

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 16, 1966

Echo From The Past

"Echo from the Past" wrote Newton B. Drury on his card when he sent a photograph showing the planting of a small redwood tree on the eastern side of El Estero Lake on June 7, 1946 in honor of the centennial celebration of the landing of Commodore John Drake Sloat and the raising of the American Flag at the Old Custom House. The photograph will be added to the files of the Monterey History, and Art Association.

In the photograph are members of the committee in charge of the planting: John B. Morse, president of Del Monte Properties at that time; M. W. McMenamin, treasurer of the City of Monterey; J. R. Perry, mayor of Monterey, and Mrs. Perry; Mrs. Margaret Allison of Los Angeles; Monterey County Clerk and Mrs. Emmet McMenamin, A. B. Jacobson, chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Monterey County; and Carmel Martin, Sr., chairman of the Planning Commission.

Six redwoods were planted at that time but when Mr. McMenamin and I made a tour to find them since receiving the picture we could not find a single tree. So, it is now planned to replant at least one in the same location and place a marker under it. Granite Construction has already promised to haul in a large boulder and the Green Thumb Nursery has promised a gift of a tall handsome redwood to replace one tree. There will also be a bronze tablet on the marker honoring the 120th anniversary of the raising of the American Flag at Monterey, provided by the Monterey History and Art Association.

After all the grand service that A. B. Jacobson gave to Monterey County during his terms as a member of the Board of Supervisors and as chairman of the board. I hope that his portrait, painted by the late Frank Myers of Pacific Grove, will not be sent in retirement as a result of the redecoration of the supervisors' chamber, as so often happens in this world of changes, forgetfulness and expression of appreciation. The portrait was unveiled March 5, 1956.

When the chalk-rock wall was constructed around the east side of the Royal Presidio Chapel (San Carlos church) in Monterey, it was a happy thought of someone to place the small, simple shrine just around the corner from busy Fremont street. Its beauty and simplicity is a

lasting memorial for all who view it. There are always flowers there, some in vases, some just placed by loving hands in cans, but we have yet to see anyone placing them there. The act is accomplished with such humility and love — no credit can be bestowed.

But a few days ago, I went by again and was sorry and humiliated at the sight the shrine presented, there were all sorts of cans, papers, weeds, etc.—not at all a beautiful picture presented for visitors as they enter Monterey and wish to present our historic sites and buildings in slides and photographs. It would take so little time to keep this shrine simple, clean, and representing a tiny piece of religious art. Maybe the children of the grammar grades and the high school of the church would like to take on that piece of work for their church. Or maybe some grown person with a desire to be of use in their church would be happy to go there once every week and clean the site. These statements are not intended as criticism but as a desire to have the shrine look as it should.

Harry Downie, who has been on the Peninsula for many years and who has been the moving spirit behind the restoration work at San Antonio, San Juan, Monterey and Carmel missions, has told me that originally a 30 inch high bronze crucifix had been executed by Ralph Stackpole, San Francisco sculptor, for the shrine.

It was never placed in the niche. The late Louis Hill, a resident of Pebble Beach and former owner of the Vasquez adobe on Dutra street, gave the first little carved wooden figure of "Our Lady" for the shrine. It was left untouched, there for several years but gradually became mutilated by vandals and at last was taken into storage within the chapel.

Folks missed the little, ancient-looking figure within the niche, and voiced their sorrow at its removal, so Harry Downie was commissioned to carve a new statue of "Our Lady." He copied the old one with such exactness that her worshipers were pleased and thankful.

The original little wooden figure now sits in another shrine placed on the outside wall of the Carmel Mission and in her crown a bird, returned each year to build a nest — we saw the evidence of building when we visited there once upon a time, but I have not checked upon that story for some time. "Our Lady" had been restored by Harry Downie, who also carved in stone the two coats of arms which flank the shrine on either side — those of the Franciscan and the Dominican orders.