

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 9, 1961

The Curse Upon Monterey

"The Curse Upon Monterey" is the headline for today's story about old Monterey as told to me a number of years ago by the late Miss Edith Cox, assistant postmaster at Monterey for many years. Her brother-in-law the late W. W. James was postmaster here for 17 years, from June 30, 1897 to August 11, 1914. He was the father of Judge William James, superior court judge in San Jose and a part time resident in Monterey, having a home on Jefferson street, the former residence of his parents. Miss Cox's home was on Hermann Drive.

"The Curse upon Monterey," as told by Miss Cox, was placed here long ago by a certain priest, coming from San Diego by boat which put into Santa Barbara. He went into the town while the boat was unloading cargo. He was in a very happy mood because he had collected quite a sum of money to use among the Indians around Monterey.

There happened to be a couple of men from Monterey among the people the priest was talking to and they were much interested in the work the father was planning for his natives in Monterey. When the boat sailed these two men made their way on horseback back to Monterey.

When the boat pulled into the harbor of Monterey, the priest learned that there was a large landing fee levied upon all comers. Strangely enough this fee amounted to the exact sum the priest had upon him. He was obliged to pay it, but his mission was brought to naught and he set out once again to raise some money.

As the boat left Monterey, the priest heard sounds of fiesta on shore and was sure that the people were making merry with the money taken from him. In the sorrow of his heart he lifted his hand and said, "May Monterey never show her fairest face to a stranger."

He was a sorely wronged man and his curse. was strong, lasting even to this day, so old timers say. When there is a big crowd of strangers in town, the weather is at its worse - fog, mist and wind greet the newcomer and convince him that Monterey is a most inhospitable place. And the old priest rejoices.

The curse must have been lifted this last month when the sun shone, and the rain held off for the annual Bing

Crosby golf tournament. Or maybe those who attended were not strangers any more to Monterey.

Mrs. Paulino McCreary, curator at Colton Hall Museum, reported to the Museum Board at recent meeting that the attendance in the Museum for 1960 had been 32,377 which was 8,077 more than in 1959.