

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 26, 1955

### **A Project That Failed**

"The General Committee selected to secure (if possible), the new Soldiers' Home at Monterey, met on Tuesday afternoon, July 19, 1887, at the Pacific House," according to the opening lines in "Claims of Monterey" printed in that year by the Women's Print, 23 First Street, San Francisco.

The committee was organized by the selection of Dr. T. H. Sinex as permanent president, and W. J. Towle as permanent secretary. Dr. Sinex, Rev. H. S. Snodgrass and Rev. C. C. Stratton, D.D., were appointed a committee to prepare an address to the commissioners, setting forth the advantages of Monterey as a suitable place for the home.

Other prominent persons appointed to committees for this project, which did not materialize, were: Invitation and Reception: David Jacks, Esq., Hon. Jesse D. Carr, Capt. Charles Goodall, Hon. B. V. Sargent, Wm. Vanderhurst, Esq., and S. B. Gordon, Esq. A committee of Ways and Means named Messrs. L. D. Stone, H. J. Palmer, J. O. Johnson, W. J. Towle and Ed Ingram.

The address which the committee presented to the Honorable Board of Managers of the National Soldiers' Home, stated that Monterey was situated on the Bay of Monterey and was accessible by sea and land— not by air in 1887, that the Pacific Coast Steamship Co.'s steamers landed regularly, and the trains of the Southern Pacific arrived and departed twice a day.

The proposed site of the home was to be on the Government Military Reservation, within the City of Monterey, consisting of nearly 200 acres of land, at a spot known as "Fremont's Fort." After writing of the bay, the mountains, and nearby places, the committee had this compliment to pay to the Monterey Peninsula: "A near view presents the quaint-town of Monterey, and just beyond, the queen of seaside resorts, the Del Monte, while in the opposite direction is the quiet Pacific Grove Retreat, unsurpassed for healthfulness and beauty."

The healthfulness of the climate is not forgotten.

"Indeed, the weather from one year's end to the other partakes of that delightful interlude, known in the East and South as Indian Summer," Observations, kept by priests and army officers for more than a century, have

shown that in some years the mean of summer and the mean of winter temperature have ranged from 6 degrees to 13 degrees apart, brag the writers in their appeal for the establishment of the Home. They even stated that Monterey had but one rival and that was Honolulu.

Advertisements at the back of the booklet evidently helped to support the publication. There is an ad for the Del Monte Wave published monthly in Pacific Grove. Hilby's Pharmacy and W. W. James, Hardware; appear with T. G. Lambert, Monterey Planing Mills and Lumber Emporium: White House Dry Goods Store, F. Gunsendorfer & Son, prop.; Dr. J. P. E. Heintz, physician in Del Monte Drug Store; and J. O. Johnson, prop. Pacific Grove Livery and Feed Stable.

To the front of the book is a map of the Peninsula and the Bay, showing the Southern Pacific Railroad built as far as Monterey. Huckleberry Hill is prominently marked, as are El Pescadero Rancho and Point Pinos Rancho, whale fishery at Stillwater Bay and Point Lobos. Three dairies are designated, a water trough and several springs are listed as is the "landing place of 1770."

The valuable little book was loaned to us by Mrs. Rose Marie Ansel of Dutra Street, Monterey.

Another "old-timer" we have enjoyed is "El Susurro", the 1910 commencement number of the Monterey High school. Listed on the program for the commencement exercises were: Oration, Miss Edith McGowan; vocal solo, Miss Pickering; Oration, "The California School System," William Burbeck; Address, Edward Burwick; and singing by a double quartette in which Elizabeth Riecks, Ed Hilby, Fern and Hazel DeWitt, Alfred Lee, Neil Best, Josephine Morgan and William Burbeck took part. Angelo (Myron) Oliver wrote the class poem and was the staff artist. Edwin Hilby composed the class will. Other members of the 1910 class were Neil O. Best, Carl Greene, Edith McGowan, Wm. B. Burbeck, Alfred W. Lee.