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The Long Story Behind The Underwood Adobe

It is most appropriate that Mrs. Owen Byles, a native daughter of Monterey, should be the president of Juniper Parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West. Mrs. Byles was Miss Ruth Brown, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles U. Brown before her marriage, and the grand daughter of Mrs. Margaret Underwood bought the Brown-Underwood Adobe, now incorporated the Hall ground.

On April 25th, 1949, the members of Junipero Parlor dedicated a bronze plaque on the Madison street side of the building in the memory of Margaret Underwood Brown, a loyal Native Daughter. Members of the grand parlor of the Native Daughters, including the grand president of that year, were present to do honor to Mrs. Brown and her descendants.

The City of Monterey acquired the adobe in 1926 almost 23 years after the death of Charles Underwood, who had expressed a wish that the property should pass into the hands of the city.

For several years after the acquisition the old building was known by such various names as "the Brown House", and the "American Legion Headquarters." In 1927 City Manager Dorton announced that thereafter the little house would be known as the Charles Underwood Adobe.

The building together with its large grounds, rounded out the city's holding in Colton Hall Park and its acquisition made possible the municipal rose garden which was planted at the corner of Dutra and Madison under the supervision of the late Francis E. Lester. Later, when the Few Memorial building was built, the Underwood Adobe was made a part of the civic center as it now stands.

The land on which this old adobe is situated was included in the original Monterey City lands, which totaled more than 27,000 acres granted by the Mexican government and later patented to the city by the United States government.

It was in 1843 that the site of the Charles Underwood adobe was deeded by the alcalde of Monterey to one Santiago Stokes who put up the older portion of the building. Three-foot adobe walls constructed by Stokes are still intact and good for many years of use.

Later in the same year Stokes sold the property to Jose Maria Sanchez. The deed under which the residence was transferred is very interesting document. It describes how Stokes took Sanchez through the place while the new owner opened the doors, pounded on the walls, scattered handfuls of dirt about the back garden and by other ceremonies indicated his ownership. Stokes watched these ceremonies without objection and Sanchez' title to the property was established without questions

Sanchez died in 1853 and the adobe passed to his heirs. At a public auction held during the next year the residence was bid in for \$700 by Bill Roach, the sheriff of Monterey County. At this time both Monterey and San Benito Counties were one, Monterey was the county seat, and Colton Hall was the seat of the government.

W.S. Johnson, county clerk, purchased the property from the sheriff for the price of \$750 shortly afterward and Johnston maintained title until 1866 when he sold to Charles Underwood for \$650. From this date until the property passed to the City of Monterey in 1926 it was in the Underwood family,

Many will remember the fascinating exhibit of Mallorcan arts and crafts exhibited last spring through the generosity of Mrs. Dina Moore Bowden. Following her visit on the Peninsula, Mrs. Bowden returned to her Mallorca home where she joined her husband, George Bowden, who had not made the journey to United States with her.

Recently friends she made while here have received their belated Christmas cards from the Bowdens. The cards came from Spindrifft, their home, which is about nine miles from Palma and near Petra, the birthplace of Father Juniper Serra. The home is now the property of the City of San Francisco and to it Mrs. Bowden took pictures of Carmel Mission, where the founder of the California missions is buried, and several other gift from the mission and friends.

The card is centered with a drawing of half the globe showing the Island of Mallorca, the birthplace and the home of the Bowdens, then flying doves of peace connecting the Eiffel Tower in France. Westminster in London, New York skyscrapers and around is San Francisco and down to the Peninsula, recognized by a drawing of the two churches, San Carlos in Monterey

and the mission of Carmel. The greeting reads "Peace on Earth."