

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Motor Trip to Mexico**

We have been mentioning the "El Camino Real," the historic Royal Highway which led from Mexico to California when this state was being discovered and colonized by Spain and Mexico. Our recent special interest in this great highway has been quickened by the two recent motor trips we have made into the great country of Mexico. Now we have found a very old clipping from a newspaper – a clipping saved by an ancestor of ours, concerning the placing of the first Mission Bells as guide posts along the California highways by the Native Daughters of the Golden West.

The article was written by the late Mrs. A.S.C. Forbes in the early 1900s. Monterey did have four of these bells and markers – one at San Carlos Church (the Royal Presidio Chapel), another at the intersection of Alvarado, Polk and Pearl streets, the third on Pacific street in front of Colton Hall, and the fourth at Figueroa and Church streets. The latter marker has disappeared during the intervening years since its dedication and it has been said that it now rests in someone's garden. If that be true it should be hastily returned to the church or to the Native Daughters, that it may again take its place along the Camino Real.

The Native Daughters of the Golden West had the cooperation of the Women's Clubs of California in their program of marking. It was the History and Landmarks Committee of the Native Daughters and a like committee from the Women's Club working in unison which furthered the project to restore and improve the King's Highway as the historic highway of California.

The old mission road familiarly called "El Camino Real," by the first pioneers of the state, is the road that joined the 21 missions, the pueblos and the presidios, when California was a Spanish possession.

The first Mission Bell guide post was erected in Ventura in 1907, when the Native Daughter's Improvement Assn., and Cabrillo Parlor, Native Sons of the Golden West placed two bells, one at Buena-Ventura Mission and another a few blocks away.

On Sept. 9, Admission Day, 1909, bells were erected at Oak Park, Santa Barbara, and also at Cadwalader Park, the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> streets and El Camino Real, by the Native Sons and Daughters of San Jose.

Junipero Parlor, No. 141, NDGW, of Monterey erected the bell at San Carlos Church, and the Grand Parlor commemorated the June session held at Del Monte in 1909, by erecting a bell guide post at Polk, Pearl and California streets (now Munras avenue).

At the close of the Portola Festival in San Francisco, "El Camino Real" bells were erected along the route traveled by the padres in going from Mission Dolores to the old landing at Clay and Montgomery on their way to Mission San Rafael, the hospital mission across the bay. The first one erected was at the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and Dolores. This was followed by others at Clay and Montgomery "the old landing place where the water came up to Montgomery," at Portsmouth Square. Northeast corner of Clay and Kearney, at Market and Kearney "the old water line," and at the corner of San Jose Ave., and 25<sup>th</sup> street.

Other bells have been erected to mark the highway at the following points: Santa Barbara to commemorate the session of grand parlor of 1910; at San Rafael, in front of the site of the old mission, and at Capilla San Bernardino near Colton, in Southern California.

Since Mrs. Forbes wrote her article bells have been placed all along the King's Highway – serving as reminders to the travelers that the early missionaries and explorers also passed that way.