

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 25, 1958

### **The First Centennial**

The first Centennial of the founding of Monterey on June 3, 1770, by Don Gaspar de Portola and Father Junipero Serra, who founded the chain of missions in California, was celebrated here on June 3, 1870, with great festivity. The Steamer Senator, with 300 souls aboard, members and guests of the Pioneer Society, departed from San Francisco on the evening of June 2 to make the sailing to Monterey in time for the celebration next morning.

The weekly Alta reported:

"As soon as the gallant old steamer was made fast to the Monterey wharf, Charles R. Bond, acting marshal of the association, announced the program. At this moment the Monterey Pioneers, a stalwart body of 56 men, were observed drawn up as a reception committee on the wharf, each bringing the regalia of their order.

"In their ranks was borne a large American Ensign, and also the first banner of the City of Monterey at its organization. It was designed by the lamented "Squibob" who was at one time stationed in Monterey. His humor is exhibited in the city by the motto, 'Anda' on the city seal, which means "Go Ahead."

We should insert a word of explanation here and tell our Monterey present day readers that "Squibob" was Lt. George H. Darby, an actor at California's First Theater an officer of the Army stationed at the Presidio with Col. J.S. Stevenson's regiment before 1850 and one of the state's first humorists. His "Phoenixiana" (1856), is now justifiably a collector's item.

To continue our reporter's story of the Monterey celebration in 1870:

"Now the Pioneers formed a hollow square. The last prefect of the district, Don David Spence, welcomed the guests most cordially with a neat speech and his singing 'Auld Lang Syne' in excellent voice for a man of three score years and ten. The crowd, a large portion of whom were ladies joined in the chorus. It was a monster outdoor concert.

"Milton Little, president of the Monterey Pioneers, in a brief speech, welcomed their brother pioneers.

"The procession then formed, the band preceding and playing national airs. Next fell in the officers, and the ladies sandwiched in between the first and second class Pioneers. The crowd marched up Alvarado street, both sides were planted with young and vigorous Monterey pine and cypress saplings.

"The houses, nearly all of which on this and nearly all of the streets, are built of adobe, and many are spacious and elegant residences, on the present occasion were dressed in holiday garb the brilliant green of the foliage contrasting magnificently with the dazzling whiteness of the houses.

"After halting for a brief period at Harris' Washington Hotel, which was covered from cornice to sidewalk with evergreens, the procession moved to the old church of San Carlos de Monterey. This sacred structure displayed the American, Spanish and Mexican design. The High Mass was sung by Padre Ambrio, assisted by several priests from adjoining parishes. This father is the priest at San Antonio. He came to California with the first bishop of the diocese, then composed of Baja and Alta California. Since then, a period of nearly 30 years, he had been exercising pastoral duties."

Then came the grand procession according to our correspondent:

"About one o'clock in the afternoon, the grand procession commenced forming at the church, under the general management of B.V. Sargent. The names of the aides were Dr. Callahan and E.W. Mills. Division marshals were J.R. Leese, R. McKee, W.S. Johnson, T.G. Lambert, Captain Pray, R.P. Warren, L.F. Brown and H. Mills.

"On the arrival of the procession at the grove, on an eminence overlooking the bay, groups selected shady dells whilst others might have been seen gathering wild flowers and enjoying the magnificent view and the finny tribes disporting in the placid waters.

"Extending through a long portion of the grove was a table, laden with viands of the most substantial character and native wines, which were partaken of with zest, heightened by the long march and stimulated by the ocean breeze. It seemed as if every resident of the county had contributed to make an old-fashioned merienda a complete success."