which had been planned by Mrs. Mary Greene, the curator.

Another rare and valuable document which visitors to the Custom House always enjoy seeing is Vol. I, No. 11 of the Californian, the state's first newspaper published in Monterey by Alcalde Walter Colton and his assistant, Dr. Robert Semple.

The copy, one of the edition which appeared on the streets of Monterey on Saturday, Oct. 24, 1846, is framed and hung on the doorway leading into the room at the north end of the building.

Donor of the gift was Everett D. Graff, Chicago financier, a collector of Californiana and items from the southwest, and one of the directors of Chicago Art Institute. During a visit with Mrs. Graff to the museum in 1945, he remarked that there was not a copy of the Californian on exhibit. Mrs. Greene remembered where one could be procured for a sum. Mr. Graff bought the copy, returned to Chicago, and mailed it back to his friend, Mrs. Francis McComas, with instructions that it find a home in Monterey, its birthplace.