

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Dead Men Tell No Tales

Mr. E. L. Williams reports in his version of the "Hidden Treasures of Monterey," that the horseman he had seen galloping toward him on the beach north of Monterey was a stranger—his horse was wet with sweat, his flanks heaving and showing distress from the speed at which he had been traveling. The stranger inquired in a hasty, nervous manner the way to the Roach home, and off he rode after gaining the information.

The stranger was Franklin Foot, the jailer of the Stockton jail. Foot, in later years, died near Watsonville of the small pox during the time it was prevalent in Santa Cruz and Monterey County in 1868. William wrote that he afterward learned that Foot had left Stockton about 3 o'clock in the morning and proceeded toward Monterey at a good pace, yet at the same time saving the strength of his horse for any rush that he might have at the last lap of his journey.

Upon crossing the spur of the coast range he descended into a valley about thirty miles from Monterey, and at a house there, he saw Terry, who was dismounted, apparently engaged in procuring a change of horses. Foot and Terry immediately recognized each other, and then came the rush that Foot had expected.

The Alvarado house at the foot of Alvarado street had been changed from a governor's headquarters into a hotel "La Bola de Ora" (The Ball of Gold). In the early 1850's the hotel was kept by Daniel McMillan and his wife, Mary B. McMillan. The couple later moved from Monterey to Santa Cruz.

One of the guests was Dr. H.L. Sanford who had married the twice widowed Mrs. Sanchez, within six months after the death of her second husband, Thomas B. Golden of San Juan. She had married Golden two months after Sanchez' death and he had been killed when an oiler exploded on the "Jenny Lind."

Sanford had been in Monterey two or three days on business connected with the litigation which was still going on. He had at various times spoken very freely about Roach, the speech in no wise complimentary.

Foot after being told by Williams the direction to the Roach home, proceeded there as fast as his tired horse could carry him. He hurriedly informed Mrs. Roach what had taken place in the Stockton jail between Terry and

her husband. She at once sent for her brother, Jeremiah McMahon, who had lived in Monterey since 1846. The keys to the Roach safe were handed to McMahon, he took out the contents, partly in gold dust and very large number of gold coins, including thousands of dollars in \$20 gold pieces, according to Williams' story.

The aggregate account was never known but was always supposed to have been over \$80,000. This was the money Roach had received as the guardian of the Sanchez heirs. McMahon took it all, saying to Mrs. Roach as he left the house "I will put this where they will not find it."

McMahon was an Irishman inclined to be hot-headed and very obstinate. He believed it to be his duty to defend Roach his brother-in-law, from all aspersions and reflections upon his character during his absence. It has been repeated to him what Dr. Sanford had said about Roach and McMahon had remarked that he would "make Dr. Sanford take it all back" should he meet him.

The morning after McMahon had removed from the Roadhouse all the treasure contained in the safe, and had hidden in a place known only to himself, he stepped into the bar room of the La Boda de Ora Hotel and there was Dr. Sanford alone.

From what could be later ascertained they had but very few words and in the usual tone of voice, when suddenly somebody in the vicinity heard a pistol shot. Another person said two shots were fired, but simultaneously. This proved to be correct, for upon examination, Sanford was found dying upon the floor, and McMahon, who had run out, was picked up on the sidewalk 20 feet away. Upon examination, it was found that, each shot the other through the heart.

With McMahon's death all knowledge of the whereabouts of the "Hidden and Lost Treasure of Monterey" was dead also, for he alone knew the place of the deposit. It has never been found, and somewhere there remains secreted the \$80,000 in gold, belonging to the heirs of Jose Maria Sanchez.