

ANOTHER GUIDE POST ON GREAT HIGHWAY

Blessing of Mission Bell and Ceremonies of Dedication.

Santa Cruz Sentinel (May 31, 1910)

An immense concourse of people had gathered to witness the dedication and blessing of the Mission bell at the guide-post placed at the point of Park Three, where Soquel Av. and Water street meet on the Camino Real, the Old King's Highway which the Mission Fathers had established, the Fathers of the Order of Saint Francis.

The history of this little park, which of yet has no name – is, in brief, that the ladies of the Improvement Society purchased this waste place, which threatened to become an eye-sore, from the holders, and presented it to the city, donating one hundred dollars, latterly, with which the Chamber of Commerce improved and beautified it. Then the ladies of the Saturday Afternoon Club's History and Landmark Department, under the chairmanship of Miss Gertrude M. Marsh, decided that to them should belong the honor of placing at this point of El Camino Real a Mission bell, the bell of Holy Cross, as Father George, Franciscan of Watsonville College, christened it on Monday afternoon. People had come from near and far; many strangers are already here for the summer, and our own people too, had come, in autos, carriages, buggies, on foot from the neighborhood, and in the street cars from the beach, for Manager General Coleman of the Union Traction Co., had installed a twelve minute service for the entire afternoon.

The dedication of the bell, the presenting of it to the city, had drawn people of all creeds and professions, prominent people from all over town. The officers of the Afternoon Club were in autos, together with the speakers, Mrs. Vice-President Swanton acting for the president, Mrs. Emma L. Fitch as mistress of ceremonies, Miss Marsh as chairman of the History and Landmark Department and Mrs. Finkeldy representing the Native Daughters of the Golden West. Father George, His Honor Mayor Drullard and Honorable W.T. Jeter, Ex-Lieutenant Governor of California, also occupied the auto, while Hon. H.A. van C Torchiana, President Chamber of Commerce, Colla McIsaac, Secretary, S.W. Coleman of the Traction Co., many merchants and professional men, were among the witnesses on foot, to this ceremony of the century. Among those looking on with deepest interest was Father Connealy, assistant priest at Holy Cross Church, Brother Justin of the Parochial School, in charge of the altar boys, who waited on Father George during the blessing of the bell, and many prominent Catholics, Patrick Morrissey Sr., W.T. Thompson, J.D. Tait, John Mellot and others.

Mrs. Fitch opened the ceremonies by an address of which our scant space will permit us to copy but these few lines:

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends of the Saturday Afternoon Club of Santa Cruz – I count it a privilege to stand before you today representing my club in the presentation of a Mission Bell Guide post, a memorial of California's early history, and I trust an incentive to all of us to learn more of those days when the Padres traveled up and down our wonderful land, carrying the cross of our master, suffering, working, that our inheritance might come to us worthily"

Miss Finkeldey was then introduced and spoke on civics, without notes, and making suggestions as well as appeals, pointing with enthusiasm to our mountain and the sea, and calling on all patriots to see that our grand heritage, the Laveaga Park, be opened and made beautiful, that waste, outlying lots be planted to copo d'oro, the golden poppy of our state, that the Big Basin, the Big Trees of Felton be made secure as assets to our glorious state, and that in Santa Cruz streets and lots be made presentable and beautiful.

Mrs. Fitch next, in her gracious manner presented Father George, whose presence, she said, was an honor and a privilege, and the Father gave a brief but thorough and very interesting history of the founding of the different Mission(s) and ours in particular. At the close of his discourse he went through the impressive though simple ceremony of blessing the bell, while men stood with their heads uncovered. Then the children of Bay View School, Miss Newman teacher, sang "Mission Bells", after which Miss Marsh with a few appropriate words presented the bell to the city of Santa Cruz, through His Honor the Mayor. Mayor Drullard responded with great tact and a thorough comprehension of the importance of this occasion, accepting the bell for the city.

When Mr. Jeter was called upon the situation grew less solemn, and it is likely that many of his hearers had not before known him to be so close a Bible student, but he said the institution and study of landmarks began at the time when Moses was the only and the whole legislature, proving by one of the commandments that landmarks had existed then. He said, in effect, that landmarks were the beginning of civilization, and he spoke of great landmarks, such as Pike's Peak and Loma Prieta, as compared to landmarks built by the hand of man.

When cheering had stopped, Mrs. Fitch announced the last number on the program, after she had made a little speech of thanks and acknowledgement to the Improvement Society, to the Chamber of Commerce, to S.W. Coleman, and to C.A. Wood for the concert vase presented to the Park. The C. of C., through Mr. McIsaac, had presented the palm planted in the vase.

The male quartet, singing "Glory, Glory, Glory"! brought this historical ceremony to a conclusion, our best singers lending their services for this event, Mr. Twist, Mr. Murray, Mr. Herman, and Mr. Mellor.