

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 31, 1951

June Is Important

The month of June is very important in Monterey's history. It was on June 3, 1770 that Gaspar de Portola, governor of the Californias, assisted by Father Junipero Serra and soldiers founded the Presidio of Monterey and took formal possession of the land in the name of Charles III, king of Spain. The formalities consisted of the planting of the royal standard, the uprooting of plants and the casting of stones, the latter symbolizing the seizing of the territory.

The establishment of the Mission of San Carlos de Monterey, which in 1771 was moved to the Carmel River and re-named "San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo," by Father Junipero Serra was the second mission to be established in Alta California. It was named for St. Charles Borromeo (1538-1584), archbishop of Milan and papal secretary of state under Pius IV.

On June 17, 1774, Juan Perez, commanding the Santiago sailed from Monterey to explore and take possession of the northwest coast of America up to 60 degrees. He reached the extremity of Queen Charlotte's Island, in 55 degrees, then returned to Monterey and Mexico.

June 24, 1797, Mission San Juan Bautista was founded by Father Fermin Francisco Lasuen, Jose Manuel Martiarena and Magin Catala. It was the 15th mission in Alta California and was named for St. John the Baptist.

June 14th, 1846, the Bear Flag standard of "The California Republic," was raised over the plaza at Sonoma following the capture of Col. M.G. Vallejo, Lt. Col. Victor Prudon and Capt. Salvador Vallejo.

A proclamation issued on the 15th by William B. Ide, leader of the republican movement, charged that the citizens had been oppressed and deceived by the Mexican government, had been denied promised land and a fair and just government, and urged all peaceable and honest citizens to support the republic.

"California celebrated its first birthday as a constituent member of the United States." That announcement appeared in a headline in the London Times in June, 1851.

The article continued: "Three short years ago, the name of California conveyed no more impressive ideas to European or even American ideas than Kamschatka of Bhootan. The country itself was an unexplored desert, and the shores of the Pacific about San Francisco were scantily tenanted by a few scores of Russians and Spaniards, who lived without rivalry or suspicion, and who scarcely waited for the sanction of their respective governments to effect such changes or sales of ground as convenience might suggest.

Nobody knew or cared whether the enormous tract beyond contained inhabitants or not and a journey across its plains was considered as remarkable as a journey through Central Africa.

This remote district is now the seat of a powerful and independent state – a state which has been founded and constituted from beginning to end, in about 30 months time.

The 29th of last December was celebrated by the Californians as the birthday of their state – to be celebrated in honor of their admission to the American Union ... Let the reader consider the extraordinary character of the facts it symbolized. Here was community of some hundreds of thousands of souls collected from all quarters of the known world – Polynesians and Peruvians, Englishmen and Mexicans, Germans and New Englanders, Spaniards and Chinese – all organized under Old Saxon institutions, and actually marching under the command of a mayor and alderman ... A third of the time which has been consumed in erecting our Houses of Parliament has here sufficed to create a state with a territory as large as Great Britain, a population difficult to number, and destinies which none can foresee."

In Tuesday evening's Diary there was a report of the gift of a document to the California Historical Society by Harry J. Breen which concerned a number of bricks and the First Brick House in Monterey which was built by Gallant Duncan Dickinson. When the article appeared the First Brick House was minus the capitals, for which we were in no way to blame, and we apologize to this historic building and its owners.