

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Sherman Rose Story

We are indebted today to the late J.J. Shinabarger, and to Mrs. J.C. Anthony, for the material in Peninsula Diary. To Mrs. Anthony because she saved the clipping from an early issue of The Herald and to Mr. Shinabarger because he was the author of the story, "Naming of the Sherman Rose."

When we arrived in Monterey about 23 years ago Mr. Shinabarger was associated with The Herald in the capacity of caretaker of the cleanliness of the three or four rooms which made up the floor space occupied by this daily paper at the south end of Alvarado Street. Aside from sweeping and general cleaning each day, Mr. Shinabarger wrote copy for the paper about old times, for he was a pioneer resident of the county, living for many years down the coast before moving to Pacific Grove.

We are sorry that the item from which we wish to quote today bears no date, but we feel that it is interesting and adds another chapter to the oft repeated story which concerned Senorita Maria Ignacio Bonifacio and Gen. William T. Sherman during the latter's stay of duty in Monterey.

Mr. Shinabarger begins his story: "In looking over some old papers of mine the other day I ran across a long-forgotten memorandum which reverted my attention to an incident in the dim history of Monterey. It dealt principally with the visit to Monterey, in the summer of 1880, of the then President of the United States, Rutherford B. Hayes, and the general of the Army, William T. Sherman; and the incident mentions the naming of the now historical and somewhat famous "Sherman Rose."

"In the middle of the summer of 1880, during the candidacy of James A. Garfield for the presidency, official word came to the Republican committee at Monterey that both President Hayes and General Sherman would be here and speak in Colton Hall on a certain day. We held a rousing mass meeting of enthusiastic citizens, appointed the necessary committees, and prepared to make the occasion a grand one. The reception committee was formed of Francis Doud Sr., Manuel Wolter, Jacob R. Leese, Dr. A Westfall and myself.

"The decoration committee was composed of nearly everybody in town, and right well did they do their work. They cut and hauled pine trees for days and planted them on either side of the street from the railroad depot to Colton Hall, and many and varied were the beautiful banners spanning the route of the procession. Tony Osio was chairman of this committee.

"The eventful day arrived and everybody, his wife and family dog turned out to witness the event. President Hayes gave us a rousing political speech, but Gen. Sherman spoke principally about his early associations in Monterey, some 20 years previously, and of the pleasant remembrances of that time, amongst the hospitable and sociable citizens of the town."

Mr. Shinabarger continues: "After the speaking the carriages were dismissed at the request of Gen. Sherman, who expressed a wish to walk through the old town and view at close range some of the scenes of his former acquaintance. We made quite a tour of the town, and many were the stories and anecdotes he told of his former exploits and high old times in the different places.

"Coming at last to the Bonifacio residence on Alvarado Street, where the First National Bank now stands, the general recognized the place at once, and turning to the President, remarked: 'Here, Mr. President, is something of a more personal nature. Let's go in!'"

"Miss Bonifacio was in the rose arbor at the time, and they met as any two old friends would meet after a long separation. There were no signs of bashfulness, or timidity, or evidence of a former tender romance on either side, but a good hearty handshake and a few brief words of salutation in Spanish. The general asked Mr. David Leese to interpret for the benefit of the President, and he talked of the great rose bush and of the time he assisted in planting it and marveled much at its growth and beauty."

"This rose is from the bush planted by Gen. Sherman 20 years ago," said Miss Bonifacio as she plucked one of the beautiful roses and pinned it on the lapel of the President's coat, Mr. Shinabarger recalled.

President Hayes answered "In that case we will name it the Sherman Rose. I thank you." So ends this story of the Sherman Rose, now a legend in the history of Monterey.