

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Gen. Edward O. C. Ord

There have been many guesses by the uninformed over the past years as to how Fort Ord got its name.

The military reservation was once known as "Gigling," and there was a station on the Southern Pacific by that name. Some folks have said that the land was named for a farmer, others that it was named for a local beverage.

But it is a matter of War Department record that the present and official name of the 23,000-acre reservation honors Maj. Gen. Edward Otho Cresap Ord who saw service against the Seminole Indians in Florida, fought in the campaign to win California and was an outstanding commander in the Civil War.

Military history of Gen. Ord's family dates to the Revolutionary War. His grandfather commanded a detachment which quelled the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. Gen. Ord himself was graduated from West Point in 1839 and two years later was promoted to first lieutenant for gallantry against the Seminoles.

Commanding a battery of artillery, he came with Lts. Halleck and Sherman in the ship Lexington from New York to California and supported Sherman in his bloodless attack which led to the capture of Monterey. In 1854 and 1855, he served on the California Coast Survey and did extensive mapping in this region.

Ord also participated in battles with the Rogue River and Spokane Indians. In September 1861, he was jumped from captain to brigadier general of the Volunteers and was ordered east to take part in the Civil War.

During that war he held many important commands and was commended for bravery in action several times. When he retired in 1880, Congress made him a major general for his long and brilliant service. He died in Havana in 1883 of yellow fever contracted during an extensive business trip to Mexico.

A musty old scrapbook containing many colorful highlights in the life of Gen. Ord, and members of his family, came into the possession of Fort Ord officials and is now, we hope, preserved at post headquarters. The book was the property of the general's wife, Mary, whose name appears on the inside cover.

Outstanding among the many items of interest in the scrapbook was the account of the wedding of their daughter, Roberta Augusta, to Gen. Geronimo Trevino, commander of Mexican army forces in northern Mexico.

The account of the wedding, July 21, 1880, reports that it was regarded as an important milestone in promoting friendly relations between Mexico and the United States. Gen. Ord was at that time in command of the army department in Texas, and the family home was in San Antonio. A son was born to the Trevino's and was called "the international baby". Tragedy soon followed, for the young mother passed away.

The second daughter, Lucy Maude Ord, married John S. Mason, the son of Gen. John S. Mason. Mrs. Ord made her home in San Diego in the later years of her life. One of the first group of Forty-Niners who arrived on the steamer California, which brought the first mail, was Pacificus Ord. He was one of a group of five appointed by Gen. Bennett Riley to canvass the vote for governor and legislators in Monterey on Dec. 10, 1849.

Ord had practiced law in New Orleans before coming to California. Previous to his serving as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, he was a judge of the supreme court set up by Gen. Riley's provisional government. He remained prominent in California for many years. He died at 84 in Washington, D.C.

Pacificus Ord was retained by Rafael Castro in 1852 for advice on divorcing his wife, Soledad. When Ord advised that he would probably have to divide his property with Soledad, he abandoned the idea. As fee Ord was given 70 acres on the highway between Aptos and Soquel in Santa Cruz County.

He went to Aptos in 1885 to live with a son, John. His wife died in 1860 and was buried in the Catholic church yard in Santa Cruz until her body was exhumed in 1931 and taken to Arlington cemetery.

James Ord, the father, died in 1873 at Omaha where his son was stationed at an army post. William Marcellus Ord, after serving in the legislature from Butte County, went to Santa Cruz in 1873 and died there in 1882. John, who farmed near Santa Cruz died there in 1911.

Dr. James Ord came to Monterey as a surgeon with Company F of the Third United States Artillery. He became a surgeon and a farmer in the state and also a claimant to land in Tuolumne County. In 1873 he was a resident of Santa Barbara and married the widow of Don Manuel Jimeno-nee de la Guerra.