

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Santa Barbara's Legitimacy

Santa Barbara played host to her townspeople and to the members of the historical area conference of the California Division of Beaches and Parks on April 17, when the 171st birthday of the city was celebrated.

At a dinner in El Paso, a charming addition to the ancient adobe home of the de la Guerra family, Francis Price, past El Presidente of "Old Spanish Days," Santa Barbara's historical group, spoke on "Recuerdos of Santa Barbara's Birthday."

"Santa Barbara's "legitimacy" as a natural daughter of the Spanish establishment erected there 171 years ago was in question for many years, but was ultimately made definite by action of the legislative body of Alta California in 1836, 10 years before the Americans came;: was Mr. Price's reassuring remark to his fellow citizens and guests.

Price continued his discussion with the listed importance of three establishments to early Spanish settlements in the new world—the presidio, the mission, and the pueblo. Usually the presidio was the first to be built, because of danger from the Indians. Then came the mission, for spiritual development, then the pueblo, or city government.

Normally, he said, the city would inherit from the pueblo, but since there was doubt whether a pueblo had ever been established in Santa Barbara, the legislative decree in 1836 held in effect that the presidio and public must have shared identity, and that Santa Barbara could regard the combination as its natural legal ancestor.

In Phil Hanna's "California, Through Four Centuries: we find listed: April 21, 1782—The Presidio of Santa Barbara was founded by Gov. Felipe de Neve, but no mission was established until Dec. 4, 1786.

Mission Santa Barbara was founded by Fathers Fermin Francisco Lasuen, Antonio Paterna and Cristobal Oramas. It was the tenth of the missions founded in Alta California by the Franciscans, and was named for Saint Barbara, the daughter of a rich merchant of Heliopolis, Egypt, who, tradition has it, embraced Christianity in the third century and was beheaded. Saint Barbara is popularly regarded as a patron saint in time of

thunderstorm and fire, and the protector of artillerymen and miners, according to Hanna.

The Mission San Carlos de Monterey and the Presidio of Monterey were founded on the same day, and at the same time, which makes this community a bit different from Santa Barbara and 12 years older than our southern sister city. It was on June 3, 1770 that Father Junipero Serra founded San Carlos de Monterey. The mission was the second to be established in Alta California and was named Saint Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan and Papal Secretary of State under Pius IV.

Upon landing on the shores of Monterey near where the Presidio of Monterey entrance now exists and where a boulder and table now marks the spot, Gaspar de Portola, governor of the Californias, assisted by Father Serra and soldiers, founded the presidio and took formal possession of the land in the name of Charles III, King of Spain.

We noticed a short story in the daily papers several weeks ago of the death, in Santa Barbara, of Miss Delfino de la Guerra, the last direct descendant of the second commandant at Santa Barbara's Presidio under the Spanish colonial empire. She was 92 years of age and up until a few days before her death had resided in the old family adobe home, which has become one of the show places in the heart of Santa Barbara.

Her grandparents, Don Joe de la Guerra and Dona Maria Antonia Carrillo, were among the most prominent, wealthy and influential citizens and residents of Santa Barbara. Three of her aunts married and lived in Monterey and helped form the early history of this part of the state: Mara Teresa de la Guerra y Noriega, who married W.E.P. Hartnell, the founder of Hartnell College and interpreter of the California Constitutional Convention in Monterey in 1849; Maria de las Abgustias who married Manuel Jimeno and later Dr. James Ord; and Ana Maria who became the wife of Alfred Robinson, who came to California as super-cargo on the "Danube," and was author of "Life in California," now of great value to collectors and researchers. Jimeno was an important citizen of Monterey and builder of a home and hotel on the site where the San Carlos Hotel now stands. James Ord was the brother of General Ord for whom Fort Ord was named.