

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Bohemia Saloon

The Bohemia Saloon, which is pictured above, was first called the Railroad Saloon and was owned and operated by Adolpho and Alex Sanchez. It originally stood on Alvarado street, directly across from where Del Monte avenue runs into Alvarado street. Adolpho Sanchez moved it down to his lot on the southwest corner of Franklin and Alvarado streets in 1890, where the Goldstine building now stands.

The men in the picture from right to left are Mr. Charles Wormes, who was the proprietor of the old St. Charles Hotel for a good many years. That hotel is now known as Mission Inn. Two paisanos sitting down are Monterey Spanish boys taking their afternoon siesta; and to the left is Mr. Frank Hellam and his brothers.

The little building on the left is Mr. Hellam's bootblack stand where he first started business in Monterey. He progressed from there to own one of the largest wholesale and retail cigar stores in Monterey County which was located on the first floor of the Monterey Hotel. He also built the brick building which for many years was occupied by the Climax Furniture Store, on the corner of Pacific and Franklin streets (now the bowling alley). Later he constructed the concrete building for his own store and warehouse, on Calle Principal between the firehouse and Montgomery Ward store.

Later he went in the real estate business, opening and developing the property known as the Hellam subdivision on Hellam street between Clay and Monroe. Frank Hellam was one of the best known men in Monterey and a friend to all who knew him, according to Victor Mossop, my information and the donor of the picture.

Mr. Mossop also tells the story that when Mr. Hellam first came to Monterey and had the bootblack stand, very often small children would come to him and extend an invitation from their mother to have lunch or dinner with the family. Sometimes Mr. Hellam accepted, even though he knew the family larder was not exceptionally well stocked, but he appreciated the thoughtfulness of the early Monterey folk. He often recalled those invitations and declared that it was this

spirit of friendliness and hospitality that brought about his decision to make Monterey his future home.

We know that the Bohemia Saloon was originally further down Alvarado street. In a letter from Louis Sanchez to a friend in Monterey, he wrote "Adolpho Sanchez was my father. The Railroad Exchange was almost directly across from the Bagby Opera House. Later he changed the name to the Bohemia Saloon because of the many Bohemias who gathered there. They were mostly great artists, and they painted pictures all over the place. In 1890, I believe it was, my father moved the building to his share of the Gil Sanchez estate, the lot on the southwest corner of Alvarado and Franklin street. After he passed away Charlie Wormes ran it."

Louis Sanchez, who supplied the information about the Bohemia, is the son of Adolpho Sanchez and Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez, who was the author of several books on California and its history.

The Hellam home is on Van Buren street on the corner of Scott. A charming chalk rock and adobe wall still stands on the Scott street side, the only remnant left of an adobe house built in the early days by an Englishman named Mathews, who married a Martinez. There were formerly a group of small houses on the property which the owners rented to the whalers.

Charlie Wormes and his family lived at the end of Jefferson street near where the American Legion hall is now. Next to the Bohemia there was a vacant lot where the traveling merry-go-rounds, traveling shows and the Salvation Army used to camp. There was also an organization known as the "Charioteers," so named because they traveled about the country in a chariot, who used to camp and hold their meetings here.

The little white church pictured in the distance is the Presbyterian Church, on the same site as the present edifice of that denomination now stands.