

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

June 16, 1961

Birthday Party

The celebration of the 185th birthday of San Francisco will be held in that city from June 25th through June 29th. The California Historical Society and a citizens' committee are sponsors of the historical observance.

By proclamation of Mayor George Christopher, these dates have been set aside for city-wide festivities. The festivities will begin on Sunday at 1:30 p.m. at the statue of Fray Junipero Serra in Golden Gate Park followed by a concert of Spanish music dancing and pageantry at the Music Concourse, sponsored by the Native Sons of the Golden West and open house at Log Cabin Clubhouse where the Assn. of Pioneer Women will be hostesses.

The San Francisco birthday celebration commemorates the beginning of the city in 1776 when the first colonists arrived and occupied the site of Mission Dolores.

As described in the diaries of Fray Francisco Palou, who shared leadership with Lt. Jose Joaquin Moraga, tents were set up, a brush shelter was built to serve as a chapel, and on the third day, June 29, the first Mass was celebrated. Historian Eugene Bolton states: "Dolores became the cradle of the city erected to the honor of St. Francis ... this little bowery built June 28, 1776, was San Francisco's first building ... the ancestor of the great skyscrapers ... for both colonists and missionaries, Dolores was continuously occupied from June 27th."

One month later, July 26, most of the party went over to the site of the Presidio, leaving six soldiers, two settlers, with their families and all the cattle at the Mission site. At later dates, buildings were constructed at both spots, officially dedicated, and formally occupied.

With the opening by William Richardson to the cove of Yerba Buena in 1835, a third phase of San Francisco's beginnings emerged. His tent-dwelling marked the start of the pueblo which was incorporated with the mission and presidio in 1847, to form the City of San Francisco, the descendant of "Mission San Francisco de Asis."

Wednesday evening, June 28th, at 8 o'clock, Harold Gilliam will present a lecture "The Image of San Francisco, 1776 -1961." Chairmen of the part of the program is Alexander L. Arguello, president of the Society of California Pioneers.

Thursday morning, June 29th, at 10:30 o'clock, there will be a celebration of the anniversary Mass in Mission Dolores, followed by ceremonies of the cemetery garden honoring the founders: Captain Jose Joaquin Moraga, Fray Francisco Palou, and Fray Junipero Serra.

The historic Officers' Club at the presidio will be the setting for a gala civic birthday luncheon at 12:30 on June 29th. Francisco P. Farquhar, president of the California Historical Society, will act as chairman for this event. La Favorita, Miss Francisca Noel McGettigan, will cut the birthday cake.

Last event of four-day celebration will be the Laura Bride Powers Memorial Award Presentation. The late Mrs. Powers is well known on the Monterey Peninsula where she resided for many years and was the inspiration for the creation of the Monterey History and Art Assn., the Path of History, the first curator of the Old Custom House and the author of several books, among which is "Old Monterey, California's Adobe Capital," published in 1934. Her daughter, Mrs. George Applegarth of San Francisco, and Carmel, was a member of the citizens' committee planning the birthday celebration of San Francisco.