

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

January 17, 1962

### **Marker Planned To Honor Thomas Doak**

The Daughters of the American Revolution is formulating plans to place a marker at San Juan Bautista in honor of Thomas W. Doak, first American settler in California. The site of the marker and the date of dedication has not yet been decided upon by the state regent and her committee, as there is much yet to learn of the history of this distinguished citizen.

Arrangements are yet to be made for permission to place the marker in the old mission town where Doak settled in 1818.

Doak was a native of Boston, Mass. He came, to California on the Albatross and landed at Monterey. He was baptized at San Carlos Mission in 1816 as Felipe Santiago and was employed at San Juan in 1818, according to Bancroft's history of California.

He was married in 1820, by viceregal permission given in 1819, to Maria Lugarda, daughter of Manuel Castro. In 1829, his age is given as 42, and from this time his name appears in various records as "carpenter of good habits." Bancroft reports that he lived for some time in Santa Cruz, or at least two of his children were born there.

In 1832 he joined "comp. extrajera" at Monterey, said to have been in San Jose in 1833; on Larkin's books from 1833; in 1834 he had six children, according to his patron; in 1836 he was living in the Monterey district, at or near Las Animas, age 50, with his wife, Lugarda Castro, age 36; child Juan B. Born '21, Valeriano '23, Ann Maria '29, and Cecilio '33. Bancroft reports: "I have his autograph of '27 and '47, but no later records of him or his family." Bayard Taylor says he died in 1848.

Rockwell Hunt, president emeritus of the California Conference of California Historical Societies and retired director of the History Foundation of the University of the Pacific, writes in his book: "California Firsts": Our best records indicate that a young seaman of 29, Thomas W. Doak, arrived at Monterey in March, 1816, on the ship "Albatross", that he deserted from the vessel and became the first bona-fide American settler in the province, of California. On being baptized on December 22, of that year, he took the name of Felipe Santiago and was thenceforth a devout Roman Catholic. In 1820, with vice - regal permission, he was married to

Marie Lugarda, daughter of Jose Mariano Castro, the ceremony being performed in the Mission Church of San Juan Bautista.

"Doak (Santiago) seems to have been a carpenter, with a reputation for good habits, but without claims of real distinction. Most of his days were spent in the vicinity of the mission a very peaceful and pleasant spot." With the aid of two Indian neophytes he painted the mission altar and pulpit. Being more of a sailor than an artist, his job was rather poorly done. Because the standard of piety was higher than that of art, his devoted work was approved, apparently giving universal satisfaction. After an uneventful life, quite removed from the major activities of the time, he died about the year 1848, leaving four children and, a good personal record."

Phil Townsend Hanna notes in his "California Through Four Centuries", January 15, 1816 - Thomas Doak, a sailor from the ship "Albatross," landed at Refugio Rancho north of Santa Barbara, and became the first American settler in California. He was baptized at Mission San Carlos, December 22, 1816.

The first ferry to be operated on the San Joaquin River was that of John Doak, son of Thomas Doak, in partnership with Jacob Bonsell, who in 1848 began to convey passengers in a small yawl across the river at a spot located just below the present S.P. railroad bridge.