

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 14, 1957

### **Napa Valley Pioneers**

In February 1831, George Yount, hunter and trapper, riding his good horse "Hunter," came to the top of Mount St. Helena. He stopped and gazed down into the valley below, and almost as a prayer whispered "In such a place I should like to clear the land and make my home; in such a place I should like to live and die."

And he did just that. He made friends with the Indians and the few white men in the surrounding country: Dr. March at Mt. Diablo, Dr. Bale in St. Helena, John Sutter at Sacramento, and Gen. Vallejo at Sonoma. He taught the Indians how to build, use a hammer and a saw, rather than adobe, and for this Gen. Vallejo rewarded him with the first Mexican grant to be given in Napa County, Caymus Rancho, 11,814.52 acres of land in the very heart of the Napa Valley.

The grant was bounded from Bale slough to the north, south to below what is now Yountville is named for Yount, and there is where the Veterans' home is located, and a huge structure with the mountains as a background. The grant was given on March 23, 1836. Napa, until 1850 was spelled Nappa, named after an Indian tribe, the Nappas, who lived in the southern end of the valley.

During a motor trip through Napa Valley last week we visited the Bale Mill. This historic grist mill was erected by Dr. E.T. Bale an early day physician in Monterey. He was the grantee of Carne Humana Rancho in 1846. The mill with the surrounding land was deeded to the Native Sons of the Golden West by Mrs. W.M. Lyman, restored through the efforts of the Native Sons Parlor of Napa County, under the leadership of Past grand President Bismarck Bruck, a grandson of Dr. Bale, and by the Historic Landmarks committee of that organization. The restored mill was dedicated June 21, 1925. Dr. Bale's wife was Maria Ignacia Soberanes of Monterey.

In 1840 Dr. Bale built his grist mill, when he found it necessary to feed his Indians. At first it was composed of two large stones turned by Indians. Later he enlarged the mill and it was powered by oxen or mules. In 1846 the present old mill was built entirely of lumber. The mill is now the delight of picture-taking enthusiasts. The grounds are well kept and the curator informed us that they have many visitors every day in the year. The

curator sits beneath the stately redwoods to receive the guests and cordially invites each and every visitor to sign a guest book which rests in a shrine-like enclosure fastened to one of the largest of the trees, away from the winds and the rain.

The library of the Monterey History and Art Assn. was generously increased this week by the presentation of five books dealing with California history. The donor was George E. Dawson of Carmel who gave a "History of the Donner Party", original edition in pristine condition, written by C.F. McGlashan and published by Crowley and McGlashan at Truckee, copyrighted in 1879 by C.F. McGlashan, and printed by H.S. Crocker & Co., Sacramento.

Two reviewers of the past have written: "Among all the books on western history this one of the most difficult to secure". McGlashan had access to many hundreds of letters and manuscripts of the survivors of this ill-fated expedition to California in 1846. From them, and from personal interviews with the most important actors in the strange and gruesome events described – cannibalism had finally been resorted to – he has brought together the only complete history of the emigration, and its frightful experiences in the snow-bound Sierras. This gift book is valued at \$50 the price which Mr. Dawson paid for it in 1930, and possibly more at this date.

A Stanford University edition of the History of the Donner Party is also included in the gift books of Mr. Dawson to the association. It is autographed to Mr. Dawson by George H. Hinkle who wrote the foreword notes and bibliography for the edition published in 1940.

An edition of Piney Paradise, written by Lucy Neely McLane as a documentary history of Pacific Grove's first 25 years and a glimpse of that city's adulthood, is the third book presented to the association. "The U.S. West, the Saga of Wells Fargo" by Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg, is also included. The last, and very important contribution to the files of the association is a bound collection of maps of California, showing present and original counties, drawn by Guy J. Giffen. The second map shows the historic sites and points of interest in the state in 1938. Designated for Monterey County are Fremont's Peak, Hartnell Adobes, Soledad Mission, Pinnacles, Monterey, Soberanes adobe (near Soledad), San Antonio de Padua, Jolon and Bradley.