

# NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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

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Vol. XXII, No. 1

March 1978



*Courtesy Monterey Public Library*

One of the handsomest periods in the life of Casa Soberanes. About 1896, Esequiel Soberanes, Jr. inherited the adobe from his father. It is this younger Soberanes who seems to have put in the first real garden with its tidy picket-fence. This picture was first published about 1910.

## **Old Monterey Families in the Casa Soberanes**

*(The editor would like to express much gratitude to Amelie Elkinton and Esther Goodhue for use of their research materials. Without their careful documentation from original mission and church records and Mexican-era civil archives, this article would not have been possible.)*

Very shortly, Casa Soberanes will be open to the public three or four days a week. So we thought it would be interesting to brush up on some of its history, especially since it is, like Casa Serrano, a charming example of the small adobes lived in by the majority of Monterenos of the time.



The district of Monterey, a huge area running almost as far north as San Jose and as far south as Santa Barbara, had an estimated population of only about 500, in addition to the Indians. The number of actual Hispanic families was small indeed. But thanks to temperate climate and the absence of large crowded towns, most of these families thrived in size, with a far lower infant mortality than prevailed in England or the United States, for example. There was so much marriage and intermarriage among these few prolific families that relationships beginning in the 1830's had become as tangled as a dozen balls of yarn batted around by half a dozen kittens. In fact, it seems as if practically everyone was doubly related, by both birth and marriage. It is not surprising that unwary researchers have confused one person with another, especially when names were similar or even identical. The Estrada family is a prime example. So we'll try to sort them out a bit, since they were the first to be connected with the present Casa Soberanes at 336 Pacific Street, formerly Estrada Street.

In 1806, two young brothers arrived in Monterey — as proteges of Governor Arrillaga, the family tradition has it. Older of the two was Jose Mariano Estrada; the younger, Jose Raimundo Estrada. Mariano later married Isobel, of the very distinguished Arguello family. Raimundo, with whom we are most concerned, married a respectable young widow, Josefa Vallejo Alvarado, who already had a little son named Juan Bautista Alvarado. Each of these marriages produced some eight or ten children. Among them, one of Mariano's sons was baptized Rafael Atenogenes



*Monterey History & Art Association Collection*

Saddest period in the life of Casa Soberanes. Judging from the broken windows, missing doors, and general air of desolation, the house appears completely abandoned. So far, accurate dating of the picture has proved impossible. Has anyone any clues?



Estrada on 18 July 1819. Then on 25 February 1820 one of Raimundo's sons was baptized as Jose Guadalupe Rafael Papias Estrada. These cousins, so near of an age, both appear simply as "Rafael Estrada" in many records — whereby, much confusion! It may help if we refer briefly to Mariano and his son Rafael before we come to our main characters. It was Mariano that Alfred Robinson in 1829 referred to as commandante in *Life in California*. Robinson also describes Mariano's house — the one which stood near the present Cooper adobes. It was Mariano also who in 1837 bought the half-finished house that became the building we now know as the Estrada Adobe, behind Monterey Savings and Loan. At one time or another, there were several other Estrada adobes now long gone: a second one near the Cooper house and another near the present Soberanes house, for instance.

William Hartnell's padrón (census) of 1836 helps us somewhat in keeping the two branches of the family straight. Hartnell, of course, knew everyone he was listing in Monterey very well. However, some minor errors do creep in on occasion; these may be due not to Hartnell's fallibility perhaps, but to slip-ups in transcription or translation. In any event, by 1836, Mariano's son Rafael is listed as a pupil at Hartnell's school. Meanwhile, *our* Rafael, son of Raimundo Estrada, has at the age of only ten lost his father. Widowed for the second time, Josefa Vallejo Estrada before long married a third time and had additional children by this husband, Bonifacio Madariaga. Unless the Hartnell census is incorrect, Rafael's mother must have been a most attractive woman. Not only had she had no difficulty in marrying three times, but her third husband was thirteen years younger than she was. In 1836, shortly before his mother's death, Rafael, along with a younger sister, is listed as living with his older half-brother, Juan Bautista Alvarado, soon to be governor.

