NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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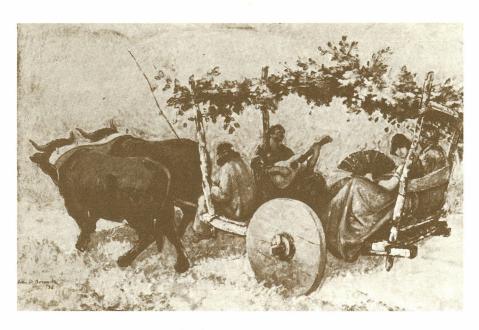
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This edition is dedicated to the memory of **Dorothy Taugher**(1915-1983)



Going to Fiesta

Detail from painting by Lester Boronda for Anne B. Fisher's Cathedral in the Sun

The Monterey History and Art Association is privileged to begin with this *Noticias* an extended biographical series by Betty Lochrie Hoag McGlynn on the late Lester David Boronda and the legendary Boronda family. Mrs. McGlynn's carefully researched, documented, and engaging study, presented for the first time here, fills an heretofore neglected chapter in the chronicles of Californians important in state, local, and art history. Of necessity, because of the length of this story which extends from Father Serra's time to the present, it will occupy a major portion of several of our quarterly issues to come and is presented in the confident hope readers will welcome this contribution to their historial libraries.

An Abbreviated Genealogy of Lester Boronda's Family

Manuel Higuera (1744-1828)	m.	Antonia Redonda	Ignatius Walker	r m.	
Manuel Boronda (1750-1826)	m. 1790	Gertrudis Higuera (1776-)	(1)? (2)George Grav (1813-1889)	m. es m.	Nancy Walker (1825-)
Eusebio Boronda (1808-)	m. 1831	Josefa Buelna (-1864)	(1) Ray (2) Ebenezer Har (1833-1893)		Lovina Graves (1834-1886)
Sylvano Boronda (1857-1940)			m. 1885	Maria Ra (1856-	

(1886)-1953) 1909

iBORONDA!©

Betty Lochrie Hoag McGlynn

This story is about the family of an artist, Lester David Boronda (1886-1953), whose roots were entwined deep in the history of California. He was scion of pioneer families noted for professions as diverse as teaching children and rustling grizzlies. One of his great-grandmothers was born in Monterey when it was only a presidio. Lester Boronda was reared on a Salinas Valley cattle ranch, in a home which today has the distinction of having been awarded status as a State Historical Landmark.

Boronda made major contributions to American art history, yet he is not well-known locally, and libraries seldom list his name in their "Artists' Files" where he most certainly deserves a niche. Before the earthquake of 1906 Lester Boronda studied in San Francisco at the old Mark Hopkins School of Design; there he was influenced by Arthur Mathews, that dynamic spokesman for the Craftsman Movement. Lester dramatically applied its principles in his own career during the few years he lived in Monterey, then for the rest of his life in New York and Connecticut. He achieved fame as a master craftsman and as a painter; his works were exhibited in leading museums and galleries throughout the country.

Lester Boronda was the first person to undertake restoration of an ancient Monterey adobe. He worked for, and in collaboration with, Sarah Parke, another artist little-known today. Their achievement presaged a time when civic groups on the Monterey Peninsula would launch concerted efforts to save and restore many of the historical buildings. One of Boronda's students, and his dear friend, was Myron Oliver who even now is remembered for his devotion to saving the "gems of mud."

Boronda influenced the future in other ways. His artistic talent was inherited by a daughter, Beonne Boronda, who today is noted in the east as sculptur, teacher, writer and lecturer.

And finally, Monterey County is constantly enriched by the endowment fund which Lester Boronda established in his parents' honor at Hartnell College, Salinas. Through this generosity, gifted students of a new generation are given aid in their pursuit of the arts.

