

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 14, 1954

'Judas Night'

Judas Night was observed late in the evening on Good Friday, according to an item which appeared in the Salinas Index dated April 17, 1879. It was celebrated much in the same way that the boys of the present time indulge and disport themselves on Halloween. The chief feature of their antics however, had truly a religious significance.

"Since Judas had betrayed our Savior, the youths would hang him in effigy and in this way would express their religious zeal and their contempt for the man who had bargained the life of the Master for 30 pieces of silver. The hanging was done on the top of the old windmill that stood in front of the Simoneau Restaurant (the site now occupied by the Standard Oil Station) at the junction of Alvarado, Pearl and California (Munras avenue) streets.

"Around the old windmill would be piled a conglomeration of odds and ends, the theft of which was charged to the false apostle in illustration of his wicked character. These consisted of gates, chicken coops, wheel barrows, wagons, hoes, rakes and other personal effects gathered from the four quarters of the town. It was above this heaping array that the good people of Monterey would wake up on 'el Sabado de Gloria' (Saturday of Glory or Holy Saturday) and find the figure of Judas, the apostle, dangling from the top of the old wind mill. This practice was continued until about 1885. It was then stopped through the instrumentality of Rev. Angelo Casanova, parish priest of the Royal Presidio Chapel of San Carlos, who evidently felt that it was too primitive an institution for the new period then dawning on the old town."

In the Republic, a newspaper published in Monterey, there appeared this item on June 9, 1870: Our townspeople, many of them, have left undisturbed most of the Centennial street decorations. They many prove useful for the next anniversary, 100 years hence." The editor must have been referring to a June 3 celebration when Monterey observed her 100th birthday.

Another item of interest in the same paper is; "The store of Don Francisco Palacios de Miranda on the corner of Pearl and Washington, was destroyed by fire

this week. Palacios was formerly governor of Baja California under Mexican rule and during the Mexican war with the United States, took sides with us. Seeking refuge by passage to this place on the Lexington was Capt. Bailey. This old gentleman is about 82 years old and with no one to aid him, the disaster, we learn, renders him insolvent."

The editor followed up this story on June 9 with this item: "The lot on which the ruins of the store of Don Francisco Palacio, which was recently destroyed by fire, was sold at public auction of Monday to Don Bernardino Vasquez for \$685."

Then again on June 18, 1871, the Republican announced: "For several days past workmen have been engaged removing the ruins of the Palacio adobe which was destroyed by fire over a years ago. As soon as the lot is cleared a two-story building will be erected by Bernardino Vasquez. This will be quite an improvement in Monterey and will add much to the good appearance of that portion of our town.

A bit of modern news, dated Sunday, April 11, 1954. Nearly 1,000 person visited in the Old Custom House in Monterey today. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon there had been 863 visitors, when just at closing time 40 additional tourists arrived all members of a Mission Trails Tour sponsored by the history department of the College of the Pacific at Stockton. Dr. Rockwell D. Hunt and Dr. Coke Wood were in charge of the party which was traveling by Greyhound bus. They had visited the Sonoma Mission, Mission Dolores in San Francisco and, after spending the night in Monterey, proceeded on South to visit the missions along the route to San Diego.