

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

December 19, 1949

Restoration work has again been started on the Gutierrez Adobe on Calle Principal and will now be followed through to completion, according to the desire of all the directors present at Friday afternoon's meeting of the Monterey Foundation board of directors, owners of the property.

Several years ago the old adobe dwelling was to be sold for taxes and was threatened with destruction to make way for a modern building. A group of interested citizens, who make up the Foundation membership, bought the building and have preserved it as an example of Monterey architecture of the early Mexican period. The restoration has been slow, at times, because of lack of funds, because of the war years which intervened between the purchase time and the beginning of the repairs that were necessary, and lack of information necessary to make the renovation authentic. These items have all been met and within a few weeks it is hoped that the little house will be ready for the next chapter in its life history.

It has been interesting to Myron Oliver, who has given of his time, enthusiasm, and knowledge of restoration procedure, to study the various phases through which the structure has gone in the years since it was built by the first owner, assisted by Mexican or possibly Indian labor. All partitions in the house were of wood but all the outside walls are of adobe, or were of adobe. When the old rotted floor was removed from one of the back rooms, the original foundation of rock was discovered. It is supposed that once upon a time the adobe wall had fallen out and been replaced with wood. Also discovered was a door space and the original door, made of cypress wood, which had been used as part of the paneling around the small room.

When the wooden partitions were removed in the large front room of the three-room adobe and the white-washed adobe walls exposed, a complete gray line, with the exception of the north walls, showed that there had been a chair rail around the room, a common thing in all adobe houses. When a party or a dance was given, the chairs were all lined up around the wall and the rail kept the clean white walls from being scratched by the chair backs.

The accepted reason for the lack of the chair rail on the north wall is that at one time this and adjoining adobe,

now occupied by an antique shop, were one. Later the property probably was divided and an additional wall built. That supposition also explains the lack of any signs that there had been a kitchen in the building in the early days. Early home owners in Monterey usually had an outdoor stove and an outbuilding for cooking.

Nailed to the inside of one of the wall boards when it was pulled off was a foot-long sample of the original chair rail which, when tried, exactly fitted the width of the gray unpainted space left on the other three walls – left as though the workman thought that someday, someone might do a restoration there. Also Mr. Oliver and the present-day workmen, found indications that the stairway which leads to the one room, second story was originally a part of the front room instead, of in the north room at the rear. This is being changed in the restoration.

The 1849 map, which is part of the valuable collections of early day records in the Few Memorial building, listed the adobe dwelling, now known as the Gutierrez Adobe, as the property of Jacob Leese. The building may have been owned by Thomas Oliver Larkin, for in 1849 he exchanged all his Monterey property for the San Francisco property of Jacob Leese, another prominent merchant who had been his partner for awhile.

On the 1852 assessment rolls the property is listed in the name of Joaquin Gutierrez and his wife, Josefa Gutierrez, who probably built the house.

Joaquin Gutierrez came to Monterey in 1831 at the age of 16 years. In 1836, he is listed as a soldier and age given as 20 years. In 1842 he is was again listed as Juez Auzilar. In the 1840's he married Josefa Escobar, the daughter of Marcelino and Tomasa Escobar. Her father was one time alcalde of Monterey who, in the year of his marriage, made a commercial voyage to China, with Santiago Estrada and others. He made a great deal of money and returned to California with many beautiful and expensive possessions. Her mother was born in Monterey. The couple had 15 children, of whom one daughter married and established herself in the home next to her parents and another daughter married a Captain Fray.

In 1852 Joaquin Gutierrez owned the Rancho El Portero de San Carlos, now owned by Arthur C. Oppenheimer. At that time it was one league square. Joaquin may have been the younger brother of one of the padres who served the missions of San Carlos and at San

Antonio. The fifth generation of the Gutierrez family are now living on the Peninsula. Mrs. Henry Potter Russell of Carmel Valley is the president of the Monterey Foundation, the sponsors of the restoration of the adobe. Mrs. John B. Morse is first vice president and Edward Tickle is the second vice president, Allen Griffin was the first president, Ted Clark is the secretary-treasurer. Members of the present board of directors are Carmel Martin, Myron Oliver, Andrew Jacobson, Harold Mack, Edward Tickle, Mrs. Mary Greene, Clyde Dorsey, Mrs. Frances Elkins, Dr. James B. Finley, Col. Roger S. Finch, Stuart Haldorn, Miss Margaret Jacks, and S. F. B. Morse.

A sustaining membership in the Foundation is \$25, patron membership is \$100, life \$500, and regular \$10.