

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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At Xalostotitlan

How Madie D. Brown, the curator of the State owned historical monument, Lachryma Montis, General Vallejo's home at Sonoma, made a trip to Mexico to discover more of the family history of the general, is a fascinating story which we began in the Diary yesterday.

After finally finding where Xalostotitlan, the birthplace of Don Ignacio Vicente Ferrer Vallejo, the general's father, was located about one hundred miles from Guadalajara, the Californians started out in a rented car with an English speaking driver, over good road. They reached the village, built on a slight rise, about three o'clock in the afternoon. Mrs. Brown writes that the asphalt road to the village became a cobblestone street which widened into a plaza. Two churches bordered the plaza as did a long colonnade, under which sat some curb merchants selling their wares. The trio made their way to the largest of the four churches in the community. It seemed to be the oldest and the logical one to inquire for the ancient records of the baptism of Don Ignacio.

Senor Amavisca, the driver, made an inquiry as to the whereabouts of the parish padre and was told that he was gone for the day. Finding an organist, Senor Leopoldo P. Alvarado, training a group of children for the Christmas music, they were told that the archives of the church were in charge of the notary of the village who would not return until four o'clock – he was taking his siesta. Senor Alvarado, suggested that the guests spend the intervening time visiting the site of the former village of La Canadas, the village in which Don Ignacio Vallejo was born July 30, 203 years ago.

According to the story in the Academy Scrapbook, Ignacio's parents, Don Geronimo Vallejo and Antonia Gomez, had come from Galicia, in Spain to this new territory of New Spain, which was called Nueva Galicia before it became the state of Jalisco, in Mexico.

The site of this historic town, Las Canadas, is two miles from Jalostotitlan (Xalostotitlan). Fancy might imagine, according to Mrs. Brown's record, that one of the low adobe houses, now mostly in ruins, had once been the home of the boy Ignacio who had studied to be a priest. In one of them he might have planned to join the soldiers in the Rivera Moncada expedition which

brought him to California in 1774, and where he was to work in eight of the nine missions founded by Padre Junipero Serra, and where, too, he became the founder of the Vallejo family in California.

On Mrs. Brown's return to Jalostotitlan, the organist went for the notary, Senor Teleforo de Albo. When told what the visitor wanted he threw up his hands in an expression of despair. The records of 1748 seemed a long way back as he was accustomed to furnishing copies for passports which rarely ever went back beyond 1870 – and the records of the 18th century seemed so far away. But he allowed the three visitors to follow him into a small room furnished with a large antique desk and three old breakfront type bookcases.

Senor Albo climbed the center one standing on the narrow ledge of the cabinet as he reached up to the top shelf for the dark bound book of baptisms. This book, Mrs. Brown wrote, chronicled the baptisms in the Pueblo de Xalostotitlan since 1746. Peering over the shoulder of the notary as he lifted the parchment pages, she spotted the entry Ignacio Vicente Ferrer Vallejo's baptism, on page 93.

"The notary then seated himself at the typewriter and started pecking out slowly with his index fingers a copy, occasionally picking up a magnifying glass to make sure of a word. As I saw him slowly typing I thought how much I would like to have the page photographed and so expressed myself to Senor Alvarado," wrote Mrs. Brown. "Nothing in the way of a courtesy seemed too difficult to that senor, so he offered to bring the village photographer to the church. He offered to photograph page 93 and the title page of the book of baptisms for 40 pesos. The obliging Senor Alvarado then offered to mail the finished photographs to Sonora, Calif."

[Sonoma?]

The translation of the Vallejo entry reads: "Canadas: Ignacio Vicente Ferel, Spaniard, legitimate. At the baptismal font of Jalostotitlan, on August 14, 1748, I baptized and placed the holy oils on Ignacio Vicente Ferel a Spaniard 16 days old son in Las Canadas the legitimate son of Geronimo Vallejo and of Antonia Gomez. His godfather was Juan Lucas Vallejo. The priest's signature could not be read.