

NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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Ghosts And Gold In Old Monterey

(Continued from the December issue)



The Carmel Mission about 1881.
—Photo courtesy of Harry Downie

In the previous installment, the reader was left hanging to a tale (pun intended) of nightmares, witches and "things that go 'bump' in the night." We were re-telling stories told by Cristiano Machado, sexton of the Carmel mission when it stood almost deserted and roofless in the early 1880's.

There is no reason to disbelieve the caretaker. If he said that he saw ghostly lights flickering in the ruined adobes outside the church, he probably did see them. His mistake was one of interpretation. Vagrants certainly sheltered there from time to time, and the glow may have come from their cautious little fires. But other and darker deeds may have occurred, too, within those crumbling old walls.

One day in 1931 or 1932, Harry Dowrie, the famed authority on the missions and their expert restorer, who had engaged laborers to excavate some of the tumble-down rooms, was brought hurrying to the scene by the men. There below him, in what he surmises was once the old mission wine-cellar, lay a skeleton, its bones badly disarranged by the shovels of the workmen. This was no pagan nor Christian burial. The graveyard was in another area, and the bones lay in a rubble of old mission floor tiles, animal bones and nineteenth century debris. It may well have meant that murder had been done above, the body thrown down into the dank cellar and the earth deliberately caved in upon it many years before. Who was the victim? Who was the killer? No one knew then, and no one knows now.

On another occasion, probably in the 1880's when it was still the custom to bury the faithful ex-mission Indians within the walls of the church, the sexton was digging a grave near the main door when he came upon a long-previous interment. This in itself was not an unusual event, but what did shock him was that the grave was not in line with the walls and with its head toward the altar, but cross-ways, where anyone entering would step on it,—and still clinging to the mouldering coffin were vestiges of the rawhide ropes that had bound it around and around as though to hold the occupant firmly until Judgment Day.

According to the late Carmel Martin, who told me this tale and whose home at that time was the present Mission Ranch Club, Machado assured him that he hastily filled in the hole and dug elsewhere. "No good Christian would have been buried like that!"

A further experience of Cristiano Machado's suggests pranksters. One midnight, he said, he saw a man, clad all in white and mounted on a ghostly white horse whose forehead glowed with a light not of this world, ride slowly down toward him from the ruined adobes where the Indian neophytes had lived long ago. Machado stayed not to inquire into the stranger's business, but courteously and rapidly withdrew within-doors and shot the bolt.

The next morning, when the full sun gave better light for further investigation, the sexton is said to have "discovered a deep hole among the ruins, from which the mysterious rider had undoubtedly retrieved buried treasure." (*1)

Tales of treasure hidden on the Monterey Peninsula are as plentiful as authentic stories of the supernatural are scanty. Some are positively true, others are mere pipe dreams. Between the two extremes lies the "Lost Mine of the Padres."



Isabel Meadows, a picture taken about 1880, from the Anne Fisher Collection.

—Courtesy, Monterey Public Library

The directions for finding the Lost Mine are simple, brief and vague: "Climb to a point on the Ventanas from where you can see the door of the Carmel mission, then go twelve miles due west."

There may be other treasures in the heart of the Santa Lucias as well. Isabel Meadows, the last native speaker of the Rumsen dialect of the Indians who formerly populated the Carmel Valley and who died in 1940 at the age of 94, used to say that "back there" was a cave where quills full of gold dust lay in rows on rocky ledges awaiting the need of the mission fathers. And there were golden candlesticks hidden, at the padre's order, between the roots of a great tree. But the trees have been chopped down, the Indians who kept the secret have died, and now no one knows in which canyon the tree grew tall over the golden horde.

Isabel Meadows' gold-filled quills may truly still wait on their dust-covered ledges; gold has been mined off and on in the Los Burros area southwest of Mission San Antonio since 1876 and in the gravels near Jolon even earlier. On April 28, 1939, a silver claim was filed in Salinas by R. L. Lane and his son Marvin. While prospecting on Bear Creek, three miles southeast of Santa Lucia Peak, they found an old drift, laid bare by a forest fire that had stripped off its blanket of dense chaparral. In the drift they found good indications of silver, traces of gold, a caved-in tunnel, and an old wheel-barrow.

But despite all these encouraging leads, the Padres' Mine probably never existed, although Indians may have occasionally brought in a chance nugget. San Carlos, Soledad and San Antonio, the missions nearest the mountains, faithfully submitted year after year complete reports to the authorities. None mentions the discovery of precious metal or the working of a mine. The silver vessels and other objects used in the religious ceremonies were brought to California by the missionaries or shipped to them, and the surviving ones show the hallmarks of Mexican silversmiths. There never were any golden candlesticks, and at the Carmel mission today is every piece of antique silver service that ever figured in a mission inventory since Padre Fray Junipero Serra's landing at Monterey in 1770. That the collection is complete is attested by Harry Downie,

who only three months ago obtained its last item, the censer, from San Antonio mission after it had been lost for 40 years.

