

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

June 4, 1952

### Early Library

Filed for record November 14, 1857 at 10 a.m., and recorded in Book "A" of Miscellaneous Records, pages 2 and 3, was the certificate of election of officers and of the incorporation of the Monterey Library. James H. Gleason was the recorder of the county on the date – nine-five years ago.

The document, written in long hand on lined paper, reads:

*Monterey, November 15, 1857*

*"We the judges of an election held this day by the members of the Monterey Library, to elect officers and trustees of that society, do hereby certify that at such an election the following persons, shareholders in the corporation, were duly elected the officers and trustees of said library for the ensuing year, to wit, James Gleason, as president; David H. Spence Jr., as treasurer and D.R. Ashley, as secretary and Librarian.*

*"The name under which said society shall be known and under which said Trustees shall act, be called and known, is 'The Monterey Library' which, as a literary and scientific institution, is incorporated under the laws of the State of California, and is located at the City of Monterey.*

*"Signed: William Curtis, D.L. Spence, and James A. Gleason, Judges of the Election."*

Our readers will notice that at the date of the filing of these incorporation papers, Monterey was the county seat of Monterey county. The document was No. 2 in the files, the Presbyterian Church incorporation being No. 1.

Between that date and the forming of the Monterey Library Association on January 17, 1901, we have been able to unearth a few bits of historical data. We have found references in several of the early editions of The Monterey Cypress prior to 1900 that the supervisors had granted sums for the support of the library, which was then housed in a room in the Cuartel, an adobe two stories in height, built by the Mexican government in the early '40s. It stood where the Chamber of Commerce and an oil station are located now, city-owned property.

Robert Louis Stevenson refers to a library in El Cuartel in his writings on Monterey at the time of his residence here. He states that he looked in the library **[text is too dark to read]**

...ing at the home of Mrs. W.W. James and voted to keep the sixteen books they had on hand and form a library association. We find this information in the first minute book of the group of about twenty women who started the present valuable library. That book is in the possession of Monterey's Public Library and will be stored in a safe place at the new library building, the dedication of which will be held on Sunday, June 8, 1952.

Officers of the first Monterey Library Association were: Mrs. Charles Henry, the mother of Mrs. Herbert Hoover and Mrs. Jean Henry Large, president; Mrs. M.M. Gragg, mother of Mrs. Julia Breinig and the late Mortimer Gragg, vice president; Mrs. J.P. Sargent, sister of George Eckhardt and Miss Etta Eckhardt, treasurer; Mrs. James Moore, secretary.

A motion was made at that first meeting that the ladies take turns alphabetically as librarian. Motion was also made and carried that the library be opened once a week on Saturday from 2 until 4 o'clock.