

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

March 13, 1967

Checking On Juan Carlos

I have before me a letter asking for information regarding James H. Carson, who was stationed in Monterey from mid-January of 1847 to the fall of 1848.

Sgt. Carson was in charge of commissary supplies, and well-known to the native Californians, who affectionately called him "Juan Carlos." He is said to be the one who delivered to Gen. Mason the news of peace in Mexico, right after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Later, from June 1850 to about January 1852, he was in the hospital in Monterey, being treated for an illness contracted while accompanying, Lieut. George Derby on a topographical survey of the Tulares in April and May 1850, the illness from which Carson died in December 1853.

"Carson was in the Stockton hospital off and on in 1852 and 1853, returning to working his gold claim whenever he felt better. While in the hospital in Stockton, he wrote a great deal for the newspapers. I suspect he may have written considerably for the Monterey paper while he was a patient there in 1850 and 1851, probably using his pen names. This is what I want to check.", writes Kenneth M. Castro, of Murphys, California.

The first newspaper in California was published in Monterey by Robert Semple, a Kentuckian, who acted as editor, and the Rev. Walter Colton, a navy chaplain, who was stationed at Monterey, as typesetter and pressman. They brought out their first edition on August 15, 1846. It was not long lived.

A Note on my desk from Mrs. N. E. Little, of the department of Adult Education of San Jose, writes that Clyde Arbuckle and she will bring a group of California History students to visit Monterey overnight on April 8th, and wish to visit Casa Soberanes. They have made reservations to tour the Larkin House at 1:45 and 2:30 p.m. and will attend the First Theatre performance that evening. Of course, Casa Soberanes will be opened for the tour of house and garden, from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

The California Historical Society, in the March issue of "Notes", is announcing a varied program in a beautiful setting, now in the planning stage with the cooperation of the Chinese Historical Society of America for the March 16th meeting.

The speaker for the evening will be Mr. Thomas W. Chinn, immediate past president of the Chinese Historical Society and descendant of a pioneer Chinese American.

He will discuss aspects of the history of the Chinese in California and the work and contribution of Chinese Historical Society.

Mr. Chinn, a typographer by profession, was born in Coos Bay, Oregon. His family moved to San Francisco in 1919 and has lived in the bay area ever since. He was the editor and publisher of the Chinese News, and English language newsmagazine and collector of Chinese Californiana since 1935, when the Chinese digest devoted much of its magazine to this subject.

In 1962 Mr. Chinn initiated the series of meetings with four friends which resulted in the formation of the Chinese Historical Society of America on January 15, 1963, and he has served through the entire growth as pro-tem president and president until now.

The setting for the dinner will be the magnificent new Empress of China restaurant. Sounds interesting!