

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Santa Cruz History**

News and Notes, the publication of the Santa Cruz Historical Society, has just arrived at my desk. It is No. 8 but no Vol. number is listed. Fred McPherson Jr. is the president of the society, and Mrs. Margaret Kock is the editor of News and Notes. We judge it a very good program of information for members. Former residents of Santa Cruz should welcome the publication each October, February and June, which they will receive through paying the annual dues in the society.

Three short features in "News and Notes" are of interest in Monterey history. One is the story of Charles Henry McKiernan, (Mountain Charley) 1808-1892. "The immortal Mountain Charley guided John C. Fremont to Santa Cruz County Big Trees of Felton in 1846 to the consternation of the Mexican authorities in Monterey. On Mt. Charley road in 1854 he achieved lasting fame as the only man in history to win a hand-to-hand battle with a grizzly bear. He emerged from the fray with a scalped head and wore a silver plate over his skull for over 38 years.

A short article accompanied by a drawing showing Duncan McPherson driving a team of oxen, tells of the life of this late citizen of Santa Cruz. Bullwhacker, muleskinner, woodsman and newspaper editor, Duncan McPherson bought a ranch in the Santa Cruz mountains in 1856 for \$600 and then traded the property for a half interest in the Sentinel in 1864 of which he remained editor for 57 years. The Sentinel is one of the oldest daily published papers in California and has remained in one family forever 95 years.

The third illustrated article concerns the life history of Captain Upton S. Matthis – 1884-1890. He was California's youngest commissioned officer in the Union Army during the Civil War. Matthis left Watsonville with Company L., Second Calvary, of the Santa Cruz County, to protect the Northern cause at Ft. Douglas, Utah.

Capt. Matthis, who erected the first general mercantile store in Castroville, had the unique experience between 1869 and 1873 of being held up twice and kidnaped once by the notorious Tiburcio Vasquez; "Per uster es un fuerte hombre, Senor Mattis." (You are a tough man.)

On Saturday, April 25, 1857, the Santa Cruz Sentinel carried on its front page a short reference to a lecture delivered in the east by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Clarke of Baltimore, entitled "Fifty Years Hence."

Part of the predictions were printed in the "News and Notes" of the Santa Cruz Historical Society. Some of his guesses were surprisingly accurate for today, a hundred years (instead of fifty years) after.

"In traveling great changes will take place. Instead of the dusty road and crowded car there will be a splendid locomotive hotel, flying over a road carpeted with turf and bordered with shade trees, and heralding its approach with sweet music, instead of the demoniac shriek of the steam whistle, and labeled through from Boston to San Francisco in four days.

"Instead of the unsightly telegraph poles, the be will be . . . network underground and under the bosom of the deep, and it will click off thoughts instead of words. Then the electric battery will light all the streetlamps at once, enable all the clocks in the city to keep exact time, and kindle the beacons on the dangerous rocks, where now, men hazard their lives, and wear out their lonely days.

"Then the author will not write by our slow process, losing his rarest fancies, but he will sit down to the newest invented chirographical instruments, and putting his fingers on the keys, write as fast as he can think."