

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Casa Gutierrez

At long last the Casa Gutierrez on Calle Principal is to be opened to the interested public from 10 o'clock each morning until 5 o'clock in the afternoon, Tuesdays and Wednesdays excepted. The old adobe is the official headquarters for the Monterey Foundation, who are sponsors of this new hospitality center. Mrs. Charles W. Allaire, a long time resident of Monterey, is the hostess and will be serving tea or coffee and empanadas to all visitors who would enjoy dropping in for rest and a visit.

Empanadas are little individual meat pies made from an early California recipe. They are delicious and are sure to be enjoyed by all who eat them.

The large main sala of Casa Gutierrez has been refurbished through the kindness of Mrs. Frances Elkins, with some very old and interesting examples of early Spanish furniture, including a long, hard-carved table, a handsome high chest and several chairs, pictures, screens and items both functional and useful.

Several years ago this old adobe dwelling was sold for taxes. The members of the Monterey Foundation acquired it and have now completed the restoration program which has been going on for a number of years. Scarcity of funds, the war years and lack of authentic information to aid in the restoration, have been the cause of much of the delay in carrying out the original program – to furnish the adobe and open it to the interested public.

For the information of the newcomers to the Peninsula, it will be interesting to repeat here a bit of the history of the old residence.

The 1849 map, which is part of the historical archives of the City of Monterey, lists the adobe dwelling as the property of Jacob Leese. The building may have been owned by Thomas Oliver Larkin at one time, for in 1849 he exchanged all his Monterey property for the San Francisco property of Jacob Leese, another prominent merchant who had been Larkin's partner in Monterey.

On the 1852 assessment rolls the property is listed in the name of Joaquin Gutierrez and his wife, Josefa Gutierrez, who probably built the house.

Joaquin Gutierrez came to Monterey in 1831 at the age of 16 years. In 1836, he was listed as a soldier and his

age given as 20 years. In 1842 he was again listed as a Juez Auzilar. In 1840 he married Josefa Escobar, the daughter of Marcelino and Tomasa Escobar. Her father was one time alcalde of Monterey who, in the year of his marriage, made a commercial voyage to the Orient, with Santiago Estrada and others. He made a great deal of money and returned to California with many beautiful and expensive possessions. Tomasa Escobar was born in Monterey. The couple had 15 children, of whom one daughter married and established herself in the home next to her parents. Another daughter married Captain Pray.

In 1852 Joaquin Gutierrez owned the Ranch El Potrero de San Carlos now owned by the estate of the late Arthur C. Oppenheimer. At that time it was one league square. It is said that Joaquin may have been a brother of one of the padres who served at San Carlos and San Antonio

Dr. Robert E. Burns, the newest member of the California State Parks Commission, and Mrs. Burns were visitors in Monterey last week. During their stay on the Peninsula, they made a tour of inspection of all the state-owned buildings in Monterey. Dr. Burns is president of the 100 year old College of the Pacific at Stockton, the first college to be chartered by the State of California. Dr. Burns is a graduate of the college that he now heads. He is intensely interested in California history and the collecting of Californiana is his hobby. He is also vitally interested in the preservation of historical spots and in conserving and developing the state's natural resources.