

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

December 28, 1955

A Most Unusual Christmas Card

The Clyde Pattons of Sixth Street in Oak Grove have one of the most unusual of all the Christmas cards we have received this year. It is possible that we think so because of historic items it contains, the artistic arrangement and the exceptional printing of the six-page folder.

Mr. Patton, according to his own words, is a "California Mustang." He was born in Gonzales in Monterey County and has lived here all his life except for seasonal visits to Arizona, Yellowstone National park and other parts of California. His great-grandfather Perry came around the Horn in 1848 and settled in Chualar where he "broke up the sod" for the first time for David Jacks on his ranches in that part of the county in 1864. Grandmother Perry came across the Isthmus in 1852 with her parents, vja mule back.

Jarret J. Patton, Clyde Patton's father, settled in Gonzales, where his two sons and three daughters were born. The senior Mr. Patton died there about ten years ago, and Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Patton came to Monterey to live nine years ago, a dream come true, for this is the home they had always intended to have if circumstances would make that dream possible. Here Irne and Clyde will celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary in three years — this year, marked 47 years of happy wedded life for the couple.

The foregoing paragraphs explain why Mr. Patton compiled and had printed these lovely cards for this season in 1955. The colored design is the stained-glass East window in the Baptist Community Church in Gonzales where both he and his wife and the Patton family have worshiped for many years.

In the lower right-hand corner of a full-page illustration, printed in color within the book, is this quotation from the writings of Padre Junipero Serra: "In this way let me give expression to my heart for I would this bell were heard by all the world; or at least by all the people living in this Sierra." The drawing shows a huge brown bell suspended from an oak tree ringing out the names of the pioneers of Monterey County — including Spanish, Indian, Mexican, Californians, and all the other nationalities who became tried and true friends during the pioneer days in the county. In the background is

Monterey's blue bay, the brown hills, the green trees and the wildflowers.

Next comes the history — the beginning of each paragraph illustrated with tiny colored drawings of the coastline and Monterey Cypress, the Franciscans and the packed burros trudging along on their way to the new country to establish the Mission chain; the first iron engines bringing the railroad to the Salinas Valley and lastly the established mission in the green fields.

Now we quote from this unusual Christmas greeting: "In the year of our Lord 1770 Franciscan Friars brought Christmas to the Salinas Valley. They had come that year with Portola and his servants of the King from Mexico north of San Diego. On December 25th Fra Junipero said Mass and the Spanish soldiers, with his blessing, celebrated; feasting on clams and salmon, taken not, from the ocean, but from the river where, miraculously it seemed to pious men. the fish had come to spawn. All the while Pacific winds cast their spray like holy water upon the solid rocks; the sound of waves and mission bells carried beyond the mountains to our valley where the echo, 'Peace on Earth' can still be heard.

"The following summer, Junipero Serra, two Padres and a Corporal's Guard, marched up the west side of the Salinas River; tramping through leagues of golden poppies over the very fields our grandfathers and their neighbors, four generations later, were to plow. On July 14, 1771, A bell, hung from an oak tree limb, solemnly proclaimed the founding of a mission in the foothills of Jolon. — For over half a century the lights of Monterey were the brightest in all Spanish California.

"Then came the gold rush. Of a sudden El Dorado was full of Gringos. Even in our valley there was trouble. Good will to men was lacking. By now candles in the mission were seldom lighted; adobe walls began to crumble and in fields Padres once had planted, meadow larks and squirrels lived unmolested. At night a flickering light, in some hacienda window might guide a traveler to an isolated rancho where a Soberanes or a Somavia lived.

"Then came the railroads and the early settlers. Some came alone, some' brought their families. The cattle-raising Dons had land to spare and gladly rented fields to honest men for a 'quarter of the crop'. These pioneers were thrifty men; they liked to work and they knew how to hook eight horses to a plow. They planted

grain, built schools and county roads. Around a blacksmith and a general store, communities were started and so it was, without benefit of election, our own hometown was born.

“On Sunday mornings when fields were white with frost, these men of Faith would drive, with their families, to their church. These were good folk, these 'Early Settlers', and their names are now as much a part of the Salinas Valley as are the lupins and the poppies and the oaks.

“In the Year of Our Lord 1955 when the Light from the East finds its way through the multicolored windows to the altars which they built, may its warmth bless us all, wherever we may be. On Christmas morning when bells ring through our valley, may the echo, Peace on Earth Good Will to Men, be heard beyond the Santa Lucias and beyond the Gabilans.”