

*Huxford
Begins*

The people of America are not lucky enough to have the Diary of Leif Erickson, nor any of his Norsemen, to tell forever the story of the first landing of White Men on the North American continent.

Those of the Little Santa Clara Valley are more fortunat, for down to today there exist the day by day Diaries of Father Crespi, the Franciscan, and Costanso, Lieutenant of Gaspar de Portola, to tell of the Valley and its inhabitants as they saw it, ~~xxx~~ on August the 8th 1769. (~~And, after all,~~ a Diary written at the time and at the place is legal evidence even Court of Law). The following excerpts are from Bolton's ^{edition} transcription of the Crespi and Costanso Diaries.

From the Diary of Father Crespi, is taken the following story of August the eighth and ninth, 1769.

Tuesday, August 8. About half past six in the morning we left the place and traveled thru the same valley, approaching the mountains. Following their course about half a league, we ascended by a sharp ridge to a high pass, the ascent and descent of which was painful, the descent being made on foot because of the steepness. Once down we entered a small valley (Over Fernando Pass to Newhall) in which there was a village of heathen who had already sent messengers to us at the valley of Santa Cataline de Bononia to guide us and show us the best road and pass through the mountains. These poor Indians had many provisions ready to receive us. Seeing that it was our intention to go on in order not to lose the march, they urgently insisted that we should go to their village, which was some distance off the road; and we were obliged to consent in order not to displease them. We enjoyed their good will and their presents, which consisted of some baskets of pinole, made of sage and other kinds of grasses, and at the side of these baskets they had others for us to drink from. They gave us also ~~us~~ and acorns, and were presented with

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beads in return. They furnished some other guides to accompany us; and we went on by the same valley, arriving late at the watering place, after a march of about four leagues.

The country from the village to the watering place is delightful and beautiful in the plain, altho the mountains that surround it are bare and rough. In the plain we saw many tall and thick cottonwoods and oaks; the watering place consists of an arroyo with a great deal of water which runs in a moderately wide valley, well grown with willows and cottonwood. We stopped on the bank of the arroyo, where we found a populous village in which the people lived without any cover, for they had no more than a light shelter fenced in like a corral. (Santa Clara River near Castac, Los Angeles, County.) For this reason the soldiers called it Rancheria del Corral, and I called it Santa Rosa de Viterbo, that this saint might be protector for the conversion of these Indians. As soon as we arrived they gave us many baskets of different kinds of seeds, and a sort of sweet preserve like little raisins, and another resembling honeycomb, very sweet and purging, and made of the dew which sticks to the reed grass. It is a very suitable place for a Mission, with much good land, many palisades, two very large arroyos of water, and five large villages close together.

Wednesday, August 9. This was a day of rest, in order to give an opportunity to the explorers to go and explore along the beach, for we had this high mountain range in sight, and we understood from the heathen that this is not the only one, but that in the direction that we are traveling there are four others, more rugged, and afterwards a large river which they say we cannot ford, and which runs to the sea; and that when we reach it we will have to turn back. All this day we had visits from these good Indians, who brought us their present of pinole, nuts, and preserves. They begged us to remain with them, and I told them that we would return, with which they were delighted. One of the heathen who

visited us here recognized Father Gomes and gave him an embrace, telling him by signs that he was a Coastal Indian, and that he had already seen him on the bark from the shore; he also recognized Senor Fages and Senor Constanzo. This day we observed the latitude, and it was thirty four degrees and 47 minutes.

The explorers came back in the afternoon with the report that the good road still continued through the valley, and that it was quite possible to go by way of the beach. This charming valley which begins after descending from the pass, I named Santa Clara. We found here a populous village, and the heathen wished to detain us, for they had prepared refreshments for us. We perceived that they were having a wedding, and they showed us the bride, who was the most dressed up among the them all in the way she was painted and with her strings of beads. From here on the women begin to wear more decent clothing, for in the place aprons they wear deerskins from the waist down, which serve as skirts, and little capes of rabbit skin to cover the rest of the body. "

From the Diary of Costano, the Engineer, ^{following} are the entries of the same date.