(To be continued)

The President's Report For 1965

At the interesting and convivial general meeting held in the Casa Serrano on January 10th, besides the featured talk by Mr. Charles S. Pope, A.I.A., Superintending Architect of Historic Structures for the National Park Service, on **Recording California's Notable Buildings**, Association President Robert Stanton gave his report on our activities for 1965.

After particularly thanking Mrs. Frank LaCauza for her outstanding work as secretary, Mr. Stanton commented on the work of each committee, beginning with that headed by Edwin Bliss. This group has obtained a clarification of the terms of the will of Mary Jacks Thomas as they apply to Monterey, and since "it was her intention that the money should be devoted to one single project, namely, a park, a recreation center or a public building, although the building itself might be located in a park . . . and be used for multiple purposes, she did not wish the money to be used for several parks, . . . or buildings." The directors and the city officials are now investigating a worthwhile project on which to carry out the donor's intention.

Mr. Roudi Partridge, Mr. Bliss and Mr. Ehrman have also been responsible for reaching an agreement with Mrs. Helen Haber, (who loaned us \$15,000 in 1959 for the purchase of the Casa Serrano and to whom we have paid interest at the rate of \$75 per month) that the loan be transferred to an annuity of \$75 per month during her lifetime. This was Mrs. Haber's original intention upon loaning the money, but a formal agreement was not previously signed.

The several projects sponsored by the Monterey History and Art Association proved very successful. The Adobe House Tour committee headed by Mrs. Jane G. Campbell reported a net income of \$3,044; Mr. George Leutzinger and his Merienda Committee netted \$1,078 after a gala affair which was attended by Governor and Mrs. Pat Brown and a host of other dignitaries. The governor presented the Laura Bride Powers Award to Mayo Hayes O'Donnell, Col. Allen Griffin and Myron Oliver in recognition of their outstanding service to the association and to Monterey. (Later on in the year, our beloved Mayo also was honored with a commendatory resolution by the California State Senate, presented by Senator Fred Farr)

In connection with the Merienda, Mr. Stanton mentioned a growing problem. Memory Garden seats 500 in a squeeze, and our membership is over 900, all eligible for the privilege of attending the fiesta. In order to make it possible for more to enjoy the Merienda, and looking forward to the celebrations that will usher in California's 200th anniversary years in 1969 and 1970, he has been conferring with the Urban Renewal chairman and architect on a plan to make use of some of the area to the north of the Pacific Building.

Speaking of the Custom House plaza, Mr. Stanton had words of high praise for the work of Adm. C. Tod Singleton on the presentation of the Sloat Landing commemorative exercises last Fourth of July. "It was truly a professional job", was the president's comment.

As for the Island of Adobes Plan, so desired by the association, Mr. Stanton said that as a member of the Mayor's Committee on this matter he had attended the meetings and that because of new traffic patterns, some modification of Mr. Gordon Hall's original plan may be necessary. The firm of Whisler and Patri had been hired by some of the landholders to work out suggestions.

The Carmel Martin Memorial Scholarship Fund has collected \$972 but its committee chairman, Eben Whittlesey, hopes that more people will contribute. The fund will benefit students at Monterey Peninsula Junior College.

The Allen Knight Maritime Museum project is moving forward. Mayor Minnie Coyle and Adm. Earl Stone's committees are working on land acquisition. A great many people have accepted membership on the numerous sub-committees and the future looks bright.

Professor Frank LaCauza has been remembered with a small fountain in the blooming garden on the sunny south side of the Casa Serrano and by the growing collection of books on California on the Frank LaCauza Bookshelf. There has been a suggestion that a small library be attached to the clubhouse, but this will be the responsibility of 1966.

After pointing out the beautiful antique Georgian tea-service purchased at the directors' request by Mrs. Stanton and him in the Silver Vaults in London last year, and thanking all members, committee workers and donors of gifts, Mr. Stanton ended the business meeting on a very cheerful note by calling on Mr. Heckenlaible, our treasurer, to announce our financial standing: \$11,476.17 to the good.

A Special Christmas Present

The Monterey History and Art Association and the cultural heritage of the Monterey Peninsula have been enriched in the last few months by a valuable gift from Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin E. Kinney of Carmel: a painting valued at \$3,000.

As an example of medieval Spanish art, it has no rival outside the great museums of San Francisco and Los Angeles. It is a tempera painting on wood, 48 by 35 inches, with raised Gothic ornament and punch-work design on the flat gilded surfaces. Painted about 1425, it obviously once formed part of a much larger altar piece. Indeed, Dr. Chandle R. Post of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, identifies the painting in his authoritative **History of Spanish Painting** (Volumes IV and V) as the left lateral pinnacle of a now widely scattered Catalan or Aragonese reredos. Other portions are in art collections in Barcelona, Paris and England.

