

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Scholze Park (2)

There must be many folks in Monterey today who have not stopped and wandered into Scholze Park in New Monterey, nor have they inquired why that name was chosen for the bit of a green belt on Lighthouse avenue on the way to Pacific Grove.

One day in 1950 I took time to visit Mr. Scholze, for in 1939 I had taken part in the dedication of the little park, sponsored by the City of Monterey Peninsula Garden Club.

For the benefit of newcomers to the Peninsula, it might be well to introduce Mr. Scholze as the very generous person who presented to the city one block of land now known as Scholze Park. The dedication was held July 22, 1939, when a bronze plaque was placed on a huge boulder there and Mr. Scholze was duly honored.

The plot of ground includes 10 lots which the donor bought from Milton Little's family in 1899. He had had a nursery and hot houses on the property for many years. When I found Mr. Scholze watering his plants in one of the greenhouses, he told me that he bought the block of land because of the curious rock formations there and because he admired the several old Cypress trees that grew there. There also was a small house facing on Foam street which he later razed and rebuilt on the site. That house is still there and was his home until he died in October of 1955.

His answer to my question as to why he gave the park to the city was: "There was not a green spot between Colton Hall and Pacific Grove for the people to enjoy, so I thought I would provide such a place."

When the ceremony of dedication was held at the park in 1939, the Monterey Peninsula Garden Club was in charge. B. J. Pardee, the city manager, accepted the gift in the name of the City of Monterey.

Others included were Dr. James B. Finley, chairman of the Monterey Planning Commission, and Mayor Emmett McMenamin, who added their words of appreciation for the gift. Gloria Gonsalves, then only 10 years old, thanked the donor on behalf of the children of the Peninsula.

Mayor McMenamin surprised Mr. Scholze with a large, framed parchment scroll memorializing the event.

Bearing the official seal of the city and signed by the mayor, the scroll read: "To Mr. Ernest Scholze: The Council of the City of Monterey, on behalf of its people, hereby expresses its gratitude for your generous gift of ten lots, hereafter to be known as Scholze Park. By this gift you bring joy to Monterey for generations to come."

The scroll was awarded by the mayor and created by Carmen Rubio, then a pupil of the late Armin Hansen. The late William Fiddes, mayor of Pacific Grove and past president of the garden club, spoke. Roddie Maddock, resident of New Monterey now of Carmel, cemented the bronze plaque in the age-old outcropping rock. The plaque was cast by Robert Peterson, Peninsula metal artist. Over 100 persons were present to honor the donor.

Ernest A. Scholze was 86 years old on Sept. 9, 1938, the same day that California became 100 years old. Mr. Scholze was born in 1864 in Rosenthal (meaning Rose Valley) in Saxony, a country in Europe but now a part of Germany. He came to San Francisco in 1891 and one year later to the old Hotel Del Monte. He left Del Monte's employ in January of 1924, after almost 32 years.

When Ernest August Scholze died in Monterey in October, 1955, he left \$135,000, as a gift to the City of Monterey, one half of the amount was ear-marked for building and development of children's playgrounds, the other half for development and maintenance of parks.