

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 22, 1951

### **Doorway to History**

As another project completed, the Monterey Foundation will soon place before the membership and their friends an exceedingly handsome brochure, containing photographs of 16 of the old adobe buildings in Monterey, with descriptive captions, several pages of historical data and an explanation of what the Monterey Foundation stands for in the community.

It will be a booklet that every loyal Monterey resident will wish to own and that they will be proud to give as gifts to their friends. Printed on high-class paper, with type style, printing and photography above the average, it is a product of which the Foundation may be justly proud. Certainly the object for which it was produced, "to picture some of the opportunities for public education and enjoyment ... to indicate the aims and objectives of the Monterey Foundation ... and to suggest how you can significantly aid in their accomplishments" should bear fruit and increase the interest in historical Monterey and its entirety.

The Monterey Foundation is a non-profit California corporation. It is affiliated with the National Council of Historic Sites and Buildings. Membership is open to all who are interested in the preservation and interpretation of historic Monterey.

As a volunteer organization the Foundation aims to foster such interest: To bring recognition of Old Monterey as a national resource in history, to preserve, acquire and interpret buildings and sites significant in Monterey history and culture, to formulate and publicize sound policies, standards and practices for preservation, restoration and interpretation of historic sites and buildings and to raise funds so that this work may be adequately financed.

Other objects stated in the brochure are: To work with individuals and civic organizations on all preservation and interpretation problems, to arouse public appreciation, use and enjoyment of historic Monterey, to arouse public opinion and to fight the loss and destruction or degradation of historic sites and buildings.

The photographs in the booklet have been chosen for their clear cut black and white values and the beauty of their composition. Among the buildings and homes

shown are: The Royal Presidio Chapel, the Old Customs House, Pacific Building, First Theater, the latter three state owned; Colton Hall, city owned; Amesti House, Stokes House, Casa Alvarado, the Gutierrez Adobe, Foundation owned; the Larkin House, Cooper-Molera Adobe; Casa Soto, House of Four Winds, and the Carmel Mission.

Casa Soberanes is represented with a reproduction of the photograph of the sala or living room in the adobe as shown in Mrs. James Ward Thorne's miniature rooms which she presented to the Chicago Art Museum and where it is now on exhibit.

The cover of the book bears this title: "Doorway to History" and has a photograph of the side doorway to the Royal Presidio Chapel. This chapel, generally known as San Carlos, is one of the oldest stone churches built in California. An expert stone cutter from Mexico, Manuel Estavan Ruiz, came to Monterey to work with the Indian labor, on the building. Ruiz evidently knew how to handle the difficult medium, the soft easily crumbled sandstone from the hills beyond Carmel. The Virgin of Guadalupe at the top of the façade bears the date 1794, and the two side doors look like bits from an old Spanish church.

The doorway pictured as the Doorway of History, was restored to its original state during the life of the federal arts project several years ago. A group of artists working on the Index of American Design, were not particularly enthusiastic over the task as many coats of whitewash had obliterated so much of the design, that it appeared quite uninteresting. They asked for and received permission of the parish priest to remove the whitewash.

As they set to work with knives and small chisels they became increasingly interested for out of the shapeless blobs of stucco emerged delicately modeled features, details of old Spanish costumes and drapery, intricate leaf and flower patterns and delicately twisted leaf forms. It was also discovered that the original coat of mineral paint was in two shades of red, believed to be made of cinnabar from New Almaden.

The brochure was printed under the direction of Mr. Roland Meyers. Mrs. Harry Lusignan was the chairman of the committee from the Foundation which planned and collected the contents.