

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Press Destroyed By Fire**

The recent placing of a plaque on the wall at the rear of entrance to the Stevenson House garden, which may be entered from the path leading from Munras avenue over the site of the Old Cuartel, brings to mind again the Zamorano Press on which The Californian, the state's first newspaper was printed. The plaque referred to honors accorded this first newspaper. We have written of this press in previous Diary notes, but we think it is timely to refresh the reader's memory again as to what the final destination of the historical piece of machinery was.

News of the world and its doings came almost solely through the "Boston Boats," through the Vicory of New Spain—and later the ruling clique of Mexico, or when some explorer touched the shores of Monterey. More than half a century had followed Anza's visit before the need of a printing press was felt on this still very lonely shore.

In 1825 Augustin V. Zamorano came from Mexico to Monterey to be the secretary to Gov. Echeandis. He soon decided that he must have a printing press and start his business career. He accordingly arranged with Thomas Shaw, a trading sea captain, for the purchase of a press and type in Boston. Capt. Shaw brought the press and delivered it in Monterey on board the "Lagoda" in June, 1834, and its records are now a part of the historical collection in the library of Harvard University.

Evan at the time of the purchase of the press it was a "weather-beaten wreck—an ancient Ramage-fashioned on the old plan, with great wooden uprights, large enough to sustain a building; its stone had surmounted by a massive iron screw."

Zamorano, it is said, paid the sea captain \$460 for the press delivered at Monterey, including the type and the captain's profit.

Figueroa's Manifesto to the Mexican government was published by Zamorano on this press in Monterey in 1835. In 1856 Gov. Alvarado ordered to be printed upon the press his celebrated "Declaration of Independence" of Alta California.

The press finally left Monterey for Sonora where it stayed for some time before being brought back to

Monterey and stored in El Cuartel on the city plaza. When the Rev. Walter Colton arrived in Monterey as chaplain of the U.S.S. Congress, to become Alcalde of Monterey and to build Colton Hall, he unearthed the Zamorano press and began the publication of The Californian with the assistance of Robert Semple, who later took a prominent part in the Constitutional Convention held here in 1849.

About 1848 a tiny settlement near Sutter's Fort was growing into a tent city and the old Ramage press was loaded on a small California-built sailing vessel bearing the name "Dice mi Nan (Says my Mama), and carried up the river to the fort, where on April 28, 1849, The Placer Times was printed, the first newspaper in Sacramento. In June of that year the press moved again, two miles to the west, to a mining community known as "Embarcadero." From there the venerable Monterey Press was taken to San Francisco to be preserved as an "heirloom" by the publishers of The Alta.

When E.H. Radcliffe, an Englishman with an urge to print, according to the author of "The Pioneer Press of California," wished to start a newspaper in Stockton, he appealed to The Alta for the Monterey or Zamorano Press. It was again loaded on a sailing vessel and early in 1850 printed the first issue of The Stockton Times and Tuolumne City Intelligencer—another tiny sheet of foolscap. It lasted for one year until the great fire of May 6, 1851, destroyed the plant.

The old press survived the fire, for two Sonora men had purchased the entire outfit. While it was still in Stockton the first issue of The Sonora Herald was set up and printed as of July 4, 1850. A few days later the old press was loaded on a wagon and taken to Sonora.

The history of the Zamorano press did not end with its life in Sonora. The nearby camp of Columbia needed a press to publish a hometown paper, so in October 1851, the old Monterey press was again hoisted onto a wagon and hauled over the hills to Columbia, now a state historic monument owned by the State of California. On the 25th day of October, 1851, the first edition of The Columbia Star was published.

G.W. Gore, who had acquired the press and published The Star, could not meet his payments, and finally the press was sold under execution, being removed from the building in which it had operated and placed outside where it remained overnight. That night the press was again moved to the middle of the street and "an act of

vandal ruffianism committed." A fire was set beneath the historic old press and the venerable relic destroyed. Thus passed from the archives the first printing press to visit California.