

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 24, 1956

Adobes Levelled by Cannon

Mrs. Bolado Davis, the granddaughter of Don Jose Abrego, builder of the small adobe home on Abrego street which will soon be the property of the Monterey Foundation, wrote her impressions of early days in Monterey shortly before her death a few years ago. Mrs. Davis expressed the wish that she could paint a picture of the early Monterey which she so clearly remembered as a child of six or seven and we think she did it very well in words substituted for the paint brush.

This is her story; "Monterey was made up entirely of white adobes, with red tiled roofs, clustered closely together, looking like white doves. The Calle Principal, now Main street had these lovely symmetrical adobe houses down as far as the Old Custom House and the water's edge, some with overhanging balconies on which the señoritas mingled with the flowers in the cool of the evening. The gardens were in the patios, and only the severe white fronts of the house with lovely window boxes faced the streets. Of course, there was no traffic or street cars, and only a few carriages. At noon time the chickens roosted down the streets, and the men sat in their shirt sleeves at the cantinas discussing the news of the day.

"As the late afternoon came on, the streets assumed a different aspect as the young gallants on their horses came out to caracole around the houses of their innamoratas. I remember how the horses champed at their bits and cavorted around but were perfectly quiet and would stand without hitching while their masters called on some señorita. Like ail Latin towns Monterey came to life in the late afternoon. My grandmother's carriage would be ordered, and we would drive down Calle Principal to the beach, 'La Playa,' a lovely unspoiled stretch of sand stretching as far as the forest which covered all that territory from the Presidio to Point Lobos, so dense one could hardly see daylight when driving through the narrow roads.

"Then I remember the day when a cannon was bought and one by one a whole block of adobes was demolished on Alvarado street. I can see them yet shuddering then falling, to make way for progress.

"The Californians were happy, trusting, easy-going children, basking in the sunshine of life until the

Americanos came. Do you wonder that we all cling to the old traditions and romances, still weep at the desecration and destruction of all the beauty, poetry, and romance that was our heritage?"

Monterey is to have another memorial plaque. The Northern California Professional Chapter, Sigma Delta Chi, national professional journalistic fraternity, is placing a plaque on the site where Colton and Semple established the first newspaper in California, "The Californian." August 15, 1846 at Monterey.

A. E. Gilbert, president, Northern California chapter of the fraternity, writes that brief but appropriate ceremonies are scheduled for 2 p.m., Sept. 9, Admission Day. Joseph R. Knowland, president of the California Historical Society, chairman of the State Division of Beaches and Parks, and distinguished member of Sigma Delta Chi, has been invited to make the presentation for the chapter. Gov. Knight has been invited to receive it for the people of California and Mayor Dan Searle for the people of Monterey.

Next Monday evening, August 27 th, Dr. Earl D. Rhoades of San Jose and Pacific Grove, will show colored slides and give a talk on the Donner Trail for the members of the Monterey History and Art Association. The Old Pacific building will be the setting for the event and the time will be 8 o'clock. Dr. Rhoades has actually traveled over the trail in the Sierra mountains and took the pictures as he toured the country over which the Donner party traveled.