

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 30, 1955

### **Weather Prediction**

Glancing over Walter Colton's "Three Years in California", we came across this notation written Oct. 3, 1846, which may be a prediction for the weather of next week in the year 1955. He noted that "a heavy mist hung over the landscape this morning till the sun was high in the heavens, and many began to predict rain, a phenomenon which I have not yet witnessed in California. But towards noon the mist departed like a shadow dissolved in light. The scorched hills lifted their naked summits, and the deep ravines revealed their irregular lines of lingering verdure. In these the cattle grazed, though the streams which once poured their waters through them exist now only in little motionless pools, hardly sufficient to drift a duck. A stranger looking at these hills might be excused if he inquired the distance to Sodom. It would never enter his most vagrant dreams that he had reached that land towards which the tide of immigration was rolling."

On October 4, Colton, the builder of historic Colton Hall, noted in his diary: "This presiding priest of this jurisdiction applied to me a few days since to protect the property of San Antonio Mission. A Spaniard it seems, who owns a neighboring rancho, had, under color of some authority of the late administration, extended his claims over the ground and buildings, and was appropriating the whole to his private purposes. I summoned the Spaniard before me and asked for the evidence of his right and title to the establishment. He had no document to exhibit. His sole claim evidently rested in some vague permission, in "which the lines of moral justice were wholly omitted, or too faintly drawn to be seen."

Colton ordered that the mission buildings be returned to the presiding priest, and that the fixtures which had been removed be at once restored. He also reported that the order had been carried into effect and noted that in his opinion the missions should be restored to their primitive objects or converted into a school-fund.

Because of our heritage of Cascarone balls in Monterey, it is interesting to note that Walter Colton found out about the use of eggs here in the days before the Gold Rush. He wrote in his diary on Oct. 8, "One of the rooms in the house which I have rented, has been occupied by some of the goods and chattels of the previous tenant.

Today they were called for, and I observed among them a large basket filled with egg-shells. They had been perforated at both ends, and their contents blown out. But to what use could anyone put these empty shells? They had been prepared, it seems, for the festivities of the carnival. On this occasion they are to be filled with scented water or tinsel, the apertures closed with wax, and then broken, in merriment, over the heads of the guests. This liberty with caps and wigs is warranted only where some intimacy exists between parties. Where this is found the eggs fall thick as hail. The young and old float in lavender and cologne. This expensive frolic is often indulged in by those who, perhaps, have hardly enough money left to purchase one of the 40 hens that laid the eggs."