

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Merienda Tradition Reviewed

It was on June 3, 1770, that Gaspar de Portola, governor of the Californias, assisted by Father Junipero Serra and soldiers, founded the Presidio of Monterey, and took formal possession of the land in the name of Charles III, King Spain. The formalities consisted of the planting of the royal standard, the uprooting of plants, and the casting of stones, the latter symbolizing the seizing of the territory. It is in observance of this late and event that the Monterey History and Art Association plans the annual Merienda in Memory Garden for the membership. The historical affair is not always held on June 3, but on the Saturday nearest to that date, so as to permit the business people, the school teachers and young folks, to take part.

The establishment of the mission of San Carlos de Monterey, which in 1771 was moved to the Carmel River and renamed "San Carlos del Carmelo," was coincidental. The presidio destined to become the capital of California was founded on the beach near the oak under which Sebastian Vizcaino had claimed the land in 1603, and named It Monterey in honor of the Count of Monterey (Gaspar de Zuniga y Acevedo), ninth Viceroy of Mexico.

There are many memorials on the Peninsula to Portola and Father Junipero Serra. There is a huge granite cross at the end of Pacific street just south of the Presidio, given by the late James A. Murray. Next to it is a huge boulder with a bronze plaque, dedicated to Don Gaspar de Portola by the Monterey History and Art Association in June of 1949. On top of the Presidio hill is a statue in memory of Father Serra, the gift of Mrs. Jane Stanford, the founder of Stanford University. It was erected in 1891. About 7,000 persons watched the unveiling.

A great redwood cross now stands silhouetted against the sky over the eminence of land that rises from the Carmel River mouth, a modern replica of the one erected 195 years ago by the Portola expedition.

It was on Sunday, December 10, 1944, that a special dedicatory program was planned by the Monterey History and Art Association at the mouth of the river near the cross. The informal ceremony was held at 2 o'clock with Father O'Connell; then pastor of the Carmel Mission, officiating, and brief talks were given by the

late Col. Roger S. Fitch and Carmel Martin Sr., president and vice president of the association. Harry Downie, curator of the Carmel Mission, personally donated the material and workmanship of the cross that rises 16 feet above the ground and carries a 10-foot crossbeam. It was made from a native redwood from the nearby Santa Lucia mountains. It stands on approximately the same spot where the original cross was left by the Portola expedition in 1769.

The Serra sarcophagus at Carmel Mission, designed and executed by the late Jo Mora, was dedicated on Sunday, October 12, 1924. Jo Mora was an eminent California artist and sculptor. This sarcophagus, a monumental work, was his masterpiece. Father Serra lies buried in front of the altar within the mission.