

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

June 19, 1951

### **Under a Large Oak Tree**

Yesterday told a story as told to us by Victor Mossop concerning his efforts to find proof from the early day residents and Indians in the San Antonio Valley as to the identity of a photograph he thought was a likeness of Father Doroteo Ambris, a priest at the Mission Antonio from 1846 until 1851. Today we will continue with a group of early day happenings in this mission valley in Southern Monterey County.

Padre Ambris had been at San Antonio only a few months, and in order to serve the outlying areas of the countryside he used to baptized children, perform marriages and hold services. When General Fremont and his men were traveling South through the state they came upon a valley and found a group of Indians and Spanish-Mexicans under a large oak tree, with Padre Ambris holding services. The soldiers names the valley Priest Valley, and so it is called today.

Father Ambris sailed from San Blas, with two other ecclesiastical students on the Rosalind with Captain Crouch, and his bishop, and landed at San Diego, December 12, 1841, after a 30-day voyage. After this ordination on January 1, 1846, he was sent to San Antonio Mission.

In 1850 he was in Monterey according to a recording in the Monterey Book of Conveyances A, page 97. The document was witnessed by Joseph Merrill and William Johnson and signed on August 9, 1850.

"The Catholic Church of Monterey, represented by Reverend Padre Doroteo Ambris of the first part and Graciano Manjares of Monterey, of the second part;

"Whereas in or about the year 1844 an exchange of certain property in Carmelo appertaining to the said Catholic Church was made by its representatives to the said Manjares in lieu of a house and lot in Monterey then appertaining to the said Manjares; "

"And whereas the document relating to such transfer has since been lose...And whereas the said parties...desire...to annul the said document and transfer one to the other...the property so originally held...;

"Now therefore this indenture witnesseth, that for and in consideration of such transfer...The Catholic

Church...represented by...Padre Ambris doth grant...to the said Graciano Manjares all right...and demand of the said...Church...to all that lot of land with dwelling house thereon...which until now has been occupied by the senores padres of said...Church situated in Monterey...to the southward of the property of Mrs. Jacob B. Leese...:

"And in consideration of the transfer to him...Graciano Manjares...by these presents doth...transfer unto the said Catholic Church all his right...to the following described property: One lot of land...34 varas in length and 14 in width, with building thereon, comprising one hall and eight rooms, a garden or orchard with 60 fruit tress...enclosed, and all that piece of land between the said orchard and the river Carmelo, consisting of 336 varas, from east to west and running from an old stone enclosure or wall to the southern boundary thereof, the same being...the same property...given in exchange by the said Church to the said Manjares for the said house and lot in Monterey...Signed and sealed by Padre Ambris and Graciano Manjares."

For the above we credit Father James Culletin, the editor of the Academy Scrapbook.

There is now hanging in one of the bedrooms in the Stevenson House a primitive little shrine containing a small wax figure of San Carlos, presented a short time ago by Lawrence Tibbett Wardell, a great-great grandson of Graciano Manjares, mentioned in the above article. Graciano Manjares was the owner of the old adobe and the property now occupied by Virginia Norris on Calle Principal. Wardell's grandfather was Imael Manjares and his greet-grandfather was Ponciano Manjares, the son of Graciano Manjares. Graciano was granted from Spain the El Saucito Rancho of 2211 acres in 1833. He was an auxiliary judge in Monterey in 1842.