

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 13, 1951

### **Salt and Timber**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of May, 1834, a dispatch from San Francisco was read in the assembly at Monterey, stating that "a number of foreigners were occupied within that jurisdiction destroying the forests. The jefe (judge) recommended measures to preserve the woods, and a change of the reglamento (regulations) of August 17, 1830, imposing a tax on timber."

Governor Figueroa in his report in 1834 to the secretary of the fomento (development) says that many public works are needed. At the capitol and elsewhere casas consistoriales (judicial buildings) are of absolute necessity, and the plans and estimates which he had ordered made are in an advanced stage.

On account of the swamp condition of the road to the landing at Monterey, it is necessary to construct a paved street, he reported. At Monterey is the principal port for the daily increasing foreign commerce, a wharf is needed. The cost would not be great. The governor confided to his secretary, Captain Zamorano, the making of a topographical plan of Monterey which approaches completion.

About the middle of 1845 a pier was constructed at Monterey, contracted for by the authorities with Larkin, according to Bancroft. Estevan de la Torre furnished 1,500 cart-loads of stone at \$1 a load; the stone was quarried by some military deserters and Indians, who were given their food and \$1 each daily. The piles were furnished by Garner at \$4 each, laid down near the pier. The cost of the pier was \$8,000, more or less, and was made a preference charge on the custom-house.

Bancroft also tells in his California Pastoral that a part of the small interior trade was that from the Salinas lagoons, or salt ponds, situated between the ocean sand dunes and the Monterey river. Salt was here obtained for the missions and the troops, some being sent to San Blas on the king's ships as early as 1770. Salt being a royal monopoly, no sooner did men begin to make it than a guard was placed over it by order of the government.

The commander of the guard would bring Indians from Soledad and Carmelo and gathering all the salt from the three lagoons into one pile, covered it with sticks and branches, to which they set fire, so as to melt the surface

and form a crust over the mass, which would protect it from the dampness of the ocean winds. When all was ready for its shipment, it was brought to the warehouse at Monterey, and placed in charge of the Habilitado (agent or paymaster) and sent away in tanned leather bags brought by the ship for that purpose.

Several important dates of the month of May are of special historical interest in Monterey:

**May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1822**, California held its first general election at Monterey, when electors representing five presidial districts met and chose Gov. Pablo Vicente Sola as "deputado" to represent the province at the "cortes" of the Mexico Empire, to which California had pledged allegiance on April 11.

**May 9, 1832** – General Jose Figueroa was appointed governor of California by President Carlos Maria Bustamante. Figueroa arrived in Monterey by boat from Acapulco after many vicissitudes, January 14, 1833.

**May 23, 1835** – Father Vicente Francisco Sarria, founder of Mission San Rafael, died at the altar during services at Mission Soledad. He was buried before the altar at San Antonio Mission.

**May 12, 1841** – M. Eugene Duflot de Mofras, French emissary dispatched to California to investigate the possibility of establishing trade, arrived in Monterey on board the Ninfa.

**May 1, 1843** – Thomas Oliver Larkin was appointed United States consul "for the Port of Monterey, in California, and such other ports as shall be nearer thereto than to the residence of any other consul or vice-consul of the United States within the same allegiance." Larkin entered into his duties April 2, 1844 and served until June 23, 1846. He was the only United States consul ever to serve in California.

May 13, 1854 – The State Agricultural Society was formed in Sacramento to conduct fairs, exhibitions, etc., and to otherwise promote agriculture, horticulture and stock-raising in California. F.W. Macondray was the first president.