

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 7, 1968

Some Famous 'Firsts'

Here are a number of "famous first" in California. There are many others which from time to time we will collect and report.

The first forest fire in The Sierra Nevada occurred in 245 AD. This date was determined by Ellsworth Huntington from his study of fire scars in tree rings of the big trees (Sequoia Washintoniana).

First white child born in California was the son of Salvador Ygnacio and Gertrudis Rivas Linares, the overland expedition of Juan Bautista de Anza from Sonora to California. The birth took place in Middle Willows near the Arroyo Santa Catarina, which is in the vicinity of Warner's Hot Springs, December 24, 1775.

The first potatoes in California were brought from Chile in 1788 by French navigator, Jean Francois Galaup de la Perouse. His was the first foreign ship to visit California after Spanish occupation. He visited Monterey, September 14, 1786.

The first church bells were brought to San Diego aboard the San Carlos or the San Antonio in 1769. Until a few years ago they hung in the belfry of the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Old Town, San Diego.

The first expert cosmographer to map the California coast was Geronimo Martinez de Palacios, a member of Vizcaino's expedition of 1602.

The first sugar beets planted in the state were from seeds brought from Mexico and planted on Gen. Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo's Petaluma ranch.

The first American doctor in California was John Marsh, who arrived in Los Angeles in 1836. On February 5, 1836, Marsh was granted permission to practice by the ayuntamiento or city council.

The first Protestant church in California was organized by Presbyterians in Benicia in April, 1849. The first express service was established by C.L. Cody in July, 1847 between San Francisco and Fort Sutter.

The first presidential elector from California was Jose Covarrubias of Santa Barbara. When he went to deliver the electoral vote of 1852 for Franklin Pierce, he was welcomed at the wharf by the entire membership of Tammany Hall.

First public hospital was established on the outskirts of Monterey in 1844 as the result of an epidemic of smallpox in that year. It was set up in a rented house. There was no doctor but two nurses and a burial squad were in attendance.

First United States mint in California was established in San Francisco by act of Congress, July 3, 1852. The building was completed early in 1854 and the branch mint began actual operation in April of that year. There had been considerable private coinage of gold in California from 1849 to 1855.

First American ship to touch California was the "Chatham," with Peter Puget master, in 1794.

The first roofing tile in California was made at Missions San Luis Obispo about 1790. Use spread rapidly to other missions.

First national forest in California was the San Gabriel Timberland Reserve proclaimed by President Benjamin Harrison on December 20, 1892. This forest covered an area of 555,520 acres of timber and chaparral land in the Sierra Madre range of Southern California. The national forests in California now number more than 18 and cover a territory of more than 20,000,000 acres.

The first American woman to come to live in California was Mrs. (article ended with nothing further)