

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **An Old Landmark Oak Tree Is Misplaced**

Here's a story of missing oak tree lost by three counties, Monterey, Fresno and Kings. The tree that they misplaced was a white oak which marked the spot where the- three counties come together in the Coast Range.

This tree was marked in 1878 by O. D. Davis, Fresno County surveyor, and Seth Smith of Tulare County. An "F"; for Fresno was carved on the north side of the oak and a "T" was placed on the south side for that part of Tulare County which is now Kings. The "M" for Monterey was added later.

However, the site of the tri-county oak was lost during the 1900s and a search by Fresno County failed to find it.

In 1929 a party of Kings County surveyors set out to locate the tree. The survey party was headed by Roy May, county surveyor. at that time.

The starting point was a monument on the Kings River near Reedley. The men proceeded southwest along the original line between Fresno and what is now Kings. Following field notes of the 1878 survey, they traveled across the north part of Kings County to the west side, through the Kettleman and Kreyenhagen hills, across Avenal Creek and to the summit of the Coast Range.

After reaching the ridge, May told S. C. Dougherty, a member of the party, to go a number of feet in a given direction and set a stake. Dougherty went as directed but called back that he could not set a stake there.

"Why not" asked May.

"Because there is a big oak tree in the way," shouted May in return.

"Well that is what I have been looking for," shouted May in return.

The tree, which was described as a 30-inch oak In 1878, had grown to almost 4 feet in diameter. However, when slabs were cut from the tree, the original blazes bearing the perfect letters "M," "F" and "T" were uncovered. These letters in reverse, were found on the slabs. May and a nurseryman named John Heidorn, cemented glass covers over the blazers in the tree so that the letters could be viewed without farther cutting. The slabs cut

away from the tree, were placed in the Kings County Museum, where they may be seen today.

It was on April 20,1852 that the California State Legislature divided Mariposa County, creating Tulare County from its southern portion. Tulare County in 1930 had a population of 77,442. /

On April 2, 1866, Kern County was created by legislative enactment from portions of Tulare and Los Angeles counties. In 1930 Kern had a population of 82,570.

On Mar. 22, 1893, Kings County was created by legislative enactment from a territory which previously had been a portion of Tulare County. It had a population of 25,385 in 1930.

Tulare means "Too-lah-ray" . . . from "valle do los tules," (Valley of the tules or ushers), the name given by Moraga. in 1813. Dr. Edwin G. Gudde of the University of California Press wrote that the word tules (or rushes), the name where tules grow, and that the word is of Aztec origin.

Kings County was named after the river which Spanish explorers in 1805 called "River of the Holy Kings." The reference was to the three Magi who came to Bethlehem to adore the infant Jesus.

We all should know, the meaning of the name "Monterey," pronounced "Mohn-tay-ray." It was named - county and city - iin honor of Gaspar de Zuniga, count of Monterrey and viceroy of Mexico, by Sebastian Vizcaino.

The word formerly was spelled Monterrey and Monte Rey. In 1776 Monterey was declared the capital of Baja and Alta California during the Spanish regime, Many of the historic buildings associated with early California are preserved and are still standing today in this colorful community.