

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Old Monterey**

Before a community can sell itself to the world, it must believe in what it has to offer, so may we submit a few, facts as to what old Monterey has to sell to the world? And that she has not yet sold to herself.

1 - It was the capital of the Pacific empire from the Rockies to the sea, from the Oregon line to Mexico, from 1776 to 1849. Every event of major importance between these periods began and ended here.

2 - The capital mission, San Carlos de Borromeo de Monterey de Carmelo, was located within its area. Carmel Mission, 1771, is still functioning.

3 - The only presidio church to survive in California is here - the Royal Presidio Chapel of San Carlos de Borromeo de Monterey, 1770, is still functioning.

4 - The only custom house in the Spanish and Mexican eras, and the first in America. Economic, political and later social center of Alta California.

5 - The United States began its life in the West in Monterey, the Custom House the scene of the event, when the American flag was raised there on July 7, 1846.

6 - The Constitution of California was written here, In Colton Hall, September 1849.

7 - Eighty-nine adobe, sandstone or chalk-rock buildings from the Spanish, Mexican and early American period survive in Old Monterey. Never mind what we may have lost, except perhaps El Cuartel. There are 39 left according to our count. Four more have been destroyed since 1933, namely General Castro's headquarters on Tyler street; First U.S., Post Office on Alvarado street; Sandstone House on Van Buren; the old house and wall, Pearl and Calle Principal, where the Purity store now stands. We hope that in 1961 none will be torn down to satisfy progress. There are still a few in private hands and a few within the borders of the proposed redevelopment which may be in danger.

What does this list mean to you - it matters not what line you are in - in dollars and cents? If Monterey would open her eyes and electrify her consciousness of this incomparable heritage, and capitalize on it, the world would be at our doors.

If we have this array of historical places - and only buildings are enumerated here, not sites, like the Presidio of Monterey (oldest military reservation in the United States), the landing place of Father Junipero Serra and Don Gaspar de Portola; the old cemetery where names of the signers of the California Constitution and many other historical personages are buried; and many others that thrill the imagination - we can keep visitors here for days on end. And romance and authentic history does it, particularly when sports and physical beauty of the area conspire together to enhance our scenes, as it does in Monterey.