

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **A Magnificent Beach**

"A Magnificent Beach" is the title of a short comment appearing in the Monterey Weekly Herald for July 25, 1874:

"Strewn with beautiful and rare shells, where the bather has a choice of plunging into the surf on one portion and walking on a fine, beautiful, white sandy bottom on the other, without a wavelet higher than a ripple of a mountain stream.

"On the same beach at low tide, lovers of good teams can enjoy an uninterrupted ride of fully thirty miles and at the same time a view not only of the bay on one hand but a picturesque country on the other, lying in the shadow of the Gavilan mountains...From the Alta California.)"

In the Monterey Weekly Herald for Oct. 16, 1875, is an article about the Monterey pine. It states that the streets of San Francisco were once planked with it in preference to Oregon lumber.

Santa Barbara is planning an arching, white bell tower on a 600-foot coastal hilltop overlooking the city, to be dedicated early next year as an historical monument to Father Juan Crespi, one of California's Franciscan explorer-padres.

The 40-foot tower will be the first monument in the United States to the Spanish friar who, with the Portola expedition, discovered the San Francisco Bay in November, 1769, and later became Father Junipero Serra's assistant at Carmel Mission.

It commemorates the first Christian religious service in Santa Barbara over 200 years ago—a mass said by Father Crespi on Aug. 20, 1759, for Portola's men, Spain's first land expedition up, the California coast.

Each year the California Historical Society presents in depth the work of one or more California artists of the past. These exhibits bring to the attention of the public a creative talent whose work and name might otherwise be neglected or even forgotten. This work also is revealed to an entirely new generation of viewers. This year it opens with such an event in The Mansion, 2090 Jackson St., San Francisco.

The artist is Francis John McComas, considered to have been one of the leading water colorists of his time. Mr.

McComas was for many years a resident of Monterey and Pebble Beach, where most of his pictures were painted. There are examples of his work at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, as well as in private homes on the Peninsula. His widow, Mrs. Jean McComas, lives in Monterey and in her own right is a well-known and appreciated artist.

Mr. McComas, a native of Tasmania, came to California just before the turn of the century and studied for a short time under Arthur Matthews at the School of Design in San Francisco. He then traveled to Paris for more study at the Academic Julian. Recognized early for his talent in the difficult medium of water color, he became one of the most popular artists in Northern California in decades preceding World War II. Two high points of his career during this period were his being asked to contribute his work to the famous "Armory Show in New York in 1913 and his selection as judge for art competitions of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915.

Following World War I Mr. McComas, then an established figure in the art world, spent much time traveling throughout the Southwest, Mexico and Europe. His studio in Pebble Beach was his American headquarters, and he continued his work until his death in 1938.

Among the contributors to the exhibition are the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the major museums in San Francisco, the Oakland Art Museum, and many notable Bay Area private collections of Mr. McComas' work. (From Notes, California Historical Society,)

A delightful Christmas card from Dina Moore Bowden and her husband, George C. Bowden, from their home—*"Spindrift,"* in Mallorca. On receiving a number of clippings from Monterey concerning events at Carmel Mission, she writes: "Please keep the enclosed sheet to tell your friends who may be coming to Mallorca about the Friends of Fray Junipero Serra and the establishment of an office in Palma." She reports that she is keeping two albums, one for Petra, the birthplace of Father Serra, and another for the Palma office.