

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Menzies' Journal Of 1792

The "Discovery arrived in Monterey on the 27th of November 1792, with Archibald Menzies on board. He had accompanied Capt. George Vancouver on the voyage around the world which took them away from their native land from 1790 until 1794.

The journal which J. Menzies kept of the events and descriptions of the various places which they had visited is now in the British Museum, and a certified copy is preserved in the national archives in Victoria, B.C.

While the "Discovery" was at anchor in Monterey Bay Capt. Vancouver made a selection of "such articles of the trade as we had on board as he thought would be useful to the settlement and sent them on shore to the governor to be divided between the Garrison and the surrounding missions in whatever manner he thought would be most beneficial to the country in general," wrote Archibald Menzies in his diary during his stay in Monterey.

"But on the 16th, we found," he continued, "that his manner of sharing these donations had - excited a good deal of discontent. The Fathers in particular complained of their not having received so liberal a share as those at San Francisco and Santa Clara. At the same time the soldiers were entitled to every liberal return we could make to them for the great trouble they were at in traversing the country hunting down cattle for our daily consumption and horses for our common amusement, in short their cheerful and ready compliance with whatever could contribute to our accommodation."

Evidently there was not enough poultry, vegetables, etc., in Monterey and the surrounding country, for Menzies reports that on the 26th the small schooner returned, which had been sent a few days before by Sr. Quadra across to the northeast side of the bay on our account to "collect sea stock for us as poultry, vegetables, etc. at the Mission of Santa Cruz. They brought about 100 fowls and a quantity of vegetables that were shared between the two vessels and a large quantity of Indian corn for feeding them and livestock and sheep which we were to carry with us to stock the Sandwich Islands with these useful animals as the opportunity we had now of procuring them was so favorable.

"This being their Christmas Day, a large party of us dined on gourd to celebrate with festivities. Most of the guests found it necessary the next day to shake off the effects of the debauch by a long ride, after which we met at dinner at the Presidio and were entertained with a bull-fight in the area within the garrison," reports the author of the log of the journey around the world.

Even in those far-off days the water situation in Monterey was not the best, for Menzies writes:

"Water was rather a scarce article in the vicinity of our anchorage. We however met at this time with very good springs of it by digging in the hollow places on the hilly ascent abreast the vessels."