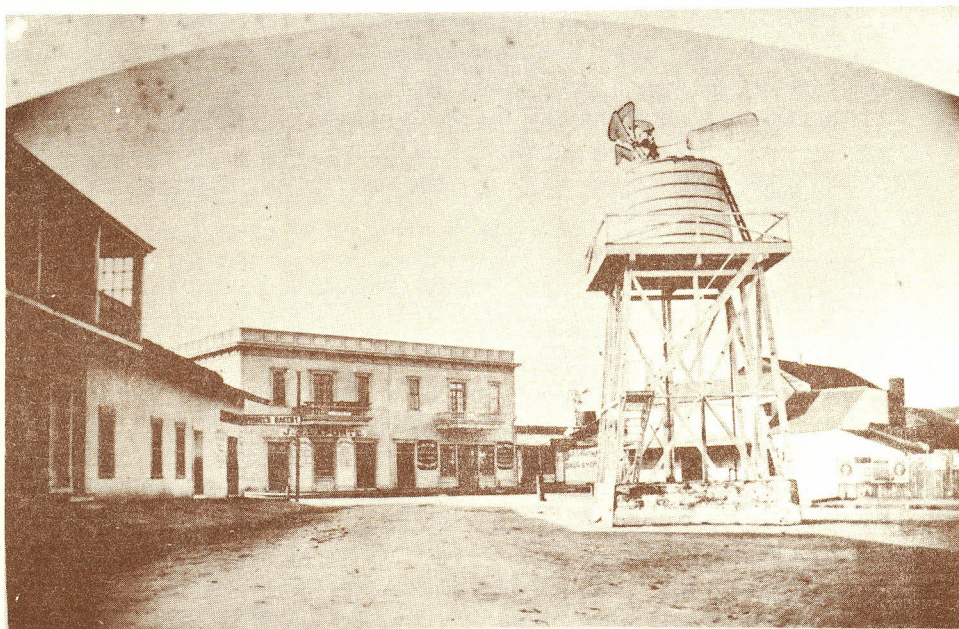


NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

A Quarterly Bulletin of Historic Monterey Issued by
The Monterey History and Art Association

Vol. XI, Number 3

September 1967



The Alvarado-Bola de Oro on the northwest corner of Alvarado and Pearl Streets about 1890. The picture is taken from in front of the building that was Simoneau's restaurant and shows the Molera-Cooper Adobe on the left.

Distinguished Adobes of Monterey "Bola de Oro" or The Alvarado House

A number of articles written during the past thirty years about the old adobes of Monterey have been confusing with regard to which was called the Bola de Oro during its early period. The terms *Casa de Oro* and *Bola de Oro*

have been used indiscriminately when they refer to quite different buildings.

This sketch presents material from various deeds of record which we hope will clarify the proper use of the two terms. The fine large two story Alvarado house on the corner of Alvarado and Pearl was termed Bola de Oro at least as early as 1853. The small two story adobe on Scott Street between the Pacific Building and the First Theatre was given the name Casa de Oro probably in the late 1920's or early 1930's when the first maps of the Path of History route were being prepared. Let us first trace the development of the Alvarado House and the term Bola de Oro.

Among the early prominent families of Monterey was that of old army sergeant Ignacio Vallejo. Closely knit always, the children established their homes in Monterey, the sons becoming prominent leaders in civic affairs and the daughters marrying men of importance. Two of the daughters and one of the sons obtained adjacent building sites. Doña Encarnacion's husband was John Bautista Rogers Cooper, a sea captain who sailed between California, the Sandwich Islands and China. Their home, with a glassed-in balcony and a high, long adobe wall, still stands today facing the Plaza at the south end of Alvarado. Doña Prudenciana Vallejo married the wealthy Spanish Basque Don Jose Amesti and they built their home just slightly to the west of the Coopers' on what is today Polk Street. This Amesti adobe has also survived and is now the headquarters of the Old Capital Club.

