

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

March 5, 1954

Planting Trees

At a special meeting of the Monterey Women's Civic Club at the adobe home of Mrs. M.M. Gragg on March 14, 1914, final action was taken by the ladies on the acquisition of the old adobe building on Calle Principal known as the House of the Four Winds. The house had been given its fascinating name because in the early days in Monterey it was the only building in the pueblo to have a weathervane on the roof.

Mrs. Gragg, the president, appointed a committee, with Mrs. Hilby as chairman, to arrange with the owner for the transfer of the property. Carmel Martin had conferred with the club on several occasions regarding the purchase and the restoration of the building.

At the same meeting the women voted to purchase the lot adjoining the home of the mayor, Robert Johnson, who met with the committee at the close of the meeting to discuss the matter of title and other preliminaries. The mayor made many valuable suggestions as to the restoration and preservation of the adobe and offered the services of one of the most capable men in the community to examine its present condition. The club intended converting the house into a museum for relics and curios of early California days.

Time has passed since we have thought much about Arbor Day as a day in which we plant trees, shrubs and flowers in public and private gardens, so I referred to Webster's dictionary as to the definition and date. I find there is no definite date – it is "a spring holiday in some states on which trees, etc., are planted"

In 1914 the same Women's Civic Club celebrated Arbor Day on March 8, with a tree planting on the Serra lot, now known as the Serra Landing Place. At this spot on June 3, 1770 Father Junipero Serra and Don Gaspar de Portola, came ashore and Father Serra recited the first mass in Monterey.

The Cypress of March 8, 1914, reported that not only were tree planting ceremonies held on the lot under the auspices of the ladies of the Civic Club a success from the standpoint of the number of contributors who brought many different species of trees plants and shrubs to be planted, but the ladies were assured of the future beautification of the Presidio tract adjoining, by

the officers of the post who attended the ceremonies by special invitation.

According to the newspaper report the ladies had been out from early morning every day during the week, preparing the lot for planting. All worked hard with rakes, shovels and spades so well that the lot was described as having been transformed into one of the most beautiful spots in Monterey.

Listed among the contributors were members of Junipero Parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, who brought a fine palm tree which was planted by a committee composed of Miss Tillie Bergschicker, Mrs. Mamie Wolter, Miss Estella Gonzales and Mrs. William Hubbard. Mr. Hubbard was also a willing worker. The palm tree still stands on the lot at the Pacific street entrance to the old Presidio.

Other generous contributors were Mrs. Mamie Wolter, plants and flowers; Del Monte Hotel sent a quantity of cannas and roses from their famous gardens; Mrs. William Sandholdt Jr.; Mrs. F.A. Zimmerman, Mrs. E.C. Rust, Miss Gonzales, Mrs. William Gibson and the Misses Jacks, who contributed four boxes of rooted geraniums, more than a hundred plants to each box. The planting was to continue over to Monday of the following week when Mr. Menges was sending a wagon load of dahlias.