

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Month Of Monterey Festivals

September is truly an historic month in Monterey. We could be celebrating with many fiestas these days in the old town if just the important ones were honored but in these busy days most of them are passed by without notice or recognition.

To go as far back as Sept. 26, 1822, the day that California welcomed Augustin Fernandez de San Vicente, representing the Mexican Emperor Iturbide, who arrived in Monterey to proclaim California a province of independent Mexico and to establish a new local government - some folks may have enjoyed a fiesta on that day but certainly not our Spanish residents.

Then there was a great event on Sept. 1, 1834, when a party of Mexican colonists, headed by Jose Maria Padres and Jose Maria Hajar, and totaling some 200 persons including 19 farmers, 11 painters, 12 seamstresses, 8 carpenters, 8 tailors, 5 shoemakers, 5 tanners, 5 silversmiths, 2 hatters, 2 physicians, 2 barbers, 2 saddlers, 2 blacksmiths, 2 printers, 2 goldsmiths, 1 mathematician, 1 gardener, 1 surgeon, 1 machinist, 1 ribbon-maker, 1 rebozo-maker, 1 midwife, 1 distiller, 1 candy-maker, 1 vermicelli-maker, 1 navigator, 1 founder, 1 porkman, a musician, a vintner, an apothecary, a boatman, 1 carriage-maker, and six teachers, arrived in California from San Blas. They surely must have celebrated that day after so long and tedious a journey. They arrived on the Natalia which was wrecked here on Dec. 21, 1834. It is said that the Natalia was the vessel on which Napoleon escaped from Elba in 1815.

After the U.S. Flag had been raised in Monterey, the first newspaper had been published and Maj. John C. Fremont had been appointed as military commandant, or governor of the "territory" of California, Alcade Walter Colton impaneled at Monterey the first jury ever called to try a legal action in California, on Sept. 4, 1846.

Finally the big day came on Sept. 1, 1849, when a convention was called to write a constitution for California. The delegates assembled in Colton Hall, then considered the largest, most handsome and appropriate building in all of California for such an important meeting. It consisted of 48 delegates and was presided

over by Dr. Robert Semple. Aside from the usual provisions for the protection of life and property, the election of state officials and the convening of a legislature, it fixed the boundaries and outlawed slavery. It was signed by the delegates Oct. 13, 1849.

This widely celebrated date calls for a fiesta in many communities throughout California annually - Sept. 9, 1850 - the date on which President Millard Fillmore signed a bill adopted by the United States Senate on Aug. 13 by a vote of 34 to 18, and by the House of Representatives on Sept. 7, by a vote of 150 to 56, which admitted California to the Union as a State.

Another interesting date, although it does not call for any large celebration, is Sept. 20, 1850, when Congress appropriated \$90,000 for the construction of California's first six lighthouses, at Alcatraz Island, the entrance to San Francisco Bay, on the Farralones, at Monterey, Point Concepcion, and San Diego. The "sites were located "by engineers conducting a survey for the Coast Survey Department, headed by George Davidson.