One of the Vallejo brothers, Jose de Jesus Vallejo, acquired a building site just to the north of his sisters. When the first records of town lots were being recorded in 1835 it was written that a lot was confirmed to him as of February 1835, "said lot consisting of fifteen varas frontage and as many more in depth". Don Jose de Jesus evidently decided not to retain the lot after the house had been started because it passed (with augmented land) into the hands of his nephew Juan B. Alvarado in the same year of 1835. On March 21, 1835, Manuel Casarin sold to J. B. Alvarado a lot which he had bought from Jose de Jesus Vallejo on which "foundations were being built 29 varas long and 12 wide, with a flowing well, and all fenced". In December of that same year a record was made in the town *solares* book (evidently to clear the title), "that in the possession of the citizen Juan B. Alvarado are some documents which credit him with having purchased from Jose de Jesus Vallejo a lot having a frontage which extends from the house of the citizen Jose Maria Maldonado to the side of the Señor Cooper's house, leaving a street between, by which documents it appears that the property granted him is of forty-six varas frontage by eighty-five varas in depth."

We interpose here a short note about the Maldonado house immediately north of the Alvarado house. Jose Maria Maldonado was a minor Mexican official who obtained a small lot of 17 varas by the grace of his two neighbors: "David Spence granted 12 varas from his lot and Jose de Jesus Vallejo the second five varas". Maldonado was arrested in 1837 in connection with the plot

against Juan B. Alvarado (by then Governor of California) and had to leave Monterey. David Spence who had his home just next door purchased the house and added it to his property. This we have learned from a personal letter David Spence wrote to Don Juan Malarin on December 22, 1837, when Malarin was on a business trip to Mexico. The letter reads in part; "I have purchased the house of Maldonado for \$600 (pesos), and I have endorsed in his favor a *libranza* for \$357 making certain that Señor Aguirre will take it with your passage on board the *Leonidas*—please do what you can for these poor people".

That Governor Alvarado resided in the big house during his term of office we know from various records in Bancroft Library. He and his wife left Monterey sometime afterwards and by 1847 he was living on one of his ranchos near present day Salinas. The town property had been transferred to James McKinley, a prominent Scottish merchant who married one of the Amesti daughters. McKinley had his own adobe home on the corner where the Monterey Peninsula Herald now stands and so did not need the Alvarado house as a home. He turned it into good business property.

During 1848 under the first American Alcalde Walter Colton, the City of Monterey attempted to straighten out many streets, open new ones, and make some attempt to establish lot lines. In September of that year James McKinley "gave twenty two feet on the south part of his lot" . . . "for a street". "His lot was the one formerly owned by Jose de Jesus Vallejo". This was when Pearl street was put through from Alvarado to Calle Principal.

In 1853 we find a record of the term "Bola de Oro" applying to the building. One Antonio Augustine paid the City of Monterey on March 10th the sum of \$10.00 for a two months business license for a Public House or Saloon "A la Bola de Oro". From the assessment list of that year we learn that he had stock in trade and furniture assessed at \$200.00 and cash on hand to the value of \$1,000.00. He evidently sold out at the end of the two months because the next business license paid in May 19, 1853, for a Public House "a La Bola" was issued to one C. Jones. At the same time one William Pyburn paid a business license to operate a Monte Bank "A la Bola". We know that this term of *Bola de Oro* applied to the Alvarado House because of the lease signed the next year of 1854 on October 24th. By the lease, one Daniel McMillen leased from James McKinley a "lot of land between Main and Alvarado, enclosed by a stone and adobe fence, with the house, store, offices and outbuildings being known as Bola de Oro, and being the same now occupied by Dr McKee, Dr Callaghan, Mr. Avila, and others", for a term of five years at \$150 per month, the lease to start January 1855.

During 1855 James McKinley was beset by a series of troubles. The depression was widespread in Monterey and McKinley was sore beset to retain his vast holdings and various businesses. Perhaps to pay a fee (or in an attempt to salvage some funds) he was led to record a sale of the property to the lawyer Durell S. Gregory by a deed dated April 19, 1855. This deed specifically men-

tions that this is the same tract wherein is situated the house called the Bola de Oro or the United States Hotel. On July 18, 1855 the Superior Court of San Francisco issued a writ of Execution against James McKinley for \$34,902.00 and costs as a result of the suit of his own brother Finlay McKinley, against him. From that point James McKinley lost practically everything, including his own home which was bid in by Jose Abrego, redeemed by Finlay McKinley and deeded to Doña Carmen Amesti, wife of James McKinley. Thus the home was saved by being in the wife's name.

