

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Legends Of Trail Over Hill**

Many were the tales and legends which grew around the trail over the hill to the Cannel Mission in the early days when the folks from Monterey made pilgrimages there, and even after it became a road.

One early morning, so the story goes, a man was driving to Monterey. As he passed the open field which still may be seen to the east, beyond the top of Carmel hill, he noticed that a deep hole had been dug beside the way. He stopped his horse to investigate. It was plain a treasure had been unearthed there but a few hours before. The imprint of a big iron kettle, such as was commonly used, for cooking beans, was plainly to be seen in the freshly exposed soil. Not only that, but a couple of gold coins, carelessly dropped, bore witness to the fact that treasure hunters, and finders, had been abroad. This is not legend, according to Lucia Shepardson's story of Monterey Trails, it is a fact. Years afterward the hole was still to be seen beside the old road. But no one knew who found the hidden hoard, for no one ever told.

Just beyond this open field, the route entered the dense forest once more. The first bend was called the Devil's Elbow, because of dark deeds done there, murders and such. No spirits of dead men were said to haunt the spot, but a ghostly hen and seven ghostly chicks were still there at dusk countless times, according to tradition. La Gallina y Gallinitos - the very name was enough to chill the blood. Just a grayish hen, with her downy brood, but many a man turned back, for fear of meeting her. The blackest of bad luck pursued and overtook the one who beheld her or molested her in any way.

Called into being by the murder of a priest who was carrying the fowls to his brothers at Carmel, La Gallina was known the length and breadth of California.

Past the Devil's Elbow the ancient way paralleled the present wide highway for several yards. The setting for a favorite "cuento" is hereabouts. One night a couple was returning on horseback from the town to the valley, the woman riding behind her husband as was the custom.

They had been attending a fandango and were sleepy and tired. Suddenly the wife was startled wide awake by

the crying of a child. She clutched her husband. He too was alert in an instant. They peered down, and there right at the horse's feet was a small child, apparently lost.

With an exclamation of compassion, the man slid from the saddle and picked up the wailing mite; failing to recognize it, they said they would carry it home and find its parents in the morning. But suddenly a fearsome thing befell. The baby's wailing changed to a demoniac laugh. To their horror, the couple beheld not a flesh and blood child, but a devil child, with a devil's face that leered up at them as they gazed spellbound.

Unceremoniously they dropped the imp of darkness and crossed themselves repeatedly as they went away from there with speed. They knew full well, the reason for this terrifying happening. They had been remiss in church going. They attended mass with punctual regularity thereafter.