

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Five Goals

Monterey was the last colonial outpost of Spain. Her harbor was chosen by Vizcaino as the anchorage and haven of refuge for the magnificent galleons sailing back from Manila with cargoes of spices and silks. Here later was placed the capital of the Spanish province of California, her high presidio walls protected the small settlement from the dangers that might beset them. Only most necessary and simple furnishings and equipment were brought in the government supply ships; in early days, no foreign trade was permitted.

The change of flag under the Mexican Republic and the development of commerce that followed brought prosperity. Houses sprang up outside the presidio walls and ships from China, the Philippine Islands, Hawaii, South America, New England, and Europe brought their trade items to barter for the cowhides and tallow, the products of the California ranchos. Almost all the adobe houses we preserve today were built during the Mexican period and certainly their furnishings were those brought in the early trading vessels.

Another important phase, of Monterey history was that period between 1848 and 1849 under United States military occupation. The names Sloat, Fremont, Stockton, Sherman, Kearny, and Riley have a place in California history.

With the adoption of the state Constitution in 1849, Monterey reached the pinnacle of her historical importance. The capital was moved, ships bypassed this port for San Francisco. The "Gold Rush" and the covered wagons migration had little influence on this sleepy town of that time. Spanish customs and Spanish language persisted until the 1890's.

The one highlight of this later period which the Monterey History and Art Assn. has chosen to mark is the sojourn of Robert Louis Stevenson who took shelter in a lovely old two-story adobe built in the Mexican period. The duena of this house was Senora Girardine, a native of Mexico, certainly must have furnished it and equipped her home in the manner familiar to her in her homeland.

Therefore, the objectives of the Monterey History and Art Assn. and the state should be:

1 - To promote research in the archives concerning inventories, shipping lists, etc., that might reveal the furnishings the dress, tools, etc., in use in early days.

2 - To obtain materials in use during the period 1770 to 1849 or of similar make as those known to have been used in that period.

3 - Materials of military nature, uniforms, equipment, etc., which would tell the story of the military occupation 1848-1849.

4 - Materials for the Stevenson House memorial and suitable furnishings for the house of 1879.

5 - Objects and material from Spain and Mexico which would reveal the fine cultural background of those early settlers of this great state.

This not only applies to the History and Art Assn. but to the state-owned buildings administered by the Division of Beaches and Parks in which and for which the association has worked to furnish since its organization in 1931, It has all been a great joy and satisfaction, many friendships have been made and many compliments received from both the Monterey citizens and the traveling public. May the work continue.