

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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A Bean Barrel Full of Gold-Dust

Matters went along in a happy-go-lucky way free and easy for Jose Maria Sanchez, whose money inspired the tale of the "Hidden and Lost Treasure of Monterey," which began in Friday's Diary. Life was free and easy for the Californian until the discovery of gold and the consequent influx of gold hunters.

All of them required beef, and then it was that Jose Maria Sanchez found himself to be a very wealthy man. His cattle instead of netting him \$4 per head after killing and taking to Monterey their hides and tallow, he could now sell them at \$70 to \$90 each to the cattle buyers who supplied the San Francisco market, Sacramento and the mines.

For the latter's use, the beef was cut into strips, dried in the sun and salted to some extent, and thus treated would not spoil for perhaps years, as long as it was kept dry and cared for. This was called "Carne Seca." Present day hunters continue to dry deer meat in much the same manner and call it "jerked meat." The Chilean word for the same meat is "charqui" or dried beef.

His horses for which he could not obtain more than \$8 to \$10 per head now sold readily, when broken to the saddle for from \$100 to \$200 each. His sheep and other animals such as mules in proportion, and that without seeking a market. The buyers came to him, and it was always cash down—gold dust—and slugs, a gold coin of the value of \$50.

In this way Sanchez, without care or trouble on his part, accumulated much wealth and became a great lover of the game of "Monte." To satisfy desire in regard to his gambling propensities he was accustomed to cross the Pajaro River to go the house of a near ranchero, the river being the boundary line between his own land and that of his neighbor.

The rains had been hard, the stream was swollen and there was a swift torrent. He was warned against the attempt to cross. But no! He had crossed the stream hundreds of times, even when the water was higher, why not again? So he got into his boat, pushed from shore and, when about half way across, was upset and drowned. He left a widow and three children.

In the course of time, according to Williams, Samuel C. Head, by profession a gambler, living in San Juan, was

appointed administrator by the probate court of Monterey County. This was in 1855. Head took possession of the estate of the deceased, and sold the personal property. He found in the store house near the Sanchez' dwelling about 40 barrels of beans. He brought to Monterey as a sample a half a sack, and offered the lot for sale to Williams' partner (probably his cousin Joseph Boston who had a store in the Casa de Ora on Oliver street.) They refused to buy, because the beans were so old and hard and therefore not suitable to cook.

Head later sold the lot. Upon emptying the lot into bags, for the convenience of transportation, there was found in the barrels something over \$30,000 in gold dust, contained in bags of buckskin.

Sanchez, evidently had been in the habit of using the barrels of beans as his bank, in which he deposited the gold dust received from sales of his cattle and sheep.

While the estate was being administered, there was set aside by the court the sum of \$80,000 for the three minor children, to be held by a guardian until they should become of age.

At that time there lived in Monterey a man who had been sheriff of the county. His name was William Roach. He had been a New York volunteer, and served as sergeant of his company during the Mexican war. He was stationed at La Paz in Lower California. General Naglee, for whom Naglee Park in San Jose was named and who made his home there, was in command. Roach was an Irishman by birth, somewhat impulsive and of good instincts. It was said in those days that he carried his heart upon his sleeve. It was he who was appointed guardian of the Sanchez minor heirs and entrusted with the \$80,000.

(More Tomorrow)