

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 6, 1951

First Brick House

On February of 1907, Edward A. Sherman sent a communication to the Monterey Cypress recording a biographical sketch of G.D. Dickenson, the builder of the First Brick House in Monterey. The clipping was found by Mrs. Millie Birks among her possessions and loaned to the Diary for this column today.

G.D. Dickenson, an old pioneer, was born in Virginia in 1806, he was left an orphan at an early age and tutored by an uncle. He emigrated to Rutherford county, Tennessee, in 1822, where he married Isabella McCreary in 1828. In 1832 he removed to Jackson, Mo., and lived there fourteen years, being one of the earliest pioneers of that county.

In May of 1846, with his wife and six children, he left for the then almost unknown California, and arrived at Sutter's Fort in November. They had had a perilous journey, but they had successfully pushed through the very storm that caught the noted Reed and Donner party. The first winter in the State he passed at Santa Clara. While there he and his two sons were forced to take part in the war until the treaty with Mexico was concluded in 1848.

It was in June of 1847, that the family arrived in Monterey and resided here eighteen months, burnt the first brick kiln and built the first brick house ever erected in the State of California. In June, 1848, he went to Hangtown and other mining points, wintered at Mokelumne Hill, and was discoverer of the noted gulch that bears his name.

In April, 1849, he located in Stockton, when there was neither a wooden or brick building in the place. In August of that year he attended the first Constitutional Convention that met in Monterey in September 1849, and soon after the adjournment of that body, he was elected prefect of the San Joaquin district and served as such until the state government was organized on December 20, 1849, at San Jose when the Mexican laws came to be in effect. His death occurred on October 25th, 1870.

Harry J. Breen, a descendant of Patrick Breen, member of the Donner party, recently presented to the California Historical Society, three documents pertaining to the sale in 1851 to Patrick Breen of 60,000

bricks and "also one lot with all improvements thereon" in Monterey. The improvements thereon included the old Gallant Duncan Dickenson house, and the bricks were part of those from which Dickenson built his house in 1847, it being the first brick house in California.

A part of the sale was also "one lot or parcel of land 22 varas by 40 extending to the rear of Vives Schultz and Co., sold for \$66. The brick house, together with its lot, was sold at \$1,025."

The Schultz store was on Olivier street. This street was named for Olivier Deleisseques, a Frenchman of some education who came to Monterey before 1850 and married Concepcion Boronda. Their home was an adobe building facing the street named in his honor.