

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 27, 1962

### **The Count de Monte Rey**

Monterey once had a Count de Monte Ray in the person of Louis Hill, a resident of Pebble Beach and one time owner of the Vasquez adobe on Dutra street back of Colton Hall, now city property.

Louis Hill had a handsome home, high on the hill in Pebble Beach overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Stillwater Cove and Carmel Beach. His large and beautiful garden was often visited by tours, especially when the thousands of tuberous begonias and fuchsias were in bloom, creating a riot of color. This property is still owned and occupied by members of the family.

But in what manner did Mr. Hill become the Count de Monte Rey? On Sept. 4, 1928, a simple ceremony, but befitting the occasion, took place at the San Carlos Hotel in Monterey, when Louis Hill, who did so much to inspire the Serra Pilgrimage and Fiesta, was presented with his parchment as Count de Monte Rey, and awarded the keys to the city for which discovery he was responsible and given greatest honors in the power of the Serra Pilgrimage and Fiesta committee to give.

On the parchment was hand lettered and illuminated the following complimentary remarks concerning the 1829 Count de Monte Rey: "Three hundred and twenty-six years after Viscaino's visit, Louis Hill discovered Monterey and the Serra Pilgrimage, realized its possibilities, jumped into the game as a whole hearted citizen to give it the spectacular beginning that led on to a striking success. He entered into its spirit and played it hard, the most colorful character in costume when the festivities began.

"With definite instructions from the 'King' committee that named him to be present each year to open a period of fun, fellowship and old-time make-believe."

Don Luis wore the scarlet bolero in which he had been garbed during the week of the Annual Serra Pilgrimage and Fiesta. Emmet McMenamain presided a master of ceremony at the dinner honoring the newly appoint count.

The framed parchment honoring his late father, now hangs in the ranch of his son, Courtland Hill, down the coast on the way to Big Sur. Mr. Hill is very proud of the honors bestowed upon his late father by his friends and admirers of Old Monterey.

The first Count de Monte Rey was the viceroy of New Spain, who sent Sebastian Viscaino in the fall of 1602, to travel up the coast of California to discover the Bay of Monterey. He it was who named our mountains Sierra de Santa Lucia and they still "shoot up abruptly from the sea and rise so gently from the fertile Carmel Valley." As the navigator passed, he named the river that runs through the valley Rio del Carmelo. That name, too, has survived the centuries.

On Dec. 17, Viscaino, with two Carmelite friars, came ashore near the present entrance to the Presidio of Monterey and under an oak tree, Mass was said, and with as much ceremony as the little band could summon, the country was taken in the name of King Philip III. And the name of Monte Rey was formally bestowed upon the harbor in honor of Don Gaspar de Zuniga, Conde de los Pinos, viceroy of Mexico, the sponsor of the exploration. This on Dec. 17, 1602—18 years before our Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock—Monterey had received its baptismal name.

Louis Hill was the son of James H. Hill, greatest American railroad builder in the country, who in 1893 completed the northern most transcontinental railroad in the United States which is known as the Great Northern Railroad. He was born in Canada in 1838 and died in 1916.