

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 30, 1967

### **Fr. Garces' Travels**

Father Francisco Garces began his remarkable journeys to Arizona and California on Oct. 23, 1775. Those journeys are recorded in "A Record of Travels in Arizona and California, 1775-1776." With Lt. Col. Anza and his soldiers, he left the garrison post at Tubac, near present-day Nogales, and went south to the Gila river, then west to the junction of the Gila and Colorado rivers. He continued along to the mouth of the Colorado river on the Gulf of California before returning to Yuma.

This historical and entertaining account is published by John Howell-Books, 434 Post St., San Francisco. The price is \$7.50, plus sales tax.

After a short stay in Yuma, Father Garces moved north to the Mohave Desert, west to San Gabriel Mission (Los Angeles), north again to a point east of Tulare Lake in the great valley and south to San Miguel. From here he set off for the Colorado river once more and followed it to and through the Grand Canyon, thus the first European to approach the canyon from the west. Next, he traveled to Oraibe in Pueblo country, and returned to Yuma before arriving finally at his Mission San Xavier del Bac, south of Tucson, Sept. 17, 1776.

The purpose of Father Garces' 2,000-mile journey was to seek a safe and well-watered route that would link the Colorado and Gila river country to Monterey. His detailed observations on his journey and his intimate record of life with the Indians who lived in this country make his account the premier record of this vast land.

"A Record of Travels in California and Arizona" is based on a contemporary Spanish manuscript whose preparation was certainly supervised by Father Garces. It is magnificently illustrated with six color pages and many black and white drawings. A map shows clearly the route that was followed by Father Garces and by Father Font, in his journey to California.

The book was designed and printed with the skill and excellence of Lawton and Alfred Kennedy, is beautifully bound in decorated cloth, with title in gilt on the spine. It is an extremely handsome volume.