

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Monterey's Glorious 4th

The city seal of Monterey was first used in 1850 for the Fourth of July celebration, the first observance of that national holiday after the Constitutional Convention held in Monterey at which the constitution was drafted and signed on October 13, 1849.

The painting of the Flag on which the seal appeared was done by Lieut. Alfred Sully who later became Gen. Sully. Sully also directed the ceremonies of the famous celebration 118 years ago. An old report of the event has this comment: "As the times were flush in Monterey in those days, everyone was brimful of patriotism, as you may suppose, and we all looked forward to a glorious career for old Monterey.

A correspondent to the old Alta, a newspaper published in San Francisco in the 1850's, printed the following article concerning the first July 4 celebration in Monterey: "The procession assembled in the plaza across from the church, with the band of the church, the band of the 2nd Infantry at the head, preceded by the famous banner which was carried by a character whose modesty would be put to blush to see himself in print, the celebrated Dennis McCarty, who had gotten up for the celebration in breeches and top boots." "There was also mounted escort of young men wearing red 'bandas' or 'fajas' across the breast. It took up the march to the house of General Riley, who was waiting to receive it in full uniform, girded with yellow sash won at Chapultepec.

"The general was received with drums and banners waving and he took his place in the line which wended its way toward Colton Hall. The ceremonies there consisted of reading the Declaration of Independence by Captain E.K. Kane of the Army, followed by a translation into Spanish by Lieut. John Hamilton, an oration by John A. McDowell (brother of the general) and some remarks in Spanish by the Rev. Padre Ramirez in the Dominican habit with national band aris."

In another article of a later date, telling of the celebration in 1850, a correspondent wrote: "It was an unusually fine day, we were somewhat younger then and we were in high spirits and our hopes ran high. The festivities of the day, as a matter of course, wound up

with a 'grand balle' at Colton Hall; the quadrille, the valse, the contra dance and the jarabe,"

After his description of the celebration of California's first Fourth of July, the writer goes on to say: "It might not be out of place to mention that the Common Council voted General Riley, on the occasion of his departure from Monterey, a massive gold medal, with the city seal crudely fashioned and engrave.

"The civic dignitaries did not however, get as far as their venerable compeers, the city fathers of the rival commercial emporium and city of San Francisco, and vote themselves each a grand metal.

But in spite of the rampant bull and the furious steed of the supporters and the imperative character of the motto 'Anda', Monterey would not 'andarrons' (go ahead); the young men's hair is now sprinkled with gray, their steps are not as springy and elastic as they were in those days, but the wind still sighs through the pines; the surf rattles and thunders on the beach, and all appearances the old town of Monterey is still the same."

Alfred Sully was a young army officer who played in the first plays at California Theater. He married Senorita Manuelita Jimeno, the daughter of Dona Augustias Jimeno and granddaughter of Don Jose de la Guerra of Santa Barbara. The senorita was born in Monterey and died here on March 28, 1851, at the age of 17 years, and her infant son is buried in the Monterey Catholic Cemetery.

Lieut. Sully came to Monterey with Col. J.D. Sullivan's New York Volunteers in 1848.