

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

December 13, 1950

### **Scholze Park**

Ernest A. Scholze was 86 years old last September 9, the same day that California became one hundred years old. Mr. Scholze was born in Rosenthal (meaning Rose Valley) in Saxony in 1864. In that year Saxony was a country of Europe, now it is a part of Germany.

For the benefit of those newcomers to the Peninsula, it might be well to introduce Mr. Scholze as the very generous person who presented to the City of Monterey the block of land in New Monterey, now known as Scholze Park. The dedication ceremony was held July 22, 1939 when a bronze plaque was placed on a huge boulder in the park and Mr. Scholze was duly honored.

The plot of ground includes ten lots which the donor bought from Milton Little's family in 1899. He had had a nursery and hot houses on the property for many years. When we found Mr. Scholze watering his plants in one of the glass-houses, he told us that he bought the block of land because of the curious rock formations there and because he admired the several old Cypress trees that grew there. There was also a small house facing on Foam street which he later raised and built another story beneath it. That two-story house is now his home. Mr. Scholze reserved the right to continue his nursery and make his home there as long as he lives. His answer to our question as to why he gave the park to the city was "There wasn't a green spot between Colton Hall and Pacific Grove for the people to enjoy, and so I thought I would provide such a place."

Mr. Scholze served an apprenticeship for three years in Dresden and attended garden school for two terms in evening classes. He then worked for large nurseries in three different places in his native land. He joined a brother in New York on the third of April in 1884, going direct to Castle Garden which was the German immigrant house then. His first position in his adopted land was in the state of New Jersey for one season and there it was that the Scotch wife of one of the gardeners gave him his first lessons in the English language. After that experience he took work in a baker's shop until gardening work was again available. One of the positions he was offered would have sent him to work at 5 o'clock in the morning, with 7 o'clock as the quitting time. He laughed when he said: "I was so

small and so short the head gardener thought I was only 12 years old, and that I would not be worth any more salary."

In 1890, Mr. Scholze returned to Saxony and brought his younger brother back with him. This time he landed on Ellis Island. He also had one sister in the United States. She lived in Jacksonville, Florida, and passed away of yellow fever in 1886.

After six years on the east coast, Mr. Scholze came to San Francisco in 1891 and one year later to the old Hotel Del Monte where he served under Mr. Clak, the father of Mrs. Sidney Pickles, and then under Tom Lee, who succeeded Mr. Clak, and Scholze became the manager of the nursery. He left Del Monte's employ in January of 1924, after almost 32 years.

Mr. Scholze was the first patron of Monterey Chapter of Eastern Star when it was organized in 1906, and the meetings were held in the hall of the La Porte building on Alvarado Street. He was master of the Monterey Masonic lodge in 1906, having become a member of the order when the late Will Jacks was the master.

When the dedication ceremonies were held at the park in 1939, the Monterey Peninsula Garden Club was in charge. B. J. Pardee, the city manager, accepted the gift in the name of the City of Monterey. Others introduced included Dr. James B. Finley, chairman of the Monterey Planning Commission, and Mayor Emmet McMEnamin, who added their words of appreciation for the gift. Gloria Gonsalves, then only 10 years old, thanked the donor on behalf of the children on the Peninsula.

Mayor McMEnamin surprised Mr. Scholze with a large, framed parchment scroll memorializing the event. Bearing the official seal of the city and signed by the mayor, the scroll read: "To Mr. Ernest Scholze: The Council of the City of Monterey on behalf of its people hereby expresses its gratitude for your generous gift of ten lots, hereafter to be known as Scholze Park. By this gift you bring joy to Monterey for generations to come."

The scroll was awarded by the mayor and created by Carmen Rubio, then a pupil of Armin Hansen. William Fiddes, former mayor of Pacific Grove and past president of the garden club, spoke. Roddie Maddock, resident of New Monterey, cemented the bronze plaque into the age-old outcropping rock. He plaque was cast by Robert Peterson, Peninsula metal artist.

Over 100 persons were present, including members of nearly every state organization of the region including Mrs. John P. Sandholdt, president of the Monterey Civic Club, and members of the executive board of that organization.