

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 20, 1957

La Favorita

Miss Camille Marla Stahl has accepted the honor annually bestowed upon a young lady by the Monterey History and Art Assn. to be La Favorita at the Merienda celebrating Monterey's birthday.

This year the city will be 187 years old on June 3, the anniversary of the landing of Father Junipero Serra and Don Gaspar de Portola at Monterey when the first Mass was said and the country claimed for the King of Spain. The annual Merienda will be held Saturday, June 1, in Memory Garden of the Old Pacific building, with a barbecue, much music and dancing, colorful decorations and gay companionship among the more than 400 members of the association who are expected to attend.

Miss Stahl is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Stahl of Monterey. She is a junior student at Santa Catalina School for Girls, where she has been enrolled since the fifth grade. Her 10 year old brother Bill attends San Carlos school. Camille's mother was Bernice Hayes before her marriage, the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Wade Hayes of Monterey, and the grandchild on the maternal side of Mr. and Mrs. J. Agustin Girardin, descendants of the early settlers of Monterey.

La Favorita's father, William Stahl, came to Monterey in 1928 to enter the automobile business. He is a native of Vasa, Finland, which country he left in 1914 to come to the United States and eventually to California. His family left Germany for Sweden in 1600 and a year later settled in Finland where Mr. Stahl still has many relatives. He and his family visited Finland twice a year ago, traveling by air over the pole four times.

Mrs. Stahl's ancestors were very early settlers in Monterey, coming here in 1848. The first of the family to arrive was Jean Girardin, a Frenchman, who had moved from France to Mexico with his wife and baby daughter. His wife died, and he later married Manuela Perez, a daughter of Mexico. They had one child born in Mexico, Cristina, before Jean decided to settle in California. He sent his wife and child by boat to Monterey, and he himself came from Mazatlan by land with a pack train of mules laden with goods. He had heard of Monterey and intended to open a general merchandise store here.

When he arrived on 1849 it was to find Monterey an almost deserted town, due to the Gold Rush. There was no business, and practically no population to which to sell his goods. He was interested primarily in business and therefore did not go to the gold fields. To make a living he started a teaming business with his mules. Mules were in great demand for hauling freight.

Girardin prospered, both in business and in family. In 1856 he purchased the large two-story building on Houston street and in the 1860s remodeled it to accommodate stores on the first floor. He should be honored for developing the use of whale bone for paving. In the early newspaper of 1864 we learn that he is complimented for being the first to discover a way of using the whalebone, and was laying sidewalks in front of his new stores.

Seven children were born to Jean Girardin and his wife in Monterey, the youngest of whom is still living—Mrs. Carrie Reedy of San Francisco. She was born in the adobe home on Houston street, now the Stevenson House, in 1865, married there in 1882 and has many pleasant memories of the family life there.

Among the other children of Mr. and Mrs. Girardin there were the following: Josephine, his daughter born to his first wife, married and settled in Petaluma, where she died in 1889.

Cristina, the daughter born in Mexico, married Valentine Gigling, for whom the former Gigling reservation was named. J. Agustin, the first child born in Monterey in 1849, married Rufina Boyd, and is from that marriage our Favorita is descended. He established a business on Alvarado street with his brother Luis. They were members of Monterey Hose Co. No. 1. It was his daughter Adelaide who married Wade Hayes, the parents of Mrs. Stahl.

Clementine Girardin married Dr. J. Heintz and became the grandparents of Gregory Teaby. When Robert Louis Stevenson was ill in Monterey it was Dr. Heintz who cared for him in his own home (the Malarin adobe on Alvarado street).

Unlike many of the early business men of California, Jean Girardin believed in banking. And therefore he invested his funds rather than burying it, as many others did. Monterey had no banks, so Girardin took precautions. His wife made for him a vest, with many small pockets inside—each pocket just large enough to hold a \$50 gold piece. When he had accumulated

several hundred dollars he and his wife would go to San Francisco on a visit. They would drive by carriage to Gilroy and there catch a train. They would stay at the French Hotel, eat at a favorite French restaurant, and Mr. Girardin would deposit his money in either the German saving Bank or the French Bank. Banks then paid 12% interest.

The forgoing amusing story was told by the late Mrs. W.L. Teaby, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Heintz, to Mrs. William Kneass, who has told it to us that we might include it in this story of the ancestors of Camille Stahl, the 1957 La Favorita of Monterey's 187th birthday Merienda.

When Jean Girardin died in Monterey in 1879 he owned several pieces of business property in Monterey, some of which is still in the possession of his descendants.