

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Monterey's City Seal

A few days ago, there appeared in Prof. Toro's column a letter from Jean Le Roy of San Francisco inquiring about the insignia appearing on all the doors of cars and trucks belonging to the city of Monterey. The writer of the letter would like to know what it all means and if there are other cities in the United States which possess the heraldry and also the full meaning of Monterey's coat of arms. We feel very proud that we can supply the information.

"Arms of the City of Monterey" is the title of an article appearing in the Alta Californian on June 6, 1870. Aside from telling about the gay celebration which marked Monterey's 108th birthday celebration, it relates how the city seal was designed and adopted. The issue of the paper in which the article appears is in the files of the State Library in Sacramento. At the conclusion of the article there is a simple signature "Sefton", so we have no further information concerning our historian who might be pleased to know that Monterey did celebrate again in 1946 and in 1949 and on June 3rd, 1957 the birthday of the city about which he wrote.

To continue with his article: "The festivities of the day, as matter of course, wound up with a grand balls in Colton Hall: the quadrille, the waltz, the contra danza and the jurabe. In the rich dialect of one of the early-day residents of Monterey the dance kept up 'till th' wee sma' hours ayant the twall and by some, even until the rosy-fingered morn had drawn aside the curtains of the East.

"In designating the arms, it was sought to observe heraldic devices with such lights in that obscure science as we then possessed, and to avoid all such incongruities as landscapes, cornucopias. railroad cars canal boats, steamboats, etc. and yet avoiding fabulous monsters and griffins.

"If anyone will take pains to examine the arms of the original states, he will see at a glance there is a meaning and a propriety in them, and the rules of heraldry observed, which the escutcheon of the strong-minded heathen lady, with a coal-scuttle on her head and her tame bear, does not possess, and which tasteful design was made by the leonine sage of the Dale of Lyons.

"The shield of Monterey is a field vert, as the environs of the town are always green, with a bar sinister in or showing a streak with a somewhat irregular birth, not being a portion of the ancient domain of the United States.

"The field is charged with an anchor and sheaf proper, showing how hopeful we were to be able to see in the future a large commerce and production; the supporters the horse and bull rampant were at that time very important items in the wealth of the country. The crest was a rising sun in or expressing our hopes at least that we were a rising town, whatever the facts might have been.

"The motto 'Anda' caused some objections on the part of scholars; they said it should have been 'Adelante' forward: that 'Anda' being the imperative of the word 'Andar,' to go on, was a homely expression, only used to drive cattle, and to urge aborigines to move along; but as there is a wide latitude in the choice of mottoes, from 'Excelsior' down to 'Thrive and Strive' notwithstanding, their learned and undoubtedly correct remonstrance, 'Anda' was retained.

"The knowledge of the Spanish language on the part of the common council in those days was extremely small-limited, perhaps, to such expressions as vou stayvamos akee manyana, your vamos tambeen, star weener.

"It might not be out of place here to mention that the said Common Council voted General Riley on the eve of his departure a massive gold medal with the city motto thereon engraved somewhat crudely fashioned and engraved. These civic dignitaries did not, however, get as far as their venerable compeers, the city fathers of the rival commercial emporium and City of San Francisco, and vote themselves each a medal.

"But in spite of the rampant bull and the furious steed of the supporters, the imperative character of the motto: Monterey would be 'Andar.' The children have grown up to be men and matrons; the young men's hair is now sprinkled with gray; their steps are not as springy and elastic as they were in those days, but the wind still sighs through the pines; the surf rattles and thunders on the beach, and to all appearances the old town of Monterey is still the same."