

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Alvarado Hundred

Because it is still the Civil War centennial year, we feel that another story of events in California 100 years ago is still of interest.

Therefore, we will report on the activity of "The Alvarado Hundred," organized in 1862 and commanded by Capt. Ephraim Dyer, the grandfather of Peter Dyer of Carmel and father of E. H. Dyer of Berkeley. It was Captain Dyer and his brothers who founded the first successful sugar beet refinery in the United States at Alvarado in 1879.

From family letters and papers, E. H. Dyer compiled an invaluable and fascinating genealogy and history of the Dyer family which his son, Peter Dyer, has kindly loaned to us for information regarding the history of the "Alvarado Hundred."

"California contained many Southern sympathizers before and during the Civil War," Capt. Dyer's son reports. "Both sides needed California gold. Perhaps it was because of this that General Sibley of the Confederate Army was commissioned to invade Arizona and New Mexico in 1862. He got as far as Albuquerque before he was turned back. Among the troops raised in California for her own protection was the company known as the "Alvarado Hundred." A part of these troops went east and joined a Massachusetts Regiment under the leadership of Captain Eigenbrodt. Ephraim Dyer captained the Alvarado Guards.

For years, the old I. O. O. F. Hall in Alvarado housed an American flag made by Alameda County women and presented to the company. It was not long after that presentation that the Alvarado Guards were ordered to Hayward. Strange to say, the historic flag; many years later, followed the Alvarado Guards. The IOOF Crusade lodge was consolidated with the Hayward Guards and the flag now rests in a glass-enclosed case in the Odd Fellows lodge Mall in Hayward.

The presentation of the flag was a social event in Alvarado. E. H. Dyer has among his family possessions the original address made by an unknown speaker at the time of the flag's presentation, and his father, Capt. Ephraim Dyer's, reply of acceptance. Here was the message:

"Captain Dyer, officers and members of Alvarado Guard. Permit me, in the name of the ladies of Alvarado, to present to you this banner, bright and beautiful emblem of our nationality. May it ever be your pride and earnest endeavor to guard and protect it from insult and dishonor. May its folds never wave over a disloyal heart, unless it be victoriously over enemies of our country. May your language ever be: 'Hail, bright banner that floats on the gale; flag of the country of Washington, hail! Red are the stripes with the blood of the brave. Bright are thy stars as the sun on the wave. Wrapped in thy folds are the hopes of the free. Banner of Washington, blessings on thee!"

"You may not be called upon to take part in this mightiest struggle the world has ever seen, but trust and know that you will stand by the flag, ready to fight the great battle of freedom with the watchword on your armor - God, Liberty and Right!"

Capt. Dyer responded to this impressive speech as follows:

"Ladies, in receiving from, your hands this beautiful flag, permit me in behalf of the Alvarado Guards. to tender to you our warmest thanks. As you have remarked, it is the symbol of our nationality. Among its folds cluster the cherished memories of the present hour - the hope of a bright and glorious future. No truly loyal American can look upon his country's flag without emotions of peculiar love and reverence. But this flag presentation by loyal ladies of this crisis of our country's history, while our fellow countrymen are pouring out their life's blood in defense, of its honor. . . will ever be regarded with more than ordinary affection.

"Although as an organization we may never be called upon to take part in this great contest, yet should our country call, I trust and believe that the honored recipients of this magnificent gift will never cause its fair donors to blush with shame that we faltered in its defense or proved recreant to those great principles of liberty bequeathed by our forefathers and, which it is our duty to aid in transmitting unimpaired to posterity."

"Ladies, we again thank you."