

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 10, 1950

The Consulate Today

On December 4, 1933, at a meeting of the board of directors of the Monterey History and Art Association held in the Old Custom House, it was moved by the late Colonel Easton Gibson and seconded by the late W.O. Raiguel that a letter be sent to Monterey's city manager stating that a committee of the association consisting of Mr. F.P. Howard, Miss E. Charlton Fortune and Mr. C.J. Ryland had been appointed to cooperate with the city in the moving of the French Consulate. The directors voted \$250 toward the expense of the materials required to complete the removal and restoration.

The following letter was sent to the city authorities on December 5, 1933, signed by Col. Roger Fitch, president of the Monterey History and Art Association:

"The Monterey History and Art Association is extremely interested in the efforts of the city to preserve the historic first French Consulate in California by moving it to city owned property in El Estero Park where it can be preserved permanently.

"This old adobe was built over a hundred years ago and except for the American Consulate (Larkin House) is the only consulate in California of the time preceding the Mexican War. It occupied a real place in early California history and is of great historical and architectural interest.

"At a meeting of the directors of the Association this date, it was unanimously agreed that an offer of assistance be made in this matter including the appointment of a committee to assist directly in the moving and restoration of the building to the proposed eminently fitting new location. Further, understanding that the cost of the materials provided by the city will amount to some \$500, the board unanimously voted to accept responsibility for providing half the amount so needed, specifically the sum of \$250.

"In view of the important bearing that this historic adobe and its early official occupants had upon early California history, especially during the crucial days immediately preceding the American occupation of California, it is hoped that it may be preserved for the generations yet to come."

Present at the meeting were the following directors: Colonel Fitch, Miss Charlton Fortune, Mrs. Laura Bride

Powers, Mrs. Jane Todd, Mrs. Vera Peck Mills, Colonel Easton Gibson, William M. O'Donnell, W.O. Raiguel, Myron Oliver, Armin Hansen, C.J. Ryland, Ralph Hughes, Allen Griffin and F.P. Howard.

In the fourth annual report of Colonel Fitch as president of the Monterey History and Art Association, there is this notation.

"The taking apart, adobe brick, beam by beam, and plank by plank of the first French Consulate and its reconstruction on city owned El Estero Park was completed early in 1934. To this work the Association contributed, first, the initial saving of the building from destruction; next a committee to work with the city, and third, half the cost of the additional material required. The City of Monterey furnished the other half and the services of an expert building superintendent (J.C. Anthony), while the SERA provided the labor."

On March 16, 1935, a request was made by the Carmel-Monterey Council of Girl Scouts that the First French Consulate be made available for use as the Girl Scout headquarters in Monterey. The request was referred to the association by the city manager, B.J. Pardee, as the association had been the primary means of saving this historic building. It was approved by the board of directors on March 20. The city authorities soon afterward installed gas, electricity and water. That the Girl Scouts appreciate the use of the building and its facilities is evidenced by the present attractive appearance of the old consulate. The city gardener and his crew are also to be complimented upon the excellent care taken of the surrounding garden.

During 1937 the History and Art Association included the French Consulate in the list of 15 markers placed in front of that number of historic buildings in Old Monterey.