Where Rafael lived during the years following and up to 1842 hasn't been pieced together yet. There were surely enough relatives, in town and scattered on various family ranchos, where he might have been at home any time. It is in December of 1841 that we first hear of Rafael in connection with the Casa Soberances. It was then he officially applied for his town lot. Remotely, he may already have begun building the house; sometimes town lots were verbally given approval before they appeared in written records. But the surest date seems to be March of 1842. This is when a deed specifically refers to the house on the lot and we may assume that the basic house has progressed far enough to be lived in. However, it still had no balcony and no stairway to its second low story. At the moment, no one seems at all sure of just when the balcony was added, except that it was almost surely some time *after* 1850-51, when Larkin finally stopped altering the famous 1942 lithograph and had it printed in the form we see it today. The outside staircase is even more baffling because we don't know when it was built *nor* when it was removed. We'll try to make some educated guesses a little later.

In July of 1844, Rafael compounded the family confusion (had he but known) by marrying his first cousin once removed — the granddaughter of his own Uncle Mariano. Mariano's daughter, Josefa Estrada, had married Juan Malarin and one of their children was Rafael Estrada's bride, Concepcion Malarin.

How many of at least ten children were born to Concepcion and Rafael in the little town house it's hard to tell. Rafael had been granted the Rancho San Lucas

in the same year he built his town house. Possibly, then, they spent some time down there. But throughout the 1840's Rafael held various government jobs in Monterey. Not until 1860 was the Monterey adobe sold, so most of the children would certainly have been familiar with the house. Eighteen years after he built it, Rafael sold it for \$450. to another cousin — this time on his mother's side — Esequiel Soberanes, also descendant of an even earlier pioneer family. Before we go on to this second family, who gave their name to the adobe, we might touch on a few highlights in the rest of the life of Jose Guadalupe Rafael Papias Estrada.

We find him in the U.S. Census of 1860 on the Rancho Rincon de las Salinas (the present Monterey Dunes development is on part of this old rancho). He is listed as 40 years old; Concepcion as 30; with 7 children there also age 15 to one year. By the 1870 census, there are 10 children, from age 24 down to 3.

The story of the Rancho Rincon de las Salinas is a tantalizing one as touched on by Anne Fisher in *The Salinas: Upside-Down River*. Some of her facts we've been able to verify; some are slightly inaccurate; and some are probably if not demonstrably true. H.B.

*(To be completed in our next issue)*

### **Big Sur Rain and Slides**

When Frank Post first came to Big Sur (1877), it was a two-day journey from Monterey by horseback.

The first road that was hacked south from Monterey to dip into the Big Sur valley crossed a river 24 times in the few miles from the north edge of the valley to the Post ranch. Every hard rain washed it out and the pioneers were again and again forced to depend on horse or muleback to reach Monterey for supplies. Even this method of transportation failed at times when slides completely obliterated the trail. Then traveling was done on foot. The Big Sur remains a challenge. (Excerpt from "The Unconquered Valley" by Charles Mohler, in *Westways* magazine, September 1948.)

### **Mayo**

Eight years ago there was an article in *Noticias* in which we remembered the beginnings of our Association and the personalities who had helped build it to one thousand strong. Today we write again of one of our first leaders, one who stayed to help through more years, until now we are two thousand strong. Mayo Hayes O'Donnell, lovingly termed "Mrs. Monterey," died in Monterey on January 4, 1978.

California-born in Tulare County on May 6, 1892, Mayo came to live in Monterey with her husband in 1925. Both were experienced in the newspaper field. William M. O'Donnell became a prominent editor and co-publisher of the *Monterey Peninsula Herald*. Mayo turned her main interest to the history of Monterey and used her various talents in this area.

The O'Donnells purchased one of Monterey's fine old adobe homes — Casa Soberanes — and over the years furnished it with local historical treasures and gifts from friends near and far. From the upper porch of the home, they could look out



over Monterey Bay. There Bill was often inspired to write some of his outstanding editorials.

