

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 27, 1965

First Newspaper

A rare and valuable document which visitors to the Custom House always enjoy seeing and reading is Vol. 1, No. 2 of the Californian, the state's first newspaper published in Monterey by Alcalde Walter Colton and his assistant Dr. Robert Semple.

The copy, one of the editions which appeared on the streets of Monterey on Saturday, Oct. 24, 1846 (119 years ago), is framed and hung on the doorway leading into the room at the north end of the building.

Donor of the gift was Everett D. Graff, Chicago financier, collector of Californiana and items from the Southwest and a director of the Chicago Art Institute. During a visit to the Custom House in 1945, he remarked that there was not a copy of the Californian on exhibit. Mrs. Mary Greene, then curator, remembered where one could be procured for a sum. Mr. Graff bought it, returned to Chicago and mailed it back to his friend, Mrs. Francis McComas, with instructions that it find a home in its birthplace. The paper is on loan to the Custom House from the Monterey History and Art Association.

In 1906 the newspaper in this city was the Monterey Cypress, published by W. Michaels. An issue of July 4, 1896 has come my way and I hesitate to wait until the anniversary on July 4, 1966, to report on the news item in this old paper.

The large front of the four-page paper is striped in red, white and blue in honor of Independence Day. The issue also celebrated California's Jubilee, and a three-column-wide program of the four-day celebration is prominently displayed.

Ceremonies were under the auspices of the Grand Parlor, Native Daughters of the Golden West. Military maneuvers were in charge of Cavalry Troop C, Capt. M.J. Burke commanding.

On Sunday a Mexican picnic, free to all, was scheduled at mid-day in the pine woods above Fort Halleck.

"On Tuesday at 10 a.m. the civic societies all patriotic people are expected to join the Grand Lodge of Masons of California on Alvarado street and march with it to the site of the Sloat Monument, in front of Fort Halleck, for the purpose of laying the Sloat Monument cornerstone," one story said.

At 12:30 p.m. there was to be a grand parade from Del Monte to the Custom House for the Flag-raising ceremony.

Miss Edna Ingram, who later became Mrs. Benjamin Wright and the mother of Mrs. Harold Sand and Mrs. Shelburn Robison, was the "Goddess of Liberty" Miss Florence Schaufele, mother of Mrs. Thomas DeLay, represented Monterey. Miss Schaufele became Mrs. L.E. Kimball. Jacob R. Leese was grand marshal.

The Cypress announced under its masthead that the publication was for "Protection and Prosperity" and asked readers to vote for William McKinley of Ohio for president and Garrett A. Hobart of New Jersey for vice president.

Another short item of interest read: "James Ward, the old favorite and his company will open a five nights' engagement at Bagby's Opera House commencing Sunday night, July 5, in the famous war play 'Old Glory.'

"There will be a whole regiment of soldiers on the stage in uniforms, good songs and up-to-date dances. During the week Jim will produce the following plays: 'Through the Daylight,' 'Ranch Ten,' 'Streets of New York,' and 'After Dark.' Reserved seats are on sale at the White House."

Another story announced: "The following pupils of the Monterey public school, having passed the required examination given by the County Board of Education, will receive certificates of promotion from the primary to the grammar grade: "John Hunt, Herbert Schaufele, Lupie Serrano, Addie Giannini, Rosie Urbanus, John Kelley, Robert Stevenson, Ida Rose, Annie Davis, Emily Silva, Ora Kent, Pliny Barnes, Philip Gonsalves, Cecil Bagby, Joe Abrego, Antonio Rose, Nelson Hanna, Willie Tibbetts, Sam Rice, Charles Bostrom, Annie Gonzales, Julia Allen and Albert Chaine."