

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Punishment Fit The Crime

In yesterday's Diary we told by bandits upon the Rancho San Juan Capistrano of Baratie and Boret, the death the two partners and the capture of Mrs. Baratie, as related by the latter's niece Mrs. Rebecca Deleissegues in 1929.

After the bandits left the ranch with Mrs. Baratie tied to her mare's back, they detailed Luciano, a youthful member of the gang, to take her to a cave in the mountains used by Mistano as a hiding place, the other members of the robber band going away to another direction with their bounty.

As the youth led the horse bearing the unhappy captive through the trails that wound among the underbrush which tore her clothing, scratched her skin and dragged off one her slippers, she pleaded with him to take her to a place of safety, finally prevailing upon him to do so. He removed the rawhide thongs that bound her and started in a round about way toward San Juan.

Mrs. Deleissegues remembers hearing the story of how they spent a night enroute at the rancho called Pulvaderas, and run by a man named Hernandez, who was believed to be a friend of the outlaws, so she dared no speak to him of her plight.

The two finally arrived at San Juan, going to an old adobe house not far from the center of town, which was occupied by a man named Chavez. This was undoubtedly Cleodovio Chavez, who a short time later became a member of the notorious Vasquez gang and right hand man and lieutenant to Tiburcio Vasquez, its leader.

Mrs. Baratie was by this time, she later told her family, in a pitiful condition---weary scratched and bruised by briars and brush, her clothing in shreds, and heartbroken over the fate of her husband. Furthermore she was in fear of her life and she knew that the occupants of the house were accomplices of the murderous outlaws who had killed her husband and his partner and robbed their rancho.

At first she was afraid to talk to any of them but finally prevailed upon them to permit her to go to town long enough to get herself some decent clothes and shoes, where she at once made her way to the office of Flint, Bixby & Company stage line, told what had happened to

her, and was furnished with transportation to Oakland to join her husband's people.

The robbery and murder at the Baratie Rancho created much excitement and almost the entire populace of the central coast section armed and joined in a search that extended far into Southern California.

After several months the outlaws were finally captured and brought to San Juan Obispo. Judge Murray, an Englishman, sent to Oakland for Mrs. Baratie and she was able to identify all of the prisoners except one, as members of the gang that killed her husband and abducted her. This unidentified man was later also proven to be a member of the gang. All of them were convicted and publicly hanged as a warning to others who might be tempted in those early days to emulate them.

The names of the robbers who were executed were, El Mesteno, Miguel Blanco, Santos Peralta, Rafael, El Hilero, Froilan, and Desiderio Grijalva. The eighth member of the gang was the boy who helped Mrs. Baratie to escape and he was permitted to go free.

Miguel Blanco, it developed, was the murderer of one of the Frenchman, and wounded the other before he was killed.

The old adobe building in San Juan Capistrano, where Mrs. Baratie was brought, and which was known to be a rendezvous of the bandits and their sympathizers, is still standing in that town. Her niece relates that Mrs. Baratie, the heroine of this story, was a very beautiful and accomplished young woman, then in her early twenties.

Judge Walter Murray, who sentenced the outlaws to death, was a married man with a family, his wife being a countrywoman of Mrs. Baratie. In time Mrs. Murray invited Mrs. Baratie to visit her in San Luis Obispo. Judge Murray and his brother, a bachelor, were the publishers of the San Luis Obispo Tribune, and Alexander Murray was the postmaster and Wells Fargo agent. After several year he married Mrs. Baratie.