The scene depicts Joachim and Anna being expelled from the temple by the high priest. In the background, a person passes by with a hooded falcon, while in niches to the right and left kneel two people, probably those who originally commissioned this part of the altar piece for their parish church. According to Mr. Augustus Pollack, a recognized expert in these matters and a member of our Art Committee, the panel is in excellent condition and a most valuable acquisition.

Mr. and Mrs. Kinney's generosity has added another art treasure to our growing collection, which awaits the day when the Monterey Peninsula will, as it must, build a museum of art which will not only display the choice works of the artists who have contributed so much to the fame of our area, but fine examples of the painting and art objects of the world.

It is all the more important that a gift such as the Kinney's should have a proper setting. It has close ties with our area for, strange as it may seem, it may once have delighted the eyes of those valiant Catalans who founded Monterey: Padres Serra, Crespi, Palou, Font, etc, Gaspar de Portolá, and the Catalan Volunteers who escorted the missionaries, and Pedro Fages, California's first governor.

Donald M. Craig

COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

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Gordon Hall
Myron Oliver

ART:

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Myron Oliver
Augustus Pollack
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(to select her own committee)

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Robert Stanton

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Mrs. A. Elkinton
Mrs. Mayo H. O'Donnell

ALLEN KNIGHT MARITIME MUSEUM:

Admiral E. E. Stone, Chm.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES FOR 1966:

ADOBE HOUSE TOUR: April 30

Mrs. George Fletcher, Chm.

MERIENDA: June 4

Edwin Bliss, Chm.

SLOAT LANDING: July 4

Jack Tostevin, Chm.

200TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE:

George Leutzinger, Chm.

Start planning now for the most interesting Adobe House Tour ever planned, April 30, the traditional birthday fiesta of Monterey, the Merienda, on June 4, and the impressive Sloat Landing Celebration at the Custom House Plaza on the Fourth of July.

* * *

The preservation and remodelling of the Capitular Hall Adobe adjoining our clubhouse to the north and the regrading of the city parking lot to our rear were important subjects of discussion at the March meeting of the Board of Directors. It was agreed to allow a low wall and walkway to be built on our property along the north side, part of the cost to be borne by the association since the property rights remain in our name.

Mrs. Charles Bentley, Mrs. David Muir and Mrs. Frank LaCauza have completed a monumental job: an inventory of the possessions of the Monterey History and Art Association, particularly those now on loan to the several local state museums and buildings. As a result, the insurance has been adjusted to cover our valuable art and historic treasures. The committee recommended that a more meticulous system of recording acquisitions, loans, whereabouts and current value be instituted at once because we constantly receive important gifts.

The mystery of how our association came to be known as the "**Monterey Peninsula Art Association**" on the books of the Internal Revenue Service will probably never be solved. Apparently the error occurred at least five years ago and never came to light until the other day. The directors have already written to the Internal Revenue Service explaining the error and re-establishing our correct title. (Curiously, the Treasury Department had it right all along.) No complications have arisen and all is well.

It was also announced at the March Meeting that President Stanton's efforts to have the Monterey state-owned adobes open seven days a week have been successful, thanks to Senator Fred Farr's interest in the matter.

Other items of recent directors' attention concerned the tree-planting program outlined by Emmet McMenamin, the so-far futile search for a used but effective duplicator or ditto machine for easing the work of the secretaries and officers, a decision to paint the still-vacant Fremont Adobe (cost not to exceed \$500 for all labor and materials). We thank Mr. Perkins of the Monterey Paint Store, who has offered us all the paint at its cost to him, for his generosity.

* * *

Gifts

Mrs. Thomas E. McCullough has given us a complete Victorian dollhouse of ornate design. It is fully furnished and ready to be set up in the Children's Room of an appropriate adobe state monument.

Mr. Myron Oliver, whose keen sense of art and historical values has so often benefitted our association, has presented, on behalf of Peter Lemon, a coin dated 1572 found five years ago near Moss Beach where the old bottle with the incised sheet of lead attributed to Sir Francis Drake turned up. The coin is French and has on one side the portrait of Charles IX (1550-1574) and on the other that of his queen, Elizabeth of Austria. The coin does not have the sound of silver but of pewter, and this, together with the date, may make it a piece commemorative of the Massacre of St. Batholomew. However, it is quite possible that it was lost by a voyager long before Padre Fray Junipero Serra rounded Point Pinos in 1770.

**THE EDITORS
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AND ART ASSOCIATION**

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* * *

New Junior Members

Margaret H. Covell, Roderick Johnson, Miss Michelle La Mothe, Christine and Lindsey Fry, Donna, Douglas, Richard R., Janet, Marian, Leslie, Donald, David and Mark Miller, children of Mr. and Mrs. Richard K. Miller.

* * *

We regret to announce the passing of these loyal members and friends: Col. Charles B. Hazeltine, Mr. Paul Bartlett, Dr. Fred X. Fry, Jr., Mrs. Hattie Doud Baker, Mr. Edmund Bolce, and Mr. C. L. Kier.