

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 4, 1952

Month of Anniversaries

On August 2, 1769, Father Juan Crespi with Portola and their companions camped on the present site of Los Angeles. Crespi recorded that the party experienced three earthquakes, but even with that experience he thought the site "has all the requisites for a large settlement" In view of the fact that the previous day, August 1, marked the jubilee of Our Lady of the Angels of Porciuncula, the Reverend Father so christened the place.

On August 3rd, the party camped again within the present limits of Los Angeles and became the first white men to discover oil in California.

On August 1, 1775, Juan Manuel de Ayala, commander of the San Carlos, entered San Francisco Bay in a small boat, accompanied by his pilots, Jose Canizares and Juan Bautista Aguirre. The expedition, the first to sail the waters of the bay, eventually surveyed and mapped the area, giving names to many of its landmarks, such as Angel Island, Alcatraz Island, and San Pablo Bay.

On August 16, 1775, a Spanish Royal Decree established the capital of California at Monterey, with Felipe de Neve as governor.

On August 9, 1834, Governor Jose Figueroa issued his famous "Reglamento para la Secularizacion de las misiones de la Alta California," the first major piece of printing undertaken by California's first printer, Augustin Zamorano. The edict provided for the conversion of the missions into pueblos and for the relieving of friars of temporal duties. Each head of a family to be given a lot of 100 to 400 varas square. Ejidos (town pastures) were assigned for the pueblos, with half of all livestock, chattels, seeds, etc., to be distributed pro rata. The government was to be in charge of the ayuntamientos (town councils), while the mission libraries and church goods remained in charge of the priests.

The month of August, 1846, saw the Stars and Stripes raised over three major communities: Santa Barbara, on August 4, with Com. Robert F. Stockton officiating; San Pedro on August 6th; and Los Angeles on August 13th, with both Stockton and Maj. John C. Fremont present.

August 15th marks the 106th anniversary of the printing of California's first newspaper, The Californian. It was

owned by Robert Semple and Walter Colton and appeared once each week.

In this year of political conventions and elections it is interesting to review the history of one of California's earliest parties. Phil Townsend Hanna writes in his "California Through Four Centuries" of the "Know Nothing" or "American" party. This was a secret political organization with a platform based chiefly on opposition to foreigners and foreign immigration. The party held its first State convention at Sacramento on August 7, 1855.

The organization had been exceedingly active since early in 1854, with chapters in many villages and mining camps, and had carried municipal elections in Marysville, Sacramento and elsewhere. The party nominated J. Neely Johnson for governor, Robert M. Johnson for lieutenant-governor, and Hugh C. Murray and Davis S. Terry for justices of the State Supreme Court. All candidates were swept into office at the election of September 5.

The party took its name from the fact when members were asked about it by non-members they were pledged to "know nothing" about it. The party was especially anti-Chinese, and sponsored much legislation restricting the liberties of Orientals.