Returning to the fate of the old adobe we assume that Gregory probably honored the lease McKinley had signed with Daniel McMillen the previous year, as we find in the files of the *Monterey Sentinel* for 1855 the advertisements of J. D. Callaghan, M.D., Physician and Surgeon, who had his office in the drugstore, and George W. Crane, attorney and counselor, had an office also in the same United States Hotel. The proprietor of the hotel part was listed as one A. C. Beckwith.

For the following bit we have no documentation, but it probably is based on fact. During the late 1800's one Mauricio Gonzalez lived on the property and as late as the 1930's a daughter of the family still lived on part of the property in a house facing on Calle Principal. The Gonzalez family stated that "in the old days" the area back of the building which then was enclosed with a high adobe wall was used for theatrical performances. Crude seats tiered circus fashion were erected and in the arena thus formed traveling Mexican acrobats performed gymnastic feats, etc. This was indeed a logical place for such performances, even as we know that the walled areas of the present day Pacific Building, and the old bull and bear area behind the former Castro Adobe next to the present day Estrada Adobe were used for public performances. We have found two records that may indicate such a use of the area in 1852. On October 15, 1852, the County Treasurer of Monterey County recorded in Cash Book the receipt of \$15 from one Jose Sentine "a/c two day theatrical performance" and the same week the personal account of James McKinley (who then still owned the property) was credited in his own store records with the sum of \$8.00 "by cash from theatrical performance for use lumber".

From all of the above we believe that we have shown clearly that the term Bola de Oro should be applied to the two story Alvarado House on the corner of Alvarado and Pearl.

Throughout the years since the 1830's, the old adobe has changed hands often, lost its walled area extending to Calle Principal, been threatened with wrecking, almost gutted by fire, used as a fine home, then as a saloon, gambling den and hotel, a combination of stores and offices, the scene of several murders (notably when Jerry McMahon and Dr. Sanford killed each other in the bar room in 1855, as told in the *Noticias* of September, 1966).

It originally had a fine second floor balcony so typical of the better homes of Monterey. This balcony shows clearly in a watercolor painted of part of

Monterey in 1849 by Alfred Sully, the young army officer stationed here for several years.

Although it was known later as the LaPorte Adobe after it was sold to new owners in 1874, we feel that the adobe now rightly bears a plaque as the Alvarado Adobe since the period of Governor Alvarado's occupancy was its most important period historically. We must also remember, however, that it was the Bola de Oro.

At another time we will give a sketch of the other adobe that has popularly been given a name with the word "Oro" in it, —the Casa de Oro.

References: (to be found in Office of County Recorder, Salinas.)

Translations of Spanish Records, Vol. I, pages 12, 23, 26, 289; Vol. II, page 61. Mexican Archives, Vol XIV, page 511. Deeds, Vol. D, pages 602, 605; Leases, Book A, page 23. Solares de Monterey, page 236. Special Assessment List, City of Monterey. Stevenson House Vault: Letter, David Spence in Bonifacio Papers. Bancroft Library, Fernandez MSS, 167. City of Monterey: Alcalde's Book, (Licenses issued under Ordinance of February 1, 1853). Monterey Sentinel, 1855, Vol. I, (owned by Santa Cruz Sentinel, Santa Cruz.)

— By Mrs. Amelie W. Elkinton

(This is the second in a series of articles documenting the historic adobes of Monterey. The first, in March, 1963, discussed the Amesti Adobe.)

The reason is clear. About these old buildings romance and legend cling like ivy, so much so that their true story is often obscured. For example, the imagined courtship of Señorita Ignacia Bonifacio by Lieut. William Tecumseh Sherman in 1849 and the planting of the Sherman Rose is now part of Monterey history even though it dates only from the 1870's and owes its creation to the fertile and poetic mind of that rollicking Irishman, Daniel O'Connell, the author of "In a mantle of old tradition. . . ." Such tales are charming and have an honored place, but when facts are needed, nothing but the facts will do.)

