

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Old School Compositions

Sketches of Leading Places of Interest, in Monterey" is a delightful little paper covered booklet printed in Monterey at the New Era Office in 1896 for the pupils of the Monterey Public School. The copy right was applied for, but if granted it must have lapsed long years ago, so we will risk that notice and give our readers a sample of historic composition as written more than 60 years ago by the students, with many of our old adobes as the subjects.

Frances B. Orton, the teacher, composed the frontispiece: "it is hoped that the following sketches, written by pupils of the Monterey school will commend themselves to all who are interested in our picturesque old town. The choice of subject, in this first effort, has necessarily fallen upon only a few of the many features which excite inquiry; but an attempt has been made to answer definitely some of the questions which naturally arise when one comes face to face with places around which memories and traditions cluster. Care has been taken to verify all statements made as facts, but it must be remembered that the testimony even of eyewitnesses may vary, so it will not be surprising if some small errors have crept in. It has seemed peculiarly fitting that the children of the place should undertake to secure from the pioneer residents little of that information which is to be found only in the reminiscences of the few who are left to tell the tale of early days."

Among the historic buildings selected for comment and the authors of the compositions are: The Custom House, Harry Olmstead; The Old Pacific House, Harrie Morey; Colton Hall, Elvira Abrego; The Allen House, Ruby Hickman; The Californian (First Newspaper); Jessie Kay; San Carlos Mission, Genevieve Dixon; Monterey Public School, Lulu Pyburn; The Covent, Ross Bemrose.

At the time the miniature history of some of the adobe buildings in Monterey was written John Hickman was the principal of the Monterey Public School. Hattie Morey, the author of "The Old Pacific House," is the only former pupil living in Monterey. Miss Morey with her sister, Mrs. Alice Pedro and Mrs. Carrie Morey Ewing, live in their family home on Munras avenue.

We hope it will be both interesting and satisfying to read what the young people of Monterey in 1896 thought of the history of Monterey as exemplified in its ancient adobe structures. Two of the old buildings mentioned have been torn down and disappeared from the scene, namely: The Old Convent and The Allen House; the rest stand as example of early California architecture. Three buildings now belong to the State of California as Historic Monuments; Colton Hall is the property of the City of Monterey and San Carlos Church is owned by Monterey-Fresno Diocese of the Catholic Church. The Historic Monuments are the Custom House, Pacific House and more recently the Larkin House, home of the first and only American Consul to Monterey from the United States, while California was under Mexican rule.

Lulu Pyburn listed her story of the Monterey Public School, the following alumni: Class of '91, George Kenyon, William James, Fannie Bostrom, May Bostrom and Ida Correia. William James is now judge of the Superior Court in Santa Clara County and resides on the Stanford Campus. The following year Fred Schneider, Oliver Ingram, Lulu Pyburn, Mary Miller, Rose Abrego, Florence Schaufele and Madeline Panella graduated. In 1894 the class was composed of Jose Escolle, William Cummings, Henry Henneken, Genevieve Murphy, Maude Smith, and Anita Ruth Orton. Graduating in 1895 were Kasper F. Henneken, Charles James, William Pisani, Pauline Smith and Mae Voshell. In 1896 there were but three—two boys and one girl—in the class: Ross Bemrose, Sam Goldstine and Carrie Bostrom.

The history of the school as written by Lulu Pyburn states that in early days Monterey knew very little about any kind of schools. The first was taught by Mrs. Pinto. She took payment in whatever the parents chose to give her. Mrs. Mary Little taught a private school in the old Leese building, a little back room lighted by only one window. Although she received \$100 a month for teaching 18 to 20 pupils, three months was as long a time as she cared to continue the work because the children could not speak English and she did not speak Spanish, and under those circumstances improvements were necessarily slow.