

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Visit Of President Harrison

"It is such a rare occasion for a President of the United States to visit California while still in office, that when it does happen it becomes history," wrote: a newsman for the "Illustrated Pacific States, a Western Sunnyside Journal," published in San Francisco, May, 1891.

President Hayes was the first to do so, but his visit was so short in duration and limited in extent that it cannot be compared to President Harrison's in importance.

On April 14, 1891, the President and his family and cabinet officers left Washington in a special train, fitted up with all the luxuries of modern traveling palaces, with a dining room, kitchen, and a competent retinue of cooks and servants, for a brief tour of the United States. It was midnight and but few persons were at the station in Washington to see them off and say "good bye," but the President was, on the rear platform and bowed his thanks to these few, according to the reporter.

The presidential party, consisting of President and Mrs. Harrison, Mr. McKee, Mrs. Dummick, Post Master-General Wanamaker, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Harrison, Private Secretary Halford, Mr. and Mrs. George W. Boyd, Mr. Tibbett, the President's private secretary, and several representatives of eastern newspapers, entered California at 4:30 on the morning of April 22, 1891, 73 years ago.

During President and Mrs. Harrison's visit in San Francisco, they had the honor of putting the double turreted, twin screw, armored coast defense vessel "Monterey" on the waves. The vessel was launched from the yard of the Union Iron Works. Mrs. Harrison touched the electric button which released the vessel from the ways.

In addition to the pictures of President and Mrs. Harrison on the cover of "Pacific States," there is an excellent photograph of the front of Colton Hall decorated in American flags and red, white and blue bunting, with a large framed photograph of the President hanging above the portico in honor of his visit to Monterey. There must have been in attendance the entire population of Monterey, so dense is the crowd. It was also a very warm day judging from the numerous parasols displayed, which must have robbed the view from those in the rear, but everyone looked happy.