

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

December 29, 1965

### **Letter From Mexico**

"Tonight is the beginning of the Posadas. There used to be held each night for nine nights a long parade of floats with Biblical scenes. Each house front was supposed to be decorated with garlands and paper decorations. Candies and fruits were thrown to the paraders as they passed," writes Mrs. Mary Greene from her home in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

"However due to the thoughtless Americans who began throwing money it became a bedlam – men and boys climbed walls to get to the source of the money so, for a few years they did not hold the Posadas. They have started again but with only one float with Jose and Maria on the float followed by little angels on foot, then all the children and teenagers follow them to reap the harvest of the candies and dulces, fruits. Each night the parade starts from the plaza in front of the church so that each night they take a different route so that in the nine nights each neighborhood is visited. They are supposed to pass by my house tonight...

The day has been overcast all day and this evening it was drizzling, the tail of a "norther" from Texas.

Dr. Albert Shumate of San Francisco, former president of the California Historical Society, has sent out his usual Christmas cards pertaining to some historical event in California history. This 1965 card pertains to the Old Station Hospital at the Presidio of San Francisco.

Quoting from the card we learn these facts: "In October 1775, Col. Juan Bautista de Anza led his famous expedition of soldiers and colonists from Tubac, in what is now Arizona, across the deserts and mountains to Monterey, California. Anza selected the site of San Francisco Presidio in March 1776, and shortly afterwards left California. He had turned his command over to Lt. Jose Joaquin Moraga, who with Father Francisco Palou, brought the pioneers to the San Francisco Peninsula. They arrived at the site of the Mission, now known as Dolores, on June 27, 1776. A month later (July 26) most of the party moved to the site of the Presidio. The formal ceremonies of possession of the Presidio were held September 17, 1776.

In 1822 the Mexican flag was raised over the Presidio and in July 1846 the United States took possession. In

March 1847, American troops formally occupied the Presidio.

The plaque was placed by the State of California History Commission, with the cooperation of the United States Sixth Army and the State Landmarks committee, near Old Station Hospital, now known as the "Post Dispensary." This building, still in use, was completed in 1857 and was the first permanent building built by the American forces after their arrival in the Presidio. During the Spanish-American War, the Letterman Army hospital superseded this building as a hospital.

This official State plaque honors the historic part of the Presidio and states, "It remains a symbol of the United States authority in the Pacific."

This Christmas card is already a collector's item for there were only 150 copies printed and designed for Dr. Shumate by Lawton and Alfred Kennedy. On the cover is an old photograph of the Old Station Hospital.

Happy New Year to all! From Mayo Hayes O'Donnell