

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Monterey Burial Places

It will be interesting to know more about the history of the cemeteries in Monterey from the year 1839, as published in the Academy Scrapbook, a publication of the Catholic Church published in Fresno several years ago. Prior to this date, the records indicate that nearly all burials were in the Carmel Mission or the cemetery there.

There were few burials in the Royal Presidio chapel in Monterey but the last previous burial in a Monterey cemetery was on August 25, 1835. In 1838, so the article relates, three persons were buried in the campo Santa del Patrocino de San Jose del Alisal. This was at Hartnell College near the present City of Salinas.

After the blessing of the new Campo Santo, Monterey burials are entered under one of the two formularies "in Campo Santo" or "in the Cementerio." If these refer to the same place and the editor believes they do, the first burial in Monterey's present cemetery was August 7, 1839, the body being that of Felipe de Jesus, infant son of Francisco Lugo and his wife, Juanna Briorez.

On January 17, 1852 an indenture was made at Monterey between "the Mayor ... first part and the Catholic Church of Monterey ... second part, witnesseth that the ... party of the first part, in pursuance of an ordinance ... passed by the Common Council of the said city on November 10, 1851 – in consideration of one dollar to him paid by the party of the second part ... by these presents doth ... grant to the said party of the second part all ... title ... and interest of the ... City of Monterey in .. a ... tract of land situated in Monterey ... and described as follows: The western half of the peninsula formed by the first lagoon ... measuring 1,350 feet from ... the westerly edge of the said lagoon nearly opposite the Catholic Church of San Carlos ... where the land touches the opposite sides of the lagoon ... The portion thereby granted ... including the present Catholic cemetery with the walls now standing and appurtenance being the same as delineated in the ... plan attached thereto, marked: To have and to hold ... forever, provided always that the same shall be used for burial purposes only." The document was signed by Charles G. Harron, president of the Common Council and notarized by W.S. Johnson, deputy county recorder.

On April 15, 1933, the City of Monterey gave the church an unrestricted deed to 8.32 acres of this land in consideration of the release, by the church to the city, of the lagoon frontage for a park and driveway. The east half of this tongue of land is the city's burial ground. Even in pre-American times, as is evident from the old plan, it was partially used as a non-Catholic cemetery, according to the scrapbook's article.