

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Important Dates For Presidio Hill**

Fort Mervine's history actually goes back a little further than the time of Sloat's landing on July 7, 1846.

It was sometime after 1770 that the Spaniards after establishing the original Presidio in the area now bounded by Webster, Fremont, Abrego and El Estero, put up a cannon-armed breastwork on the hill above the bay. It was called "El Castillo" and today is the site of the Junipero Serra monument.

As a fort it was not much good. Its armaments failed to repel pirate Hypolite Bouchard who in 1818 raided in force from two ships anchored off Point Pinos and sacked Monterey.

Col. R. B. Mason, who Commanded the post in 1847, reported to the Army adjutant general that it consisted of a "redoubt in the form of a bastion, on a hill overlooking the town and the anchorage.

"It has twenty 24-poundors mounted, and four 8-Inch mortars on platforms.

...In the rear of the redoubt, I have caused to be constructed mostly by contract labor, a stone house, 75 feet by 25, with an excellent shingle roof, containing ample room to store all the valuable ordnance stores..."

During the early part of 1938, the late Col. Roger S. Fitch, then president of the Monterey History and Art Assn., wrote to Col. Oliver L. Spaulding, (FA), historical section, Army War College, Fort Humphreys, Washington, D.C., asking if he could supply a brief history of the Presidio of Monterey or of the City of Monterey itself. A prompt reply was received, and valuable information related. The original document is in the History and Art Association files.

The following extracts from "United States Military Reservations, National Cemeteries, and Military Parks," supplied by Col. Spaulding at that time should be of genuine interest.

"Presidio of Monterey: This reservation is situated partly within the city limits of Monterey, overlooking the bay, in Monterey County, and contains 598.13 acres above water mark, with metes and bounds as announced on Mar. 14, 1908. Occupied as a military post by the Spanish government as early as 1772. Mexico succeeded Spain, and by treaty with Mexico the

United States succeeded to the title and took possession.

"By executive order dated Nov. 23, 1866, the reservation was made to include about 158.14 acres, according to the Warner survey. Through an error in the subsequent survey (the Forman) the reservation as occupied included only about 140 acres."

The reservation was enlarged to its present area by purchases in 1903 and 1906, as follows:

"1 - Deed of David Jacks and wife, dated March 21, 1903, recorded in Vol. 116, page 407, of the deed records of Monterey County, surveying 104.17 acres. This tract includes some land, which according to the Warner survey, belongs to the military reservation.

"2 - Deed from David Jacks and wife, dated Jan. 20, 1906, Vol. 99 of the said records, covering 153.85 acres.

"Revocable licenses - June 14, 1889, the Southern Pacific Railroad Co., to construct a line of track across the reservation."

On July 15, 1890, Jane L. Stanford was given permission to erect a monument to Father Junipero Serra, founder of the California mission chain on the hillside within the Presidio property. Mrs. Stanford, with her husband, was the founder of Stanford University.

"The next important date pertaining to the Monterey Presidio was on Mar. 31, 1903 when the Monterey v Gas and Electric Co. was given permission to run its lines upon the reservation. There followed a water system when the Pacific Improvement Co. was permitted to lay and maintain a 12-inch water main across the reservation on Dec. 23, 1903.

The following year, on Mar. 15, 1904, the Monterey-Pacific Grove Railway system asked for and was given a permit to construct, operate, and maintain an electric streetcar line across the reservation.

When we arrived in Monterey in 1925 there was a small wooden house on the Presidio curve below the railroad track and almost on the beach. We found "that a Mrs. King was granted a permit to occupy the house on May 5, 1904.

On Dec. 12, 1904, the Pacific Improvement Co., and the Monterey - Pacific Grove Railroad Co. was given permission to maintain the 16-inch pipeline, and the electric railroad, respectively, upon and along Pacific street.

The city of Monterey was granted on Jan. 3, 1905, a permit to maintain a road to be known as Lighthouse avenue, where same crosses southern extremity of the Presidio reservation.

It was not until May 12, 1914, that permission was granted to the Pacific Telephone Co. to construct, maintain, and operate a telephone line.