

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Glass House Shattered

The dream house of Don Ignacio Vicente Ferrar Vallejo succumbed to the power of a modern bulldozer on Werner Hill in the Pajaro Valley during the last days of January 1962. Time, neglect, indecision and just plain indifference cost the valley one of its important links with the past.

The Glass House, as it was best known for many years, once capable of restoration and preservation, was believed to have been built in 1820 by Don Ignadio Vallejo, who was born in 1748 in Guadalajara, Mexico. He often has been described as having arrived in California with Father Serra in 1769, or perhaps later in 1774 with Ortego.

As a result of his military service in Spain he obtained a grant to Bolsa de Cayetano Rancho in 1824, the grant having been confirmed by court action in 1830.

His rancho on which he had raised cattle, extended north to the Pajaro River, east to Vego del Pajaro and west to the bay, including the Werner Hill site of the Glass House. It was located above the highway across from the Pajaro Valley golf club.

The Watsonville Register Pajaronian reporter, Howard Sheerin, wrote this piece of history which also concerns Monterey: "Although Don Ignacio is credited with having built the adobe mansion overlooking Monterey bay, it was not until 1852 and after his death that the 'mistake' was made that ultimately resulted in his dream house being known as the Glass House."

In 1911, J. R. Leese of San Francisco, a descendant of Vallejo, wrote what he said was a true story of the Glass House.

"In 1852, Juan Antonio Vallejo, a brother of Gen. M. G. Vallejo, owned Rancho San Cayetano in Pajaro Valley, and one day in Monterey, at the house of Don Jose Abrego, Juan Antonio Vallejo ordered, through Mrs. Abrego, some glass for windows. Mrs. Abrego wrote for the same to San Francisco. In the course of a few weeks the windows arrived at Monterey and Vallejo was notified of the arrival. When he called for the glass, to his surprise, the hundred windows were there. He objected to them and to Mr. Abrego he said that he ordered glass and not windows.

". . . They wrote to San Francisco for a copy of the order and they found that the mistake was made by Mrs. Abrego's order. Vallejo said, 'All right, since you made the mistake, I will keep them and send them to the rancho and have a glass porch made.' He did so and a man by the name of Jose Eucebio Borondo took them to the ranch. I remember the circumstances because I went with Borondo. At the time I was then 12 years old."

At any rate, the windows were used to adorn an upper portion of the adobe which .. soon.... made the house known as the "Glass House".

For years, the Pajaro Valley Historical Society has been trying to save the house from destruction. In 1947 it appeared that its restoration might be realized. A. J. Trafton, then owner of the land, agreed to donate the remains of the old adobe and three acres of land to the state for the establishment of an historical monument. A bill was passed in the legislature appropriating \$20,000 for the job. But the project was not begun because when estimates of the cost of the work were presented a much higher figure was presented and a dispute arose over what roads should be built to the proposed monument. The land came back to Trafton.

There now remains only the possibility of the placing of a memorial plaque to mark what was once the site of La Casa Materna de Los Vallejo, an historic structure in northern Monterey County.