

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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A Historic Brick

Victor Mossop, the venerable amateur historian of Monterey who is always kind to other would-be historians, has supplied us today with a bit of interesting material on the old building which until recently housed the Pioneer Bakery at the corner of Polk and Pearl streets. The information makes this another of the historic buildings in the Old Town of Monterey.

We always have admired the decoration at the roof line of this structure and was sorry to see some of the ornamentation torn away several years ago, but still it remains an interesting building.

Mr. Mossop was reminded of the stories he had heard since boyhood, when an announcement appeared several months ago that this building might be destroyed if Pearl street was widened at that point.

The building is of brick construction, according to Mossop, and he remembers back in the early '90's when the Old Monterey Spanish men, who were 60 and 70 years of age at that time, would refer to it as the old McKinley store. History tells us that McKinley built a general store building back in 1848 and that Hugo Reid, the Scotch Paisano, when returning from the gold mines in 1848, called at Monterey and was hired by McKinley to manage his store for him.

But it seems that Hugo Reid gave the store up in the summer of 1849, as he noted that most of the male population of Monterey had gone to the gold diggings.

Mossop thinks that the bricks in this building came from those left over from the building of the First Brick House on Decatur street. We know from the records that the Brick House was planned in 1847 as a much larger home and the bricks were fired on the spot by Gallant D. Dickenson. But when the gold rush came, it was left with one wing, as it appears today. So, it is very probable that the extra bricks were used in the McKinley building.

Mr. Mossop, also remembers that when he was a small boy, Honore Escolle, a wealthy Frenchman, used the old building as a warehouse for his new farming equipment, machinery and wagons, as his general store was in the old Copper or Molera adobe across the street.

James McKinley, spoken of as the owner of the general store building now the Pioneer Bakery building, at the corner of Polk and Pearl streets, was the husband of Carmen Amesti, the daughter of Don Amesti, a Spanish Basque, who built the casa Amesti on Polk street.

In 1824, McKinley, a Scotch sailor boy, was left behind in San Francisco by a whaler, according to Monterey history notes of authentic sources. In time, he became a Mexican citizen, and was thereafter known as Santiago McKinley. For many years he was connected with maritime affairs, and his name constantly is cropping up in commercial records from 1830 on.

From the year 1840 and later, he was the owner and operator of a schooner plying up and down the California coast. He became a member of the shipping firm of Fitch and Paty in 1842 and opened a store in San Francisco in 1843.

McKinley married Carmen Amesti in 1848 and took up his residence in Casa Amesti before building a home which stood at the corner of Pacific and Jefferson street where The Herald building now stands.

Don Santiago became a wealthy man and was held in good repute through- out his long career in California. He died in the Amesti home in 1875, leaving a family of several children.