

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **We Celebrate a Birthday**

It might be well today on Monterey's 185<sup>th</sup> birthday to review the history of the city from June 29, 1769, when Don Gaspar de Portola, governor of the Californians, arrived in San Diego in advance of final contingent of the sacred expedition, which he commanded and which included Father Junipero Serra, the founder of the Royal Presidio chapel in Monterey and of Carmel Mission in Carmel. Portola claimed California for Spain and founded the Presidio of Monterey.

Father Serra was a Franciscan missionary of the College of San Fernando in Mexico City and father-president of the missionary chain in California. Others in the party were Sgt. Jose Francisco Ortego, soldiers, Muleteers, servants and 44 neophyte Indians. The company had been assembled from many points in Baja California at the recently founded mission of San Fernando de Vellicata, Baja California, which it left May 15, 1769.

On July 14, Portola, accompanied by Fathers Juan Crespi and Francisco Gomez, Lt. Pedro Fages, and a group of soldiers and Indians, left San Diego to discover the port of Monterey and locate sites for Missions in California. On October 3<sup>rd</sup> he stood on the shores of Monterey Bay but failed to recognize it. He went on northward where one of the group discovered inner San Francisco Bay. The entire party returned to San Diego in January 1770.

It was on October 3, 1769 that Portola, seeking the port of Monterey, reached Point of Pines, thus standing on the very rim of Monterey Bay without recognizing it. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month he camped on the Pajaro River, which his soldiers named because they found a bird there which the Indians had stuffed. Then they journeyed on to Santa Cruz which he named.

On December 7, 1769, a council was held by the expedition at its camp beyond the Carmel River near Point Lobos to decide whether to continue the search for Monterey or to return to San Diego, and they decided upon the latter. This spot is now marked with a huge cross put there by Carmel Mission and the Monterey History and Art Association.

The San Antonio, in command of Juan Perez and bearing Engineer Miguel Costanso and Father Junipero Serra, left San Diego on April 16, 1770 to join Don Gaspar de Portola and his land expedition and to establish the

Presidio of Monterey. This vessel reached Monterey on May 31. After the purpose of the voyage had been fulfilled the San Antonio returned to San Blas.

The following day after the sailing of the San Antonio from San Diego Portola left there on his second expedition to seek the port of Monterey. He reached it and this time recognized it on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

The date we will celebrate today in Monterey is the day that the Mission San Carlos de Monterey was founded by Padre Junipero Serra, and the day that Don Gaspar de Portola founded the Presidio of Monterey and took formal possession of the land in the name of Charles III of Spain.

The mission was the second to be established in Alta California and was named for Saint Charles Borromeo (1538-1584), archbishop of Milan and Papal secretary of state under Pius IV, who was one of the chief factors in the Catholic Counter-reformation. In 1771 Father Serra realized that the Indians whom he wished to serve, were in the Carmel Valley and so the mission was moved to its present site near Carmel and renamed "Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo."

The formalities of the founding of Monterey and the mission on June 3, 1770, consisted of the planting of the royal standard, the uprooting of plants, and the casting of stones, the latter symbolizing the seizing of the territory. All this happened at the entrance to the present presidio gate on Pacific Street, where there is now a huge granite cross and a boulder with a bronze plaque honoring Don Gaspar de Portola.

The establishment of the mission of San Carlos de Monterey, which in 1771 was moved to Carmel, was the work of Father Serra. The presidio, destined to be the capital of California, was founded on what was then beach near the oak under which Sebastian Vizcaino had claimed the land in 1603, and named it Monterey in honor of the Count de Monterey (Gaspar de Zuniga y Acevedo), ninth viceroy of Mexico (1595-1603).