

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Old Night Pasture

Edmund J. Bolce, who resides on Pine street in New Monterey and who will soon be ninety years old, wrote us a note soon after the fire in an old adobe French Consulate on El Estero, saying:

"Your treatise on the historic French Consulate (Girl Scout headquarters) was read by me with absorbing interest. During the '80's my brother, George S. Bolce, was one of the Del Monte drivers, taking guests around the drive. He and his wife and step-daughter lived in the French Consulate when it was on Fremont street near Abrego and took in roomers. Many a night I slept under that roof while visiting them. I wonder if my bedroom suffered from the fire?"

This information intrigued us so we asked Mr. Bolce to tell us more about the Old Town and he willingly obliged with much interesting information concerning not only this city but much county history.

"My first glimpse of Monterey was in the late summer of 1876, when Alvarado street was a dirt road and the stores that sold edibles were called provision stores. Grocery stores and canned goods as we know them now were, to use an algebraic expression, an unknown quantity."

Mr. Bolce's sister had married Sinclair Ollason at Hayward, California, and they were living and operating a dairy at the entrance to Carmel Valley. "My father and we three children were going to visit them," stated Mr. Bolce to begin his reminiscences of his first visit to the Monterey Peninsula.

The dairy Mr. Bolce refers to we have known for many years as the Hatton Dairy, now only a memory as it was torn down a few years ago to make way for progress. We still miss it – all the white-washed buildings against the green artichoke fields and the backdrop of high hills.

"We came over the San Juan grade on the old stage road to Los Angeles, four miles down. We made many such trips each summer about the same time of the year, after the orchard fruit at Hayward had been gathered," Mr. Bolce explained.

"These Monterey visits served a dual purpose; a visit with my sister Mary, and attendance at a Methodist camp meeting at Pacific Grove Retreat. At the time of

our visit Carmel was only a name, and what is known as Hatton Fields was the night pasture for the dairy herd. There were two or three milkers besides Sinclair Ollason and the cheese maker. The late Charlie Ollason, a brother, was one of the milkers. There was also a Vasquez, a relative of the infamous outlaw."

After a pause Mr. Bolce laughingly said: "Tom Work was there also, but I think he had a contract to cut wood and not to milk. I will ask him some day. These milkers had a one-legged stool strapped on, leaving both hands free to expedite the milking. In the milking process the men always milked the same cows in the same rotation. Watching them in the corral I often wondered how they kept track of which cow came next on their list."

Sinclair Ollason was also a bee and honey man and our historian for today reports that he saw Ollason's bare arms literally covered with bees; while if the children went near the hives, they would get painfully stung. One of the outbuilding was filled with dry mustard stalks tied up in bundles. When the Steward boys, who lived on the Martin ranch near the mouth of the Carmel River, came to Mr. Ollason's house to tell him the sand dam at the river's mouth had broken he would grab a lot of stalks and a salmon spear, go down to the beach and by the light of the dry mustard stalks, spear salmon, according to the memory of Mr. Bolce.

"One night at supper time the fireplace chimney caught fire," Mr. Bolce recalls, "Some one placed a ladder against the porch, a man grabbed a bucket and poured the contents down the chimney putting out the fire. When the cook went to get milk in the morning, the bucket was empty. Milk had put out the fire the night before."

Recalling his boyhood journey around 17 Mile Drive, Mr. Bolce told us that, to the children's great joy, some days after the morning milking, Mr. Ollason would hitch up a team of horses to a spring wagon, Sister Mary would gather a lunch together and they would all be off for a day on the drive, going in by way of the Carmel Hill entrance. Often they would find dead trees across the road which would necessitate a move before they could proceed, but that was also fun. There were no charges in those days, the only restriction being: "Please Close the Gate."