

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

January 8, 1952

Great and Very Special Joy

The De Anza expedition arrived at the Royal Presidio of the port of Monterey at half past four in the afternoon on Sunday, March 10, 1776. Father Font records that "the road, like all the rest is through pretty country, green, shady, flower strewn, fertile, beautiful and splendid. When we arrived at the presidio everyone was overjoyed, in spite of the fact that we were so wet, for we did not have a dry garment. We were welcomed by three volleys of the artillery, consisting of some small cannons that are there, and the firing of muskets of the soldiers."

Font follows this tale of the greeting Anza himself and the colonists received, with a description of the presidio as it looked to him that day.

"The royal presidio of Monterey is situated in a plain formed by the Sierra de Pinos (Point of Pines), which ends here. It is close to the sea and about a quarter of a league from the port of Monterey. Its buildings form a square, on one side of which is the house of the commander and the storehouse in which the storekeeper lives. On the opposite side are a little chapel and the quarters or barracks of the soldiers, and on the other two sides there are some huts or small houses of the families and people who live there. All are built of logs and mud, with some adobes; and the square or plaza of the presidio, which is not large, is enclosed by a stockade or wall of logs. It is all a very small affair, and for lack of houses the people live in great discomfort. Nor is this for want of materials, for there is lime and timber to spare, but for lack of effort directed to that purpose. The commander, indeed, had to lodge in the storehouse, and I in a dirty little room full of lime, while the rest of the people accommodated themselves in the plaza with their tents as best they could."

Those who follow the Historic Route through Monterey will find the markers telling where the walls of the old presidio were near the Royal Presidio Chapel.

Padre Font continues on with his impressions of the port of Monterey. He writes, "It consists of a small inlet affording slight shelter, formed by the Point of Pines, which extends about three leagues into the sea, and Point Ano Nuevo, which extends into the sea about 12

leagues, making a large but very open bay. For this reason what is called a harbor has little shelter, and almost none against the northwest wind, which blows there a great deal of the time, aside from the fact that it is so small that with two barks it is filled up, and likewise it is very shallow.

"The Point of Pines in relation to the Presidio of Monterey, from which it is distant about three leagues, lies almost to the north, and Point Ano Nuevo with respect to the harbor, from which it is distant some 10 or 12 leagues, lies almost to the northwest. The patron of the Presidio is San Carlos, and it is therefore called San Carlos y San Joseph, the latter in honor of the most illustrious Senor Don Joseph de Galbes, which gave the mission a beautiful image of Senor San Joseph, as the principal patron whom he invoked for all that new establishment; and it is called Carmelo because this is its original name, given at the time of the first discovery made by sea by General Don Sebastian Vizcaino."

Jose de Galbes, when inspector general of New Spain, directed the colonization of Alta California. Vizcaino explored Monterey Bay in 1602 and 1603.

On Monday, March 11, Fray Junipero Serra, the reverend father president of all the missions came from Mission San Carlos del Carmelo with four other friars – Palou, Murguia, Cambon and Pena, to greet the new arrivals. The royal surgeon of the king accompanied them and "great and very special was the joy which we felt on our arrival."

(More Tomorrow)