

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

March 6, 1952

Joseph Boston & Co.

All historic items pertaining to Casa de Oro at the corner of Scott and Oliver Streets in Monterey, are of particular value now that the building is in the process of being restored by the State Park Commission. The old adobe building was given a number of years ago to the State of California by the Misses L. M. and V. Jacks, and at present the district offices of the Commission are housed in part of the property, although not in the original building.

The present plan is to restore the adobe to its original lines and use. It was a general store in the 1850s occupied by the firm of Joseph Boston & Co., and one of the employees was David Jacks, the father of the donors of the building to the State.

Mrs. William Kneass, Jr., the curator of the Stevenson House, has acquired a bit of information about the Casa de Oro to add to the files. While in Salinas a short time ago Mrs. Kneass found the record of the will and probate proceedings of John Morrison, one of the early partners in the Boston Store. The will had been signed on September 11, 1854, when he was 29 years of age. He died the following day in San Francisco. The terms of the will "give to my well loved friend David Jacks all my worldly goods ... including my interest as general partner in the firm of Joseph Boston & Co. doing business in the City of Monterey."

As executor of his estate, Morrison wrote "I nominate my friend Briscoe G. Baldwin, U.S. Army at Monterey."

The will was signed by two witnesses: Joseph Boston and A.J. Donzel, and also present was David Jacks. When the will was filed for probate Joseph Boston testified as a witness that Morrison had been of sound mind at the time of the signing.

According to the records in the County Court House, on April 23, 1856, an appraisal of Morrison's estate was submitted by P. Zabala and Charles R. Johnson as follows: Interest in the firm of J. Boston & Co. Cash value \$3,000, one lot in the environs of Monterey, \$40; wearing apparel and old saddle of no value; total \$3,040.00.

John Morrison died in September 1854 but it was not until the summer of 1855 that Joseph Boston signed another partnership agreement with Thomas Day.

Therefore it is possible that during the intervening year Boston ran the store by himself, or there may have been still another partner, the identify of whom has not yet been discovered.

The next meeting of the California Historical Society will be held on Thursday, March 13th, in the Comstock Room of the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, beginning with a luncheon at 12 o'clock, noon.

The speaker will be Dr. Elliot A.P. Evans, chairman of the Department of Art of the University of California's Santa Barbara College. In 1944 Dr. Evans edited a "Series of Letters from William S. Jewett," for The Quarterly. Jewett was a distinguished portrait painter, and his son, William Dunbar Jewett (1873-1926), a California sculptor, will be the subject of Dr. Evans' talk. The talk will be illustrated with slides.

Dr. Evans was a member of the faculty of the Sunset School in Carmel a number of years ago. His parents are residents of Santa Cruz.

Joseph R. Knowland of Oakland was unanimously elected president of the California Historical Society at the recent election of officers for 1952. He replaced Aubrey Drury, who served in that capacity for the last three years. Francis P. Farquhar of Berkeley, Homer D. Crotty of Los Angeles and Ralph H. Cross of Berkeley were elected as first, second and third vice-presidents respectively, and Warren H. Howell of Berkeley and George H. Harding of Palo Alto were elected secretary and treasurer. There are many members of the Society on the Monterey Peninsula.