

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 17, 1970

Viva Nuestro Pueblecito

For a few moments I am going to relive those exciting, beautiful mid-day activities that occurred on Alvarado street on Sunday, Feb. 8.

I was so excited as a young child being brought to her first parade in the Pueblo of Monterey as they celebrated La Fiesta de Las Carnestolendas.

The matrons passed by in their black crepe dresses and pearls and also their mantillas. The caballeros in their black suits that shimmer in the midday sunshine. Las señoritas in much brighter colors and with fresh flowers entwined in their hair. Los niños y las niñas each dressed as his or her heart desires, as this is the fiesta for which special costumes and masks were made for them. In their hands they fidget with the small, gaily-decorated eggshells that their parents had brought them from El Baile de los Cascarones held at the Old Hotel Del Monte the night before. The children, overcome with joy and excitement – shyly, barely smiling – break the cascarones over one another's heads and in a flash streams of confetti dangle in their hair. What fun!

The crowds are becoming larger and larger and more excited as los músicos approach, accompanying the beautiful colors of my country joined by the colors of Spain, Mexico and of the California Republic.

What magnificent rancheros with their sombreros and riatas. The beautiful horses reminded one of the pride that Old Californios took in their fine care of their livestock. This remains so today and if one had any doubts all he had to do was to attend the area rodeos and see for himself.

Every parade has its various bands and marching groups of young people. Here we saw the American Indians represented in full regalia.

The parade leader guided the many guests of honor who rode in the Wells Fargo stagecoach. The alcaldes of all of the Peninsula cities and of their sister cities in the county rode in the horseless carriages that somehow managed to squeeze in between. With the parade over, one could only follow the advice of El Señor Alcalde's Las Carnestolendas proclamation the day before in which he stated: Feast and eat meat, for it shall be taken away for Lent, and so the crowds headed for the

barbecue and the rodeo where more music and dance were to be found.

Monterey is known and always has been known for its gracious way of living and for making the visitante very much aware of "Mi casa es su casa."

I was so proud of being a Californio and particularly a Montereyan as I saw what seemed to be Jo Mora sculptures come to life and join me along with the many thousands of fiesta-goers, in this our beloved pueblecito's Bicentennial.

Viva Nuestro pueblecito!