TO RECORD THE HAPPY HOURS MAYO HAS GIVEN US

For almost a year Robert Stanton and Mary Frances Singleton have been tending to a delicate project, but on September 5th, it finally bore fruit.

It seem that last October a tree blew down in Mayo O'Donnell's garden at the Casa Soberanes. "That's not so bad," said Mayo, "Now I can have a sundial there", and she spoke about it to her landlords, the Division of State Beaches and Parks.

They conferred with Mr. Stanton, then our president, and Mrs. Singleton, 1966 chairman of the House Committee, about a suitable design. It had to fit the atmosphere of the old Monterey garden, and after a fruitless search in San Francisco, President Stanton went to the source of all things Spanish. He wrote to Spain and had a sundial made there.

In January, Mayo was told, for we had hoped to have the dial installed in time for the Adobe Tour, but mañana, y mañana, y mañana. . . The packing

case arrived in August; it contained a dial of carved sandstone, beautifully executed with old world skill and cost a total of \$63. By this time, President Mewborn knew of it and the other directors clamored to have a share in its purchase, and by September 5th they had paid all costs from their own pockets. Mrs. Singleton had lured Mayo away for a few hours, the ladies among the directors had prepared an assortment of sandwiches and cookies, Frank Work, Bob McKeever and Bob Stanton had provided champagne and ginger ale, the Beaches and Parks workmen had installed the sundial and all was ready for the unveiling.

When Mayo came back, all was in readiness. A Spanish shawl belonging to one of the ladies was whisked off the sundial and Mayo was properly surprised, but she immediately turned the tables by giving a surprise of her own: a lovely big silver tray for the tea set in the Casa Serrano and a smaller sandwich tray. Vernon Hurd of Holman's Department Store had given Mayo \$100 worth of green stamps so that she might make her surprise complete.

COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

President A. Boyd Mewborn asked the directors at the September meeting to give attention to providing more general meetings, particularly for discussions of historical matters and projects planned for the association. As a result, October 9th was set aside for the meeting to discuss changes in the by-laws which was agreed upon last January. So that interested members might attend without encroaching on their evening activities, the time was set for 5 p.m. at the Casa Serrano. Ken Erman and Mrs. Heard, the committee in charge, will present the proposals for change and lead the discussion.

October 16th, a Monday, has been placed on the calendar as a general meeting. The result of the by-law meeting will be presented and an informal talk on the History of Monterey's Italian Colony will be given by Mrs. Angie Lucido. This promises to be most interesting and we expect a good crowd.

* * *

Now that the new parking lot in back of the Casa Serrano is completed, our leaky, three-colored roof to the additions looks pretty shabby. The directors voted in September to have it repaired and made uniform. The north front wall base needs drainage tile and waterproofing, too. It will be done this month at a modest cost.

* * *

Both President Mewborn and Admiral Earl Stone, Chairman of the Maritime Museum Project of our association, have been keeping the Museum pot boiling with explicit and persuasive letters to Mayor Minnie Coyle and prominent citizens. The key point, however, (upon which all else depends: an official statement by the city council that the land in question will be used for park and museum purposes) has not been bridged. What can be the reason for this delay? Such a resolution could be passed by the city council even without actual possession of the land in question. It would probably make negotiations with the Army and the State much easier.

* * *

The acquisition of the Francis Doud House still hangs fire. The old house is not made of adobe, although from the outside it has a typical Monterey adobe appearance. It is of wood and is probably the oldest and best example of a wooden house in California. George Leutzinger is in charge of this project and is working with George Clemens and the Business Affairs Committee in the negotiations with the Urban Renewal Agency and the city.

* * *

An engrossing book with many allusions to Monterey in the 1840's has just been published by Dawson's Book Shop in Los Angeles (550 South Figueroa Street, 90017.) Written by Professor Doyce B. Nunis of the University of Southern California, it tells of the **Trials of Isaac Graham**, a thorough-going old ruffian of Santa Cruz who was one of the principals in California's first jury trials in Monterey on September 4, 1846, was deported as an obnoxious alien in 1840 and whose minor troubles with murder, bigamy, kidnapping and land deals kept him in hot water until his death in 1863. Professor Nunis' scholarship and research are impeccable and his style clear and evocative.

