

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Old Washington Hotel

The Washington Hotel stood on the corner of Washington and Pearl street in Monterey, where the Herald building is now, until 1914 when it was demolished to make room for "progress." It was a three and a half-story adobe building, erected in 1832, and for a few years was the private home of Don Eugenio Montenegro, who married a member of the well-known Soberanes family, after which it was used as a hotel. Following the American conquest in 1846, additions were made from time to time to the original structure to accommodate the increasing demands brought on by the new era.

The building was over 200 feet in length, with a breadth of about 50 feet. At one end was an annex two stories high which extended 100 feet at right angles to the main building. The adobe walls were covered with white-washed plaster. There were accommodations for over one hundred guests. The building stood facing the southeast, looking directly to the spot where the Cuartel once stood.

In 1849 it was owned by Don Alberto Trescony, a worker in tin, who arrived in California in 1841, and who later acquired a large fortune through judicious investments in lands. It is said that during the first Constitutional Convention held in California, that gave California the Constitution in 1849, the hotel was leased by Trescony for \$1,200 a month to a former private In the regiment of Colonel J.D. Stevenson. At that time the hotel entertained and sheltered the delegates. It was a place for the bon-ton alone, for its rates were then \$200 a month without board, according to the W.P.A. Historical survey.

Most historians referring to the accommodations for the delegates during the Convention, say that there were no hotels in Monterey at the time of that important gathering. Bayard Taylor in his "Eldorado" writes: "At the Washington House I obtained excellent board at \$12 per week."

For many years the Washington Hotel remained the city's chief hostelry. Notable among the feature of its social life were the "Cascarone" balls. In the early seventies, the county seat of Monterey County, which had formerly been at Monterey, was, by popular vote,

transferred to Salinas. This event cast a shadow over the old Peninsula and withdrew the official life to the neighboring town. There was no recovery from this loss, and at the coming of the Hotel Del Monte, the old Washington Hotel had passed the stage of competition.

In 1899, it was owned by Judge J.B. Snively. By this time its career was practically ended, and it rapidly began to disintegrate. From that time on to the time it was wrecked in 1914, its course was consistently downward.

When Mr. Trescony bought the old adobe home of Juan Montenegro, added the wing to it and opened the hotel, he paid his stone masons \$20 a day and charged his guests \$10 a day and up. Alberto Trescony, of Italian birth and parentage, who once spelled his name Tresconi, crossed the ocean as a very young man and settled in Memphis, Tenn. From there he made a tour of inspection of Mexico and in 1841 came on horseback to California, establishing himself at Monterey, as a worker in tin. According to Bayard Taylor, he was without money but obtained the loan of some sheets of tin, which he manufactured into cups and sold. From this beginning he amassed a fortune. In addition to his regular trade he did considerable work in making pans for miners and would often take a load of these by ox teams to the mining camps.

The first land purchase made by Alberto Trescony consisted of one hundred and sixty acres where Salinas now stands. At one time he owned property aggregating forty-five thousand acres of land in Monterey County. He retained his robust health to a very advanced age. His death occurred in 1892 at the age of 80 years. His wife, who was Catherine Cotton, of England, died in 1866, leaving three children, Julius A., Mrs. Rose Christal and Teresa, who married R.F. Johnson of Monterey. Mr. Johnson was former mayor of the city and the family owned and lived in the home which is now known as the Larkin House.

Mrs. John Cooper and Mrs. William I. Wilson of Carmel and Mrs. John L. Mears of British Columbia are the granddaughters of Mr. Trescony and the daughters of the late Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. Mrs. Anita Christal Purdy of Carmel is the daughter of the late Mrs. Rose Christal and also granddaughter of Alberto Trescony.