

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Escolastica Wins a Wager

Yesterday we began a review of the life of Mrs. Martha Bolton, formerly of Monterey and Pacific Grove, who passed away in King City a year ago, and of her mother Dona Escolastica Rodriguez de Dye. Mrs. Bolton was the daughter of Job Dye, and early merchant of Monterey and business partner of Thomas Oliver Larkin, the only American Consul to Monterey.

Part of this historical data has been gleaned from old papers, from stories told by Mrs. Bolton to friends on the Peninsula and in King City and from the newspaper in the latter city.

Mrs. Bolton told the story often of her grandfather, Senor Rodriguez's vast acreage near Santa Cruz. Job Dye, owner of the sailing ships which brought the merchandise into Monterey for his store, was much older than his 16 year old bride Escolastica. She also told that her mother (born in 1822) was high-spirited and daring as well as lovely to look upon. Mr. Dye liked to "show off" his lovely wife as they rode about in a carriage with a colored driver.

Her father, Mrs. Bolton related, shipped gold dust from the mines, hiding it in the collars of his horses. This dust was often used later in Monterey to fill casarones which added to the gaiety of the dances and parties in the old town

Mrs. Bolton was very proud of the authentic story of her mother's winning of the stallion, Ten Thousand Dollars, from Governor Pio Pico. He had brought the animal from Sonora, and from the headquarters in El Curatel of the Mexican officers, he let it be known that in his opinion, there was not one in Monterey who could ride the horse. This was said in the presence of Jacinto Rodriguez (builder of the old adobe on Alvarado, sometimes known as the Osio adobe). Jacinto was a cousin of Escolastica, She heard the story and challenged his statement. Rider of horses since early childhood, she had no fear. Riding the sidesaddle and wearing the long habit of ladies of that day, she mounted the animal.

"Many a time I have heard it told," Mrs. Bolton said to her interviewer, "Madre mia, graceful and handsome, using the whip on the animal to show it who was the master." History tells, just as Mrs. Bolton told it, that

Escolastica rode the animal through the streets of Monterey to the edge of what is now Pacific Grove, and running with her were several hundred Spanish residents. On her return she rode to Ed Cuartel where she made the horse place its hoof on the steps as she saluted the Governor.

True to his promise the horse was presented to the lovely and fearless Escolastica, and when Commodore Sloat left for New York, Ten Thousand Dollars accompanied him on the "Savannah," the gift of the winner. In return Sloat sent her a library of 1000 books, and it is 100 of these that the Monterey History and Art Association acquired from Dr. And Mrs. Goscinko of King City, after the death of Mrs. Bolton. A very handsome old cameo brooch was also acquired by the Association. The frame for the cameo was made of pure California gold which had been presented to Thomas O. Larkin by Sutter who in turn had received it from James Marshall, the discoverer of gold in California. On the back of the cameo is a glass covered portrait of Larkin and an engraved greeting to Escolastica from Larkin. In Spanish are the names and a quotation, in Spanish, "Do not give up old friends for new".

In addition to the articles already named, there are in the Custom House two lacquer boxes brought from China in the early days, the remains of three very handsome white dresses of real lace and a lovely grey one, which are not always on display because of lack of space. These were also the property of Escolastica Rodriguez de Dye.