

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **New Attraction At San Juan**

San Juan Bautista has added a new attraction to the state historical monument there.

It is an ancient log cabin believed to date back to the 1850's. It was through the newly formed San Juan Bautista Historical Society that the state park department came into the possession of the historical landmark.

The cabin has been placed in a large enclosure across the street from the side of the old Breen adobe.

Martin Penn, chairman of the historical society, dates the cabin around 1850 from its structure, artifacts found under it and a description of what appears to be the same building in a book published in 1929 by Isaac Mylar, now deceased. Its title is "Early Days at the Mission San Juan Bautista."

I have a copy of the book which once belonged to the late Victor Mossop and to his mother before him. It is autographed by the author and by J.G. Piratsky the compiler. There were only 300 autographed copies issued, so the book is now very precious to all collections.

The cabin, 18 feet long at the front and 16 feet in depth, is built of split redwood slabs. The corners of the building are dovetailed, or brought together, in a notching, a building style of the 1850's, Penn has said.

Located about one-half mile from Penn's home across from the mission vineyard, southeast of the city, it is said to have been built by Mr. Frances, a cobbler. One of the items found under the cabin when it was moved is an old shoe which appears to have been handstitched. Roy Pedersen, acting park supervisor, believes that the old shoe may have been cut from the lower portion of a heavy boot.

Also found under the house were old bottles, pieces of broken crockery and glassware and a large jaw bone. The Franciscan priests at the old mission had several hog farms in the area, and bears were also known to roam here. Pedersen is sending the jaw bone to the naturalist for study before announcing a definite decision on what kind of animal it comes from.

Penn calls the one-room cabin a unique house, perhaps one of the first wooden structures built by the American

people in this area after it was taken over from the Mexican government.

Mr. and Mrs. William Mackenzie, who own the land on which the cabin was located, gave the building to the historical society.

Mylar, in mentioning the cabin recalls that a kitchen and another room were added about 1894 along with a new cedar shingle roof. An attempt was made at the time to "insulate" the cabin with old newspapers, portions of which could be seen coming out from crevices in the redwood slab. One of the papers gave a date line as 1894.