

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 29, 1959

### Monterey Bay's Anchor

A little of this and that today. It is surprising how one's desk can get an accumulation of notes, inquiries and special articles in such a short time, all interesting and too important to be disposed of in a wastepaper basket under the typewriter. So, we will begin to use them before another pile accumulates and cries for use.

A note in the question box of the Sacramento Bee concerns Monterey history: "Please tell us something about the old anchor found in Monterey Bay in 1906" - signed C. J. T., Sacramento.

The answer to that question was: "On Feb 6, 1906, a fisherman discovered an old anchor at the bottom of Monterey Bay in front of the Custom House. It weighed about 1,000 lbs. One fluke was gone. The anchor was dragged to the wharf, but a derrick was needed to get it out of the water. It was thought to be an anchor from the brig Natalia, on which Napoleon made his escape from Elba, and which was supposed to have foundered in a sudden storm in Monterey Bay in 1842. Bancroft, however, in his history of California says the Natalia was wrecked Dec 21, 1834."

Maybe the answer to the subscriber should have been verified in Monterey before it was printed, in order that other historians who write about our anchor at the north of the Old Custom House, will not make the same mistakes as to date, etc.

Monterey's old bronze anchor was brought up from the Monterey Bay attached to another anchor lowered by an oil tanker in 1942, It took two years for the city, the History and Art Assn. and the public to decide where it should be placed.

The city manager at that time thought it should be placed on the lawn at Colton Halt far away from the sea from which it came, and others, as is always the case, had other locations for their choice, but finally the very appropriate site near the bay and on the Custom House reservation was definitely selected and the details of the installation were begun.

Assembled in the sunny plaza of the Custom House, where they were sheltered from chill north wind, more than a hundred members of the Monterey History and Art Assn. and other interested citizens took part in

Sunday's (April 28, 1946) program celebrating the unveiling of Monterey's newest landmark.

The anchor's history prior to the previous two years, might have been associated with Cabrillo, Viscaïno or any other of the pioneer navigators who explored this coast, or it could have been lost by some Spanish galleon or British merchant ship, although few vessels of that era were large enough to match the large anchor.

Capt. A. P. Kurtz, in command of the Tidewater Associated Tanker Tide Oil No. 2, accidentally round the anchor near the terminus of the submarine pipeline, a mile off Seaside Beach. Andrew Skov of Monterey and the crew of the purse seiner Liberator, under the direction of Sal and Vince Colletto, landed the anchor on shore.

Armin Hansen designed the sturdy stanchion against which the anchor rests. It was fashioned by R. A. Wilson, then chief ranger at the Point Lobos State Park, with wrought iron worked by Francis Whitaker of Carmel.

The late William M. O'Donnell, associate publisher of The Monterey Peninsula Herald, was chairman of the anchor committee. Myron Oliver was also of great assistance during those interesting days when the anchor became one of the city's most interesting relic.

The anchor is in perfect condition and contrary to the Sacramento story both flukes are there to be admired by all visitors who come to Monterey and visit the Old Custom House and Fishermen's Wharf.

Inspired by the occasion is the following verse, penned by J. S. Moodey of Sanger, who was visiting here at the time:

*"Men dredged this ancient anchor from the bay,  
A sentence from a history unknown,  
Old bronze memento of square-rigger day,  
When in this town the flag of Spain was flown,  
The flukes corroded green from years of brine  
Stand taller than man, tip to tip,  
But neither stock nor shank reveals a sign  
Of origin or forge or name of the ship.  
Links chaining to the past disappear,  
And which, among the galleons of Spain  
Here foundered nameless in a shrouded year  
This muted bronze in voiceless to explain."*