Tuesday, August 8. We entered the mountain range, the road having already been marked out by the pioneers who had been sent ahead very early in the morning. Part of the way we traveled through a narrow canyon, and part over very high hills of barren soil, the ascent and descent of which were exceedingly difficult for the animals. We descended afterwards to a little valley where there was an Indian Village the inhabitants had sent us messengers to the Valle de Santa Catalina, and guides to show us the best trail and pass throu the range. These poor fellows had prepared refreshments for our reception, and as they saw that it was our intention to move on so as not to interrupt the day's march, they made the most earnest entreaties to induce us to visit their

village, which was off the road. We had to comply with their requests so as not to disappoint them. We enjoyed their hospitality and bounty, which consisted of seeds, acorns, and nuts. Furthermore, they furnished us guides to take us to the watering-place about which they gave us information. We reached it quite late. The day's march was four leagues.

The country from the village to the watering-place is pleasing and picturesque on the plain, altho the surrounding mountains are bare and rugged. On the plain we saw many groves of poplars and white oaks, which were very tall and large. The watering-place consisted of a stream, containing much water, that flowed in a moderately wide canyon where there were many willows and poplars. Near the place in which we camped was a populous Indian village; the inhabitants lived without other protection than a light shelter of branches in the form of an inclosure; for this reason the soldiers gave to the whole place the name of the *Journal Station*
Rancheria del Corral.

(To the Rancheria del Corral, 4 leagues. From San Diego, 58 leagues).

Wednesday, August 9. Before our eyes extended vast mountain chains which we had necessarily to enter if we wished to continue our course to the north or northwest, as these were the directions most advantageous and most convenient for our journey. We feared that the more we penetrated into the country the greater the difficulties might be, and that we might be led very far from the coast. It was decided, therefore, to follow the canyon in which we had camped, and the vourse of the stream if possible, as far as the sea. To this purpose the scouts, who had been sent out early in the morning, had orders to proceed as far as they could, and to find out if there were any obstacles on the road. For this reason the people and animals rested today.

A multitude of Indians came to the camp with presents of seeds, acorns, and honeycombe formed on frames of cane. They were a very good-natured and affectionate people. They expressed themselves admirably by signs, and understood all that we said to them in the same manner. Thus they gave us to understand that the road inland was very mountainous and rough, while that along the coast was level and easy of access; that if we went thru the interior of the country we would have to pass over five mountain ranges, and as many valleys, and that on descending the last range we would have to cross a full and rapid river that flowed between steep banks.

During the night the scouts returned and reported that the land which led to the coast was level and contained plenty of water and pasture; they had not been able to see the ocean, altho they had travelled for about six leagues following the course of the canyon.

Portola, the Commandante, the military man, with his mind on other matters, much more briefly tells history of the entry to the Valley of the Little Santa Clara.

August 8th. We proceeded for 6 hours over one of the highest and steepest mountains and halted in a gully where there was much water and pasture. (Some natives appeared and begged us to go to their villages which was near; there we found 8 villages together which must have numbered more than 300 inhabitants --- with a great ^{supply} grain. We rested for one day where there was a village of about 50 natives. //

For the benefit of those not acquainted with early California History, it may be wise to remind them that in 1769, or thereabouts, the California Coast happened to be attracting international attention.

Russia had commenced the establishment of trading posts for the rich fur trade starting in Alaska and gradually infiltrating down the Coast as far as Ft. Ross. England also had some claims based on ^{to Lemton} Drake's voyages searching for a northwest passage. Spain was already

in possession of all Mexico, and had long held lower California through the establishment of Jesuit Missions. Spains colonial policy made necessary an immediate settlement ⁱⁿ ~~of parts of~~ California, if Spain's ^{generally} claims to California were to be recognized. Experience had proved to Spain the economy and success of allowing colonization to be carried on through the medium of the Catholic religious societies, ^{By remaining them to} ~~who had developed a successful policy of~~ establishing Missions, for the propagation of the Faith, in heathen lands and gradually subjugating the areas around the Mission by proselytizing. The Jesuit order happened to be unpopular with Spanish government at this date, and the work was therefore turned over to the Franciscan Order, to be carried out by missionaries and teachers from the Franciscan College of San Fernando at Mexico City. ^{this} The plan was ~~completely~~ carried out under the leadership of the first appointee, Father Junipero Serra. ^{Calif San Francisco President's}

Father Serra had come overland from Mexico City, and established headquarters at San Diego Bay which was chosen ^{had been} as the site for the most southern of the prospective Missions. Since 1594, Spanish Maps had shown the Bay of Monterey, discovered on one of the voyages of Vizcaino, and from its description and location it had been selected to be the site of the most northern Mission, the plan being to establish future Missions, at about a days march apart, each Mission being a link in what was to be a unbroken chain of Spanish influence running upon the Coastal line.