Taproots — Spanish Period

Patriarch of the California Borondas was Don Manuel Boronda (1750-1826), great-grand-father of Lester. Spanish of ancestry, Manuel was born in the village of Gerez, in the area of Guadalajara, Mexico. He was a nineteen-year-old soldier in the Spanish army when he traveled from Mexico to Alta California with Fray Junipéro Serra's second expedition. It is said that the youth was a favorite of the good Franciscan friar and served as his acolyte during mission services.

Some two decades later Manuel was stationed at the San Francisco presidio and had become a person of importance. For example, having power of attorney he was asked on February 26, 1790, to serve as proxy godfather at the christening of Concepción de Argüello, daughter of the Mexican Governor, being selected by none other than Commandante Zúñiga of San Diego who was unable to attend the ceremony. It was a momentous period in Manuel Boronda's life. Only a month earlier he had wed María Gertrudis Higuera.

Gertrudis was daughter of another Spanish soldier stationed at the San Francisco Presidio, Don José Manuel Higuera (1744-1828), patriarch of the California Higuera family, great-great grandfather of Lester Boronda. (1) Born in Sinaloa, Mexico, José also had been a soldier in the Spanish army and had come to California with the Rivera expedition which walked all the way from Loreto. Many Mexican wives accompanied this caravan, including José's María Antonia Redonda (sometimes spelled "Arredonda"), a native of Sinaloa City. On a stormy March night the party of over 130 persons arrived at Monterey. Most of them were housed in tents on the presidio grounds. In June the bulk of the army traveled on with Lieutenant Moraga, to found what would one day become the city of San Francisco. However, some ten families including the Higueras elected to remain in Monterey, despite the miserable accomodation.

That 1776 springtime was a lively one! Three babies were born, the first being María Gertrudis Higuera on June 29th. And there were two weddings. One was important to Lester Boronda for it represented another taproot when on May 26, 1776, José Antonio Buelna married María Antonia Tápia: one of their descendants a half century later would marry a Boronda, becoming one of Lester's grandmothers. The other marriage was that of Ana Josefa Castro to José María Soberanes on May 29th; descendants of these two families would inter-marry later with Boronda descendants.

The little Higuera girl, Gertrudis, was only fourteen when she married forty-year-old Manuel Boronda. Festivities were held at Santa Clara on January 23, 1790, and must have been memorable for the wedding was a double ceremony, shared by Gertrudis' sister Victoria who wed Francisco Villencia. One is reminded of Jo Mora's delightful polychrome sculpture, "La Novia" ("The Bride") which is at the Naval Postgraduate School today, on loan from the Monterey History and Art Association. And one thinks of Mora's explanation of the event:

After the early California wedding the couple was escorted with much gaiety by their friends to the home where the nuptial feast and fandango was to be given ... In riding, the old Californian custom was for the woman to be seated "side saddle" in front, her left foot in a ribbon stirrup, while the man rode behind, seated on the *Anquera* (flank piece) ... On arriving at the casa, the groom's spurs would be unbuckled by the waiting merrymakers; before he could dismount, he would have to redeem them by paying a forfeit, generally a bottle of brandy. (2) Jo Mora's triple equestrian group illustrates this scene, with the groom's attendant leading the pair, the bride's father following. To imagine *two* bridal couples on *two* prancing chargers is mind-boggling!

It is also mind-boggling to believe a manuscript which reports that Gertrudis' mother moved in with the Boronda newly-weds and spent the rest of her life with them! Surely Dona Higuera must have been too busy helping her husband to spend much time in another household. It is certain that both Higueras lived in San Jose presidio three years later, for Bancroft says José was stationed at the *padron* in 1793 "with wife Antonia Redonda and five children." The wealthy Higuera family owned vast lands throughout California. Before 1800 Don José Higuera was invalided out of the San Francisco company and became a soldier-settler at San Jose and San Juan Bautista. In 1821 he was granted the *Rancho Los Tularcitos*, a huge spread in northern Santa Clara County. After that the family made annual trips to their vegetable gardens, fruit and olive orchards in the area of today's Milpitas. One historian speaks of the "merrymakings at the Higuera home with its numerous progeny ... longest remembered in the countryside being a grand-daughter's wedding fiesta ... which continued for three days and was attended by friends from far and near."

