

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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A Delegate From Oregon

The history of the Monterey Peninsula is always a fascinating subject for research and review. A chance line or a story will lead on to a full grown story on some distinguished person or a happening in the history of the west. A reference in the "Knaves" attracted our attention recently and led back to Monterey and the Constitutional Convention held in Colton Hall in 1849.

Donald E. Cameron of Oakland spent a few days in Monterey a short while ago and through a visit to "the State's first capital and its many historic buildings," he began an historical research relative to the men and events of that time.

"Presently in Colton Hall, the site of the first convention," he wrote, "there are tables arranged as though these delegates to the convention were seated at them. There are photographs of the men, when available, as well as short biographical sketches. It is surprising how few of these delegates left any permanent impression."

One obscure member was M.M. McCarver, who along with Peter H. Burnett, our first governor, had come to California in late 1848 to try his hand at gold digging. McCarver had been in Oregon and was a member of the provisional legislature of that territory. In fact he had been speaker of the House.

There are a couple of anecdotes about him gleaned from Bancroft's "Oregon" that seem to be the only reference to the man. He was reportedly a talkative, long-winded individual who frequently bored his auditors with his harangues. In order to keep him quiet and out of debate his fellow legislators elected him to the post of speaker, where it would be his sole duty to preside. Later, during the California convention, while the boundary question was under debate a proposal was made that the northern boundary of California be extended to the Rogue River in Oregon. Upon hearing that, McCarver bounced to his feet and said: "As a resident of Oregon I resent that much extension of territory." From that time on he was known in the convention as the "member from Oregon."

The Academy Scrapbook has printed, in the May issue, an interesting story concerning a relic of Don Gaspar de Portola's historic land-blazing expedition of 1769 to the

Golden State. As June 3 will be the 184th anniversary of Portola's landing at Monterey, accompanied by Father Junipero Serra, it is fitting that the story should be reviewed in the Diary.

After resting for some 58 years in a trunk of rare memorabilia at the home of John H. Crum in Santa Monica, an old hand-forged spur with trifoil shank mounting a heavy 20-point, four and three-eighths inch rowel, was brought to light recently. Mr. Crum is a noted historian and son of early Yankee pioneers in the Southland.

Annals of the Dalton family, of which Mr. Crum is a third-generation member, reveal that the spur came to his people as a souvenir of Portola's journey, through the intermediary of Don Augustin Vicente Zamorano. Zamorano came to Monterey in 1825 from Mexico as executive secretary to Gov. Jose Maria Echeandia. He brought the first printing press to Monterey and to Alta California and printed upon it the first newspaper in the state, the Californian.

As was inevitable, romantic marriages and gift-giving ensued between in-coming families of grantees and the early Anglo-Saxons who had also entrenched themselves in the territory. Don Zamorano had this Portola spur, which no doubt he had found in Monterey, gold plated as a special wedding gift for his son-in-law, Henry Dalton, who was then acquiring, either through Spanish grant or through purchase, the vast Ranchos Azusa, San Jose, Santa Anita, San Francisquito and Duarte.

In time, The Academy Scrapbook reports, its golden covering wearing thin, yet still highly treasured by the Dalton family as a symbol of high adventure and romance and a harbinger of good luck, passed to a nephew, George Dalton of Los Angeles, who in the 1890s, left the relic to his own nephew, John H. Crum, its long-time present owner.