

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 1, 1956

Explorers Arrive

This month of August which we are entering today is a month of many historic happenings for both Monterey and California, we find in looking back over the records.

It was in August 1765 that Don Gaspar de Portola, seeking the port of Monterey, camped on the present site of San Juan Capistrano, which Father Juan Crespi had called the "Valley of Santa Maria Magdalena." He did not arrive here until Oct. 3, 1769 when he reached the Point of Pines, thus standing on the very rim of Monterey Bay without recognizing it.

It was in August 1773 that the first California boundary was established when Father Francisco Palou erected a cross defining the limits of Dominican and Franciscan missions of Baja California. The latter established those of Alta California. Phil Townsend Hanna relates in his book "Through Four Centuries," that until a few years ago, the cross still stood on a knoll of the Dominican mission of Nuestra Senora de Descanso, 30 miles south of Tijuana in the present Mexican territory of Baja California.

It was 181 years ago today that Juan Manuel de Ayala, commander of the "San Carlos," entered San Francisco Bay in a small boat, accompanied by his pilots, Jose Canizares and Juan Bautista Aguirre. The expedition, the first to sail the waters of the bay, eventually surveyed and mapped it, giving names to many of its landmarks, such as Angel Island, Alcatraz Island, and San Pablo Bay.

On August 16, a Spanish royal decree established the capital of California at Monterey, with Felipe de Neve as governor.

Father Junipero Serra, father-president of the missions of California, died at Mission San Carlos Borromeo, where he is buried. Father Serra was born at Petra, on the island of Mallorca, Spain, Nov. 24, 1713. Serra personally founded six of the missions in the state — San Diego de Alcalá; • San Carlos Borromeo, San Antonio de Padua, San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, San Juan Capistrano, and San Buenaventura.

On August 9, 1834, Gov. Jose Figueroa issued his famous "Reglamento Provisional para la Secularizacion de las misiones de la Alta California," the first major piece of printing undertaken by California's first printer, Augustin Zamorano, providing for the conversion of the

missions into pueblos; friars to be relieved of temporal duties; each head of a family to be given a lot 100 by 400 "varas" square; "ejidos" to be assigned for pueblos; half of livestock, chattels, seeds, etc., to be distributed pro rata; government to be in the hands of ayuntamientos: mission libraries and church goods to remain under charge of the priests.

On August 14, 1841, the first exploring expedition sent to California by the United States, containing six vessels and 600 men, commanded by Lieut. Charles Wilkes, anchored in San Francisco Bay.

It will be 110 years ago on August 15, that the "Californian," first newspaper to be published in California, made its initial appearance as a weekly at Monterey. Walter Colton and Robert Semple were the owners.

In more modern times we came across this noteworthy data: On August 1, 1901, the largest known tree in the world, a Sequoia Gigantea, was discovered in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Its circumference, as measured by John Muir, was 108 feet, one foot from the ground and at six feet from the ground it measured 93 feet in circumference.