

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Pictures Of Old Monterey

Our readers who enjoy tales of old Monterey will appreciate some of the old time verbal pictures and stories as told by E. J. Bolce of New Monterey as he remembers them when he came here first in 1876. Mr. Bolce will be 90 years old on his next birthday. His wife, Sarah Wright Bolce, died several years ago but Mr. Bolce keeps home in New Monterey and keeps active and up with the times every day in the week.

Mr. Bolce recalls that after the Del Monte Hotel was built a fleet of hotel drivers took tourists around the drive, going in from Pacific Grove entrance. George Bolce, a brother of E. J. Bolce, was one of the drivers and he and his wife and daughter lived in the house known as the French Consulate. Going around the drive from the Pacific Grove entrance, Mr. Bolce remembers, you came out on top of the Carmel Hill, where you saw a breath-taking view of Monterey Bay in front of you and of Carmel as you looked back over Point Lobos and the Pacific Ocean. He also recalled part of a speech the drivers would tell the gullible tourists: "Behold, in front of you is the Pacific Ocean; now back of you the Atlantic. The only spot in the world where you can see this view."

Thinking of the Carmel Valley in the early days, Mr. Bolce remembered the Snively boys, friends of Mr. Ollasan, who owned a ranch near where the Farm Center is now and close to Robinson Canyon, where they would visit. The road followed the Carmel River and in going from Ollasan's to Snively's they would cross the river seven times.

"Not all of our trips to Monterey from Hayward were made overland," Mr. Bolce recalled. "My mother, Sister Fannie and myself came down one trip on the Goodall Perkins steamer, the Orizaba. Sister Fannie had just begun to wear long dresses. She had put on a short dress when she entered the boat and changed to a long dress after the purser had collected the tickets. He noticed the change and remarked, "You are a pretty big girl to travel on half fare." The Orizaba pitched and rolled and we all got sick. Wonder if Allen Knight has any relic from the Orizaba?"

The third means of transportation from Hayward to Monterey in his boyhood days was made by Mr. Bolce

by rail. Accompanied by his younger brother, he took a train to San Jose via Niles Junction. They had to wait in San Jose several hours, all of which was spent at the station as they were afraid of getting lost if they went up town. There were large curtains at the waiting room windows on spring rollers, the like of which the boys had not seen before. While they were concerned with the mechanics of the things one flew to the top. The boys ran and it was a long time before they dared return to the protection of the waiting room.

On one of the family's overland trips they failed to make Salinas the first day and had to camp by the Gabilan Creek, near the foot of the grade. There was a ranch house close by and the father of the family walked up to buy some hay for the horses. The ranch owner came down to see and size up the outfit. After he returned to the house and reported there was a man and three children camping out on their way to Monterey, the wife hurriedly cooked a pan of hot biscuits and delivered them with a huge pitcher of fresh milk. She invited them to visit her after their meal and her boys would take them for a ride on the lake. True California hospitality! The place was called Laganita. Twenty years later Mr. Bolce was manager of that ranch.

There was no bridge across the Salinas River, and when its water subsided enough to make crossing possible, a herd of cattle was driven back and forth to pack the bottom after which willow saplings were stuck along each side to mark the crossing. When they made earlier trips to Monterey that portion of the valley from Salinas to the river was a sea of wild mustard and blackbirds.

About ten years ago Mr. Bolce told us that he had driven by the Laganita. All the land between the Prunedale road, San Juan highway and the creek was plowed up. Not a thing remained to show that any buildings were ever there. In going from Monterey to Pacific Grove Retreat only two houses were seen from the Custom House to the campground. One was the Zink house across from Scholze Park and the other the Half Way House, Hoffman and Lighthouse. Harry Greene later built near where the Zink house stood. His stable faced Hawthorne street and had the quarters for coachman and hostler. These houses are still there and occupied by antique shops.