Regardless of any mother-in-law situations which may have existed, the Boronda-Higuera marriage was to be a long and successful one, blessed by a large family and remembered for numerous civic contributions which eventually would earn Manuel and Gertrudis the right to be addressed with the titles of "Don" and "Dona." (3)

The Borondas began their new life at the San Francisco presidio. There, in addition to serving as soldier and carpenter, Manuel almost gratuitously conducted a class for boys, from May, 1795, until June of 1797, thus achieving the distinction of being the first teacher in San Francisco.⁽⁴⁾

From 1802 to 1804 Manuel Boronda was a guard at the Santa Cruz *escolta*. Retiring in 1811, the sixty-one-year-old soldier with his family moved to Monterey, to join some four hundred people living in the presidio. Like other military families, they were housed in one of about fifty small buildings on the grounds which were surrounded by a rock wall some ten to twelve feet high. Outside, regimented to within four leagues from the barracks, there were half a dozen provisional ranchos which had been granted to retired soldiers before 1795, including those of Antonio Buelna, José Soberanes (both of whom we have noted were married in Monterey in 1776) and Francisco Cayuelas.

Within the presidio Don Manuel Boronda, although considered an *hombre anciano*, kept busy as the third retired corporal to serve as sacristan at the Royal Presidio Chapel, from 1814 until an unknown date between 1817 and 1821. During this time he also was teacher to the children of Monterey.

Boronda was the first teacher in the village outside the presidio walls of Monterey, but he was not the first teacher in Monterey. Back in 1794, while Boronda was holding classes at the San Francisco presidio, a soldier-carpenter named José Rodríquez had given "free instruction in reading, writing and catechism in the carpentry shop at Monterey (presidio)." That school could not have lasted long for records show that three years later Rodríquez was living at San Miguel Mission. Again, Bancroft wrote that the citizens of Monterey in 1811 made a contract with the retired corporal Rafael Villavicencio to teach their children. It "was approved at the capitol with certain modifications, including school regulations, which may be supposed to have been carried into effect. Of educational process nothing more is known till 1818 ..." Since Villavicencio was also the *first* sacristan, it may be supposed that a precedent was set in 1811 for sexton-teacher responsibilities as undertaken later by Don Boronda.

In the middle teens of the 1800s several retired soldiers were permitted to build homes outside the presidio and within three-fourths of a league from the walls. Don Manuel Boronda was one of them. In 1817 with the aid of friends and local Indians he built his simple adobe on the mesa, "walking distance from the church for the convenience of the women in the family." The paths on his property were planked with whalebone. Situated on a large tract, the house was one-story; in area about 90' x 24'; consisting of "one small room in the center with two large rooms on either side. The beams are axe-hewn and some are twisted. The building ... follows the slope of the ground." The original roof was made of tules tied on with rawhide thongs. "It is told that ... there was constant fear of the structure being deroofed by high winds. When the gales howled down the canyon, whistling and singing about the old adobe, the Borondas would prostrate themselves on the floor and chorus a prayer that the leather thongs might hold." Hard earthen floors were not very comfortable for the several girl children who spread their straw mats on the floor for beds. Nevertheless, the Boronda family must have felt their new abode was infinitely superior to the presidio's crowded and unsanitary huts.

Bancroft lists four names as the original extramural Montereyans, but errors have been found in his record. Probably a more accurate list of Boronda's neighbors is that given by Culleton:

... Julian Cantua (1815), Felipe García (1815), Toribio Martínes (1817), Luis Romero (1817), and José Armenta (1817). To these Alvarado says that *Tia* Boronda and *Tios* Armenta and Cayuelas had shops.

