

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **The Sleepy Hollow Of The Pacific**

The best-selling novel in Spain in 1510 was the "Sergas of Esplandian." The scene of its plot was "an island in California on the right hand of the Indies, peopled with Amazons and abounding in fabulous riches."

The Spaniards had found such great wealth in Mexico and South America that they readily credited the fictions of the "Sergas." According, June 27th, 1542 Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a native of Portugal, but a Spanish citizen, left Natividad, Mexico, with two ship and sailed up the coast in search of California's fabled riches.

He found none, but mentioned in his diary, that at 37 degrees latitude he came upon a little ensenada (bay), the shores of which were covered with pines. The bay later was named Monterey and the site of the future presidio and City of Monterey.

Many historians and writers have written books—both big and little—which they hoped at the time would answer the eager inquiries of the many visitors to Monterey who are greeted by many signs marking places of interest. One of the most complete and interesting which I have read and from which the above paragraph is quoted, is a small paper covered volume of just 95 pages written by Grace MacFarland, entitled "Monterey, Cradle of California's Romance,"—published in 1914 at the press of Weybret and Leo Co. in Monterey.

It contains the facts of her birth, and growth from histories, public and church records and stories of people yet living and as the author states: "the story of a lost port that was found again and a dream that came true." Probably there are still a few copies in existence in private libraries of the Peninsula. The copy I have enjoyed was loaned to me by Miss Myfanwy Lloyd.

It will be interesting to many old-timers to look over the list of those who gave help to the author as she compiled the facts for "Monterey, Cradle of California Romance": Rev. S. H. Willey (one of the chaplains at the Constitutional Convention) and his son, W.A. Willey, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hitchcock Sr., Frank Devendorf, Dr. E.K. Abbott, Tom Allen and his daughter, Mrs. Dana, Miss Bonifacio, Mrs. C. Field, Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. Johnson, (Mayor) C. Machado, Rev. Father Mestres, J.K. Oliver, William Sandholdt, C. Williams, Harry A. Greene, H.R.

Warner, Del Monte and Frank Abbe, Mort Regan and Miss M. Solas of San Juan Bautista; Frank Powers and Charles B. Turrill of San Francisco.

The author included in her book a bit about the school in early Monterey as she had learned of it from older residents of the city. "The Monterey school is comparison with even the most primitive establishment of the Atlantic States at the same epoch, was a very crude affair...Rude benches extended along the sides of the long low adobe room with dirty unpainted walls. On a raised platform at one end sat a soldier teacher, of fierce and war-like mien, clad in fantastic greasy garments with ferule in hand. On the wall over his head was great green cross and the picture of a saint, to which each boy came on entering the room to say a bandito aloud. Then he approached the platform to salute the master by kissing his hand and received a bellowed permission to take his seat, which he did after throwing his hat on a pile in the corner." This description fitted the conditions about the time that Governor Sola came to Monterey and in which he took pride in continuing and improving.

The author begins her story with the earliest explorations, California colonization, Mexican Monterey, conquest of California, then American Monterey which she calls the Sleepy Hollow of the Pacific, and ends with the announcement of the preparations for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Father Junipero Serra, on Sunday, November 23, 1913. Carmel a pilgrimage, a religious ceremony and a barbecue. When the throngs of worshipers left Carmel, they went to the Presidio of Monterey to participate in civic ceremonies in honor of friar.

(More on Monday)