

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Iron Pot, Silk Mittens and a Blue Moon

A bit of this and that today!

A note from Juan B. Alvarado of San Francisco, the grandson of Don Juan B. Alvarado, first governor of California, relates: "I note in one of your clippings that there is a quotation from Marno Dutton which starts with the question: 'Have you ever seen moonlight in the Jolon Country?' Twice in my life I have seen what they call a blue moon. Once when I was up at Salsipuedes where I was camping out in the open. I woke up about 3 o'clock in the morning with the moon shining full in my face and when I was fully awakened I realized that this was some sort of a different and better moonlight. I shook my partner, a sound sleeper, out of his blankets and said 'You better get up, boy and see something you have never seen before.' The moon was brilliant and seemed to give off a bluish radiance. We stayed up and walked around down on that little flat below Avila's for about half an hour.

"I don't know whether it was fact or fancy but the expression 'once in a blue moon' must mean something and when you do find a blue moon you have seen something of remarkable brilliance and coloring."

Victor Mossop of Monterey has sent the clipping of the Peninsula Diary to Mr. Alvarado in which the book "Salt of the Earth" had been spoken of and quoted from the biography of Mrs. Marno Dutton Thompson, daughter of the late owner of the Dutton Hotel at Jolon.

Cipriano Avila, was born on the Salsipuedes ranch in 1870, and it was there that Alvarado camped. Avila still lives on the ranch and has many fascinating tales to tell of the early days in that part of southern Monterey County. His father, Vincente Avila had been a Monterey man before he went to Jolon in 1864. Cipriano Avila recalled in the "Salt of the Earth," the trips that the family of thirteen children made by oxcart to the San Antonio Mission. The whole family would go and the carreta would be loaded down with food and blankets.

"And the wheels, you should have heard them squeak" he laughed. "They were made of sycamore trees, and they would get so hot. My father had to keep plenty of grease on them or they would catch fire. What a noise we made."

Those were the days when Father Ambris was still at the mission. People gathered at the Holy Season, attended Mass, and visited for several days, camping near the mission. Then they would pack up and return to their ranches.

Mr. and Mrs. William A. Hartnell and son, Richard, of San Jose, were visitors a few days ago at the Stevenson House in Monterey. Mr. Hartnell is the grandson of W.E.P. Hartnell whose adobe home was where the Monterey Hospital now stands. Hartnell was the interpreter at the Constitutional Convention in Monterey in 1849 and was the founder of Hartnell College, near Salinas, the first college in California. Mr. William A. Hartnell was the son of Jose Hartnell, one of the older sons of W.E.P. Hartnell.

Mrs. Anne Sturtevant of San Francisco called at the Stevenson House one day last week and presented an interesting iron cooking pot for the newly opened old-time kitchen in the building. Mrs. Sturtevant had promised to bring the pot on her return to the Peninsula from a trip to New Orleans, and she kept that promise.

Mrs. John Cooper of the Carmel Valley, recently presented a pair of silk mittens, which had been a treasured possession of Senorita Maria Ygnacio Bonifacio, to the Custom House Museum. They will soon be added to the case where other gifts from Mrs. Cooper are on display. The mittens were undoubtedly of Paris make, with embroidered flowers in color down the back of the hand and around the wrist.

Mrs. Cooper's mother and father Mr. and Mrs. Robert Johnson (the former mayor of Monterey) were very devoted friends of the Senorita.