

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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History and Art

During 1934 more historical markers were placed by the Monterey History and Art Association, including the First Post Office in Old Monterey, "El Castillo" the old Spanish fort below the artillery stables in the Presidio; Governor Alvarado's early home and the original southeast corner of the old Presidio of Monterey. The installation of these markers brought the number of historic sites and buildings marked to sixteen.

In 1934, formation of the San Juan Bautista plaza, together with the adjoining Zanetta home and adjacent historic buildings, into a California State Monument, took place.

The Association expended \$275 toward the restoration on the new site of the Old French Consulate.

During 1935 six more markers were added to the Historic Trail: Brown-Underwood adobe, built in 1843; Cooper House built about 1845; House of Four Winds, built in the late 1830s; Larkin House, American consulate in 1844-46; site of El Cuartel, old California's first American capitol, 1847-49; and Casa Verde, the house where Charles Warren Stoddard wrote his last works.

During 1936 the number of historic markers was brought to forty, by the following additional ones: Old Pacific building, Casa Munras, one of the first residences built outside the walls of the old Presidio; Casa Rodriguez-Osio, built about 1820; Casa Alvarado, the residence of Governor Juan Alvarado from 1836-1842; Casa de la Torre, headquarters of the Alcalde when Monterey was taken by the Mexicans in 1846; Site of the First Convent in California; Casa Abrego, built by Don Jose Abrego in the late 1830s; Site of Casa Bonifacio (The Sherman Rose Adobe); Casa Amesti, built by Don Jose Amesti in the 1820s; Gordon House, one of the "early milled lumber" houses in California; site of the First French Consulate in California; Stokes House, built by James Stokes in the early 1840s (Gragg Adobe); Casa Pacheco, built in the early 1840s by Don Francisco Pacheco; Casa Serrano, built by Don Florencio Serrano, an alcalde of Old Monterey; Mission Inn, built by Don Jose Estrada during the Mexican era, and Casa Soberanes also built by Don Estrada and later owned by the Soberanes family.

On July 7th, 1936, the 90th anniversary of the capture of Monterey by the U.S. Navy was celebrated under the sponsorship of the Association. At the Custom House an unveiling of the portrait of William P. Toler, the young midshipman of the "Savannah" who raised the American

flag over the Old Custom House, took place. The portrait was presented to the museum by his son, James Hoyt Toler and is now hanging in the main room.

In 1937, Colonel Fitch begged to be excused from the presidency of the association and the late J.R. McKillop, principal of the Monterey high school became the president. On June 1st of that year Mrs. Laura Bride Powers who had been one of the moving spirits of the entire program of the association, announced her retirement as curator and custodian of the historical monuments and landmarks in Monterey.

In 1937 the Denny-Watrous management took over the production of plays at the First Theatre which have remained throughout the years, worthy of widespread and favorable attention.

In 1939 Mr. Ted K Clark was elected president and most of his term was taken up with efforts to save the old chalk rock house on Van Buren street, without success.

In January 1940 Colonel Fitch returned as president. The Stevenson House was accepted by the State of California in 1941, due to his efforts. The cacti along the wall in the Custom House garden were presented by Myron Oliver in memory of his father, the late J.K. Oliver. The association played a part in seeing that the original site of the flag pole at the Custom House was marked and that the new pole be made of Monterey pine. The ancient anchor which now adorns the north end of the Custom House was unveiled on April 28th, 1946, under the sponsorship of the association, with William M. O'Donnell acting as chairman of both the placing of the anchor and the ceremonies.

The more recent years in the life and work of the Monterey History and Art are too well known to repeat here. There have been meriendas on June 3rd each year in Memory Garden, there have been evening programs and historic tours sponsored by the Association to acquire funds to assist in the restoration of the Gutierrez adobe owned by the Monterey Foundation, and there have been numerous gifts received and historical objects, books and documents purchased to add to the attractiveness and interest in the Old Custom House Museum, the First Theatre, The Stevenson House and the Monterey Library.

Colonel Fitch is no longer the president after sixteen years of service to the association, assisted by Carmel Martin as vice-president. He resigned the latter part of 1949 and attended the annual meeting of the board of directors held last week that he might have the honor to nominate Thomas W. Norris as his successor.