* * *

GIFTS

From Mrs. Clara Spangler we have received two ladies' boleros, and from Mr. Julius Trescony of San Lucas a fragile little handkerchief made by Dona Ignacia Bonifacio, the legendary Lady of the Sherman Rose. Mrs. W. R. Holman has donated a fine Mexican sombrero and a pair of men's beaded riding gauntlets that formerly belonged to Thomas Norris, once president of the Monterey History and Art Association and a notable collector of Californiana.

An interesting group of seventy-five colored photograph slides of past Adobe Tours and Meriendas have been added to our slide library by Miss Hortense Lion. Mr. Claude Faw donated an old wall map of part of the pueblo lands of Monterey with the names of the occupiers inked in. It appears to date from the 1850's. Claude also gave us a photographic copy of the 1844 Narvaez map of Monterey. This is extremely valuable, for it shows the location of every adobe built by that time.

* * *

Martha Bentley, chairman of this year's very successful Adobe House Tour, is no procrastinator. At the September meeting she impressed upon the directors the need to plan ahead for 1968's tour and as a result, April 28th has been reserved already for that gala spring event.

* * *

Now is the time for all historical societies to come to each other's aid. Dr. Shumate of the Conference of California Historical Societies has asked us for a resolution supporting the preservation of historic Fort Point, a San Francisco Bay landmark which might be threatened by too low a second deck on the Golden Gate Bridge. We are happy to oblige, for we know how important it is to save buildings of California's past and how impossible it is to replace them. So few remain, alas.

**THE EDITORS
MONTEREY HISTORY
AND ART ASSOCIATION**
P. O. Box 805
Monterey, California 93940

Non-Profit Organization
Bulk Rate
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 20
Monterey, Calif.

Miss Ethel Solliday
84 Wellings Place
Monterey, Calif.
93940

OFFICERS 1967

President: A. Boyd Mewborn
First Vice President: Ted Durein
Second Vice President: Edwin Bliss
Treasurer: Bertram Heckenlaible
Secretary: Betty Hallett

EDITORS

Donald M. Craig
Mrs. A. W. Elkinton
Mrs. Wm. M. O'Donnell

DIRECTORS: F. K. Arthur, Mrs. Charles Bentley, Edwin Bliss, Robert Ross, Col. William Mc C. Chapman, William D. Concolino, Mrs. Horace Dormody, Ted Durein, Kenneth Ehrman, Mrs. Harold Hallett, Norman Hasselo, B. L. Heckenlaible, George Leutzinger, Robert Littlefield, Emmet McMenamin, Prof. A. Boyd Mewborn, Mrs. David Muir, Mrs. William Oberholtzer, Mrs. William O'Donnell, John Nail, Mrs. Philip C. Smith, Robert Stanton, Adm. Earl Stone, Mrs. Yukio Sumida, Donald Teague, Mrs. Duncan Todd, J. O. Tostevin, Mrs. Van Court Warren, Eben Whittlesey, Mrs. Elmer Zanetta, Robert G. Beck and Walter Haluk. **Honorary:** Miss C. Fortune, Mrs. William O'Donnell, Claude Faw, Col. Allen Griffin, Col. Harold Mack, Emmet McMenamin and Mrs. Willard Wheeler.

New Members

Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Hannon, Mr. and Mrs. Francis B. Duveneck, Jr., Dr. and Mrs. Robertson Ward, Mrs. Pillsbury Pringle, Miss Joan Scott, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Tonkin, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan Flagg, General and Mrs. John H. Hinrichs, Miss Emma Svrbely, Mrs. Rose Marie Holt, Mr. and Mrs. Paul McKinstry, Mrs. William Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Paul G. Sletton, Mr. and Mrs. Harold R. Apger, Mrs. Elizabeth B. Mudd, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Ballard, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Arenz, Mrs. Darwin R. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Railton, Mr. and Mrs. Leon Edner, Miss Patricia Anne Dick, Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Crombe (reinstated), Chester Andrew Storaa.

Deceased Members

We are sorry to report the passing of three old friends and loyal supporters:
Mrs. Edna Capen Lapham, Guy Curtis, and Charles DeTurk