

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Early Monterey**

Mrs. Bolado Davis, the granddaughter of Don Jose Abrego, builder of the small adobe home on Abrego and Webster streets in Monterey, which is now Casa Abrego Club, a woman's luncheon club, wrote her impressions of early days in Monterey shortly before her death several 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 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, 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 hours came on, the streets assumed a different aspect as the young gallants on their horses came out to caracole around the houses of the innamoratas. I remember how the horses champed at their bits and cavorted around but perfectly quiet and would stand without hitching while their masters called on some señorita. Like all 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 the territory from the Presidio to Point Lobos, so dense one could hardly see daylight when driving along the narrow roads.

"Then I remember the day when a cannon was brought 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."

Mrs. Bolado Davis went to Tres Pinos in, San Benito County after her marriage, and lived on the Rancho Santa Ana y Quien Sabe, which had been bought by her father Don Joaquin Bolado in 1860. She gave the land for Bolado Park to San Benito county and it was named in her honor.