

History Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **An Historic Adobe Home**

Whether or not the small adobe house on Hartnell street in Monterey was ever the headquarters of General John Charles Fremont as an old California Automobile Assn. sign indicates, it is worth saving, according to the opinion of many history loving people of the Peninsula. The Monterey History and Art Assn. decided at a called meeting of the board of directors, to be a sponsoring organization to proceed with negotiation with the Post Office Department to preserve the building by possibly having it declared surplus property and thus acquiring it for preservation and restoration. These plans are still in the embryo stage, but the decision of the department will be made soon for the plans for the enlargement of the Monterey post office building and grounds are already underway.

Past history tells us little about the building of the adobe house but we know that in 1861 it was the property of Antonio Maria Vasquez, as in that year he sold to Concepcion Zamora a lot in Monterey on Hartnell street, in front of and opposite the house and lot on the same street owned by W. E. P. Hartnell. The lot was 45 yards on the street and 50 yards in depth, and the house, and adobe house of two stories.

Among a collection of 408 photographs, recently given to the History and Art Assn. by Mrs. Ann B. Fisher, former resident of Pacific Grove, is one of Monterey printed in 1887 by C. W. J. Johnson which shows the very large Hartnell House and the vey small so-called Fremont headquarters on the opposite sides of a footpath which later became the paved Hartnell street. Where the Hartnell adobe was is now the site of the Monterey Hospital and where the post office now stands was a vacant lot.

The adobe evidently changed hands again, coming into the ownership of Cristimo Castro. He and his brother came to live in California from Baja California. Cristimo and his family lived in the house for some years. There his wife, who was a member of the Duarte family, died. Their children married and came often to visit and some of the grandchildren were born there.

The house was a typical adobe home of a Monterey family and is remembered with affection by some of Christimo Castro's grandchildren today. Sarah Cecilia

Gibson, now a resident of Fresno, was born in one of the second story rooms. Mrs. James Burton of Pacific Grove remembers the house well from the period she visited there with her grandfather Cristimo.

Mrs. Burton told Mrs. William Kneass, curator of the Pacific Building, that when she was a child there were two stairways to the second floor, one went up from the outside to the upper back porch and the other from the kitchen, inside the house, to a room on the second floor.

One of Cristimo's daughters was given part of the land, to the north of the adobe. This daughter, Dahlia, married Charles Tripp, and for many years one of her sons, Billy Tripp, had a small frame house on the property in which he and his sister lived. We have been told by members of the family that the property originally extended from the present post office property along Hartnell street to the gulch.

There are still three granddaughters of Cristimo living – all daughters of his daughter Trinidad, who married George Gibson. They are Miss Sarah Gibson, Mrs. Burton, and Mrs. Lucinda Burns. Their father, George Gibson, was a constable of Monterey in the 1860's. As far as the family tales are concerned "It was always just a very nice house of Cristimo Castro."

Fremont, in his memoirs, stated that he slept on a hill at the end of town during his sojourn here. Gen. Sherman's memoirs says that Fremont camped in a tent about a mile out of town, and Sherman visited him there. Mrs. Fremont and their daughter stayed in the Castro Adobe, now the home of Frank Work.