

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Riley's Farewell

The Daily Pacific News covered very well the farewell dinner given by the citizens of Monterey on hearing that their esteemed friend and late governor, General Riley, had received orders to return to the States immediately. They held a meeting to decide upon the most appropriate mode of paying a tribute of respect and esteem to that distinguished gentleman, as well as to mark their approval of his services, both in his military and civil capacities, in California. It was decided to invite the gallant general to a dinner and present him on the occasion with a gold medal.

A committee was appointed to convey the invitation, when the evening of Wednesday, July 24, 1850, was fixed upon. The tables were laid in the spacious saloon of the "Pacific House," for the accommodation of 200 guests the walls were decorated simply, but tastefully with flags of our country, the "Spangled Banner," whilst two naked swords, crossed, were suspended over the president's chair.

"The dinner consisted not alone of good and substantial solids, but of all the delicacies that the season, or the country could produce; the wines were said to be the prime brands.

Indeed, the style in which it was served up reflected the greatest credit upon the caterers of the Pacific House.

"At five o'clock a deputation, with the band of the 2nd Regiment of U. S. Infantry proceeded to the residence of the general, and accompanied him to the festive hall, where 150 gentlemen were seated including some of the most respectable and oldest citizens, officers, both civil and military, with many foreigners.

"Among the company were: Capt. Elias Kane, Capt. Steele, Lieut. Sully, Gen. Don Manuel Castro, Mexican army; Dr. Ord, Judge Ord, Wm. Roache, David Spence, Capt. Cooper, James McKinley, Dr. J. Stokes, Don Jose Abrego, Don Pedro Cappett, Don Augustine Garcia, Milton Little, James Watson, Rev. Mr. Willey, Ald. Boston and Phillip Roache.

"After grace had been said the president arose and said: 'General, I have been selected by a number of your friends, to present you with this chain, made of pure California gold. As you will receive it, general, the different pieces of which it is composed, preserve

almost natural shape and appearance of nature and art, at once pleasing and curious - reflecting great credit upon the artisan who put it together, and also does credit to the gentleman who selected it for this occasion. General, your friends present you this chain as a token of the high regard in which they hold you as a man, as well as admiration for you as a soldier.'

"The gallant and eloquent gentleman concluded, amid loud and long continued cheers, by suspending a massive, but unique chain of gold, round the neck of General Riley."

The Hon. P. A. Roche was the next speaker. Roach was alcalde of Monterey 1849 and 1850 and first mayor of the city, he was state senator from Monterey County and Council General to Lisbon. After extolling the virtue, the Army career and personal friendship of Riley, Roach made the presentation to him of the gift from the City of Monterey with these words:

"In behalf of the citizens of Monterey, I have the honor to present to you a medal, bearing on one side the arms of the city, the place which you have justly chosen and in the most interested manner as your home. The medal bears on the other side an inscription which is the just tribute to your life - the man who came to do his duty, and who accomplished his purpose. (Loud applause.)"