

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 23, 1959

### **Pacific Squadron in Monterey**

"The Pacific Squadron comes to California" was the headline from Monterey, Oct. 13, 1848. The United States Navy's Pacific Squadron under command of Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones, had arrived in port here from La Paz, Lower California, the day before.

Besides the flagship Ohio, the arrivals included the U.S.S. Southampton and the U.S.S. Lexington.

Aboard were the companies of the First New York Volunteers Regiment which had been on extended duty

At La Paz, and were to be formally discharged from Army service, in the next few days. Also, among the passengers were 350 Mexican refugees - residents of Lower California who had helped the United States in various actions there during the war with Mexico.

Orders had been left by Governor Mason, then absent in the gold regions, to have them fed and quartered for the next two months of their exile from the homeland. Commodore Jones directed that they be paid by the government for their lost property.

A few days later there appeared other items pertaining to the New York Volunteers:

"Companies of the New York Volunteers Regiments were mustered out here yesterday by the regimental commander, Col. Jonathan D. Stevenson, after lengthy service in Lower California. Col. Stevenson himself came here from Los Angeles where in September he mustered out the portion of his regiment stationed there. He was in direct command of that district."

Unfortunately, it was reported, with their discharge from the discipline of Army life, some of the volunteers created disturbances in the town and also stole some horses to speed their way to the gold country where all were most eager to go.

It was also reported that Col. Stevenson with some picked men, formed a company and proceeded under semi-military rule to the diggings to try their luck in the southern district of the mining area.

It was men of Col. Stevenson's regiment who were the first to open Jack Swan's sailors' rooming house as the first California Theater, and produce old time plays there in 1848.

On Nov. 1, 1848 Monterey was discussing, the news of a jurisdictional quarrel between the magistrate of Monterey and Santa Cruz. Lieutenant Henry W. Halleck, secretary of state, favored Monterey in his decision. The dispute arose when William Anderson, who had claimed to be acting magistrate at Santa Cruz, refused to answer a summons issued by Alcalde Florencio Serrano of Monterey in a suit brought against him. Anderson denied the Monterey jurisdiction.

In consequence, Don Florencio, the first alcalde since Rev. Walter Colton was absent in the gold regions, asked Lieutenant Halleck if an armed force could be used to compel Mr. Anderson to obey the citation.

The secretary of state confirmed his jurisdiction but would not sanction the use of arms. Instead, he directed Alcalde Serrano to proceed with the case against Anderson at the scheduled time even if the latter did not appear, and to give judgment in accordance with the evidence produced.