To find the Bay of Monterey, Fr. Serra had first sent his ships. The Ships went as far north, possibly, as Drake's Bay, but failed to recognize the Bay of Monterey. Father Serra then determined to send an overland party, under command of his military Commander, ^{the} then Governor of California, Gaspar de Portola. This party went down in History as the Sacred Expedition.

(This Sacred Expedition also failed to recognize the Bay of

Monterey but did find the Golden Gate - The Bay of Monterey later being found by a second overland expedition under Portola's leadership).

The entire proposition was simply one of adding Upper California to the territory under the Spanish Flag in the cheapest possible manner. Nothing could be cheaper than allowing a handful of Franciscan Friars, with a Corporals Guard of Spanish Soldiers, to subdue a tremendous territory by peacefully establishing a Chain of Missions. Had the Friars been wiped out by hostile Indians, a thing that frequently happened, the Spanish Crown suffered no loss. If the Friars were successful, they would cheat the clutching claws of the Russian Bear, already reaching down from the North to acquire more territory. This digression merely hits the high spots in explaining why the Sacred Expedition, or any one else, for that matter, happened to come into the Little Santa Clara Valley at that particular date.

interesting a being in the first group
As the first group of white men to enter the Valley of the Little Santa Clara, were such men as Rivera, Commandante of California from 1773 to 1777, Pages later to be not only commandante of California, but Governor, in 1782, Ortega, discoverer of the Golden Gate, founder of the Presidio of Santa Barbara, while the men in the ranks included, Pedro Amador, Alvarado, Jose Raimundo Carrillo, Yorba de Cota, Oliveras, Soveranes, who later gave their names to many of the Counties and most of the prominent Californian families. Father Crespi, was the Padre attached to the expedition. (It was a custom ^{was Required} of Franciscan, of Jesuit Fathers proselyting new countries, to keep a daily Diary) Today those Diaries are of major importance for historical source material.

The naked Indians must have been highly startled to see the Expedition climbing down the Indian Trail from the South, especially if mules and horses were along, for those animals were not native to the Valley. Neither was clothing, altho the tribes down near Ventura wore garments of skins, but the Spaniards wore a sleeveless jacket made of

several thicknesses of skins, which would turn arrows shot from a distance, and a divided leather apron fastened to the saddle, covered the legs, practically a chaparejo, or chaps of today. (The Friars wore cowled robes of coarse grey or brown material. The Officers probably ran somewhat to colors.) The accompanying Indians were dressed as usual i.e., undressed) In event of trouble, the soldiers ^{were armed} ~~carried bull~~ ^{with} ~~hide shields on the left arm.~~ They had ~~for weapons,~~ lances, swords, and a small carbine. ^{and carried bull hide shields on left arm}

Ortega's Scouts went in advance, picking out camping places with water and feed. Theirs was peaceful work, as the party was already seven weeks out of San Diego., (The record shows actual travel of only about three hours a day, covering about three leagues (approximately 2.6 miles to a league) (resting one day in four), and normally they were proceeding on invitation and with guides from the tribal areas ahead, who had probably heard of the trade beads to be gotten by the superfluous food. ^{see paper copy}

On the night of August 7th., 1769, the Sacred Expedition camped about at Tunnel Station, on the San Fernando Valley side of the Mountains, and on August 8th., climbed down the old Indian Trail, just about where Highway 99 cuts the crest of the mountains. At the hospitable request of Indians from the old village (about at the Devendorf ranche,) the Expedition swung off the road to visit.

The Diary shows that Fr. Crespi named the Valley August 9th., 1769, for Santa Clara, the founder of l'Ordre de Sainte-Claire, or Les Clarisses, in 1212 A. D., the Lady in question being described as a fashionable, frivolous girl, who, when but 17, was so affected by the preaching of St. Francis, that she became a nun, at the convent of Porciuncula. Her day was August the 12th.

The Expedition was camped by the Indian Village of Chaguayabit, and rested there August 9th., starting down the Little

Santa Clara river banks towards the Ocean August the 10th.

