

May 22, 1952

### **Monterey Duenna**

In the old days in Monterey every young lady of family background had a duenna when she ventured beyond the adobe walls of her own home and garden. Duenna, the Spanish word for owner or chaperon, is one who accompanies her charge to market, to church, to the parties, or on the long walks which were popular in those days.

To observe this custom the committee from the Monterey History and Art Association has always chosen a duenna for La Favorita at the annual Merienda held in commemoration of Monterey's birthday. On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1952, when the city observes its 152<sup>nd</sup> birthday, Mrs. Charles Kiernan has been selected to be the duenna for Miss Glyneth Myra Gregory, the Favorita.

Mrs. Kiernan was born Jessie Frances Wood, the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Ball. Her grandmother was Maria Ygnacia de Ball, the daughter of Miguel Villagrana and Francisca Juarez de Villagrana, early residents of Santa Cruz. Mrs. Kiernan was born in Castroville where her father, Townsend Wood, was a grain broker and merchant. Mrs. Wood passed away a year ago at the age of 91 years. She had made her home with Mrs. Kiernan's sister, Mrs. Ethel M. Little in Monterey.

The Villagrana family has an interesting and historical record in California. We are indebted to Leon Rowland of Santa Cruz for the authentic genealogy of the family. Mr. Rowland has been a long time student of this hobby of collecting the data on the ancestry of early Californians and recently published "Los Fundadores" in which is listed the first families of California and also all other persons with family names that were in California from 1769 to 1785.

Mr. Rowland writes that the first record he has of the Miguel Villagrana family was when he and his wife, Francisca Juarez, appeared at Santa Cruz Mission to baptize a son, Miguel Sotero, on April 20, 1824. This couple was the great grandfather and great grandmother of Mrs. Kiernan. Francisca Juarez does not seem to fit into any Juarez family in Northern California, according to Mr. Rowland, so it is supposed that she came to California from Mexico with her husband.

Villagrana had probably been a soldier, for he was given a small grant of "Aguajito" at what is now the eastern edge of Santa Cruz. He was regidor of Branciforte in 1832 and alcalde in 1836. Mr. Rowland adds that while these officials were called alcaldes they were technically jueces de paz, appointed by the governor in Monterey. Villagrana was in the 1840s Branciforte residents, aged 66 years.

There were 11 children born to Miguel and Francisca Villagrana, of which Maria Ygnacia was the fifth child. She was baptized on December 31, 1831 at the mission in Santa Cruz and later married Frank Ball.

Miguel Sotero, the oldest, married Concepcion Arroyo. The marriage probably took place in Santa Cruz although the old "Branciforte matrimonios" (Santa Cruz marriage records) have been lost. However, they were married and had a son, also named Miguel, who was baptized in Santa Cruz January 29, 1844. According to official record Miguel was married in 1873 to Maria Valdez and in 1877, after Maria's death, somewhere in Santa Clara County to Concepcion Buelna. They baptized a daughter at San Miguel in 1884 and were residents there as late as 1901.

Maria Ygnacio, the fifth child and Mrs. Kiernan's grandmother, married Franklin Ball in 1852 in Santa Cruz. He was a Vermont native who had come to California with Stevenson's regiment in 1847. In order to marry Ygnacia he was baptized in the Catholic church, as was the custom in those days, his parents being recorded as "Osijenes Ball and Maria." He was in Santa Cruz as early as September 29, 1847, when he received an "American alcalde" grant. He was a blacksmith in 1847, road supervisor in 1854, court interpreter in 1863, and grantee of land near the mission of Santa Cruz in 1866.

About 1874 the Balls moved to Castroville, where he farmed. He died on April 14, 1902, in Santa Clara County at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Townsend Wood, the mother of Mrs. Kiernan.

The name Villagrana was often shortened to Villa and, by the Americans, to Bea and Bia, according to Mr. Rowland. There are many descendants of the family living in Santa Cruz County.

Mrs. Kiernan, the descendant of the Villagrana family and the chosen duenna for this year's Merienda, came to Monterey in 1905 and taught in the old grammar school, a three-story wooden building on the site of the

Walter Colton school of today. On the third story was the high school and it was here that Sue Gregory, the aunt of Glyneth Gregory, the 1952 Favorita, came to teach in 1907. For 15 years Mrs. Kiernan taught at the Bay View School in New Monterey. She is now retired and living in her home on Monroe – her home for the past 42 years.