

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 12, 1960

This Was The Site

It seems appropriate at this time to review the history of some of the old historical buildings which come within the urban renewal program for the old town of Monterey. We ask: "Where else In California have so many of the historic buildings been saved for future generations to see and study? Each one lost is an irreplaceable loss to the Peninsula at large as well as to Monterey and it is of no value to the visitor to read a sign "This was the site of . . ."

We have chosen today to tell the fascinating story of the construction of the Osio-Rodriguez adobe which faces Alvarado street just north of Franklin, now occupied by Hermann's Inn and Harold McLean's men's shop. The builder was Jacinto Rodriguez, son of Don Sebastian Rodriguez, who owned many leagues of land in the Pajaro Valley.

Jacinto Rodriguez lived in Monterey in the middle 1800's and was one of the signers of the California State Constitution and a delegate to the First Constitutional Convention held in Colton Hall 111 years ago last month.

The Rodriguez adobe is a two-story building, built originally with a balcony overhanging the sidewalk. It is located at 380 Alvarado street. It was erected in 1818 by Don Jacinto Rodrigues, and there, it is said the California Constitution was first signed. The balcony was later removed from the structure. According to the WPA Historical Survey records, "The house known as the El Adobe or Oslo building, has been so grotesquely disfigured that it bears little resemblance to the former structure." We believe that it could be restored to its original adobe appearance, with the tiny, narrow balcony, such as appears on "My Attic" on Alvarado street, south of Franklin, and still be used for business as it is today.

Don Jacinto Rodriguez, the builder of the adobe, was born January 12, 1815, in the Pajaro Valley. He moved to Monterey shortly after the death of his father, Don Sebastian Rodriguez, and was soon very prominent in the affairs of the capital city. He became a lieutenant under Alvarado, in 1836, and in 1839 was elected as "Alferez" in the army, and celador of the Custom House (1843-46). to 1849 he was appointed Alcalde (mayor).

In spite of the delays resulting from the rush to the mines, Colton Hall was in readiness for the Constitutional Convention in September 1849, when the convention was called by Bennet Riley, the military governor. Deliberations of the assembly were accompanied by almost continuous festivities ending with a grand ball at the home of Don Jacinto Rodriguez. Here the delegates refused categorically to return to Colton Hall to sign the constitution, so the document was brought to the ball and there the signatures were placed upon it. The next day the final draft was officially signed at Colton Hall.

Rodriguez died in Monterey in 1880, leaving considerable property on the principal business street in Monterey, he having purchased the property from Curtis and Conover, on which was built the first brick store building in the city, In 1857. That building still stands a few doors north of the Rodriguez adobe. To the rear of both these old buildings there was always a beautiful, well-kept garden as long as they were owned by the Rodrigue-Osio family.

Jacinto Rodriguez also owned an adobe building, long since torn down, about where the present Ordway building is on the corner of Alvarado and Franklin streets. In 1851 the property was assessed to Blcinto Rodriguez for \$1,500. In 1855, Jacinto Rodriguez was shown as the owner, and the assessment against the building had been raised to \$2,500.

We hope it is not the plan that these two buildings -the adobe and the brick building - be destroyed under the Urban Renewal plan. They are certainly two of our historical structures and could very easily be restored and blended into the proper atmosphere of the Custom House reservation.