

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### Captions For A Flag Story

The story of the flags of California, which we began in the last issue of the Peninsula Diary, as written by J. 8. Coates of Carmel is the recording of the "developing history of the wonderful and beautiful state which is even more colorful than the vivid reds, greens, blues and yellows in these flags which flew for a time so proudly and bravely, even piratically, in the bright clear sky," The convict artist Pecor followed history most carefully when he painted the murals in Folsom Prison and his terse thumbnail sketches of the events occurring during the periods when each of these flags was the official ensign of the power in ascendancy tells the exciting story of California.

Pecor, the lifer, wrote the caption for the historic episode when Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sailed along the coast of what we now call California and needing water, landed in a cove known as Magu (Mugu) Lagoon near Ventura and took possession of the land in the name of Carlos V, king of Spain. The flag of Spain was raised.

Here is Pecor's statement recording this great event of the first flag to be raised on the soil of California:

"Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a Portuguese on Spain's payroll, sailed in and cased what is now Southern California. He tumbled to the class of the lay-out immediately and put up a Spanish flag at Magu Lagoon, Ventura County, claiming the score for Carlos." One may see that what he lacked in composition he made up in art in the murals in the mess hall at Folsom Prison.

Here Cabrillo, only 15 years after Columbus made his discovery, flung rocks, pulled up grass in symbolic gestures and voiced the proclamation that he had taken possession of the land in the name of the King of Spain, wrote Mr. Coates.

The flag of England came next (1579) and Pecor's caption for this event - "was not told exactly in public school language."

"England's Queen Elizabeth sent a seagoing hijacker named Sir Francis Drake to muscle in on the California score. Drake knocked over every Spanish ship he could find on the way, put up an English flag at Drake's Bay near Frisco, and made the touch stick."

The Spanish national ensign (1785). In Pecor's prison jargon he captions this painting:

"The Spaniards stood pat until England cooled off on the caper, then Gaspar de Portola and Father Junipero Serra heeled in with settlers and sprung missions, presidios, and pueblos. The sleepers went over and Spanish national ensign went up at San Diego."

Two hundred and six years later after Cabrillo's voyage, all of a sudden thought it best to dispute the claim of England made over Novo Albion and dispatched a land expedition from Mexico to dissipate England's claim and again take over actual possession of the land, recalled Mr. Coates he wrote in this period of California's history.

This expedition consisted of Don Gaspar de Portola, commander of the troops and settlers, and a Franciscan monk, Father Junipero Serra. Their expedition carried a separate banner depicting the sword and cross. Father Serra's role was to establish missions and convert the Indians. He did both. His resting place is at the Carmel Mission San Carlos de Borromeo.

The flag of Russia (1812). Pecor's caption for this painting follows:

"The Russian czar, on the make for California's Bonarue sea otters, put the finger on Ivan A. Kuskof whose mob of heavy-men built a fort near Drake's Bay and hung out the Russian flag. They stuck until 1841, when John Sutter bought it for a split out."

The otter trade was a great adventure and the "take" on these easily killed friendly little animals was prodigious, as records exist that show there were as many as 800 in one day taken within the Ban Francisco Bay off the location of Sausalito and Tiburon.

Mr. Coates' story will be continued.