Mayo's honors were numerous — we leave the long listing to the obituary in the local press. We remember how she went to many a conference with other groups in the state to learn from others or to tell others of progress in Monterey. She served the Monterey History and Art Association as Secretary of the Board of Directors for many years...helping to establish architectural controls; creating historical districts and good zoning; saving from destruction the old adobes; and sharing with others her enthusiasm, thus inspiring them to appreciate the values we have here. She refused to serve as President, saying, "That is for a man." But do not for a moment think she would deny the best of women's lib: she was one of the most liberated women we knew, working her wonders by gracious hospitality and knowledge of how to work with others. She had an amazing drive hidden within a very feminine woman.

She presented her home to the State of California and continued to live there. After her husband's death, she wrote a daily historical column for the *Herald*.

Her home was always open to the seeker of California history, from the thousands who tramped through the rooms during an annual adobe house tour to the special visit of VIP's. She received usually in her attractive sala, sitting on the little sofa; or, if you were a close friend or relative, in the "sitting kitchen."

One could open the back gate by lifting the inside latch, walk though the typical old Monterey backyard garden and knock on the kitchen door. A small barking dog greeted you, rousing the house. Then you were offered a chair around the small table beside the little old-fashioned wood-burning stove. You had a drink or a cup of tea, a bit of cheerful conversation, and then back out to the changing world. You took with you the knowledge that some part of the past still lived and that in Monterey never would the "dias de antes" be forgotten. A.E.

### **Col. Charles B. Richmond, U.S.A., Retired**

A vital part of the Allen Knight Maritime Museum is gone. A man of charm, discerning instinct, an old, proud soldier; a ship model-builder par excellence, and a dear personal friend, passed away recently. The Museum can never be quite the same without Charlie, as he was affectionately known. Having worked with, and admired, this man for many years, I can speak for his many friends at the Museum when I say: "Well done, Shipmate. We'll surely miss you." We will remember him in seeing the several ship models he built at the Museum, which we proudly display for public viewing and appreciation.

R. Adm. Earl E. Stone, U.S.N.-Ret., Director, Allen Knight Maritime Museum

### **Cosas de Interes para Los Socios**

Mrs. Harold J. MacLean of Carmel Valley deserves our deepest apologies. Those Tassajara pictures in our last issue were wrongly credited — it was Mrs. MacLean who so kindly let us use them for our members' enjoyment.

Gifts were gratefully received from California Heritage Guides, Community Hospital, Mrs. Alfred Fry, Mrs. V.K. Klemme, and Mrs. Charles L. Taylor.

Especially gratifying because of their Californiana value were 39 volumes of Bancroft and 4 volumes of Hittell's History of California given by Mrs. Frank Lang, from the estate of her mother, Juanita Cooper. Similarly appreciated were a comprehensive collection of "American West" magazines from Kenneth Pemberton.

In Memoriam: Marguerite Helen Church, Fred Dodd, Freida M. Harding, Capt. Weston McLeod Johnson, Judge Stanley Lawson, Mary Mitchell, Radm. C. Tod Singleton, Maurice M. Tara.



## BILL OF FARE

### COCKTAILS

Oyster	-	-	-	30c	Crab	-	-	-	30c
Lobster	-	-	-	40c	Shrimp	-	-	-	30c

### SOUPS

Abalone Chowder	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25c
Abalone Nectar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25c
Clam Chowder	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25c

### SALADS

Crab Salad	-	-	-	60c	Crab Louis	-	-	-	75c
Lobster Salad	-	-	-	75c	Lobster Louis	-	-	-	90c
Shrimp Salad	-	-	-	60c	Sliced Tomatoes	-	-	-	20c
Lettuce and Tomatoes	-	-	-	20c	Lettuce	-	15c;	(two)	25c

### FISH

#### Fresh Daily

Filet of Abalone, Tartar Sauce	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	75c
Lobster, Tartar Sauce	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	75c and \$1.00
Filet of Sole, Tartar Sauce	50c	-	-	-	Cracked Crab	-	-	-	60c
Oysters, fried or stewed	60c	-	-	-	Halibut	-	-	-	50c
Mackerel	-	-	-	50c	Sea Bass	-	-	-	50c
Salmon	-	-	-	50c	Rockcod	-	-	-	50c
Sandabs	-	-	-	50c	Scallops	-	-	-	50c
Bernaise or Bordelaise Sauce				-	15c				

