

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 13, 1967

### **Mystery of South Seas**

I wonder how many folks in Monterey or on the Monterey Peninsula knew that in Tonga, the Friendly Island, was celebrated a coronation on the Fourth of July, 1967

I have before me as I write, a long envelope, with a very special stamp in one corner. The colors are black, silver and a bit of green on which it is noted that it cost 21 cents air mail.

The stamp measure 2 ½ inches across and is round, decorated with flags, crowns and a silver seal in the center on which is embossed "Two Pa'Anga," No other stamps appear.

It was mailed in Nukualofa on the 8th of August. The envelope was addressed to me and on the back is printed "gift from Eduard Vio Mestres." So Eddie Mestres must be a tourist these days.

The contents within the envelope contained an old Declaration of Homestead, with John W. Miller, a claimant dated Nov. 8, 1877 at 25 minutes past 2 p.m. in volume A of Homestead page 456 of Married persons, and signed by J.R. Leese, recorder, Monterey, Calif. The penmanship is very beautiful.

Miller describes his claims as lots beginning at the westerly side of Main Street (now Called Principal) at the corner of what is known as Joaquin Gutierrez family lot and running then northerly along the said westerly side of Main street about 30 Spanish varas to the southerly line of residence lot of A. Manuel, then westerly along the said Manuel's twenty-four Spanish varas to the east line of Pacific street, thence southerly along the east line about thirty two Spanish varas to said Gutierrez lot, thence easterly along northern line of said Gutierrez lot, about thirty two yards to the place of beginning.

The actual cash value the document states is \$3,500. John W. Mill signed the paper.

The property is situated back of few Memorial Hall and city offices, next to the city parking lot.

The mystery is how Eddie Mestres came into possession of the document in the Friendly Islands, and how it got there in the first place. If that is where he found it.

I am going to turn the document over to the History and Art Association, where it belongs. And as soon as I get in touch with Mestres and find the answer to the mystery, I'll pass it along to my readers.