

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Early Monterey Gardens

From the files of the Monterey Gazette and the Monterey Democrat of the early 1870's we have learned of the early gardens in Monterey. Juan Bonifacio was praised for his garden of beautiful roses; and Theodore Gonzales was said to have the best laid out garden in the old town. Rock's nursery of San Jose, represented by J. S. Merritt, supplied many of the trees, shrubs, and plants desired by the people of Monterey. Paul Romie of Monterey and Kelsey's Nursery of Oakland also came into prominence for the importance they gave to planting. Each of the above nurseries carried advertisements in the local papers.

By 1875, the following, a partial list, had been planted or were available in Monterey: cypress, pine, oak, black walnut, eucalyptus, ash, elm, sycamore, mulberry, pepper, Rose of Sharon, snowball, lilac, dwarf pomegranate, silver maple, popular, willow, palm, grape, fig, olive, almond, nectarine, cherry, apricot, apple, current, gooseberry, blackberry, iron bark, veronica, oleander, japonica, roses, woodbine, geraniums, hollyhocks, jasmine, ivy, and dracaena, all listed in the advertisements. Together with the growth of native flowers, shrubs, and trees, these mean that Monterey had passed the time of disregard.

After the 1880's, especially after the building of Hotel Del Monte and the planting of its world-famous gardens, Monterey has enjoyed an ever-increasing growth of trees. The American Legion several years ago planted as a gift to the city the plane trees that border the entire length of Jefferson street. Myron Oliver was petitioned to make the artistic benches which are such a nice part of the Friendly Plaza, when that beautiful garden was completed. When he received his check to cover the cost of the benches, he put the entire amount into 50 trees which now surround the Friendly Plaza and the Few Memorial building. Mr. Oliver also planted, at his expense, the trees around the block on Alvarado, Scott, Olivier, and Decatur streets. The late Mrs. Mary Black Morrison planted all the acacias which beautify Church and Abrego streets. A few years ago, one whole block of these trees were cut down by order of the City Council - too bad. Jack Dougherty planted Hawthorne trees from Casa Munras to the intersection of Munras avenue and Abrego streets.

The Monterey Woman's Civic Club instigated the planting of the trees on Calle Principal. Mrs. B. D. Marx Greene was the president of the club at the time of the planting and with a committee she visited all the property owners and obtained their permission for the plantings. It was Mrs. Greene who also received the permission of these people to ask the council to change the name of the street from Main to Calle Principal.

Mrs. Frances Elkins and the Misses L. M. and V. Jacks also planted trees in front of their respective properties. The Monterey Peninsula Herald the law firm of Hudson, Martin, Ferrante and Street, William Hudson, Dr. Winton F. Swengel and the Herald Printers and Publishers planted in the parking spaces in front of their buildings on Pacific street and the City of Monterey, which maintains all the trees, planted those on Pierce street. We must also give the State of California full credit for the well-kept gardens at the historical monuments in Monterey.

To the list of adobes printed last Friday, still standing and marked in Monterey should be added Casa Bonifacio (the Sherman Rose Adobe) on Mesa Road; Casa Madariaga a simple adobe built in Mexican period, on Abrego street; and the Brown Underwood adobe, now the office of the City Manager. This makes 42 adobes still standing and in good hands at the end of 1962.