

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 11, 1955

Tribute to a Wife

A few weeks ago, we told our readers about the visit in Monterey of Langdon Sully of Bergenfield, N.J., and of his interest in the life and work of his grandfather, Lt. Alfred Sully, while he was stationed here with the New York Volunteers in 1849. During the officer's residence in Monterey, he met and married Senorita Manuelita Jimeno, the charming and beautiful daughter of Dona Angustias Jimeno and granddaughter of Don Jose de la Guerra of Santa Barbara.

This romantic marriage did not last long for the lovely Manuelita died March 28, 1851, and her infant son followed her in death on the 15th of April in the same year. During Mr. Sully's visit here in July he made a vain search in the old cemetery to find the grave of the girl about whom his grandfather wrote to his family in the East, telling of his great happiness and of her unusual beauty and charm.

It was because of the interest and kindness of Mrs. Lucia Shepardson De Wolf of Pacific Grove that I was told that the gravestone actually existed and that she would be only too happy to guide me to it.

Written in Spanish, the epitaph, etched into the marble headstone, when translated reads: "Dona Manuela Jimeno, dedicated by her husband, Don Alfredo Sully, Lieutenant in, the Army of the United States, this stone as a lasting tribute and perpetual memorial of his love and affection. She died on the 28th of March. 1851, at the age of 17 years and five months."

Below this appealing tribute is another: "And to their son, Tomas Manuel Sully, who died the 15th day of April 1851, at the age of one month."

We regret that the stone has been laid upon the ground with the lawn around it, making it impossible to photograph otherwise we could supply Mr. Langdon Sully with a copy of this tribute to a young wife and mother.

In former times the old cemetery was always known to Montereyans as the Campo Santo. It was enclosed with an adobe wall four feet high, the foundation of which was chalk rock, and the graves were brick-lined we have been told.

Mrs. De Wolf and I also hunted out the burial place of Juan Bautista Bonifacio, the father of Senorita Maria Ygnacia Bonifacio. The Bonifacio home, better known as the Sherman Rose House, was a lovely old adobe building at the corner of Alvarado and Bonifacio Place, where the First National Bank now stands. Our companion on this historic hunt remembers that in the past, before the cemetery was modernized with lawns and flat markers, there was a stone marking the grave of Senorita Bonifacio placed between those of her parents and that there was a rose planted there, the foliage of which looked like the "cloth of gold." The History and Art Assn. has plans to erect a simple marker there in her memory, for the love story of this charming little Spanish lady, whether true or false, is part of the collection of legends of old Monterey.

The cemetery, along with the old adobes and the historic sites, is steeped in history if one just browses through its winding paths and roads and hunts for the names of those who made California history even before the Stars and Stripes were raised over the Custom House in 1846. We saw the burial place of W. E. P. Hartnell, the interpreter at the Constitutional Convention in Monterey in 1849, the founder of the first college in California, a schoolteacher in Monterey and a man of many accomplishments. We visited the white fence-enclosed lot of the Abrego family where appear the names of Jose Abrego, the builder of the Abrego adobe at Webster and Abrego streets, Dona Josefa Abrego, born 1814 and Julia and Julian Bolado, all born in Spain in the early 1800s.

The Abrego and the Amesti family were friends and neighbors in Monterey in those early days, so it was appropriate that their families should "rest in peace" as neighbors in the "graveyard." Amesti graves include Dona Prudenciana Vallejo Amesti and her husband, Don Jose Amesti; and their daughter, Carmen A. de McKinlay. Amesti was the builder of the Casa Amesti on Polk street, the home of the late Mrs. Frances Elkins who willed the two-story adobe to the National Trust of Washington, D.C., and which is now the headquarters for the Old Capital Club—a men's club of the Monterey Peninsula. This historic house will be open to guests on the "Historic Adobe Tour" on Aug. 20th, sponsored by the Monterey History and Art Assn. Oil portraits, probably the work of Leonardo Barbieri, an early day artist, of Don Jose and Dona Prudenciana and their daughter, Caledonia de Arno, are hanging in the Old

Custom House. The home of Carmen Amesti de McKinlay, and her husband, was an adobe on the corner of Jefferson and Pacific streets where The Herald building now stands.