

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Among the '49ers

One of the first group of Forty-Niners who arrived on the steamer California, which also brought the first mail, was Pacificus Ord, about whom we wrote yesterday. He was one of a group of five appointed by General Bennett Riley, to canvass the vote for governor and legislators in Monterey on December 10, 1849.

Ord had practiced his profession of law in New Orleans before coming to California. Previous to his serving as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, he had served as judge of the Supreme court set up by General Riley's provisional government. Judge Ord continued to be prominent in California for many years, and from 1854 to '59 served as United States Attorney for the Southern district of the state. His death occurred at the age of 84 in Washington, D.C.

All this data on an early California citizen leads to a very interesting story we found in Leon Rowland's bit of history on Santa Cruz.

Pacificus Ord was employed by Rafael Castro in 1852 to give him advice on his idea of divorcing his wife, Soledad. When Ord informed him that if he carried out his plan he would probably have to divide his property and Soledad would get half, he abandoned the idea. As a fee Ord was given 70 acres on the highway between Aptos and Soquel in Santa Cruz County. This transaction brought to the neighboring county a family of English Royal blood.

A morganatic marriage in 1785 of the Prince of Wales, the future King George IV, with Lady Fitz Herbert, reigning beauty of London, resulted in the birth of a son who, ineligible to the throne was sent to the United States in 1800. Taking the name of James Ord he attended Georgetown University, fought in the War of 1812, and married Rebecca Cresap of Baltimore.

Two of his sons, Lieutenant Edward O.C. Ord, just out of West Point, and Dr. James Ord, army surgeon, who arrived in Monterey in 1847, were followed by Pacificus, by John, who settled on the land near Aptos, by Robert, and by William Marcellus. A daughter had married General Trevino of Mexico when he had gone to Washington on a diplomatic mission. Another, Georgiana, married Samuel Holladay, an attorney in San Francisco.

Pacificus Ord came to Aptos in 1855 to live with his son, John. His wife died in 1860 and was buried in the Catholic churchyard in Santa Cruz until her body was exhumed in 1931 and taken to Arlington cemetery to rest with that of her husband, her son, General Ord of the Civil War (for whom Fort Ord was named); and that of a grandson who had died on San Juan Hill in Cuba in 1898.

James Ord, the father, died in 1873 at Omaha where his son was stationed at an Army post. William Marcellus Ord, after serving in the legislature from Butte County, went to Santa Cruz in 1873 and died there in 1882. John, who farmed near Aptos died in Santa Cruz in 1911.

Dr. James Ord came to Monterey as a surgeon with Company F of the Third United States Artillery, under contract and not in the regular Army. He became a surgeon and a farmer in the state and also claimant to land in Tuolumne County. In 1874 he was a resident of Santa Barbara and had married the widow of Don Manuel Jimeno – nee de la Guerra Jimeno had been a resident of Monterey and had built two large adobe buildings here one for his home and one for a hotel, which later became St. Catherine's Convent, the first private school in California. It was located at Franklin and Calle Principal.

Ord became attending surgeon to the United States troops at Fort Point in San Francisco in 1878. The couple had one daughter, Rebecca, who was living with her mother in Salinas in the late 1870s according to Bancroft.