

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

November 10, 1966

Washerwoman's Bay

While re-reading some former minutes of the Monterey History and Art Association, I came across this recording by the secretary in 1946: Miss Margaret Jacks discussed with the board the advisability of attempting to make a public park of Washerwoman's Bay area.

She stated that Miss Vida Jacks had intended before her death to make some provision, in this respect. Miss Jacks said that this was the place in the very early days where the Mexican and Indian women did their washing, and it became more or less of a public place at which all the gossip of the town and neighborhood was spread.

She also states that there was a legend that "whenever a crime was committed in Alta California the peace officers would visit Washerwoman's Bay, gossip with the women, and thereby obtain information to solve their problems."

There is no problem to the future of Washerwoman's Bay today, the Division of Highways has solved it twenty years later. The old willows have disappeared as have many other things, to accommodate a new freeway and will soon be paved with cement instead of being saved and used as a park, as Miss Vida Jacks wished it to be.

In the library of the old Mexican Cuartel, at California (now Munras) and Webster streets, the first issue of the Sentinel was printed on June 2, 1855. It was 20 columns in all, with a page 24x30 inches.

In April of 1866, Benjamin Park Kooser bought the half interest which had once been Delos P. Ashley's. Kooser was a Pennsylvania printer who had worked along the Mississippi River towns until he enlisted in the artillery in the Mexican War.

His regiment arrived in Monterey in January 1847, and Cpl. Kooser set type for Walter Colton's Californian, the state's first newspaper.

"Monterey, June 23, 1855—Matter of Jonathan Cogitation—During one of the high tides of last week the Monterey sardines, which is nearly the exact size and weight of the Mediterranean species, was thrown up by the thousands on our beach, for the length of a mile or so."

In the 1896 copy of the Monterey Cypress we find this item of interest to old timers:

"Frank Hatton, for whose parents Hatton Fields and Hatton Dairy were named, wrote an article, 'About Our Country,' which was published in the issue of the Sentinel this week, with the following introduction: A nine-year-old boy's composition on his country written at Bay School, and published at the request of F. P. Feliz."