

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 10, 1953

### **Gustatory Memories**

Many of the residents of Monterey know the story of Isabel Meadows and how she was invited to go from her home in the Carmel Valley to Washington, D.C., and there record for historians and future generations her knowledge of her ancestors' Indian language, history and habits of life on the Monterey Peninsula in the early days of the Mission fathers. She died there, but her body was returned to her native land and she lies buried in the Monterey Catholic cemetery.

Another interesting story in early California history concerns a Scotchman who came to California in the early 1850s, in the person of Hugo Reid, and almost at once befriended the Indians of his adopted country and married a native wife. He was distinguished by his concern for less fortunate human beings. Susanna B. Dakin wrote in her "Hugo Reid, Humanitarian":

"Almost all the others who steamed over the mountains and around the Horn, sought primarily to make a fortune; at first, by trapping, trading, or ranching; later, by mining gold. Reid settled in San Gabriel when the woman he loved was free to marry him. To do so, he left a satisfying life elsewhere, and risked ostracism in California by marrying into a despised race."

Along with his Indian wife, Victoria Bartholomea of the Comicrabit clan, Hugo Reid assumed responsibility for her four children who were pure-blooded product of her marriage to a mission Indian named Pablo, who died from small-pox. Reid's friends shook their heads sadly over his transformation into a "squaw man," Mrs. Dakin relates. But later William Heath Davis praised him in his "Seventy-five Years in California," and James McKinley, Reid's business partner, did much to dispel this fantasy.

In the Davis collection in the Huntington Library at San Marino, that author relates a story of a visit to the Hugo Reid home; "During our stay as guests at Santa Anita, we feasted daily on good food. For breakfast we had honey, fresh eggs from the poultry yard, which was well stocked with chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys; coffee, with rich cream; chocolate and tea; chino beans (curly beans), which looked like scrambled eggs, especially for breakfast; tortillas made of flour or corn; but no butter, strange to say, with hundreds of cows on the place.

However, this was characteristic of the ranchos at that season of the year. This composed the first meal of the day. The cloth was neat, and the furniture of the table was exquisitely clean.

Davis goes on to describe the other two meals of the day during his two month's stay. Luncheon consisted of a solid meal of "beef steak with or without onions, broiled beef, stewed chickens, hash made of "carne seca (dried beef) with scrambled eggs mixed, beans prepared with plenty of gravy, homemade bread, California wine, and finished with black coffee."

"The dinner consisted of chicken soup, roast ducks, guisado de carne richly flavored, sweet potatoes grown on the land, frioles (beans), chicken salad, and lettuce," Davis reported. This fine dinner was served with old wine of the make of San Gabriel Mission and custard pie and coffee.

Hugo Reid was the grantee of the Santa Anita rancho of about eight thousand acres. It was then one of the most picturesque spots in Southern California, with mountains, valleys, springs and running silvery streams.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of last May the members of the California Historical Society met in the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum, in Arcadia, and after luncheon went to Santa Anita Rancho where the members viewed the restoration of the Hugo Reid Adobe and the "Lucky" Baldwin's Queen Anne Cottage. All of Santa Anita Rancho was in later years the property of Baldwin, early day millionaire of San Francisco.

Reid was a cultivated and educated man, a big-hearted person, a thorough accountant, and bred as a merchant in his own country ...," William Heath Davis related. He also said of Dona Victoria: "A Castilian lady of standing could not have bestowed on us any greater attention or graciousness than was extended to us ... at Santa Anita." It is said that often Reid referred to her as his "Rosa de Castilla," and she remained straight and slim as a Spanish princess, speaking in the Padres' pure Spanish.

Mrs. Dakin who wrote the "Scotch Paisano" said: "Slowly the Reids were accepted in San Gabriel and Los Angeles society. They were known as El Perfecto, (the accomplished one) and Dona Victoria. Victoria's children married into the Stearns-Bandini set.

(To be continued)