

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 13, 1950

### **Colton Hall School Days**

The school and Colton Hall were still uppermost in the minds of the Common Council of the City of Monterey when they met on June 10, 1850.

"Report received from special committee on Schools. Ordered that the report be filed and committee instructed to confer with the master of the Spanish school as to whether he desires a room which is now vacant in Colton Hall and at the disposal of this body."

On July 29, the Common Council passed: "On motion the Schoolmaster was given permission to use this building upon Sundays as a school."

Monterey or the Common Council once had a chance to sell Colton Hall to the Catholic Church for the "establishment of an Academy for Young Lady's amongst us." The minutes read, on February 6, 1851:

"The new Catholic Bishop, Right Rev. Joseph S. Alemany, accompanied by one of his clergy, was introduced by Mr. David Spence to this Council. The Clerk read a lengthy petition from the Bishop, bearing also the signatures of 37 of the citizens of Monterey which, after stating the importance and the great advantages that would result from the establishment of an Academy for Young Lady's amongst us, concluded by praying that the Council would sell Colton Hall, with the ground thereto belonging, at as low a price as possible to the Bishop for the purposes already stated in the petition. On motion, the petition was received. Ald Cooper moved that a committee be appointed to report on the subject at the next meeting. Carried."

The proposed sale was turned down at a meeting of the Council on February 10, 1851, when a committee of three gentlemen, Messrs. Cooper, Diaz and Curtis, were appointed to inform the Bishop that his proposition could not be accepted by the Common Council.

On January 13, 1852, the Council received a letter from the Assembly of California and the Senate of California stating: From the diversity of opinion existing at present as to where the next Legislature shall hold its session, we are of the opinion that a contingency may arise, which may enable us to urge the claims of Monterey, to the Seat of the Government. And as your Representatives we desire to be empowered by your Honorable Body to offer for the use of the State the

Public Buildings at your disposal. We invite your instant attention to this matter as it is of deep interest to the people of Monterey.

It was not until November 17, 1896, that Resolution No. 56, was passed to print to clear the title on the property known as "Colton Hall," now held and claimed by the Trustees of the Monterey School district and others. At that date W.W. James was the president of the Board of Trustees. Just one year later on Nov. 2, 1897, "The city attorney reported the decision of Judge Dorn in favor of the City vs. the Monterey School district for the Colton Hall property."

President Johnson of the Council informed the board on Feb. 17, 1899, that he was in receipt of a letter from Assemblyman Feliz, stating "that his bill for the restoration and preservation of Colton Hall had been reported favorably by the committee."

On August 4, 1890, Trustee Kennedy protested against Colton Hall being used as a camping grounds. After discussion the board concluded it best not to use the property as a camping ground as the privilege had been abused by campers.

During February of 1900 there were discussions back and forth between the school board and the Council concerning the school lot adjoining the Colton Hall property and finally decided not to bid for it at that time as "our treasury is not in condition to warrant the expense and we are not in any present need of larger grounds." In March, 1903, the following motion was carried after a motion by Mr. Schaufele: "The Clerk was instructed to draw a warrant for the sum of \$400 and retain the amount ordered drawn until the delivery of the deed for the lot to the city, by the school trustees." Trustees of the school district were Ross C. Sargent, J.K. Oliver and L.D. Lacey. The property included as described in the deed:

"Commencing at a point on Gordon Street, in said City of Monterey, at the SW Corner of the stone wall enclosing the Monterey jail as it now stands, running hence on the east line of Gordon Street 50 feet; hence at right angles easterly 245 feet, a little more or less, to the westerly line of Pacific Street; hence at right angles northerly 40 feet to the district school lot; etc., being a piece of land 50 feet wide on the easterly side of Gordon Street and 40 feet wide on the westerly side of Pacific Street by 245 feet deep, a little more or less."

“Together with all and singular tenements,  
hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging  
or in any wise appertaining, and the reversion and  
reversions, remainder and remainders, rents, issues and  
profits thereof.”

To Miss Marjorie Brown, Monterey City Tax Collector,  
this volume owes a debt of gratitude for the  
information contained in the series on the history of  
Colton Hall. She went through the old records and  
gleaned most of the information for the record.