

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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First in a Series

A Name For Eusebio

Most of the old-timers around Monterey know Victor Mossop and also know that his first love and hobby is history – either California or Monterey County in particular. He is devoted to the people and the happenings in the country around Jolon and Victor can make a motor trip by way of the River road, to San Antonio Mission a delightful experience for anyone. We have had that experience and will cherish it for the remainder of our life. Each succeeding trip, since that with Vic Mossop as the director, has been richer because of this information so enthusiastically given on the first visit.

With Mr. Mossop we visited his Indian friend, Frank Avila of Jolon, the caves with Indian painting in the region of San Antonio Mission, and several of the old adobe homes and buildings of that southern section of Monterey County. Today we will repeat a story as told to us by Victor.

There was once a young Indian boy who was raised at San Antonio Mission by the mission fathers. His name was Eusebio. As he grew up he was kept by the mission fathers as a courier or messenger boy to carry messages to the missions north and south of San Antonio.

It was while on one of these trips to San Miguel that he met an Indian girl whom he brought back with him to be married by the priest at Mission San Antonio.

After secularization they came to the mission in 1834 or a little after that date. The priest who was in charge at that time got Eusebio and his wife a piece of land about 25 miles above the mission at the end of the San Antonio River. This land had belonged to the mission and there was a two-room adobe house on it that the fathers had built in early times to house soldiers that were kept there in case of an emergency.

As Eusebio's family began to increase and as other Indians came to live there with them, they would build another addition until the house had seven additions and was at least 200 feet long. As the dwelling was built on sloping land each addition was about a foot lower than the other. It made it look as though it was built on steps.

Mr. Mossop says that the last time he was there he noticed the old grape vines, how they ran almost around the house. The butts of some of these vines are as large as a man's body.

A funny little story was told by an old man who was born there about one hundred years ago, as to how Eusebio and those Indians got the name of Encinales, and Victor Mossop told us this story.

It seems that along in the early 1850's his father, William Earle, was appointed as registration clerk of that district, so all the men came from all over the country as far back as the coast to become registered to vote.

And so did our friend Eusebio. He wished to vote. But when Mr. Earle asked for his full name, he said Eusebio was all the name he had.

So, Earle told him he would have to have another name. He lived up there among the encinales - meaning "live oak trees" so he said, "I will put you down as Eusebio Encinales."

Which he did. And from that time on the family all went by the name of Encinales.

On a little round hill about half mile above the adobe house one can see a large cross on the very top of the hill. There lies Eusebio Encinales, his family, and friends, the last of the San Antonio Mission Indians.