

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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He Baked Flower Pots

In The Republican, printed in Monterey February 2, 1871, there appeared this short news item: "By the Pacific Mr. Escolle has sent to San Francisco some 5000 flower pots of Monterey manufacture. They find ready sale in San Francisco"

Those pots were made in the garden at the back of the Stokes adobe on Hartnell street and were baked in a baker's oven which stood near the rear wall which enclosed the property. In recent years the house has been the home of the late Mrs. W.W. Gragg. It was built in the 1830's by Dr. James Stokes, a shop keeper. The ambitious young man built in his beautiful white house one of the largest "salas" in the capital, so it often came about that when affairs of political import were to be staged, the Stokes house was pressed into service. It was later purchased by Honore Escolle, a wealthy Frenchman.

Honore Escolle was born in France on the 24th of December, 1832, and immigrated to the United States in 1847, settling in New Orleans. After a residence of about five years in that city, he started for California, arriving in 1852. He selected Monterey county as his residence and at once engaged in business in the city of Monterey by opening a bakery and general store, in which business he continued until 1886 when he sold to his son-in-law, A. Manuel.

In 1872 he purchased about 1400 acres of the Paraje de Sanchez ranch near Gonzales in this county and there spent a great amount of money. He planted about 50 acres of fruit trees, which turned out to be a good investment. He had a splendid home on the ranch where he and his family spent the summer months. He also owned 5,000 acres of land in San Luis Obispo County which he devoted to dairying and stock raising.

Honore Escolle was married in 1854 to Miss Adele Duval, an accomplished young lady and also a native of France, according to an early Monterey country history. They were the parents to 11 children, three sons and eight daughters. One daughter married W. H. Pyburn, one time county recorder; another married B.H. Lucke, a prominent merchant of San Francisco; and another became Mrs. A. Manuel. Leon, the eldest son, was in charge of his father's ranch at Gonzales for several

years "but as he had an excellent business education, he resigned that position for a more lucrative occupation congenial to his tastes"

The Monterey New Era on December 18, 1895, printed the following notice of the death of Honore Escolle: "This morning at about five o'clock, Honore Escolle, surrounded by his family, passed peacefully away to his eternal rest at the age of 62 years. He had been ill for several weeks. Word was sent to his son, Charles, in Mexico, who immediately started for home and reached here last Monday evening. The other members of the family living had been in continual attendance at this bedside.

"Honore Escolle was born in Salernes, Var, France. After a few years' residence in New Orleans he started across the plains to California in 1852, stopping in Sacramento. This following year he came to Monterey"

Mr. Escolle was a member of Monterey Lodge and also of the Masonic Veterans' Association. The funeral took place from the family home on Hartnell street. The funeral service was held in San Carlos Catholic Church, after which the Monterey Lodge F. & A.M. assumed the direction; the interment was made with the rites of the Fraternity.

In the Old Custom House there is a broken piece of pottery with a charming yellow glaze which was designed and made by Mr. Escolle, probably fired in the same oven which had fired the flower pots which were shipped to San Francisco in 1871. There are still many pieces of the old pottery distributed among the early day families in Monterey which would someday make an interesting loan exhibit (if not gifts) in one of the historic buildings. Mr. Escolle, it is said became interested in making of pottery here because he thought the soil was adaptable and he sent to France for a potter to come to Monterey to assist him in the project—but the venture was not profitable and the making of pottery did not last long.