

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Miss Lucy In Old Monterey

Miss Lucy Morse's manuscript composed of a description of Monterey in 1898 and presented to the Monterey History and Art Association by her nephew, George E. Morse, of Milwaukee, tells of her visit to The Monument, the Custom House, Gov. Alvarado Houses, the old Convent, the First Brick House, the Whaling Station, and the Washington Hotel. All of these historic structures were held by the "drivers as their stock in trade." All of these she proceeded to investigate after settling in a comfortable room at the home of Senorita Maria Ignacia Bonifacio on Alvarado street.

Among those people in Monterey to whom she felt indebted she relates in her story, were Mr. J.K. Oliver, Mr. Hannon, Capt. Bralee and Mrs. Allen. Mr. Oliver was the father of Myron Oliver, Monterey merchant. She wrote of Mr. Oliver: "He is a genial gentleman, a thorough scholar and a specialist in his own line, conchology. He enjoys an enviable business location being opposite the Old Custom House, thus attracting all tourists who visit the latter building and enjoy the beach."

A bit of past history which never materialized is contained in the next paragraph: "The Monument erected by Mrs. Leland Stanford in 1891 in honor of Junipero Serra, is a fitting testimonial to the worthy father and stands on an eminence just below the old fort and above the cross marking the spot where Junipero landed, hung his bells upon an oak, and held mass June 3, 1770. This land is government reservation. It was on this reservation that the enterprising part of the population of Monterey desired to have the Soldiers' Home, now at Santa Monica, located."

Mr. Hannon, mentioned by Miss Morse, was in the real estate business on Alvarado street. One afternoon she writes that he drove her over to the rectory of San Carlos church where they examined the old records. "The oldest records," she reported, "are in the hand writing of Father Serra, bearing his own signature. Their execution is beautifully neat, the penmanship resembling somewhat the vertical writing of today. They are neatly bound in vellum."

In describing San Carlos church Miss Morse relates "The San Carlos church was dedicated in 1794 as a chapel for

those who could not attend services at Carmelo. Upon the dedication of San Carlos de Monterey as a parish church (1843), San Carlos de Carmelo was abandoned but services are held there once a year in honor of the patron saint of San Carlos. The walk leading to San Carlos de Monterey is made of whale bone, a substance now becoming very scarce as most of the old walks have been exhumed and sold to dealers for the manufacture of fancy articles."

"In the rear of the church are exhibited many relics brought from Spain and Mexico by Father Serra one hundred and twenty-nine years ago. Among them are pictures painted in Mexico, an iron safe, gold communion and altar services, crucifixes and rich vestments. Silver candlesticks and a silver crucifix of the same age are now in place upon the altar.

"On our way out of the church we met Mrs. Diaz, an old lady who many years ago gave her white satin wedding dress for a vestment. The vestment is hand embroidered and very beautiful."

Miss Morse next called on Captain Bralee, an Englishman by birth but who "for many years had been a patriotic American citizen." She further states that: "He is one of Monterey's oldest residents and his word is considered unimpeachable."

Bralee told Miss Morse that the Custom House was built by the Mexican government in 1843. Thos. O. Larkin, the American Consul, took the contract. All through the discussion of Monterey history between Bralee and Miss Morse, the former refers to Thomas Oliver Larkin as O'Larkin. Quoting him Miss Morse writes: "O'Larkin lived in that large house with a corredor in front in line with the state house. He met his wife while coming around the Horn. She was coming to meet her husband but when she got here she found him dead. You see being together so much on shipboard she and O'Larkin got pretty well acquainted and after awhile were married. O'Larkin and Capt. Cooper were half brothers. Everyone knew Capt. Cooper. He died only a short time ago."