

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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When Alvarado Fleed

Early in July of 1840 the American; man-of-war St. Louis and a French ship arrived in Monterey to demand satisfaction from Alvarado. He had pretended to receive information of a deep-laid plan to overthrow the government and had ordered the arrest of all connected with the conspiracy. Nearly 100 Americans had been thrown into jail and hurried off to San Blas. The arrests had been made chiefly at the Washington Hotel, the site which was where The Herald building now stands.

When the Governor heard of the approach of the ships, he promptly displayed the better part of valor and went to the mountains for his health, according to a story published many years ago. His health did not improve until the ships left the harbor.

While the officers and men of the St. Louis and the French ship were in Monterey, the old Washington was full of life. American and French flags were entwined, while the "host bowed himself lame to the epauletted officers. A grand ball was given in honor of the rovers of the sea. There were hosts of pretty Spanish girls in Monterey and they were jolly enough when out of sight of their duennas. Their gardens were surrounded by high adobe walls, suggestive of a cloister, but on ball nights they were allowed to blossom undisturbed."

It has been said by early residents who remembered the interior of the old adobe in its day of glamor, that the ball room was wainscoted with Philippine mahogany. Mrs. Millie Birks recalls when she was a child being taken by her aunt and uncle, Captain and Mrs. J.G. Lambert, to the balls in the Hotel and she says that it "was very pretty." They would put her in a far corner to look on and when she became too tired she went to sleep. The ballroom was lighted with oil lamps in brackets around the walls and a couple of huge hanging lamps in the ceiling. Mrs. Birks also remembers an early day manager of the hotel, a Mr. Lockwood, who went to the wharf each day for fish for the dining room, which was on the first floor.

The WPA Historical Survey and the early newspaper clipping found in Felipe Gomez's scrapbook, both place the old Washington Hotel on the corner of Pearl and Washington streets, facing east, looking directly toward

the spot where the Cuartel once stood. This could not be true for the reason that the Cuartel was situated where the Chamber of Commerce now stands, facing west.

Many interesting signatures appear in the old Washington Hotel register which is on display at the Custom House. Many visitors came to Monterey from Natividad, Pajaro, Salinas, San Juan and Watsonville, and stayed the night, the distance then being too far to return home the same day. The Breens from San Juan, the Watsons from Salinas, Trescony from Natividad, Tresconi of San Lucas, Thos. Layton of Hong Kong, China; Soberanes of Soledad and Joseph Acklin, Salinas Plains, were among those registered. Mr. Ceruti, Italian consul was a guest on Nov. 1, 1865. Jenks and his team of horses were also named in the book. Men from the Cooper Tancho, Los Cookes Rancho, the Boronda Rancho, San Francisquito, and others. There were men from the U.S. Flagship Savannah here on March 17, 1867, Charles Josslyn of the schooner Ada May, who arrived the next day, seven men from the flagship Pensacola, and a group of actors, Talbot Wallace and Edmonds Minstrels. On June 3, 1870, the California Pioneers met in Monterey and the members registered at the Hotel Washington.