

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Monterey Hidden Treasure

Hidden treasures In Monterey have always been a fascinating subject for stories, news articles and long ago for the natives who washed their clothes in Washerwoman's Bay near the site of the new Presbyterian Church.

A number of years ago there came to light a story written in the old Californian of 1879. The files of the Californian are preserved in the Bancroft Library at the University of California. The issues of 1879 was not the same paper as started in Monterey in 1846 by Walter Colton and Semple but the one published in San Francisco. Robert Louis Stevenson often contributed to the Californian during the visit of a few months in Monterey. He received two dollars a week for his editorial work for the early weekly, the first newspaper published in California.

It has been thought by a number of historians that Stevenson wrote the article concerning Monterey's buried treasure in 1879, the style appearing to be much like his.

In the December 16, 1879 issue of the Californian there appeared this headline: "Hidden Treasure, Ten Thousand Dollars In Gold Dust Buried In The Willows Near Monterey."

The story follows: There are many now living who remember the excitement occasioned on the Atlantic shores by the report of the fabulous wealth Captain Kidd, the noted filibusterer, was said to have buried.

Many were the expeditions organized in search for the hidden treasures, but we do not know that any great amount was ever found. It is only a few years ago that we heard the story of how Walker, in his filibustering expedition, through Nicaragua had sacked a church in one of the large cities of the great amount of silver plate and other valuables, how the fortunes of war made it possible for him to carry it away and of its final burying under the floor of a house.

There are parties who only a few years ago were living in Los Angeles who were familiar with the location and if we remember rightly two of Walker's comrades-in-arms, years after the treasures were buried, repaired to Nicaragua for the purpose of recovering it. They had no trouble in finding the city and the street, but time had

changed the "land marks" whereby they expected to find the exact spot, so they rented house after house upon the street and removing the floors, searched night after night, but without success, until their actions became suspicious to the authorities and they were ordered to leave without accomplishing the object of their visit.

But It remains for Monterey to add to the already long list of buried treasures that have never been found. The incidents as related to us come from a gentleman of unquestionable reliability, and there are many in Monterey at the present time (1879), who remember well the visitation of the old man and his son who came up from Los Angeles to seek for the hidden gold.

In the years 1851 and 1852 Monterey was a great commercial distributing point for the different gold discoveries, in California.

At this time Philip Roach was mayor of Monterey, a live, stirring, man who organized a military company for the purpose of clearing the city of all persons of "questionable character." We are told that they made numerous scouts into surrounding country, carrying terror and dismay into the ranks of the lawless. In 1852 the section of the country running east of Laguna Seca to the ranch now owned by John Myers (1879) was then known as "The Willows."

(Continued Friday)