

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 9, 1954

Sloat's Grave

"The California Society of New York reaches across the Continental Divide, and with hearts beating with life for the most beautiful land that God's sun shines upon, extends its fraternal greetings to the society founded for the purpose of immortalizing in the minds of Californians the glorious deeds of Commodore Sloat, the naval hero who gave to the nation its grandest commonwealth."

The above is a quotation from a letter written to Maj. E.A. Sherman, the secretary of the Sloat Monument Assn., by J.E. Van Eaton, secretary of the California Society of New York City, whose members were asked to preside at the consecration services at the grave of Rear Adm. John Drake Sloat, on the 35th anniversary of his burial in Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn.

Van Eaton wrote: "The California Society feels highly honored by the invitation to represent the Sloat Monument Assn. on this occasion, and are this afternoon sprinkling the historic earth you sent over the grave of the hero who first raised the American flag over the Golden State. The society also ordered a magnificent floral piece to be placed on the grave in behalf of the association and the New York society."

Robert MacKenzie, D.D., formerly Presbyterian minister of San Francisco, was the president of the California Society of New York, William Parmenter Martin, vice-president, and Robert Dickson, second vice president.

On Nov. 30, 1902, the ceremony took place. The secretary of the Navy and a naval detachment represented the government. The earth which was scattered over the grave of Commodore Sloat, sent by Maj. Sherman from California for the event, was taken from, "beneath the flagpole on the old Custom House reservation at Monterey, upon which the commodore hoisted the American Flag when he took possession of California on July 7, 1846; also earth from the base of the Sloat Monument that was being erected in front of the old Fort Mervine, constructed and commanded by his aide-de-camp, Midshipman William P. Toler, (deceased) of San Jose, where the flag was raised by the Americans on July 16; from Portsmouth Square and the Presidio of San Francisco, where Capt. Montgomery of the sloop-of-war Portsmouth landed and raised the flag

by Sloat's orders, July 9; also from the foot of the flagstaff at Sonoma, where the bear flag was hoisted June 14, 1846, by order of Sloat by Lt. Revere, USN, grandson of Paul Revere of Revolutionary fame; also from Sutter's Fort at Sacramento, where the American Flag was hoisted on the same date and from four other places including the site of Sutter's Mill, where Marshall discovered gold, that brought representatives from every country on the globe to California.

"Adm. Sloat was buried with Masonic and Navy honors Nov. 30, 1867, so it will be on the 35th anniversary of his funeral and burial that we ask you to act for us, in consecrating his grave with earth from these historic places in California made sacred to the people of our beloved Golden State and the nation at large" so wrote Maj. Sherman to New York and the former residents of California.

The ceremony in New York was in charge of Capt. James Dexter Adams in command of the naval detachment, as he was the last naval officer to raise the flag at Monterey, and his vessel, the Alert, to fire salutes when the naval stones were laid at the base of the Sloat Monument at Monterey on July 4th, 1902.

Most of the above information was gleaned from an "Enlarged Monumental Edition of the Life of the Late Rear Adm. John Drake Sloat" by Maj. Edwin A. Sherman, published in 1902.