

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 25, 1951

### **Washerwoman's Canyon**

The late Mrs. Thomas W. Morgan, who was also known as Christina A. Morgan, was the mother of the late Miss M. DeNeale Morgan, noted artist, and Mrs. A.C. Klenke of Carmel. It is most fortunate for the historian that Mrs. Morgan dictated her "Reminiscences" of early day Monterey to her son, Thomas Morgan Jr., before her death in 1922.

Mrs. Morgan came with her parents to Monterey in 1856 and lived on a ranch at Point Pinos, not far from the present location of Carmel. Later the family lived on the rancho of W.E.P. Hartnell of Alisal near Salinas. Mrs. Morgan lived through the interesting years when California was being populated by the pioneers, when mining was uppermost in the minds of everyone and when vast ranchos and small towns were scattered over the width and breadth of the new state.

Mrs. Morgan recalled members of the early families in Monterey, when she and her young sister attended school in the Old Quartel. Among the names which she remembered were Hartnell, Cooper, Leese, Spence, Malarin, Dungalado, Abrego, Sanchez, Pacheco, Vallejo, and Gonzales. Some of the later families were Littles, Wellmans, Sanborns, Molera, Strong, Pyburn, Layton and others.

She tells of knowing W.E.P. Hartnell, an Englishman who arrived in Monterey in 1823 as a seafaring man. He married Teresa de la Guerra. Their daughter, Anita, Mrs. Morgan recalls, was a most beautiful Spanish dancer.

She remembered the dances at the Washington Hotel (now the site of The Herald building) in which Miss Hartnell and Efronio Boronda were partners. Everyone was delighted to see these two dancers going through all the beautiful steps. General Vallejo also married a de la Guerra daughter and thus became the brother-in-law of Hartnell.

Juan B.R. Cooper came to Monterey in 1823 as master of the "Ship Rover". He married Encarnacion, a sister of General Vallejo. His daughter, Amelia, married E.J. Molera and their home in Monterey is still in the possession of Miss Frances Molera. These early residents were all known by Mrs. Morgan during her residence on the Peninsula.

Another early comer to Monterey, Jacob P. Leese, was a friend of Mrs. Morgan and her family. Mr. Leese arrived in Monterey in 1833 and went into the merchandise business. In 1836, he built the first frame house in San Francisco. He married Rosalia sister of General Vallejo. The first Fourth of July celebration was held in 1836 at the Leese home in San Francisco, then known as Yerba Buena.

The Leese children went to school in the Quartel with Mrs. Morgan. Their home was near the present House of Four Winds and she remembers seeing Mr. Leese walk back and forth near his home and they often chatted together. Mr. Ross, the father of Mrs. Morgan, was a partner of Mr. Leese in stock and sheep on the Sausal ranch, near Salinas.

Down by the Carmel River, Mrs. Morgan and her sister and brothers often watched the servants doing their family washings. They would be down on their knees scrubbing the clothes, which they laid on a board, and with the amole (Spanish soap) in hand, they scrubbed and pounded the clothes, now and then dipping and rinsing them in the river. The amole were brought in from the mountains where they grew and looked like large white onions. By pounding and rubbing the amole on the clothing, a soapy substance was formed which, to the children's surprise, cleaned the clothes in cold water.

Near Monterey, in a beautiful little glen, there were in those days a number of springs, or water-holes, where the women were in the habit of doing the town washing. This place was called Los Aguajitos (water-holes) by the Spanish residents, and "washer-woman's canyon or bay" by the Americans. In the pastoral days in California, entire families climbed into ox carts made with solid wood wheels, and provided with liberal lunch baskets, made a picnic of "blue Monday" under the green trees of Los Aguajitos canyon. (Pronounced AH-gua-Hee-to.)