

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 17, 1970

### **Mexico Day Fiesta**

The dates that I am going to write about today are 1822-1848. This is the Mexican Period, which was a very important era in our Monterey history.

The development of the beautiful fiesta that took place at the Custom House Plaza celebrating "Mexico Day" involved such cooperation to relate the many unbelievable little problems that almost prevented the fiesta from taking place.

However, these are not even to be mentioned because of the determination of such capable and sincere committee members of the "Mexico Day" Bicentennial of Monterey. Nothing was going to step in their way to make this fiesta one of the most beautiful and exciting, and causing such international pride that it will go down in history.

If Monterey was a sleepy little Mexican village in 1822 it certainly was not so with all of the fiesta spirit that made the stark white plaza radiate with little girls dressed in their red and green and white skirts and blouses so brilliant that even the flowers in their pretty hair refused to wilt. The plaza walls were very much alive, especially with little people.

The spirit of friendship that was brought by La Estudiantina de San Luis Potosi was equal to that spirit that our own Fray Junipero Serra brought to Monterey when he came from the Sierra Gorda. San Luis Potosi in Mexico should be our sister city, because Serra was there before he was assigned to the Alta California mission frontier. The Sierra Gorda Mountains are situated in the southern part of the State of San Luis Potosi and in the northern part of the States of Guanajuato and Queretaro. La Estudiantina sang their own "Himno a la Patria;" they stood so proud, as did we, as they sang. This was followed by our "Star Spangled Banner" and a California selection and "La Marcha Zacatecas." In this group from San Luis Potosi were young men who are the illustrious sons of the great Mayas, Zacatequen and Aztec Indians of Mexico.

On behalf of Monterey, muchas, muchas gracias.

Come to Monterey often for you have, indeed, captured her heart again.