

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 20, 1954

The Visit of the Bishop

Sessions of the Ayuntamiento in Monterey in 1844 were probably just as important and exciting as the city council meetings often are in 1954. Proof of that interest is contained in a copy of the clerk's recordings of some of the sessions of this old time council, before California became a part of the United States. The Monterey Library has just received and has bound the photo static copies of several of the original recorded proceedings of 1844 written in Spanish, followed by the English translation made by a member of the library staff. This translation we have been permitted to use in the Diary today.

Gil Sanchez asked permission to establish a sawmill in the Canada Verde, included in public lands of the city, and it was granted to him with the condition that he pay 10 per cent of the value of the wood which he sawed, according to a notation on Feb. 24, 1814.

Another important item was the request by Serrano that the expense be approved of lighting the house and municipal bridge and the vicinity of Mr. Hartnell's house, with a street lamp, and another on the Consistorial, and it passed with a warning to do it with the least possible expense.

Mr. W.E.P Hartnell's house was an adobe building which stood on the land now occupied by the Monterey Hospital and the street on which it faced was named for him. Hartnell was the interpreter of the Constitutional Convention held in Colton hall in 1849. The municipal bridge crossed the ravine before the Hartnell and Stokes adobes.

"The Ayuntamiento received for action, with an accompanying official letter, the plan of the capital which the government had surveyed at its expense and it was ruled by the members to proceed with regulating the streets and beautifying the city according to this plan." This action was probably Monterey's first master plan, provided by the Mexican government for its California colony.

Another February notation was: "Citizens Serrano proposed that there be named a second justice of the peace and auxiliary justice in the new town of San Luis Obispo, one being insufficient; and it was approved."

"Senor Serrano proposed the nomination of a commission to revise and regulate weights and measures; this is approved and Councilmen Santiago Watson and Trustee Salvador Munras are named members of the Commission."

"Senor Serrano proposed a commission to present a domestic plan of the community, and Gregorio Castanares and Marcelino Escobar are elected to serve on the commission. Castanares proposed that a Councilman of the Week be nominated to act with the police and he (the same) was named as oldest member, to nominate auxiliary justices of the peace and district judges to keep order and observance of municipal edicts. Auxiliary judges elected were Jose Castillo and Antonio Mendez for the western part of the city and Homas Salzado and Ivagn Genling (sic) for the eastern, who began their functions from that day. Escobar proposed that a note be sent to the Government re the collection of excise taxes."

Serrano had ideas. He proposed a distinctive badge for the police with the initials I.O. Escobar proposed a place for a public square be designated and the place decided upon at an undated meeting of the Ayuntamiento was between the houses of Benito Diaz, Francisco Pacheco, Feodoro Gonzales and Esteban Munras.

Great must have been the excitement among the residents of Monterey in May of 1844 for a visit from the lord Bishop was expected according to plans made at a meeting of the Ayuntamiento on the 14th of that month which was duly recorded.

"The President called a meeting together with the object of reporting the invitation to Padre Fray Jose Maria de Real to cooperate with the council in receiving the lord Bishop, and it was resolved that the necessary expenses be made for the purposed by commanding invitations to the inhabitants to illuminate their houses for the space of three days from the arrival of the lord Bishop."