

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

January 15, 1962

Christmas Play Revived

On Jan. 3, 1915, there appeared in the Monterey Cypress a special Christmas story telling of the production of an ancient Spanish Biblical drama which had been played in Monterey many years ago and which was revived under the direction of Father Ramon Mestres for the pleasure of the people of the community. It was produced in English by local talent at Mission hall on Sunday afternoon previous to the review, which we read with great interest while searching for old-time Monterey stories.

This ancient drama, "Pastores," played here every Christmastide in the mission days, had been translated from Spanish by the kindly priest of San Carlos Church, and members of the Junipero Serra Club took the various parts.

"The play was greatly enhanced by exquisite symphonic music by the orchestra under the direction of Prof. D. E. Nofan. The music alone was a rare treat," the reporter stated.

It will be interesting to all old-timers to read the list of the members of the Junipero Serra Club who took part in "Pastores." The infant Jesus was portrayed by a mission statue; the Blessed Virgin Mary by Miss Maria Antonia Field; St. Joseph by Clarence Rudolph; Angel Gabriel by Marie Rudolph (now Mrs. Don Cummings Sr.) the angels were Julia and Clarice Sparolini, Kathleen Doud and Grace Rudolph.

The Magi Kings were: Malchor, P. J. Dougherty; Balthasar, Louis Rudolph; Gaspar, Charles; Kiernon; a shepherd girl of Judea was Ruth Chaine; Bartola, John Hawkins; and Barrego, John Lindsay.

The three kings acted in a dignified and creditable manner as did all their attendants. These latter parts were taken by Raymond Rudolph, Ben Watson, Moses Diaz and Manuel Enos, according to the Cypress report.

The role of the mischief maker from the lower regions, "Lucifer" by cleverly interpreted by Daniel McAnaney. His ally, Herod, was well acted by Felipe Gonzales, both characters amusing the children in the large audience.

The shepherd's caravan in the production of "Pastores" 47 years ago was made up of Benjamin Aristos, Ruth

Chaine, Frank Enos, William Perry, Fernando Enos, Harold Camp and Donald McAnaney.

Walter Colton, first American alcalde of Monterey, wrote in his journal of this religious performance which was performed in the church with the angels, the devil, a hermit, and the clown, Bartola, all taking part. Colton's first knowledge of this drama was when he attended the performance in San Carlos Church on Christmas Eve in 1846.

He wrote in his diary, "Three Years in California:" "As soon as the sun had gone down, and twilight had spread its sable shadows over the hills and inhabitants of Monterey, the festivities of Christmas Eve began. The bells rang out a merry chime; the windows were filled with streaming light and skyrockets burst high overall."

San Carlos Church was then known as the Presidio Church of Our Lady of Refugio. Colton notes: "The ample nave was soon filled. Before the high altar bent the Virgin Mother, in wonder and love, over her newborn babe; a company of shepherds entered in flowing robes, with high wands garnished with silken streamers, in which floated all colors of the rainbow, and surmounted with flowers. In their wake followed a hermit, with his long white beard, tattered missal, and his sin-chastising lash."

Most of the characters in this Christmas drama were played by the children of early Monterey families.

"The Pastores," composed by Padre Florencia of Soledad Mission for California production, a copy of which is among the Vallejo documents in the Bancroft Library at the University of California in Berkeley, was a favorite dramatic production.