The Dark age

For the next few years, the Valley saw few white men, and its primitive life remained unchanged. Father Francisco Garces did come through here on his exploration of the Mojave Desert in April, of 1776, and rested ten days. His Diary read as follows (Cone's (Trail of a Spanish Pioneer")

April 13th. I passed over a Sierra that comes off the Sierra Nevada and runs to the west-northwest, and entered into the Valle de Santa Clara, having gone two leagues on a north course, in the afternoon having gone a league and a half northwest, arrived at the Cienega de Santa Clara (Chaguayabit). One of the Janajabs having taken sick, I tarried in this place until the twenty third day; during which I visited various rancherias that there are in these Sierras, as also the caxones and arroyos, with much water and abundant grass, and from whose inhabitants I experienced particular meekness and affability. I baptized one infirm old man, the Father of the Chief of the Rancherias, having instructed him by means of Sevastian, tho with difficulty. There came other Indians from the north northeast, who promise to conduct me to their land, as also they did, with five more Jamajabs who arrived these days to trade.

April 23. (1776) I departed west, and at a little distance took a course north, ob which I surmounted the great sierra; and halted at a cienega that is on the descent having travelled thus far, nine leagues".

So far, the Franciscans had established Missions at San Diego, 1770 San Carlos (Monterey), San Luis Obispo, San Antonio, San Juan Capistrano, and Santa Bueno Ventura (1782), and San Gabriel. 1771

The jump from San Gabriel to Santa Buena Ventura was 75 miles, altogether too long for a one day march. Not only that, in the Valley named by Fr Crespi, Valle de Santa Catalina, but later to be

known as the Encino (Oak) Valley, there were large numbers of Indian Villages that could not possibly be converted and afterwards administered, from these two Missions. Father Serra ~~had~~ died at San Carlos Mission in 1784, and his Associate, Father Lasuen had succeeded him as Presidente of the California Missions. Lasuen took up the torch of Serra, and, as fast as California politics, as interpreted by the California Civil Governors would permit, undertook the work of filling in the gaps in the Chain of Missions.

In 1795, an Expedition explored the Valley north of San Gabriel for a Mission site, to which was attached Fr. Vicente de Santa Maria. From Fr. Engelhardt's "San Fernando Rey" is taken the following excerpts of Fr. Santa Maris's Report, sent from Mission Santa Buena Ventura. ^{Sept 3 1795}

"My most Venerable and Esteemed Fr. Presidents: In compliance with the resolution of the governor that an examination be made with the greatest exactitude and in a thoroughly satisfactory manner, in order to find the best place between this Mission and that of San Gabriel, so that we may proceed with assurance in case the founding of another mission between this and that be conceded; and since his Honor wishes that a Missionary make the survey, and your Reverence has entrusted this charge to me, I shall have to execute it perfectly.

I have to report that on August 16th, at twelve o'clock at noon, I set out from this Mission accompanied by Ensign Don Pablo Cota, Sergeant Don Jose Maria Ortega, and four soldiers

On the nineteenth we left Calabazas at half past six in the morning, going on the camino real as far as Encino Valley, from where we took the direction towards the east northwest. We went to explore the place where the alcalde of the pueblo (Los Angeles), Francisco Reyes has his rancho. It lies in front of Encino

~~and~~ it is distant from the Camino Real about two leagues

We found the place quite suitable for a mission, because it has much water, much humid land, and also limestone ; Stone for the foundations of buildings is nearby. There is pine timber in the direction of west northwest of said locality, not very far away; also pastures are to be found and patches very suitable for cattle; but there is lack of firewood To this locality belong, and they acknowledge it, the gentiles of other rancherias who have not affiliated with Mission San Gabriel

On the twenty fifth, we set out after a league and a half we found ourselves at a pass which was very rough, so that, in order to ascend and descend it we had to alight. At a little distance from the descent we encountered a little ditch of water where we stopped at six in the evening.

On the twenty sixth we set out from there at six in the morning and at eight we reached said place and came to a rancheria contiguous to a zanja of very copious water at the foot of We followed this ditch to its beginning, which was about a league distant; and from here it is where the Rio de Santa Clara takes origin.

This zanja is very easy of access, so that with its water some land can be irrigated; but in said district we found no place suitable for establishing a mission. It is six leagues distant from the Camino Real to the north and it has the additional drawback of the pass through the sierra."

