

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Some Sympathetic Repairs

A short time ago there appeared an article on the News Comment page of the San Jose Mercury which is of interest to Monterey for the reason that it is complimentary.

"At the present time the Stately old mansion built by Charles Henry 'Mountain Charlie' McKiernan and San Augustine street is being torn down", the comment reads; "This is one of the most historic buildings remaining in San Jose. It will soon be entirely gone, and so will vanish one of the last relics remaining to perpetuate the pioneer settler of the Santa Cruz Mountains. What a shame such buildings as this one are razed! All the Mountain Charlie home needed was a coat of paint, some sympathetic repairs, and a little love—not the wreckers' hammers."

"There exists in the City of San Jose Historical Landmark Commission, an organization empowered by the City Council to mark landmarks of historical importance. The commission's work is admirable, considering the limitation placed up it, but there is no provision to prevent a building which is marked from being torn down. Then what purpose serves the sign save to mark the site, and who would go out of his way to see an empty lot?"

"Monterey is no more historic than San Jose, and yet it has received nation-wide attention for its history, something which San Jose cannot boast. Monterey not only erects historic markers but also makes a genuine effort to preserve the building which they mark. San Jose should follow Monterey's example. San Jose should extend authority to its historic landmarks commission to make provision for the preservation and restoration of its most important landmarks."

Newton Drury said at the Merienda; "It is better to maintain than to restore. It is better to restore than to reconstruct. It is better to reconstruct than to rebuild."

When Miss Margaret Jacks was at her adobe home on the Del Monte Fairways a few days ago, she told us an interesting story about the early days of her father, David Jacks, in Monterey.

At that time Joseph Boston and E.L. Williams had a general merchandise store in the Casa de Ora on Oliver street, and the young David Jacks succeeded in getting a job from them as a clerk. Then he went up the hill to the northwest corner of Scott and Van Buren Streets to board in the Boston home. He became so fascinated with the area that he made up his mind that someday it would be his home. When he took Miss Mary Romie for his bride, he bought the property and his desire for the site became a realization.

The lumber for the old home had been brought by Mr. Boston around the Horn from the east coast, ready to construct. There were four rooms on each of the two floors and each board was numbered, with the directions on the top board, reading "Abajo" (below) and "Aribo" (above). The house was altered about 1896 and finally moved to a location on Madison street when Mr. Jacks build a larger and more modern house, which has now disappeared for the building of a subdivision.

Miss Jacks' grandfather, John Frederick Romie, was born in Hamburg, Germany, and came to Monterey via Mexico. Upon his doctor's orders that he seek another climate for his health's sake, he sailed with his family from San Blas. They arrived in Monterey Bay and were landed on a rock near the old Custom House. He first rented an adobe house on Madison street and Miss Jacks says that she often heard her grandmother tell how inconvenient it was to have the rain trickle in through the roof on stormy days.

When Mr. & Mrs. Romie arrived in Monterey about 1841, they had two sons and a daughter, Mary, who became Mrs. Jacks. She was three and had been born in Oaxaco, Mexico. A son Charles T. Romie, settled on the property about seven miles from Soledad, about 1875. He was the owner of Paraiso Springs and a surrounding large tract of land. Paul T. Romie, the youngest son was born in Monterey and settled in Salinas and Ernest Romie lived in San Francisco and managed the huge Espinosa estate for many years. Another daughter, Louise passed away in Monterey. Mr. Romie Sr. lived to be but fifty years of age. His widow survived him until 1888 when she passed away in Monterey at the age of seventy-six.