

July 7, 1963

**July 7, 1846**

July is a month with several important events, including the 4th of July, but California and Monterey in particular should be most interested in July 7, for on that date 117 years ago, Commodore John Drake Sloat and his troops landed near the Custom House, raised the Stars and Stripes and claimed California for the United States.

Appearing in the log of the "Savannah" on that memorable day of July 2, 1846, when standing in for the anchorage of the town of Monterey, the log reports, the consul visited the ship. On July 6, 1846, the log noted this: "At 9, inspected the crew at quarters. Hoisted out the launch and struck an 18 lb. carronade into her."

On the day of the landing the writer of the ship's log reported this activity: "Made signal 894 to the Cyane. At 7:30 a.m., Capt. Mervine left the ship to demand of the military commandant the surrender of the Town of Monterey, forthwith, with the forts, military posts and stations under his command, together with all troops, arms, munitions of war, and public property of every description under his control and jurisdiction in California . . .

"At 9:10, called all hands to muster and read the following general order :

"We are about to land on the territory of Mexico, with whom the United States is at war; to strike their flag and hoist our own, in the place of it, is our duty. It is not only our duty to take California, but to preserve it afterwards, as a part of the United States, at all hazards. To accomplish this, it is of the first importance to cultivate the good opinion of the inhabitants whom we must reconcile. I scarcely consider it necessary for me to caution American seamen and marines against the detestable crime of plundering and maltreating unoffending inhabitants. That no one may misunderstand his duty, the following regulations must be strictly adhered to, as no violation can hope to escape the severest punishment:

"1st. On landing, no man is to leave the shore, until the commanding officer gives the order to march.

"2d. No gun is to be fired, or other act of hostility committed, without express orders from the officer commanding the party.

"3d. The officers and boat-keepers will keep their respective boats, as close to the shore as they will safely float, taking care that they do not lay aground, and remain in them prepared to defend themselves against attack, and attentively watch for signals from the ship as well as from the party on shore.

"4th. No man is to quit the ranks, or to enter any house for any pretense whatever, without express orders from an officer. Let every man avoid insult or offense to any unoffending inhabitants, and especially avoid the eternal disgrace which would be attached to our names and our country name by indignity offered to a single female, even let her standing be however low it may be.

"5th. Plunder of every kind is strictly forbidden, for the plundering of the smallest article from a prize forfeits all claims to prize money, and the offender must expect to be severely punished.

"6th. Finally, let me entreat you, one and all, not to tarnish our brightest hopes of success, by any act that we shall be ashamed to acknowledge before God and our Country.

(Signed) John D. Sloat Commander-in-chief of the U.S. Naval Force in the Pacific Ocean.

"At 9:30 Capt. Mervine returned from shore with the reply from the military commandant (Mariano Silva) that he was not authorized to deliver up the place, having no orders to that effect; but said the commodore may arrange with the commanding general, to whom the communication must be sent, which was delivered to me for him, the undersigned retiring and leaving the town pacific and without a soldier. That there existed neither public or private property nor warlike munitions. "At 9:50, made general signal No. 134, at 10:00, an expedition, consisting of the boats of the ships Cyane and Levant, with about 85 marines and sailors under the command of Capt. Mervine, left this ship. At 10:20 landed all the marines and a detachment of sailors at the Custom House wharf, read a proclamation from the commander-in-chief to the inhabitants of California, and hoisted the American ensign on the Custom House flagstaff. During the reading, the ship's company were kept in their quarters, and on the hoisting of the ensign ashore, this ship fired a salute of 21 guns. At 11 the boats returned to their respective ships, leaving the marines in garrison in town."