As noted earlier, Francisco Cayuelas (spelled "Cayuelos" by Bancroft) was one of the ranchero owners as far back as 1795. And it is probable that Armento's building was not a home (at least in the sense that Boronda's was, with its bevy of children) because Bancroft tells a story about a Monte game held there, implying that the place was frequented by *marineros-just-off-the-ships*. Bancroft suspects that *Tia* ("Auntie") Boronda may have been a sister of Manuel, and that she sold trinkets. One of her descendants wrote rather peevishly in 1939 that "Gertrudis gave away many of the family antiques." Might one consider Gertrudis Boronda to have been Monterey's first antique dealer?

Bancroft tells us that in California "throughout the entire Spanish period very few soldiers could either read or write." It was so bad that "in 1800 many soldiers acting as corporals could not be promoted because they could not read." Of course the wages offered to teachers were hardly tempting: "in 1796 both Rodríquez in Monterey and Boronda in San Francisco received ... \$125 a year for their trouble." The last Spanish Governor, de Solá (1815-1822), was extremely concerned about the illiteracy of the area. It is said that he persuaded Don Manuel Boronda to open a school for boys in his new home, paying him a salary from his own pocket. De Solá also was successful in persuading another teacher, Matías Guerrero, to conduct a school of primeras letras ("primary school") for younger lads. Guerrero could not have taught long because Miguel Archuleta, a retired soldier, replaced him — and Archuleta died in 1822.

Meanwhile, Governor de Solá had induced retired soldier Antonio Buelna to open a girls' school in the home which he built on the mesa near the Boronda adobe. According to Bancroft, Buelna had been appointed to a teaching post at San Jose, where he served until the spring of 1821. Presumably there are no records of when the Buelna adobe was built or the exact year the school was opened; based on the Bancroft statements above, the assumed year is 1821.

Don Manuel Boronda died January 23, 1826, and was buried in San Carlos *Campo Santo* (holy ground), Carmelo. His widow maintained the boys' school for some time, with help from her youngest daughter, Petra. The latter's husband conducted classes for boys in the adobe in the mid-1840s. Eventually Dona Boronda moved to Santa Barbara to remain the rest of her life with another daughter, María Josefa Burke. She is buried at the foot of the tower on grounds of the southern mission.

Taproots — Mexican-American Period

Manuel and Gertrudis Boronda had a large family. In addition to several offspring who died young in those days of primitive medicine, they reared eight to adulthood: three boys (each piously named "José") and five girls (each named "María"). Today many prominent people in the state of California are descendants of this family. And there are adobes still standing which were built by children of Manuel and Gertrudis: in Monterey, in Salinas, Carmel Valley and Santa Barbara.

The Boronda sons were active in political, economic and social affairs. After secularization of the missions they became grantees of immense ranchos. The 1830s and 1840s were years of princely cattle ranches in California. The new generation was almost completely horse-oriented, the beasts being of prime importance in herding cattle, driving them to market, in rounding-up wild ponies or strayed animals. And there were marauding grizzlies in the Coast Range: horses were used in their capture or kill, necessary for survival of domesticated ranch animals. Social highlights, in addition to fiestas, consisted of colorful rodeos and brutal bear-and-bull fights for which horses were especially trained. The Boronda men were vaqueros par excellence. Accouterments for their horses' trappings and their own personal adornment were made by such master silversmiths as José Guadalupe Avila and Agapito of Monterey. (6) But the Boronda men were no dandies: their bravery was of the John Wayne variety, rugged, *macho*, exciting in the very Spanish tradition. This was the milieu of Lester Boronda's ancestors in the Mexican and early American period. Briefly these are the generations: (7)

⁽¹⁾ María Guadalupe Marietta () married José Gabriel Espinosa; lived in Castroville-Santa Cruz area; is said by Tulita Westfall to have received the Pilarcitos Rancho as a wedding gift from her mother. (8) One Espinosa daughter married an Englishman named William J. Anderson; their son (W.A. Anderson) married Inez Boronda (youngest daughter of Eusebio Boronda, and a sister of artist Lester Boronda). The Andersons had eight children.

