

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Early Photographic Art

The Monterey History and Art Association and the Stevenson House are the recipients of several valuable and historical items, coming from the descendants of two of Monterey County's early day citizens. Mrs. Winifred Wolf of Gonzales, a granddaughter of Teodoro Gonzalez, for whom the town was named, has given two framed pictures of her grandparents and several other articles of interest.

Teodoro Gonzalez, according to Bancroft, came to Monterey from Mexico in 1825. He was licensed to hunt otter in 1833 and in 1836 he became regidor and acting Alcalde in Monterey, during the troubles with Governor Chico. In 1836 he was granted Ranchos Rincon de la Puente del Monte, an area of seven leagues, and Sur Chiquite. He was 30 years of age at that time and his wife was Guadalupe Villarnel de Rico. In later years the spelling of the town of Gonzales was changed to end in "s" instead of "z" as in the family name.

Teodoro Gonzalez was alcalde of Monterey in 1837; lived in Buenavista in 1840; was juez de pas in 1842-3 and was de policia (police) in 1846. He became a man of great wealth and good standing in California and in 1879 gave to Bancroft much of the information contained in his California Histories, regarding the Revoluciones de Cal. (Revolution of California). His death occurred a few years later.

Dona Guadalupe, the wife of Teodoro, was first married to Vicente Rico, an officer in the Mexican army, and had a son Francisco, born in Mexico before the family's arrival in California. Her first husband died here and the young widow married Gonzalez. Of interest to local families is the fact that through her first son, Dona Guadalupe was the ancestor of the Rico family in Monterey.

It has been told by members of the family, according to Mrs. William Kneass, the curator of the Stevenson House, that the Gonzalez family gave the land for the first school and the townsite and supported the development of the town.

Teodoro Gonzalez built for his family one of the most beautiful old adobe homes in Monterey, famous for its gardens. According to Dr. Aubrey Neasham's, this home was built by Gonzalez in 1831. It stood on the south side

of Fremont, just about where Abrego street now crosses Fremont, with French consulate to the east, and the Munras home to the west. It was said to have one of the best libraries in this part of California.

The two fine photographs which Mrs. Wolf has given to the History and Art Association, are excellent examples of the very early photographic art. There is the signature of K. Iverson Booth on the photograph of Dona Guadalupe. Both pictures are now hanging in the large sala at the Stevenson House.

Mrs. Wolf's father was Dr. Mariano Gonzales, who with his brother, Alfredo, was prominently connected with the early Monterey and Salinas Railroad project. Mrs. Wolf's mother was Lucy Stokes, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. James Stokes, builders of the Stokes adobe in Monterey.

Other gifts from Mrs. Wolf included four leather bound books, all published in the early 1850's. Three of the books have the name of "J. Stokes" inscribed inside the cover and one has the name "Miss Lucy Stokes" written on the flyleaf.

A branding iron, used to brand the Gonzalez cattle, was also given. Mrs. Wolf relates that she often heard the story told that one year when there was a great drought in the Salinas Valley, cattle with the brand from the Rancho were found roaming near Monterey looking for food. In the collection is also a two-pronged cooking fork used in the barbecue area at the Gonzalez rancho.