

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Washington Hotel

On the Home Forum page of a recent issue of the *Christian Science Monitor*, there appears a very charming drypoint of the "Old Washington Hotel Monterey", by William S. Rice, with the following story:

"Old Monterey, California, how many romantic and religious traditions cluster around its crumbling old adobes, its missions, its dark golden-green cypresses and balsamic pines. The town lies cosily in the hills, bordering a grand sweeping curve of its magnificent blue bay, where the low sandy beach slopes down to the eastern and southern shores and meets the rocky coast that bounds the peninsula. The great variety of its scenery, its historic associations, and the deep blue waters and skies in the vicinity, have offered numberless subjects for the brush and pen of many artists and writers from early times to the present day.

"In his rambles about Monterey, searching for old landmarks in the year 1901, the artist came across the almost deserted adobe building known as the Washington Hotel, the resort of fashion during the period of Monterey's greatest prosperity. It was then almost tenantless, with the exception of the south wing in which a Spanish family lived, and a room on the second floor of the main structure which was occupied by an aged lady, one of the last of the Carmel Indians. Queer little brown faces peered at him from all sorts of nooks and corners, as he sat and worked on his sketch of the old ruin.

"From this sketch of an angle in the courtyard, he later made the drypoint herewith reproduced. Not only is the sketch attractive in itself but it evokes eloquently the image of a period long since vanished. This was a California which will never return."

The Washington Hotel was erected about 1832, and for a few years was the private residence of Don Eugenio Montenegro, who married a member of the Soberanes family. The adobe building was over 200 feet in length, with a breadth of over 50 feet.

In 1849 it was owned by Don Alberto Trescony, a worker in tin, who arrived in California in 1841. Many of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention stayed in the hotel, which had been leased by John O'Neil, a former private in the regiment of Colonel J.D.

Stevenson, an early day actor at the First Theatre, a former Justice of the Peace of Monterey, and a grandfather of Mrs. O.C. Fleisher of Monterey.

The old hotel was wrecked in 1914 and the present Herald Building now stands on the site.

Miss Fanny Jeffers Pray of Oakland, the granddaughter of The Rev. Samuel Hopkins Wiley, chaplain of the California Constitutional Convention in 1849, has placed on loan in Colton Hall, a pocket size Bible which she believes is undoubtedly the one used by Wiley at the Convention. His name is written in ink in his own handwriting on the fly leaf. The book was published in 1845. Miss Pray has also loaned the little melodeon which has been in Colton Hall since its restoration for the 1949 centennial. It was the one upon which Rev. Mr. Wiley played during the Convention.

Twenty-six years ago, on October 3rd, the Duke of Alba, who was also the Count of Monterrey, planted a redwood tree on the Hotel Del Monte grounds, now the General Line School. The Duke and his entourage were guests at the Lodge. He was a lineal descendant of the County of Monterrey, Don Gaspar Zuniga, for whom Monterey, California, was named.

The baby redwood was planted on the lawn in front of the hotel building which had been destroyed by fire the previous month. He then visited with Father Mestres at San Carlos church and went with him to the Mission at Carmel where the party took part in a preview of the Father Junipero Serra sarcophagus, which had just been finished by the late Joe Mora, sculptor.

Also on October 3rd in 1769, Don Gaspar de Portola, seeking the Port of Monterey, reached Point of Pines, thus standing on the very rim of Monterey Bay without recognizing it.

Newton Drury, director of the National Park Service and Mrs. Drury, were the house guests for several days last week of Mr. and Mrs. M.A. Cartwright in their home at the entrance to Carmel Valley. During their stay on the peninsula Mr. and Mrs. Drury and their hosts paid visits to the state-owned buildings in Monterey – the Custom House, the Stevenson House and First Theatre. They were high in their praise of the accomplishments of the curators and their superiors and of the interest shown by the citizens of the community.

Mrs. Maidie Brown, curator of the Vallejo home at Sonoma, visited Monterey's historical buildings during a

visit here last week with Mrs. Burton Holmes in her Pacific Grove home.