

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 24, 1951

### **From Carmel to Mallorca**

For weeks before the Nov. 23, 1913, observance of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Father Junipero Serra at the Carmel Mission, Father Ramon Mestres, pastor of both the mission and the Royal Presidio Chapel in Monterey, had been in constant correspondence with Father Torrens, the only known relative of Padre Serra, who was planning a similar ceremonial in Mallorca, Spain.

That the state as well as the church might show its appreciation of Junipero Serra's great work, Governor Hiram Johnson sent Frank H. Powers, founder of Carmel, as a special Serra commissioner to the Mallorca celebration.

Cablegrams were exchanged Nov. 23, between Father Mestres and Father Torrens. King Alfonso's representative at Washington telegraphed greetings and congratulations from his sovereign to the worshippers in Carmel.

But because of inclement weather, the Mallorca celebration had been held earlier. The Serra commissioner had come too late. Instead of icily polite official regrets, such as might have been expected from a country with which the United States had been at war only 16 years before, Father Torrens got up a second celebration in order that the American envoy's mission might not be in vain.

Following the quaint old world custom, he sent criers through the streets announcing to the people that there would be special services in honor of their countryman, Junipero Serra.

Happy over the expected holiday, dressed in their best, the crowds came according to Mr. Powers' report after his return to Carmel, listened to their priest's speeches and applauded when Father Easterlink translated the English speech of the commissioner Frank Powers of Carmel.

The late Frank Powers was the father of Mrs. Nelson Miles Leoni of Carmel Valley and Gallatin Powers of Monterey.

Along about 1890 the city board of trustees began plans to tear down Colton Hall and use the stone and site for a new school house. The wall around it had been

demolished before Monterey woke up to save its historic building.

Just in the nick of time a few patriotic citizens, prominent among them the late Harry A. Greene, Mr. Sargent Sr., and Col. Lambert, according to "Monterey, Cradle of California's Romance." They called a mass meeting, annulled the board's action and raised money enough for another school site.

The city could not afford to repair the hall. Joseph Knowland now chairman of the California State Parks Commission, had a bill passed in the legislature providing that the building be leased and kept in repair by the State of California. It later came back into the possession of the city.

Feb. 23 the Rev. S.H. Willey, who had assisted Grace MacFarland with information for "Monterey, Cradle of California's Romance," told her that he was the first Protestant clergyman in California when he landed at Monterey Feb. 23, 1849. The following morning he said he went ashore at 11 o'clock to hold public worship for the first time in Monterey and in California. Service was held in the schoolroom of the stone edifice (Colton Hall) used for public purposes.

"Although on account of the unpropitious state of the weather, our meeting was not numerously attended, I have not yet presided under more interesting circumstances. The text was First Corinthians 1:23-4."

At last in May, services were held in a private home. They continued holding meetings at irregular intervals until 1851, when the Rev. Mr. Willey was called to a larger congregation in the sand hills of San Francisco.

Just before daybreak on Tuesday, Feb. 25, 1849, the first steamship on the Pacific puffed into Monterey Bay.

The story is told by Miss MacFarland that some Indians living on the coast saw her by the light of her fires. Not knowing what to do or what it could be, they ran in great alarm to the interior where Major Hill, their special friend, was. They reported that there was a ship on fire and what was more, she did not burn up; but the strangest of all was that she was making rapid headway right against the wind and not a sail was set.