

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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To Tour Monterey

For the first time, San Francisco will be the site for the national annual meeting and preservation conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Oct. 4-8.

The National Trust, with headquarters in Washington, D. C., is the only nonprofit, non-governmental educational organization chartered by Congress to safeguard America's heritage sites and buildings. A famous example of the trust's work in California is the beautiful Casa Amesti in Monterey, willed to the organization by the late Frances Elkins.

To view handsome old adobe homes the members of the National Trust will journey to the Peninsula by bus to be entertained here by members of the trust, individuals and in the Old Capital Club, Casa Abrego, Larkin House and the Monterey History and Art Assn.'s Casa Serrano, where catered luncheons will be served to the 200 persons expected.

In addition to the adobes already mentioned, the eastern visitors will be taken on a tour of the Path of History in Monterey and 17-mile Drive. They will get a glimpse of California history from their buses, one of which will be the "House of Gold" a state historic monument, which will immediately be a conversational piece and cause a review of the discovery of gold in California and the Gold Rush.

This two-story, part adobe and chalk rock building still stands on the corner of Scott and Oliver streets. It was presumably erected prior to 1849, under orders from Gen. Manuel Castro as a barracks for his men. At the time, William Tecumseh Sherman, who later became the famous general, was stationed at Monterey and he used the building as a part of his quarters, as well as for sleeping quarters for his soldiers.

In 1851, according to the assessment records, the house was assessed as "La Bola de Ora," to James McKinley, for \$2,500. In 1855, the records show it assessed to Jose Abergo for \$1,000.

There are four versions pertaining to the name of "The House of Gold", (La Bola de Ora) meaning Ball of Gold.

1- About 1851, the building was in use as a store, and gold dust was left there for safe keeping.

2- From the fact that about this time, it was operated as a saloon, the liquor to a great extent being paid for in gold dust.

3- It was the headquarters for the exchange of gold dust, which the miners brought from the mines after the gold rush.

4- In an interview with Mrs. Elizabeth Dutra in 1937, she said that this building was known as the "Mint" in her girlhood days. During the Civil War, a Capt. Coates, arrived in Monterey and established himself at the "Mint," and began soliciting funds for the campaign to carry on the war. Her grandfather, Francisco Garcia, who was employed at the Custom House at the time, took all of his gold over to the "Mint" and placed it at the disposal of the captain. Because, of the spirit of it, her grandfather received a letter from the authorities in Washington stating that he would forever be exempt from taxation.

She further stated that Capt. Coates came on a "wheat ship," And by reason of this was named "Wheat." Men were named after the cargo they brought.

After 1885, the property was purchased by David Jacks, and following his death many years later, his daughters, the late Lee, Margaret, and Vida, had the building entirely restored, and inter presented it to the State of California as a historical monument. It is now restored as the store which may be seen from the doorway on Olivier street.