⁽²⁾José Canute (1792-1880) - born in San Francisco; a soldier with the Monterey Company in 1812; and with the *escoltas* of Sant Antonio, San Miguel and San Juan Bautista; with the San Francisco Company in 1826-27; was alcalde of Branciforte in 1828; given a land grant near Monterey in 1843; was judge at San Jose in 1844; married Francisca Castro (whose father was French); when elderly (1878) lived with a daughter in San Luis Obispo area.

⁽³⁾ José Manuel Ciriaco (1793-1794)

⁽⁴⁾María Irenea del Carmen (probably died an infant)

⁽⁵⁾María Theresa de Jesus (1797-1817) married Rafael Soto; both died young, leaving a son who also died early.

- (6) María Josefa Bruno () married twice; first, Manuel Cota, "in what is probably the first wedding in a California home; the bride, daughter of the school master, was confined to her bed." After Cota's death Josefa married Captain James W. Burke of Santa Barbara.
- (7) María Ana Anastasia (1802-) married Francisco Cazeres (also spelled "Caceres") (1770-1846), a corporal stationed in San Francisco. They were parents of ten children. There are still members of the family in the Bay area.
- ⁽⁸⁾José Manuel, Jr. (1803-1878) married Juana Cota (of the same Cota family, Santa Barbara, as his sister Josefa's first husband). In 1835-36 the family was at the Salinas rancho, but when José was granted the Los Laurelles rancho in 1839, the couple with their thirteen chidren settled into the Carmel Valley adobe (which is still a ghostly remnant incorporated in Los Laureles Lodge). Juana became famous for a special kind of jack cheese which she made and sold. One of Manuel and Juana's daughters, Isabel, married Francisco Soberanes (their daughter Josefa in 1881 would marry Octaviano Boronda, a son of Eusebio and uncle of Lester Boronda). In her book, *The Salinas*, Anne B. Fisher tells a hair-raising tale about Manuel and horses:

Manuel was breaking wild colts. The obstreperous youngling ran between two scrub oaks and the result was a dangling broken leg for Manuel Boronda. The leg was of no use as it was, and feeling of it with gnarled brown hands the old man decided the bones were too mashed up to make a good "set". "Bring me a saw," he roared to a vaquero. "Give me a tumbler of whiskey and go to work!" The vaquero sawed ... Herbs were put on the stump as a poultice to stanch the blood, and before long Manuel Boronda was hobbling around on a homemade wooden leg.

- (9)María Gracia Magdalena (probably an infant death)
- (10) José Eusebio Lester Boronda's grandfather, whom we will discuss after the #12 child
- (11) José Francisco Laureano (another infant death in 1811)
- (12)María Petra (sometimes spelled "Petri") () in 1821 married an Englishman, George Allen (1795-1847) who became very important in the Monterey community, serving as a surgeon, dentist, justice of the peace in 1842, a teacher of boys in 1844-45, and Secretary of U.S. Consulate under Larkin. It was George Allen who replaced the whimsical tule roof of the Boronda adobe with one of shakes, and had a wooden floor put over the dirt. From England he had shipped beautiful Chinese hand-painted wallpapers. In this lovely home eight generations of Borondas lived, five of them being born *in* the adobe, before (about 1939) Tulita Westfall sold it to a decorator from Southern California, Alexander H. Tiers. In the 1940s Mr. Tiers considerably modernized the house, adding a tile floor and a formal garden. (9) A decade later it was bought by Dr. and Mrs. Mast Wolfsen who still live there.

It should be noted that Tulita Boronda Westfall, like her remote cousin Lester Boronda, was a fine artist. During W.P.A. days, she was one of the watercolorists chosen to make historical records of early California jewelry, tools, clothing, etc.⁽¹⁰⁾ The City of Monterey was given a large collection of her renderings of early buildings; they may be seen at Colton Hall.

