

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 1, 1952

5 Old Adobes Open Tomorrow

Once again we must announce the importance of the tour of five of the oldest and most charming adobe homes in Monterey, to be held tomorrow afternoon from 2 until 5 o'clock. The Monterey History and Art Association are again the sponsors of the tour which will include the Amesti, Alvarado, Soberanes, Castro and Larkin houses.

Anyone who has ever lived in an "old adobe" – especially if it is honored with the designation of "historic," knows how often they have been confronted with the question, "Is this house open to the public?" Tomorrow the owners may answer, "Yes, for today only."

The tour will not be a conducted one in the usual sense; the five adobes will be open between the hours of 2 and 5 o'clock, with the owners and a group of hostesses in charge, and the interested public making the tour may follow their own inclination as to the order or sequence in which they visit the various places. In other words, there will be no starting point; no parties will be formed. Tickets may be obtained at the first home visited.

Casa Amesti, 516 Polk Street, is owned by Mrs. Frances Elkins. It was built in 1825 by Senor Don Jose Amesti, a Spanish Basque, Don Santiago, as he was known in Monterey's early days, became a wealthy man and was held in good repute throughout his long career in California. He died in his Monterey home in 1875, leaving a family of several children. His portrait with that of his wife, Dona Prudenciana Vallejo Amesti, painted by Leonardo Barbieri, hangs in the Old Custom House.

Casa Alvarado, the adobe home of Dr. and Mrs. Wesley Heard, was erected in the early 1830s by California's first Monterey-born governor, Don Juan Bautista Alvarado (1836-1843). Alvarado was born in this city February 13, 1809. He was the son of Don Jose Francisco Alvarado and Josefa Vallejo and was a direct descendent of Captain Cortez.

Miss Margaret Jacks owns the Castro adobe on the Mesa behind the old Del Monte golf course. It was the summer home of Governor Castro and in those days was far out in the country. Miss Jacks purchased it and

the surrounding land a number of years ago and has authentically restored it. The surrounding garden is a delight to those interested in floriculture.

Casa Soberanes at 336 Pacific Street, was erected by Don Jose Estrada, ranking officer of the Presidio under the Mexican regime. Estrada sold the property to Don Feliciano Soberanes, who had married one of the daughters of Don Ignacio Vallejo.

In 1902 the property was again sold to Mrs. Reuban L. Serrano, whose husband was the late Reuban Serrano, a grandson of Florencio Serrano, a former teacher and alcalde of Monterey under Mexican rule. Mr. and Mrs. Serrano sympathetically restored the house, which is now the home of Mrs. William M. O'Donnell. It will be opened for the tour tomorrow.

Mrs. Harry S. Toulmin, the granddaughter of Thomas Oliver Larkin, and the owner of the Larkin House, will receive the tour guests in the delightful old adobe home. Tea will be served during the afternoon with Mrs. Toulmin as hostess.

Thomas O. Larkin was one of the outstanding figures in California history, especially during the critical period from 1830 to 1840, when he was the first and only American consul to Monterey. His home was the commercial, financial, and cultural center for early Monterey.