### POTATOES

French Fried	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15c;	(two) 25c
Julienne	-	-	-	15c	Lyonnaise	-	-	-	20c
Saute Hashed Brown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20c

### DESSERTS

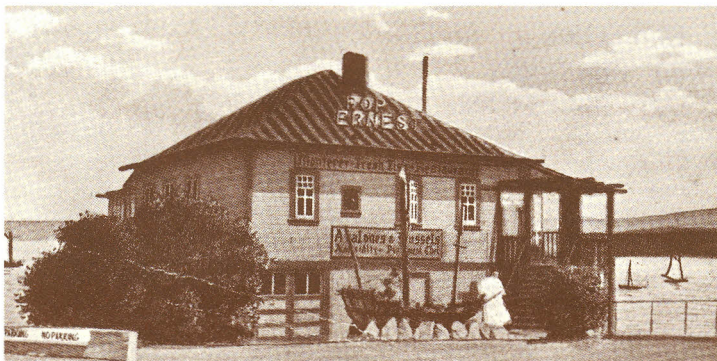
French Pancake	-	-	-	50c	With Rum	-	-	-	75c
Rum Omelette	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	75c

### BEVERAGES

Coffee	-	10c	Tea (pot)	-	15c	Milk	-	10c
A Single Portion Served for Two Persons				-	-	25c	Extra Charge	

Good cause for nostalgia — this menu from Pop Ernest's old restaurant, first on Fisherman's Wharf. Note mouth-watering prices. Menu's undated but a good guess would be during the Depression of 1930's or first years of 1940's.





Undated post card of Pop Ernest's old restaurant on Monterey wharf. Like the menu, it most likely comes from late 1930's or early 1940's.

### **Maritime Museum Building Fund Started**

Rear Admiral Earl E. Stone, U.S. Navy, Retired, Museum Director

The September 1977 *Noticias* contained an announcement that the Board of Directors of this Association had created a "Building Fund" for the purpose of helping to finance a new museum building in Monterey. Some contributions have already been received from interested individuals. It is hoped that bequests by individuals, and contributions — large or small — will be forthcoming to augment this fund so that, with the cooperation and assistance of the City of Monterey and/or the State of California, in a few years, a new Maritime Museum building will be a reality.

The present space utilized by the Maritime Museum is already inadequate for our fine nautical collection. Monterey should always have a Maritime Museum, considering its old whaling and fishing days, its many ties to the sea in its Naval historical background, and in the old sailing ship era. We have made an excellent beginning in our present cramped quarters. A new and larger museum building is an important future objective of the Association.

The building fund established by this Association amounted to \$50,899.05 on 1 December 1977. Information was received in December from The San Francisco Foundation that \$300,000.00 can be counted on from Mewborn Estates funds for this building if satisfactory arrangements are made with the City of Monterey (or the State of California) for the achievement of this project. The initial problem is to obtain a site for the new building, preferably in the Urban Renewal area. More than one-third, and possibly nearly one-half, of the money needed for this project has been pledged. The actual amount of money required cannot be determined accurately until a site has been agreed upon, and the construction costs thereon are known.

Contributions to the Association for this building fund are tax deductible. Those wishing to augment this building fund should send their contributions to the Monterey History and Art Association, Ltd., marked Museum Building Fund, P.O. Box 805, Monterey, California 93940.

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AND ART ASSOCIATION

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**Adobe Tour Alert**

Those of you who invite out-of-town guests for Adobe Tour weekend should be moving quickly now! April 29 and 30 are fast approaching. Saturday hours for the tour will be from 10 till 5; on Sunday, from noon till 5 p.m. Tickets are \$5 each (\$2.50 for students and military and include tea at Casa Serrano). Mrs. Joseph P. Leo is in charge.