

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Mr. Little's Houses

In 1844 Milton Little arrived in Monterey. He became a partner in a mercantile business with Thomas O. Larkin, the first and only American Consul to California, the place of business being located in the Larkin House on the corner of Calle Principal and Jefferson streets. After a few years the partnership was dissolved and Mr. Little went into business for himself.

In 1851 Milton Little decided to erect a number of residences and as a consequence he imported quantities of heavy timber from Australia and galvanized iron from New York, the iron being cut and grooved to his specifications Both shipments arrived by sailing ships. He had ordered sufficient iron to cover the outside walls of six houses, but in the end received just enough to cover four houses. At this date the only house still standing in Monterey built by Mr. Little of the imported iron, is enclosed in the Kimball Hotel on Alvarado street.

Two houses built by Mr. Little of the same material were in New Monterey. The one known as the Ranch House occupied the corner where the Lighthouse Furniture Company now stands and the other was across the street and was the home of Mr. Little's son, David Little, and his family.

After building the house on Alvarado street, Milton Little opened his own mercantile business, using the lower floor for his office and store, and the 10 rooms on the second floor as his residence. He was also, in later years, the local agent for the Wells Fargo Express Company.

During Mr. Little's occupation of the building now known as the Kimball Hotel, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1849, would gather there and it is said that many of the ideas which were incorporated into the final draft were composed in his shop, although he was not one of the signers of the finished work.

Another story which has been handed down in the family of Milton Little is that Mrs. Little always placed a lantern in the window of their home at night to guide the ships into the harbor of Monterey.

In 1865 Little discontinued his mercantile business and sold the property, moving to the ranch house in New

Monterey. The late Mrs. Lucy Little Wolter, whose home was for many years on Van Buren street near Scott, was a daughter of Milton Little, and Walter Colton Little of Oakland (named for Walter Colton), who surveyed much of the land on the Peninsula in the early days, is a son. Mrs. Mary Murray, Mrs. Frank Massie and Milton Little Wolter, all of Monterey; and Harry Wolter of Palo Alto, are Milton Little's grandchildren.

Shortly after the sale of the Alvarado street property it was opened as a small hotel under the name of the Hampton House. The property was again sold, in 1882, this time to Louis Schaufele, president of the Monterey Whaling Company, the name of the hotel by that time being that of Bay View. More addition and remodeling was done, and when this was completed the name was changed to Pacific Ocean House. When Mr. Schaufele got the property it measured 45 x 40 feet, which had originally been part of an early Spanish grant. It now has a frontage of 198 feet, according to Mrs. L.E. Kimball, the present owner.

Mr. Schaufele, who was Mrs. Kimball's father, passed away in 1896 and his widow married R. Chambre, well known in local musical circles. He became manager of the hotel, and in an advertisement appearing in the newspaper of 1893, the fact was stressed that it was "an ideal hotel for families, with gardens adjoining the premises, and swings, hammocks, etc., for the children."

Upon the death of Mrs. Chambre in 1911, the property came into the possession of Mrs. Kimball. The building had by that time been changed considerably, the iron was covered with shiplap and later the balcony was removed and stucco was placed over the wood. Old timers can remember when the guests sat in comfortable chairs both on the upper balcony and on the porch which bordered the sidewalk on Alvarado street. It is also recalled that there was a Chinese laundry next door which was patronized by most of the residents.

When the hotel was being remodeled by Mr. and Mrs. Kimball, a grandson of Milton Little, Henry Little, worked on the building and discovered to his surprise some of the tin which his ancestor had had placed there.