The first description of course is the site of Mission San Fernando, the second description is of the Little Santa Clara Valley Headwater, which then, if ever, needed just one good modern Realtor to talk his way past the roughness of the mountain road, and assure the good Padre of many wide boulevards for the future. As might be

expected, without that aid, the San Fernando Valley, yet to be, won its first competitive struggles with the headwater area of the Little Santa Clara.

San Fernando Mission was built in 1797.

The mountain range, to which Fr. Santa Maria objected, remained in place with one major result, i.e. that the large gentile (unconverted) Indian population about the Chaguayabit and the head water area were practical all beyond the influence of the Mission San Fernando, and were still forty miles distant from Mission Santa Buena Ventura, which meant that its local use was small.

But another factor had to be considered.

Under the Spanish colonization system, the Missions supported the Presidios, or ~~Forts~~, where the military was maintained. The Santa Barbara Presidio depended in part upon the contributions of grain, hides, soap, tallow, etc. from San Fernando Mission. Also it was more than a days trip from San Fernando Mission to Mission Santa Buena Ventura. Also in the Mission San Fernando Grant were included the ranches of San Francisco Javier, or Chaguayabit, and Camulos, both of which were on the same side of the Range as Santa Barbara, with an easily travelled road running down the Canada de Santa Clara, and with ranches productive both for wheat and for cattle. They were, however, too far removed from the Mission for efficient operation, and it was probably a mixture of the preceding reasons, that inspired Father Dumetz, of San Fernando Mission, to build the first building in the Little Santa Clara Valley headwater area in 1804.

This was an adobe structure (about 105 feet by 17 feet) for granary, dormitory and guest house use. The site was completely lost for a half a century, and was finally re-discovered and identified in 1935 by R. F. Van Valkenburg and the writer, who naturally found it

contributed to the
18

while hunting for something entirely different.

Archaeological excavation under Arthur Woodward, of the L. A. County Museum, showed a probable division into fire apartments, the living quarters being tiled floored and roofed, walls built of typical Mission adobe brick, white washed on the interior. The east end of the building was evidently the granary, and did not have a tiled floor.

About 60 feet to the south of the structure, is another wall line, probably the ramada wall, in the southeast corner of which was a kiln where the tile was probably baked, and adjoining which was another adobe store room.

A plan of reconstruction, similar to that at Riverside, was shattered in 1936 when treasure hunters, the curse of all old Missions, dug the tile floor out and practically wrecked the structure in a futile effort to find the treasure the archaeologists had located under the tiled floors - evidently figuring that, as the diggers invariably stopped excavating when the tile floor was encountered, and always spread dirt over the tiles to discourage anyone from stealing them before leaving, there must have been Mission gold hidden at the spot.

The fallacy of this belief is quickly shown when it is realized that all California Indians were stone aged people, without use, possession or knowledge of metal, that the first gold discoveries were in 1842, and that the Mission had been secularized in 1834, eight years before that date.

The site of the building was on the projecting mesa, just across the creek easterly from Castaic Junction, a high elbow of ground, commanding an impressive panorama.

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An occasional Spaniard undoubtedly came through the Valley, but, taken as a whole, the picture was not greatly changed.

Now it was different. Right at the site of Chaguayabit, the Padres had established their local Asistencia, to the Indians, a workshop.

As a matter of fact, even the Indian villages began to lose their original tribal associations and replace them with their Mission affiliations. Now the Villages in Placeritos and on the east side of the Valley and in the Canyone were known as Venturenos.

Chaguayabit itself however as Ventureno.

The medicine men could not face the Padres, and it was probably then that the older men of the tribe sorrowfully bundled up their ceremonial regalia and packed it high into the precipitous cliffs of San Martinex Chiquito Canyon, in sight of the Asistencia, and piled the regalia into the storage cave, where the Pyle boys found it in 1884, sold the contents to a man named Bowers, then a Ventura editor, who in turn sold it to Peabody Museum, where it is today.

It must have been difficult for logical Indians to follow the teachings of Franciscan Fathers, when the Spanish soldiers, the only other white people they came in contact with, seemed to enthusiastically do everything the Padres said was wrong. It would have been just as hard to understand why the Mission and the lands which the Padres kept saying belonged to the Indians, and for which the Padres were only Trustees, were only a source of work without recompense to the owners - if they were owners.

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