

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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A Puzzle Solved

The California Genealogical Society Newsletter for October announced for the first time the California burial place of a veteran of the American Revolution.

Proper ceremonies are being planned marking the grave of Capt. William Smith (1768-1846) in Mountain Cemetery a Sonoma. Members of the D.A.R. and other patriotic organizations had searched in vain during more than 60 years for such a tie with our nation's founding years. The clue was unearthed in the California Historical Society's Edward C. Kemble collection.

According to the newsletter, the discovery of the grave came about in this manner:

"The thorough identification of William Smith was easier than his name would imply. He had sailed around the world eight times, was an acquaintance of Vancouver and had visited California as early as 1800.

"According to one biographer Capt. Smith's experiences were legion and would fill several volumes. Yet one piece of the puzzle remained unsolved—his place of death and burial. This posed a major problem for those wishing to erect a suitable marker honoring California's only known Revolutionary War veteran.

"Following months of search and conjecture, the key to the problem was uncovered by an officer of the California Genealogical Society on pages 364-65 of Vol. 4 of the Larkin Papers: 'Personal, Business and Official Correspondence of Thomas Oliver Larkin, U.S. Consul in California' (University of California Press, 1951-1964). The editor of these papers, Dr. George P. Hammond, who recently received the California Historical Society's Wagner Medal for his monumental work, has permitted the society to reprint the letter which solved the problem of Captain Smith's death and burial."

It is anticipated that the Daughters of the American Revolution will place a plaque honoring California's Revolutionary War veteran in the Mountain Cemetery at Sonoma on the anniversary of George Washington's birthday, Feb. 22, 1965.

On Nov. 19 the original site in San Francisco of the Bancroft Library was dedicated as California Registered Historical Landmark NO. 791. The library was one of the

most remarkable private libraries ever assembled in the United States.

It was also the home address of Hubert Howe Bancroft. The California Historical Society, together with St. Luke's Hospital and the Friends of the Bancroft Library, presided over the dedication ceremonies. Dr. George P. Hammond, director of the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, was the principal speaker.

The books Bancroft had collected remained unharmed through the 1906 fire. The library had been sold to the University of California in 1905 for \$200,000. Mr. Bancroft at that time, had made out a \$100,000 check to the university as his share of the purchase.

To my desk has just arrived Vol. 1, of "The Indian Historian." official publication of the American Indian Historical Society, for October 1964. Articles are titled: "Tuolumne," "How Indians Stored Acorns for Food," "List of Honored Assistants to the Staff," "Research Help," "Historical Record, Pit River Tribes," "Ohlone Indians," "California's First Orchestra," and List of Directors. Price 30 cents per copy or \$3 per year. The address is 206 Miguel St., San Francisco.