

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Boronda and Buelna Adobes

One of the earliest adobes erected in Monterey is the Boronda Adobe which was built by Don Manuel de Boronda in 1817 and is still to be found intact on Boronda Lane, a short street branching off from Sherman Lane, which in turn leads off from Fremont street. It is now the home of Dr. and Mrs. Mast Wolfson.

Don Manuel de Boronda, a native of Jerez, Spain, came to California as corporal in the Spanish Army during the early days of the Spanish colonization movement. Boronda became the first schoolmaster in San Francisco in 1796, according to the seventh Spanish governor, Diego de Borica, 1794-1800. He taught gratuitously from May, 1796, to June, 1797, when he moved to Monterey and the artilleryman, Jose Alvarez, took his place, according to a list of the teachers of public schools in California from 1794 to 1846, published in Bancroft's California Pastoral.

For many years Boronda was kept exceedingly busy with his activities as carpenter, school teacher and soldier, in and around Monterey. When he finally retired from the Spanish service, Boronda took up from 12 to 14 acres, located directly back of the San Carlos Church at the end of Boronda Lane, so his womenfolk would not have far to walk to church.

Here he built the Boronda adobe with the aid of friends and Indians. The original building consisted of one small room in the center with two large rooms on either side. The beams are axe-hewn and some are twisted. The building, which is 87 feet long by 20 feet wide, follows the slope of the ground.

When originally built and for many years after, the floors were of dirt, but when wooden floors were put in, it was necessary to have one step in the center of the building added in order to make the floors approximately level. This caused the ceiling in all of the rooms to be some inches lower at one end than the other. The difference in the height of the ceiling from one end of the house to the other is 15 inches, according to the historical survey made in 1937.

Boronda was one of four retired soldiers who built the first adobe dwellings outside the San Carlos Presidio Church walls. That was when the present Royal Presidio

chapel and the first Presidio were enclosed within a wall now marked by one of the History and Art Association markers. As the other three adobes are in ruins, Casa de Boronda is probably the oldest adobe residence in Monterey.

In 1817, Governor Sola appointed Manuel de Boronda to conduct the first school for boys in Monterey, which was held in the Boronda adobe. The school was supported for the most part by Solas' money.

The building has been thoroughly remodeled without changing the outside structure. The Spanish fence that once surrounded the rose garden, however, is gone and a high wall obstructs the view of the adobe.

Also on the Mesa is the Buelna adobe, a two-story dwelling which is one of the oldest in Monterey. The builder, Antonio Buelna, was a Mexican soldier, who first settled in San Francisco. Prior to 1801 he owned a rancho near Monterey. Buelna was a teacher at Monterey and San Jose during the years 1818-21, and he conducted a select school for girls in this adobe during part of that time.

The names of Buelna and Don Manuel de Boronda are often linked together in the activities of that day as they were great friends and neighbors.

On the map of 1849, the house is described as on "hill beyond the church." In 1851 it was assessed to Elario Ons Willner (Buelna) for \$20. In 1855, it was assessed to the same for \$100.

A son of Buelna, Antonio, was a soldier and later was Alcalde of Monterey in 1831.

The building has been entirely restored and is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Leo A. Ross. An extensive and well-kept garden surrounds the adobe which commands a magnificent view of the bay and surrounding hills.