Notes

- Higuera's birthdate is determined from the records of the first census of the Pueblo of San Jose in November, 1777.
- 2. From "Jo Mora folder," archives of Betty Hoag McGlynn.
- 3. Samuel S. Westfall stated that "Manuel Boronda was given the title of 'Don' as a reward for distinguished service." It should be noted that Manuel Higuera also was awarded this honor.
- 4. The fact seems to be agreed upon by all historians. Mr. Westfall wrote that the information "was brought to the family by the late Monseigneur Mestres who discovered it in the records (in San Francisco)."
- Mayo Hayes O'Donnell, "Peninsula Diary: Boronda and Buelna Adobes," no date, no attribution, but part of the series she wrote for *The Monterey Peninsula Herald*; from the files of the Monterey History and Art Association library.
- 6. From conversation with Amelie Elkinton.
- 7. Names and dates (incomplete) of the Boronda family genealogy are largely obtained from a chart at the *History Center*, Boronda Adobe, Salinas, California.
- 8. It should be noted that Hoover and Rensch do not confirm this fact, nor does Frank M. Stanger in his definitive history of San Mateo County, *South from San Francisco* (San Mateo County Historical Society, 1963).
- 9. Monterey Peninsula Herald, November 12, 1940.
- 10. From conversation with Amelie Elkinton who was in charge of the Index of American Design's work in Monterey County. For reproduction of Tulita Westfall's work on this project, see Erwin O. Christensen, *The Index of American Design* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1950) figure #55 (reproduction of Westfall's watercolor painting of a gold pin designed by Celestino Trujillo, 19th century, Monterey, California).

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About the author: Betty Lochrie Hoag McGlynn is a California art historian; for 3 years Research Director of the former Carmel Museum of Art; Director of the Triton Museum of Santa Clara; Archivist of San Mateo County Historial Association. With art degrees from Stanford University and U.S.C., she has taught art history at Monterey Peninsula College and San Jose City College. She is the author of numerous articles and catalogues as well as a book for Bancroft Library about Carmel artist Mary DeNeale Morgan. She tape-interviewed over 100 southern California artists for the Archives of American Art. Her direct ties with artists are notable: born in Montana, she is the daughter of the eminent painter of Indians, Elizabeth Lochrie. Her husband is Thomas A. McGlynn, son of the artist by the same name who was an early Carmel Art Association President and friend of Lester Boronda.

The McGlynns make their home in Carmel and San Mateo.

In Memoriam The Reverend Lawrence H. Farrell 1908-1983

iVaya con Dios, Padre!

At this years' Merienda, Fr. Farrell promised your editor to compile for the *Noticias* some of his invocations and poems declaimed over the years to fellow Montereyans at their joyous birthday parties whose celebrants, especially the cooks, the good Padre blessed. Alas, there was not time. Instead, we print the John S. McGroarty poem which Fr. Farrell loved and learned from his mother.

Green is the way to Monterey,
And once, upon a wandering day,
With breath of mist and flash of sky,
My feet were where the green ways lie—
My soul unleashed, my heart at play,
Upon the road to Monterey.

All in the morning's golden glow, I came by holy Carmelo Where whispers still its silvery stream Like voices from an ancient dream, And through the haunted silence beat The long-hushed tread of sandaled feet.

Dream-wrapped in memory's mystic spell, I rang the rusted Mission bell, And called to hill and vale and sea To give their dead again to me— The brown-robed priests, the altar lights, The hosts of dark-eyed neophyties.

I called the dear years forth to free Their dust-thralled feet to trudge with me. So, fared as comrades with me, then, Fair women and brave riding men— By wood and dune, that dream-kissed day, They passed with me to Monterey.

Blithe were the green ways then that told The gladness of the days of old; From chaparral, with flocks athrong, I heard the Indian herder's song, And ringing scythes, with laughter blent, From fields where dusky toilers bent.

Madre de Dios! keep for me
My dream of hill and sky and sea—
The green ways where my path was set,
The gay guitar and castanet,
And stars that hailed, at close of day,
The sunset roofs of Monterey.

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