

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Kimball Hotel**

In 1844 Milton Little arrived in Monterey. He was the builder of the Kimball Hotel on Alvarado street just south of the Custom House, a hotel which all of us, who have made our homes in Monterey these number of years, know so well and which will probably disappear from the old site when new plan under the Urban Renewal project take over.

That will be a sad day for old and new comers alike - for there is history wrapped up in that long, low two-story building, history which can never be replaced in any modern construction on the property which is so close to the Old Custom House, the oldest federal building west of the Rockies.

Let's register a bit of the history background of the Kimball Hotel. In 1844 Milton Little arrived in Monterey. He became a partner in a mercantile business with Thomas Oliver Larkin, the first and only American Consul to California. Their place of business was to be established in the Larkin House, on the corner of Calle Principal and Jefferson streets. After a few years the partnership was dissolved, and Mr. Little went into business for himself.

In 1851 Milton Little decided to erect a number of residences and as a consequence he imported quantities of heavy timber from Australia and galvanized iron from New York, the iron being cut and grooved to his specifications. Both shipments arrived by sailing ships. He had ordered sufficient iron to cover the outside walls of six houses, but in the end received just enough to cover four houses. At this date the only house still standing in Monterey built by Mr. Little of the imported iron, is enclosed in the Kimball Hotel on Alvarado street.

Two houses built by Mr. Little of the same material were in New Monterey. The one known as the Ranch House occupied the corner where the Lighthouse Furniture Company now stands and the other was across the street and was the home of Mr. Little's son, David Little, and his family.

After building the house on Alvarado street, Milton Little opened his own mercantile business, using the lower floor for his office and store, and the ten rooms on the second floor as his residence. He was also, in

later years, the local agent for the Wells Fargo Express Company.

During Mr. Little's occupancy of the building now known as the Kimball Hotel, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1849, would gather there and it is said that many of the ideas which were incorporated into the final draft were composed in his shop, although he was not one of the signers of the finished document. In 1865 Little discontinued his mercantile business and sold the property, moving to the ranch house in New Monterey. Shortly after the sale the building was opened as a small hotel under the name of the Hampton House. The property was again sold in 1882, this time to Louis Schaufele, president of the Monterey Whaling Company, the name of the hotel by that time was the Bay View. More addition and remodeling was done, and the name again changed to Pacific Ocean House. When the last owner, Schaufele, got the property, it measured 45 x 40 feet, which had originally been part of a Spanish grant. It now has a frontage of 198 feet, according to the present owners.

Mr. Schaufele, who was the late Mrs. Kimball's father, died in 1896 and his widow married R. Chambre, well known in local musical circles at that time. He became manager of the hotel, and in an advertisement appearing in the newspaper of 1893, the fact was stressed that it was "an ideal place for families, with gardens adjoining the premises, and swings and hammocks, etc., for the children."

Upon the death of Mrs. Chambre in 1911, the property came into the possession of the late Mrs. Kimball. The building by that time had been considerably changed, the iron was covered with shiplap and later the balcony was removed and stucco was placed over the wood. Old timers can probably remember when the guests sat in comfortable chairs both on the upper balcony and on the porch which bordered the sidewalk on Alvarado street. It is also recalled that a Chinese laundry was next door which was patronized by most of the residents.