

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

January 10, 1952

### **The Lettuce Cure**

Both Anza and Fray Pedro Font were ill during their stay on the Monterey Peninsula in 1776. The Fray writes in his diary on Thursday, March 14, that the commander continued to be sick in bed at Carmelo Mission. As for himself, his affliction became worse after leaving San Diego, but afterward he was entirely cured by the large and good lettuce which he ate here nearly every day.

After saying mass in Monterey Father Font reports that he went to view the harbor near the presidio and saw that it scarcely merited the name of harbor, "because of its small capacity and poor shelter, although the bay formed by Cabo de Pinos and Punta de Ano Nuevo is very large." Here, he recorded, he saw the landmarks given by General Vizcaino, the oak to which he anchored his ship, and the arroyo nearby in which he noted a small dam had been built. Not far from this he wrote in his diary, a store was being built in which to keep provisions which the annual vessels bring to the presidio. It does not seem possible to the 1952 resident of Monterey that a ship could be anchored to the oak tree under which Father Serra said the first Mass in California, and where Portola and his soldiers gathered to take part in this religious service. The site is marked by a History and Art Association marker, by a large boulder with a bronze tablet to the memory of Don Gaspar de Portola and a huge granite cross, at the Pacific street entrance to the old Monterey Presidio, now the Language School.

On Thursday, March 21, 1776, Font continued to copy the map, which had been first made by his cousin, Fray Pablo Font in Mexico from the data in the diary kept by Fray Juan Crespi in that journey which he made with Captain Fages in 1722. He added the ports of Monterey and Bodega and then again observed, and Father Francisco Palos also observed, with the graphometer, and Father Fray Juan Crespi with his astrolabe, but he explained in his diary that he did not note down the results of these observations because they were the same as that of the 16<sup>th</sup>, with half a minute more, although in the minutes they all three differed somewhat. In the afternoon Font went with other fathers to the mouth of the Carmelo, and there he saw "sea lions with which that sea and coast greatly abound, and heard them bark."

On the afternoon of Friday, March 22, 1776, Father Font, Anza and their party set out from the mission of San Carlos de Carmelo, to go to the port of San Francisco. Before entering the Presidio of Monterey they went to see and examine the harbor of Monterey again. They traveled about a half league beyond it, until they could see the end of Point Ano Nuevo, which because it projects a long distance into the sea, from the presidio is covered by the Point of Pines. In a note in the diary written by Dr. Herbert Bolton, it is stated that Font's map shows Monterey Bay much too deep.

On March 23 the party left the presidio of Monterey with a Lieutenant and 11 soldiers. There were also the necessary muleteers and servants, six in number, making altogether 20 persons. In the late afternoon they halted on the other side of the valley of Santa Delfina (Salinas); at the entrance to a canyon, at a place called La Natividad, the site of which is still there and bears the same name. Their route was to the left of the present highway from Monterey to Salinas and San Juan Bautista. One of the lagoons passed was evidently Laguna del Rey. Camp was made near Sugar Loaf mountain.

The party again set out, after mass on Sunday. They proceeded from La Natividad and in the late afternoon camped at the Arroyo de las Llagas, having traveled some 12 leagues. The route was essentially that of the highway over the range to San Juan Bautista, north through San Benito Valley (San Pasqual) to the Pajaro (spelled Paxaro by Font) at Betabel, along the river to Sargent along the western edge of the Gilroy valley (in 1776 known as San Bernardino) past Gilroy ad San Martin to Llagas Creek to which they dropped down after crossing the upper spur of hills just northwest of San Martin, where the valley appears to end. This description is contained in Dr. Bolton's report of his trek of the route traveled by de Anza and Font.

In the Salinas Valley Father Font noted that they saw many antelopes and white and gray geese. They camped that night on the Arroyo de Las Llagas just northwest of the present town of San Martin.

(More Tomorrow)